

Text: Acts 2.32-33
St Stephen's

Sept 8/9, 2007
Sat/Sun

Jesus Pours Out the Holy Spirit

Tim Allen at the most successful time in his career: *"My tank is empty. I will never get back what I spent to get to the top."*

The church wasn't **emptied** by the ride to the top of the Roman Empire, they were **filled**. They were **burning**, but not **burning out, aflame**, but not **flamed out**. Why did this religion not just succeed, but sweep the Roman Empire?

1) **Christians were more inclusive than anybody**. All other religions were geared towards a certain region or class or race. But Christians welcomed royalty and slaves, men and women, Jew and Gentile - and made them brothers and sisters.

2) **Christians cared better than anybody**. Poor, sick, diseased, condemned - The Christians cared for them all. They give more, serve more, love more, care more...

3) **Christians died better than anybody**. The credibility of the Christian faith grew by the martyrs.

But why all this? What is the **'reason behind the reasons'**?

The Spirit of God came down.

And suddenly a sound came from heaven like the rush of a mighty wind, and it filled all the house where they were sitting. And there appeared to them tongues as of fire, distributed and resting on each one of them. And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other tongues...

Acts 2:2-4 (RSV)

That was the difference, the reason behind the reasons! I want

to sweep through Acts and note the **varying responses** to the Holy Spirit.

Some People Were Longing for the Holy Spirit

*"he charged them not to depart from Jerusalem, but **to wait...** before many days you shall be baptized with the Holy Spirit... you shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be my witnesses..."*

Acts 1:8 (RSV)

All these with one accord devoted themselves to prayer, together with the women and Mary the mother of Jesus, and with his brothers.

Acts 1:14 (RSV)

These were people who were **broken**. And broken people know they need more from God. These were people whose dreams had crashed, whose plans for life had come to a stunning end. They had **suffered** sharply over the past weeks, and had given up on themselves.

When this happens to you, you begin to pray, "More of you... less of me..." And you begin to long for the Holy Spirit.

Some People Were Surprised by the Holy Spirit

*And at this sound the multitude came together, and they were **bewildered**, because each one heard them speaking in his own language. And they were **amazed** and **wondered...***

Acts 2:6 (RSV)

While Apollos was at Corinth, Paul passed through the upper country and came to Ephesus. There he found some disciples. And he said to them, "Did you receive the Holy

*Spirit when you believed?" And they said, "No, **we have never even heard that there is a Holy Spirit.**"*

Acts 19:1-2 (RSV)

Sometimes we are like that – been a disciple for years but have **never heard** there is a Holy Spirit.

You **can't miss** the Holy Spirit in the Book of Acts. In the Book of Acts the Holy Spirit **falls** on people, **speaks** to people, **leads** people, **fills** people, **guides** people, **empowers** people, **says 'no'** to people, **heals** people, **convicts** people, **converts** people...

More than one commentator names this book **the Acts of the Holy Spirit**. There is no doubt about it, the Spirit is the **central character** in the play, though as I said to you last week, if the Gospel of Luke is all about **what Jesus began** to do during his ministry on earth, Acts is all about **what Jesus continues** to do during his ministry from heaven **through the Holy Spirit**.

And it is **surprising**. What happened on Pentecost was surprising...

- **Roaring wind** and **flames of fire** and uneducated men praising God in **different languages**, signs of God's power and presence and passion for the nations of the earth. That was surprising!
- the Holy Spirit fell on **men and women**. That was surprising!
- **3000 people** were converted on that day. That was surprising!
- The **whole city was talking** about Jesus being alive and about the Holy Spirit. That was surprising!

- And there were **miracles and wonders** done by the apostles. That was surprising!
- And everyone started to **give their property** to anyone who had needs. That was surprising!

And everyone was **in awe** of God – and we're not even out of chapter 2 yet!

(People's responses to the Michael Vick Video)

Some People Were Confused About the Holy Spirit

And all were amazed and perplexed, saying to one another, "What does this mean?"

Acts 2:12 (RSV)

Peter gives the answer in his sermon that morning...

This Jesus God raised up, and of that we all are witnesses. Being therefore exalted at the right hand of God, and having received from the Father the promise of the Holy Spirit, he has poured out this which you see and hear.

Acts 2:32-33 (RSV)

That's **what Jesus said he would do**. And Peter notes it. You thought he was dead, but he's not. You thought his life was over, but it's not. You thought his ministry was through, but it's just getting started. He's the one who is doing all this!

Here's how Jesus said it the night before his crucifixion...

*"when **the Friend** comes, the Spirit of the Truth... he won't draw attention to himself, but will make sense out of what is about to happen and, indeed, out of all that I have done and said. He will honor me; he will take from me and deliver it to you. Everything the Father has is mine... "*

John 16:13-15 (Msg)

The ministry of the Holy Spirit is to **point people** to Jesus, to **lead** people to him, to help us to **understand the teachings** of Jesus and **his plans** for our lives.

Sometimes people get so excited about the Holy Spirit and the supernatural life that He brings, that we talk again and again about the Holy Spirit. But all the time **the Holy Spirit is drawing us to Jesus, and pouring out the life of Jesus on us.**

Note what Jesus says here... *"Everything the Father has is mine... He will take from me and deliver it to you..."*

I like to explain this with a picture of **three great vats**, stacked up a ladder towards heaven. At the top, **the greatest vat is God the Father**. Everything in God is in that vat. His eternity, his majesty, his unbroken holiness, his goodness, his mercy, his love for sinners. His eternal purposes, his truth, his wisdom, his righteousness, his power over everything... **it is all there.**

The **next vat is Jesus**, and Jesus says everything the Father has is his. Everything. The Father has **poured it all into Jesus**, no holding back, nothing left behind. That is why Jesus said, *"All the Father has is mine"* They are that close.

Now here's what happens. You are the last vat. **Everything in Jesus...** all of it, no holding back... he **pours into you** by his Holy Spirit. His eternal life, his grace, his unbroken holiness, his goodness, his strength, his mercy, his love for sinners. **It is all there.** *"He will take from me and deliver it to you..."* And then it **begins to grow**. That is what a supernatural life in Jesus is all about.

Luke doesn't want us to be confused about these things. That's why he wrote. He wants us to be **clear** about the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit is the Spirit of Jesus.

"the Spirit of Jesus..." Acts 16:7

That's what the Apostle's called him. That's how you can know him, discern him, and why you want more of him.

Some People Were Closed to the Holy Spirit

But others mocking said, "They are filled with new wine."

Acts 2:12-13 (RSV)

"You stiff-necked people, uncircumcised in heart and ears, you always resist the Holy Spirit. As your fathers did, so do you..."

Acts 7:51 (RSV)

My Testimony: Came to Christ... during my early years, I was stumbling along. Someone noticed... and asked me, "Are you filled with the Holy Spirit?" I knew his promises... "Well..", I thought. I hope I am." But I didn't, honestly, know. And, to be even more honest, I was cautious. Reserved. Closed.

For some months I wrestled with it. Finally, it came down to one clear issue. **Control**. I believed in Jesus but wasn't so sure I wanted to give over control of my life. Not day to day or moment to moment control. I **liked being in charge!** So I found I was saying "Yes" and "No" to Jesus at the same time.

The question was not just how much of the Holy Spirit did I have, but how much of me did He have? I was afraid of losing control.

Some People Were Filled with the Holy Spirit

Acts 2:4 *they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance.*

Acts 2:38 *Peter said, "Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins; and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit."*

Acts 4:8 *Then Peter, filled with the Holy Spirit, said to them: "Rulers and elders of the people..."*

Acts 4:31 *After they prayed... they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and spoke the word of God boldly.*

Acts 13:9 *But Saul, who is also called Paul, filled with the Holy Spirit, looked intently at him...*

Acts 13:52 *And the disciples were filled with joy and with the Holy Spirit.*

The Promise is the Pattern: filled, and filled and filled again!

I think it is like the **water heater in your house**. The pilot light is on all the time. That is like the Christian who has the Holy Spirit, but it doesn't produce any hot water; you hardly know that it is on. But then when the thermostat detects a need for hot water, gas is turned on and ignites and burns brightly, the burner comes on. That is like the Christian who is full of the Holy Spirit