

2023 Theme - Focus On What Matters

Sermon Series - The Book of Acts/God's Plan for His Church

Sermon Title - The Spirit of the New Testament Church! Part 1

Sermon Text - Acts 2:1-21

Sermon Presenter - Pastor Larry

Introduction

"We have an anchor, The Lord, our Sustainer, Even when billows roll, It is well with my soul!" Webster Dictionary says that billow means "to rise or roll in waves or surges!" Do the storms of life ever seem to rise or roll in waves or surges in your life? And when we sing the words to the song we just sang you might be inclined to ask this question and it would be fair...How can Jesus be our Anchor and Sustainer when He ascended back to heaven? It all has to do with a promise He made to His disciples which was fulfilled in the Book of Acts. Let's pray and ask God to teach us what His promise to always be with us has to do with the Spirit of the New Testament Church! Let's pray.

I wanted to remind you all that we will observe The Lord's Supper at the end of the service today. If you have children who have been baptized and who would want to participate, you can go get them you can go get them towards the end of the service. Before we read our text in the Book of Acts, I want to remind you of the promise Jesus made to His disciples and ultimately to you and me. It is found in John's Gospel.

John 14:16 And I will ask the Father, and he will give you another Counselor to be with you forever--

John 14:17 the Spirit of truth. The world cannot accept him, because it neither sees him nor knows him. But you know him, for he lives with you and will be in you.

John 14:18 I will not leave you as orphans; I will come to you.

John 14:19 Before long, the world will not see me anymore, but you will see me. Because I live, you also will live.

Why does He say I will come to you? Who is this Counselor He's talking about, this Spirit of Truth who is to live with us and in us? And why does Jesus then say "because I live, you will also live? And to top it off He says in the next verse...

John 14:20 On that day you will realize that I am in my Father, and you are in me, and I am in you.

What day is He talking about? Let's turn to our text for today and we will find some answers!

Acts 2:1 When the day of Pentecost came, they were all together in one place.

Acts 2:2 Suddenly a sound like the blowing of a violent wind came from heaven and filled the whole house where they were sitting.

Acts 2:3 They saw what seemed to be tongues of fire that separated and came to rest on each of them.

Acts 2:4 All of them were filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other tongues as the Spirit enabled them.

(Let me just point out to you that in this passage it does not say unknown tongues, but other tongues. Let's keep reading and you'll understand.)

Acts 2:5 Now there were staying in Jerusalem God-fearing Jews from every nation under heaven.

Acts 2:6 When they heard this sound, a crowd came together in bewilderment, because each one heard them speaking in his own language.

Acts 2:7 Utterly amazed, they asked: "Are not all these men who are speaking Galileans?"

Acts 2:8 Then how is it that each of us hears them in his own native language?

Acts 2:9 Parthians, Medes and Elamites; residents of Mesopotamia, Judea and Cappadocia, Pontus and Asia,

Acts 2:10 Phrygia and Pamphylia, Egypt and the parts of Libya near Cyrene; visitors from Rome

Acts 2:11 (both Jews and converts to Judaism); Cretans and Arabs--we hear them declaring the wonders of God in our own tongues!"

Acts 2:12 Amazed and perplexed, they asked one another, "What does this mean?"

Acts 2:13 Some, however, made fun of them and said, "They have had too much wine."

(Don't you just love the world's logic? These guys are speaking other languages, fluently, so they must be drunk! Every time I've ever seen someone drunk they couldn't even speak their own language fluently! Boy when someone doesn't want to accept a miracle they'll get pretty goofy to try and explain it away!)

Acts 2:14 Then Peter stood up with the Eleven, raised his voice and addressed the crowd: "Fellow Jews and all of you who live in Jerusalem, let me explain this to you; listen carefully to what I say.

Acts 2:15 These men are not drunk, as you suppose. It's only nine in the morning!

Acts 2:16 No, this is what was spoken by the prophet Joel:

Acts 2:17 "'In the last days, God says, I will pour out my Spirit on all people. Your sons and daughters will prophesy, your young men will see visions, your old men will dream dreams.

Acts 2:18 Even on my servants, both men and women, I will pour out my Spirit in those days, and they will prophesy.

Acts 2:19 I will show wonders in the heavens above and signs on the earth below, blood and fire and billows of smoke.

Acts 2:20 The sun will be turned to darkness and the moon to blood before the coming of the great and glorious day of the Lord.

Peter is quoting the prophet Joel who had lived in the 5th century B.C. and had warned of imminent judgment of God on the wickedness of the people back then. I believe Peter was trying to get the attention of the people who were making fun of what was happening on the Day of Pentecost. They would have known Joel's prophecy well and I believe Peter wanted them to see the similarities, repent and call upon the Name of The Lord.

So now we know the day Jesus was talking about, when He said...

John 14:20 On that day you will realize that I am in my Father, and you are in me, and I am in you.

I believe He was talking about the Day of Pentecost when The Holy Spirit, the Divine Counselor, was given powerfully to the New Testament Church! The promise of Jesus and at least a portion of the prophecy of the ancient prophet Joel, are fulfilled on the Day of Pentecost, and we discover that the Spirit of the New Testament Church is in fact "The Holy Spirit." When we examine the promise of Jesus and the prophecy of Joel we also discover this very important truth...

1. The Holy Spirit, He is the Person of God

Remember Jesus had said this...

John 14:17...But you know Him, for He lives with you and will be in you.

John 14:18 I will not leave you as orphans; I will come to you.

Notice Jesus didn't say "But you know it", or "it lives with you and will be in you," but "you know Him and He lives with you and will be in you!" Joel had prophesied this and Peter quotes the prophet in our text...

Acts 2:17 "'In the last days, God says, I will pour out my Spirit on all people.

God says, "I will pour out My Spirit!" In other words...

The Holy Spirit, He is the Spirit of God, He is the Person of God! He is the third person of the Holy Trinity! God the Father, God the Son, God the Holy Spirit! He is not an impersonal object, substance or force! He is God! "Have you got it?" is not the proper way to refer to The Holy Spirit! He is the Spirit of God and why does this matter? Because the Holy Spirit, He is the very Spirit of God Almighty, and as such, He is our Teacher/Our Guide/Our Counselor!

He is Our Teacher

Jesus said these things about His Holy Spirit in John's Gospel...

John 14:26 But the Counselor, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, will teach you all things and will remind you of everything I have said to you.

And then in Luke's Gospel...

Luke 12:11 "When you are brought before synagogues, rulers and authorities, do not worry about how you will defend yourselves or what you will say,
Luke 12:12 for the Holy Spirit will teach you at that time what you should say."

I don't know about you, but I need the Holy Spirit to teach me on a daily basis and not just if I were falsely accused and brought before the authorities. I need Him to explain and interpret Scripture to me, and to give me wisdom to know how to apply God's principles in the different life situations I'm faced with! I know we all need The Holy Spirit to be our teacher when it comes to parenting, grandparenting, dealing with situations at work, at school, at home or with a neighbor. So I'm basically saying we need Him to be our teacher in life! And when it comes to interpreting Scripture for life, I can't tell you how many times I've heard people say that they never really understood Scripture. However, after they accepted Jesus as their Savior and started reading the Bible again, a lot of things began to make sense to them. It's not that you will automatically know every little detail and nuance of meaning, but The Holy Spirit will begin to lead you and teach you the meaning and application of Holy Scripture. He may use a commentary written by scholars, or a small group leader who has had some of the same questions, and He might even use your old preacher from time to time. But I can promise you this: If you ask The Holy Spirit to help you understand the meaning and the application of Scripture for your life, He will! As I've said many times before, God is not playing guessing games with you when it comes to the principles of His Word or His will for your life. He wants you to know these things and will reveal them to you when you seek them! Remember what Jesus said...

Luke 11:9 "So I say to you: Ask and it will be given to you; seek and you will find; knock and the door will be opened to you.

Luke 11:10 For everyone who asks receives; the one who seeks finds; and to the one who knocks, the door will be opened.

When we are asking for God's wisdom, seeking God's guidance, and knocking on heaven's door in prayer so we can walk in the will of God for our lives, Jesus said it will be given, we will find, and the door will be opened! Jesus went on to compare us reaching out to Him with our requests, our questions, and our desperation to a child petitioning a father for their needs. Jesus said...

Luke 11:13 If you then, though you are evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Father in heaven give the Holy Spirit to those who ask him!"

In other words, The Lord wants to teach us through His Holy Spirit! Listen to the way the Psalmist expressed this...

Psa 51:6 Surely you desire truth in the inner parts ; you teach me wisdom in the inmost place.

Psa 86:11 Teach me your way, O LORD, and I will walk in your truth; give me an undivided heart, that I may fear your name.

Psa 119:18 Open my eyes that I may see wonderful things in your law.

Psa 119:19 I am a stranger on earth; do not hide your commands from me.

Psa 119:20 My soul is consumed with longing for your laws at all times.

And here's a beautiful truth: If you allow the Holy Spirit to be your teacher in the classroom of study, then you will discover He takes it to the next level, and it's a practical level because The Holy Spirit...

He is Our Guide

Jesus said this...

John 16:13 But when he, the Spirit of truth, comes, he will guide you into all truth. He will not speak on his own; he will speak only what he hears, and he will tell you what is yet to come.

John 16:14 He will bring glory to me by taking from what is mine and making it known to you.

John 16:15 All that belongs to the Father is mine. That is why I said the Spirit will take from what is mine and make it known to you.

This is so awesome and so powerful! So many times God has given me real time guidance out there in the real world and not just in the study! I'm going to give you a few illustrations. One from when I was a teenager and one from two weeks ago!

I shared this story with the church a number of years ago so there may be a few of you who remember. It was one of the times when The Holy Spirit gave me guidance in a supernatural way that very much had implications in the natural world. What I'm about to tell you will take a few minutes to explain, but in reality it transpired in less than one minute, maybe as little as 40 seconds. The reason I tell you that is the fact that I just don't believe it would have been humanly possible for this to happen without the intervention of The Holy Spirit. I had only been saved a couple of years. I was between 15 to 17 years old. So I'm on my way to work in my first vehicle, a 1958 Chevy Apache pickup. It had a straight 6 engine with the old low geared transmission so it would do about 55 miles an hour with the pedal to the metal! This was in Vicksburg, MS on interstate 20. There is a place where the interstate crosses Clay street which is a four lane street but divided by a strip of land between the two sides of Clay street so there are two small bridges, one over each of the streets below. At the end of the second bridge there was a terrible dip in the road where the road had settled but the bridge had not. I found it on Google maps and did the street view, so let me show you this 15 second video of these two bridges. Video. I need to tell you that those guard rails were not there between the two bridges 48 years ago. If they had been I might not be here today. And remember what I'm about to tell you took place in less than 40 seconds. So here's what happened: I was about to cross the first bridge and there was an 18 wheeler flatbed truck passing me on the left. I looked over and he had no load, but one of the small steel beams they would have used to secure a load was just sitting on the flatbed unsecured. Immediately my mind thought of the bump at the end of the second bridge. Immediately my mind thought when he hits that bump he will have just passed me and will still be in the left lane. Immediately it went through my mind that the beam might come off that truck and come through my windshield. Immediately I pulled over between the two

bridges and even at 55 miles per hour I had to pump my brakes and skidded up to the bridge abutment of the second bridge. I watched and the truck hit the dip in the road and the beam flew off and landed in my lane. Had I not stopped that beam would have come through my windshield. I jumped out of my truck and this baptist boy got pretty pentecostal. I was like, "Thank You Jesus, Praise The Lord in heaven above! Glory hallelujah! Wow, God, You totally just saved my life! I know in my human power I would have never have put that together!" That was The Holy Spirit guiding my path! A number of years later, my wife was driving in Nashville, TN with our young children and a couple of big luxury campers were passing her. She looked at the front wheels of the one passing and got a feeling something was wrong so she slowed way down to let them go on by when all of a sudden that wheel just came off and flew into her lane. But because she had slowed down, she didn't hit it! Again, I believe another example of The Holy Spirit giving divine guidance. And just a couple of weeks ago Debbie and I drove over to Baton Rouge to attend a funeral for the father of one of our Church members, Ty Swanson. We got there and were talking to him when an usher from the church along with another member of that church came up to me. One of them asked me if I was a pastor! I said, "Yes sir, I'm Ty and Patty's pastor." He said, "Here's what we've got, this is highly unusual but the service is supposed to start in ten minutes and our pastor is not here yet and we can't get him on the phone! If he doesn't show up, could you do the service?" I said yes sir and he handed me the order of service! Most of you know, I manuscript my sermons and always spend time preparing funeral messages so they are personalized for the individual. No time for that! I was going to have to depend 100% on The Holy Spirit! I borrowed Ty's pen and wrote a couple of thoughts on the order of service. Then the organ player came up to me and explained the songs I would be leading. The music started and I walked to the platform and welcomed everyone and then led the first song. And here's how God works! The week prior to the funeral, Ty had called me and asked me to suggest some Scriptures to read at His dad's service. After the song Ty came and read those passages! So God provided my text for the day! After He read the Scripture, His sister came up and shared some things about her dad and what he had meant to her and their family. So God provided the personal things about Ty's father for me to incorporate as I shared a message of hope that we as Christians find through our faith in Jesus! After I led the closing hymn and prayer, and dismissed, the pastor, in his preaching robe, had gotten to the church. What had happened was that he was out of town and in another time zone when he scheduled the funeral. When he got back to our time zone his smart phone had changed the time from 2:00pm to 3:00pm. It was a God thing. The Holy Spirit was teaching me a lesson about trusting Him in all situations, and evidently it went okay, because one of Ty's friends was there with his dad. His dad told Ty to tell me that if I ever become a priest, he'll come hear me preach!

The Psalmist alludes to this guidance in Psalm 25 and Psalm 119...

Psa 25:4 Show me your ways, O LORD, teach me your paths;

Psa 25:5 guide me in your truth and teach me, for you are God my Savior, and my hope is in you all day long.

Psa 119:35 Direct me in the path of your commands, for there I find delight.

Psa 119:36 Turn my heart toward your statutes and not toward selfish gain.

Psa 119:37 Turn my eyes away from worthless things; preserve my life according to your word.

So the Holy Spirit is our teacher, our guide, and...

He is Our Counselor

John 16:7 But I tell you the truth: It is for your good that I am going away. Unless I go away, the Counselor will not come to you; but if I go, I will send him to you.

How about having your very own personal counselor at your side, 24/7? How cool is that? Very cool indeed!!!! The Psalmist put it this way in Psalm 119...

Psa 119:24 Your statutes are my delight; they are my counselors.

Psa 119:25 I am laid low in the dust; preserve my life according to your word.

Psa 119:26 I recounted my ways and you answered me; teach me your decrees.

Psa 119:27 Let me understand the teaching of your precepts; then I will meditate on your wonders.

Psa 119:28 My soul is weary with sorrow; strengthen me according to your word.

Isn't it beautiful how the Word of God teaches us amazing truths and how the Old and the New Testament complement each other so wonderfully? Jesus told us He would send us another counselor to remind us of all the things He had taught us. And we see in this Psalm that the very statutes of God are like personal counselors for us and because the Holy Spirit teaches us those things we understand that He is not only our teacher and guide, but our very own counselor!! Jesus was the word made flesh and now that He has sent us His Holy Spirit to dwell within us, we have the supernatural ability to let Scripture counsel us! Now I know some of you may have a translation that says comforter instead of counselor. Actually there are several ways to translate the Greek word "Paraklete" in John's Gospel. According to the Holman Bible Dictionary, the following can be used: Helper, Comforter, Counselor or Advocate! Most scholars agree that Counselor is the best translation, but I will add this caveat, "What a comfort to know that The Holy Spirit of God is your counselor! So comforter is certainly an adjective that describes some of the very important work The Holy Spirit does in our lives! What a help to know that we have an Advocate with The Father making intercession on our behalf! I love the way the writer of Hebrews put it..

Heb 13:5 ... because God has said, "Never will I leave you; never will I forsake you."

Heb 13:6 So we say with confidence, "The Lord is my helper; I will not be afraid. What can man do to me?"

And this truth is found in Romans...

Rom 8:26 In the same way, the Spirit helps us in our weakness. We do not know what we ought to pray for, but the Spirit himself intercedes for us with groans that words cannot express.

This leads us to the next major truth concerning the Spirit of The New Testament Church...

2. The Holy Spirit is the Presence of God

We discover in our text that Peter quotes Old Testament Scripture from Psalms 16:8-11. Just before He quotes this passage Peter reminds the people that God had shown His presence and done His work of salvation through Jesus His Son. Jesus was the presence of God in the flesh. Listen...

Acts 2:22 "Men of Israel, listen to this: Jesus of Nazareth was a man accredited by God to you by miracles, wonders and signs, which God did among you through him, as you yourselves know.

Acts 2:23 This man was handed over to you by God's set purpose and foreknowledge; and you, with the help of wicked men, put him to death by nailing him to the cross.

Acts 2:24 But God raised him from the dead, freeing him from the agony of death, because it was impossible for death to keep its hold on him.

Peter then reminds them of the prophecy of David in Psalms about Jesus being God in the flesh...

Acts 2:25 David said about him: "'I saw the Lord always before me. Because he is at my right hand, I will not be shaken.

Acts 2:26 Therefore my heart is glad and my tongue rejoices; my body also will live in hope, Acts 2:27 because you will not abandon me to the grave, nor will you let your Holy One see decay.

Acts 2:28 You have made known to me the paths of life; you will fill me with joy in your presence.'

Folks, what confidence, what courage, what calmness can be a part of your life when you realize that no matter where you are, and no matter your circumstances, God Almighty, the Creator God of this Universe is right there with you! J. Sidlow Baxter shared this in a devotional he wrote around 1961...

"Long ago, a scornful emperor asked a Christian, "Where is God?" The Christian replied, "Where is He not?"

And in our text, Peter is letting the people know not only how vital it is to have the presence of God in our personal lives but also how...

The Presence of God is essential to the survival of the Church!

Listen as Peter continues...

Acts 2:29 "Brothers, I can tell you confidently that the patriarch David died and was buried, and his tomb is here to this day.

Acts 2:30 But he was a prophet and knew that God had promised him on oath that he would place one of his descendants on his throne.

Acts 2:31 Seeing what was ahead, he spoke of the resurrection of the Christ, that he was not abandoned to the grave, nor did his body see decay.

Acts 2:32 God has raised this Jesus to life, and we are all witnesses of the fact.

Acts 2:33 Exalted to the right hand of God, he has received from the Father the promised Holy Spirit and has poured out what you now see and hear.

In other words, once Jesus, God in the flesh, God's presence with the disciples, once He had ascended to the right hand of the Father, He poured out His Holy Spirit on His followers, because without the presence of God the followers of Christ, the church, the body of Christ in this world, would not survive! In fact David had once said these powerful words...

Psa 51:11 Do not cast me from your presence or take your Holy Spirit from me.

Psa 51:12 Restore to me the joy of your salvation and grant me a willing spirit, to sustain me.

And Moses had said these words to God when the Children of Israel were in the desert wilderness...

Exo 33:15 Then Moses said to him, "If your Presence does not go with us, do not send us up from here.

Exo 33:16 How will anyone know that you are pleased with me and with your people unless you go with us? What else will distinguish me and your people from all the other people on the face of the earth?"

Exo 33:17 And the LORD said to Moses, "I will do the very thing you have asked, because I am pleased with you and I know you by name."

Exo 33:18 Then Moses said, "Now show me your glory."

Exo 33:19 And the LORD said, "I will cause all my goodness to pass in front of you, and I will proclaim my name, the LORD, in your presence. I will have mercy on whom I will have mercy, and I will have compassion on whom I will have compassion.

And to whom does the Lord have mercy and compassion? We find the answer to this in our text...

Acts 2:21 And everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved.'

And here's the beautiful thing: If you admit you've done wrong and are in need of a Savior to forgive you, and you believe Jesus died on the Cross to save you from your sins and you're willing to call on His Name, you can be saved today and filled with His precious and powerful Holy Spirit, who will be your comforter, your counselor, your teacher, your guide, and oh so much more! We are about to observe The Lord's Supper, Holy Communion, which reminds us of the staggering price Jesus paid in order to take away the guilt of our sin! Parents, if you want to get your children who you want to participate in the Lord's Supper you may do so now. Let's all stand. And if you would please bow your heads with me. If you know Jesus as your Savior,

please take this time to thank Him and to make sure your heart is right with Him! If you've never trusted Jesus, you could do that today by praying this simple prayer. I'll say it slowly enough for you to pray with me if you would like. It goes like this...Dear Jesus, I know that I have sinned against You.....I need Your forgiveness..... I believe You died on the old rugged cross.... to pay the price for my wrong doing....Thank You! I need You to be my Savior....and I call on Your name today....With the help of Your Holy Spirit I will live a new life....Thank You for loving me so much....In Jesus name I pray and believe, Amen!

The Lord's Supper!

If you prayed that prayer today or have previously accepted Jesus as your Savior, you are welcome to share communion with us because it's not about being a member of a particular church body, but it's about being a member of the Body of Christ through faith! If you want to participate, while the praise band plays, just make your way to one of the tables around the auditorium and get a piece of bread and a cup of juice. Then return to your seats and I'll give you further explanations in just a moment.

Luke tells us...

Luke 22:14 When the hour came, Jesus and his apostles reclined at the table.

Luke 22:15 And he said to them, "I have eagerly desired to eat this Passover with you before I suffer.

Luke 22:16 For I tell you, I will not eat it again until it finds fulfillment in the kingdom of God."

Luke 22:17 After taking the cup, he gave thanks and said, "Take this and divide it among you.

Luke 22:18 For I tell you I will not drink again from the fruit of the vine until the kingdom of God comes."

Luke 22:19 And he took bread, gave thanks and broke it, and gave it to them, saying, "This is my body given for you; do this in remembrance of me."

We eat this bread to remember the broken flesh of Jesus' body, broken and bruised because He was taking the punishment we deserved! Never forget that He suffered for you! Luke then says...

Luke 22:20 In the same way, after the supper he took the cup, saying, "This cup is the new covenant in my blood, which is poured out for you.

We drink this cup to remember the precious blood of Jesus which was poured out to cover the filth of our sin and shame! Never forget His sacrifice to cleanse and make you right with God!

Thank You Jesus! Amen! Our praise band will lead us in this final praise song. If you would want to come to the altar and pray or if you would like to pray with me or one of our counselors we will be in the youth room, out the back doors to my left and across to the youth room! Love you!

