

## **Pentecost! The Latter Rains & Great Harvest**

**Intro:** Stefan Duerksen Lead Pastor

**READ IN BIBLE Acts 1:3-8** He presented himself alive to them after his suffering by many proofs, appearing to them during forty days and speaking about the kingdom of God. And while staying with them he ordered them not to depart from Jerusalem, but to wait for the promise of the Father, which, he said, “you heard from me; for John baptized with water, but you will be baptized with the Holy Spirit not many days from now.” So when they had come together, they asked him, “Lord, will you at this time restore the kingdom to Israel?” He said to them, “It is not for you to know times or seasons that the Father has fixed by his own authority (speaking of 2<sup>nd</sup> coming). But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you, and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth.” **(REVIEW MEMORY WORK)**

**Pentecost** – we are celebrating the FIRST outpouring of the Holy Spirit which took place 50 days AFTER Jesus died and was resurrected and 10 days after he ascended back into heaven...

**READ IN BIBLE Acts 2:1-4** When the day of Pentecost arrived, they were all together in one place. And suddenly there came from heaven a sound like a mighty rushing wind, and it filled the entire house where they were sitting. And divided tongues as of fire appeared to them and rested on each one of them. And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other tongues as the Spirit gave them utterance.

**This outpouring of the Holy Spirit changed everything.**

**Church-Wide Prayer:** (REFLECTION) Pray for the Church...

- Lord... where have we placed our hope? In this world? or the one to come?
- Lord... are we walking in step with your Spirit? Or walking in the flesh?
- Lord... prepare our hearts to receive Your Word this AM... prepare the soil of our hearts today..
- Lord... reveal the things in our lives that we need to lay down... and give us the power to do so today...
- HOLY SPIRIT. WE INVITE YOU INTO THIS ROOM. INTO OUR CHURCH. INTO OUR MIDST. We declare that You are welcome! You are more than an honored guest, you are God. Would you lead us. Convict us. Encourage us. Empower us. Teach us this AM...

**What was the significance of what happened at Pentecost?**

**A. The Holy Spirit guarantees God’s promises**

**2 Corinthians 1:20-22** For all the promises of God find their Yes in him. That is why it is through him that we utter our Amen to God for his glory. And it is God who establishes us with you in Christ, and has anointed us, and who has also put his seal on us and given us his Spirit in our hearts as a guarantee.

**Acts 2:38-39** And Peter said to them, “Repent and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins, and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. For the promise is for you and for your children and for all who are far off, everyone whom the Lord our God calls to himself.”

Forgiveness of sins is ONE aspect promised to us in the New Covenant! The other aspect is the GIFT OF THE HOLY SPIRIT!

**Ezekiel 36:25-27** I will sprinkle clean water on you, and you shall be clean from all your uncleannesses, and from all your idols I will cleanse you. And I will give you a new heart, and a new spirit I will put within you. And I will remove the heart of stone from your flesh and give you a heart of flesh. And I will put my Spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my statutes and be careful to obey my rules.

### **The outpouring the Holy Spirit at Pentecost changed everything**

**READ IN BIBLE: Acts 2:14-21** But Peter, standing with the eleven, lifted up his voice and addressed them: “Men of Judea and all who dwell in Jerusalem, let this be known to you, and give ear to my words. For these people are not drunk, as you suppose, since it is only the third hour of the day. (*They were speaking to everyone in their native language!*) But this is what was uttered through the **prophet Joel**: ““And in the last days it shall be, God declares, that I will pour out my Spirit on all flesh, and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, and your young men shall see visions, and your old men shall dream dreams; even on my male servants and female servants in those days I will pour out my Spirit, and they shall prophesy. And I will show wonders in the heavens above and signs on the earth below, blood, and fire, and vapor of smoke; the sun shall be turned to darkness and the moon to blood, before the day of the Lord comes, the great and magnificent day. And it shall come to pass that everyone who calls upon the name of the Lord shall be saved.’

- a. **Pentecost:** fulfilled OT prophecy, guaranteed our redemption, empowers spiritual gifts, gives the ability to obey!
- b. **BUT... what about this last part?** “And I will show wonders in the heavens above and signs on the earth below, blood, and fire, and vapor of smoke; the sun shall be turned to darkness and the moon to blood, before the day of the Lord comes, the great and magnificent day. And it shall come to pass that everyone who calls upon the name of the Lord shall be saved.”
- c. **This didn't happen at Pentecost!**

**Joel 2:23-32** “Be glad, O children of Zion, and rejoice in the Lord your God, for he has given the early rain for your vindication; he has poured down for you abundant rain, the early and the latter rain, as before. “The threshing floors shall be full of grain; the vats shall overflow with wine and oil. I will restore to you the years that the swarming locust has eaten, the hopper, the destroyer, and the cutter, my great army, which I sent among you. “You shall eat in plenty and be satisfied, and praise the name of the Lord your God, who has dealt wondrously with you. And my people shall never again be put to shame. You shall know that I am in the midst of Israel, and that I am the Lord your God and there is none else. And my people shall never again be put to shame. **The Lord Will Pour Out His Spirit (Referenced in Acts 2:14-21)** “And it shall come to pass afterward, that I will pour out my Spirit on all flesh; your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, your old men shall dream dreams, and your young men shall see visions. Even on the male and female servants in those days I will pour out my Spirit. “And I will show wonders in the heavens and on the earth, blood and fire and columns of smoke. The sun shall be turned to darkness, and the moon to blood, before the great and awesome day of the Lord comes. And it shall come to pass that everyone who calls on the name of the Lord shall be saved.

### **B. Early & Latter rain outpourings of the Holy Spirit**

#### **1) The Long Dry Summer... produced some fruit**

- a. Was actively involved with Creation
  - a. Gen 1:26, Job 33:4
  - b. Then the FALL happens... the dry summer begins...
- b. The Exodus from Egypt
- c. The Ministry of the OT Prophets

- d. Empowered special leaders for unique tasks
  - a. 70 elders (Num. 11:24-27), Othniel (Judges 3:10), Gideon (6:34), Jephthah (11:29), and others. The Spirit would empower specific tasks!
- e. The Bible - In the OT & NT. The Holy Spirit inspired ALL of the writers of Scripture. He used imperfect people to deliver a PERFECT, INFALLIBLE, WORD from the Lord.
  - a. Acts 1: 16 which Holy Spirit spoke by the mouth of David concerning Judas (RE: Psalm 69 & 109)

**Little wonder Moses declared! Numbers 11:29** But Moses said to him, “Are you jealous for my sake? Would that all the Lord's people were prophets, that the Lord would put his Spirit on them!”

**John 16:7-13** Nevertheless, I tell you the truth: it is to your advantage that I go away, for if I do not go away, the Helper will not come to you. But if I go, I will send him to you. And when he comes, he will convict the world concerning sin and righteousness and judgment: concerning sin, because they do not believe in me; concerning righteousness, because I go to the Father, and you will see me no longer; concerning judgment, because the ruler of this world is judged. “I still have many things to say to you, but you cannot bear them now. When the Spirit of truth comes, he will guide you into all the truth, for he will not speak on his own authority, but whatever he hears he will speak, and he will declare to you the things that are to come.

## 2) The Early Rain Outpouring → more fruit!

**At Pentecost everything changed!**

- a. **The Holy Spirit was now available to EVERYONE – not just special people for special assignments!**
- b. **Believers were personally transformed!**
  - i. Peter went from DENYING Jesus to DYING for Jesus!
  - ii. **Acts 4:13** Now when they saw the boldness of Peter and John, and perceived that they were uneducated, common men, they were astonished. And they recognized that they had been with Jesus.
- c. **Signs & Wonders were being done by regular people!**
- d. **The gifts of the Spirit were distributed amongst the entire body!**
- e. **Effective witness to make disciples**
- f. **The Church of God EXPLODES – referred to as the FIRST FRUITS!**

## 3) The Latter Rains are coming! The Great Harvest!

**TWO MAIN End Times Camps:**

1. **Camp Fear:** images of persecution... destruction... terror... come to mind! And believers easily fall into anxiety!!!
2. **Camp Irrelevant:** We will be raptured before then OR we are already in the Millennial Kingdom – it will just keep getting better until Jesus returns

**NEITHER is the correct response!** The End of Days is COMING – with it the great tribulation AND the great harvest!! YES!!

3. **Camp Get Ready!** Jesus is coming back to establish a Kingdom! Right before he returns there will be BOTH the greatest tribulation ever AND the GREATEST HARVEST EVER! BEST TIME IN HISTORY!

**Matthew 13:24-30** He put another parable before them, saying, “The kingdom of heaven may be compared to a man who sowed good seed in his field, but while his men were sleeping, his enemy came and sowed weeds among the wheat and went away. So when the plants came up and bore grain, then the weeds appeared also. And the servants of the master of the house came and said to him, ‘Master, did you not sow good seed in your field? How then does it have weeds?’ He said to them, ‘An enemy has done this.’ So the servants said to him, ‘Then do you want us to go and gather them?’ But he said, No, lest in gathering the weeds you root up the wheat along with them. Let both grow together until the harvest, and at harvest time I will tell the reapers, “Gather the weeds first and bind them in bundles to be burned, but gather the wheat into my barn.””

### **Look at these contrasting Passages!**

**Worst time in human history! Matthew 24:21-22** For then there will be great tribulation, such as has not been from the beginning of the world until now, no, and never will be. And if those days had not been cut short, no human being would be saved. But for the sake of the elect those days will be cut short.

**BEST TIME in human history! Revelation 7:9-17** After this I looked, and behold, a great multitude that no one could number, from every nation, from all tribes and peoples and languages, standing before the throne and before the Lamb, clothed in white robes, with palm branches in their hands, and crying out with a loud voice, “Salvation belongs to our God who sits on the throne, and to the Lamb!” ... And he said to me, “These are the ones coming out of the great tribulation. They have washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb.

The RESTORATION OF ALL THINGS! As we talked about last week – this the HOPE that enables you to ENDURE HARDSHIP & TRIBULATION!!! The Holy Spirit will keep you, empower you, guide you – BUT...we need to...

### **C. RESPONSE: Get Ready! Live by the Spirit**

Whether the End of Days happens in our life time or not! We are responsible to GET READY! And, Prepare people for the coming Kingdom! This requires us to **not just BELIEVE** but to **LIVE BY THE POWER OF THE SPIRIT**.

**Romans 8:1-14** There is therefore now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus. For the law of the Spirit of life has set you free in Christ Jesus from the law of sin and death. For God has done what the law, weakened by the flesh, could not do. By sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh and for sin, he condemned sin in the flesh, in order that the righteous requirement of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not according to the flesh but according to the Spirit. For those who live according to the flesh set their minds on the things of the flesh, but those who live according to the Spirit set their minds on the things of the Spirit. For to set the mind on the flesh is death, but to set the mind on the Spirit is life and peace. For the mind that is set on the flesh is hostile to God, for it does not submit to God's law; indeed, it cannot. Those who are in the flesh cannot please God.

You, however, are not in the flesh but in the Spirit, if in fact the Spirit of God dwells in you. Anyone who does not have the Spirit of Christ does not belong to him. But if Christ is in you, although the body is dead because of sin, the Spirit is life because of righteousness. If the Spirit of him who raised Jesus from the dead dwells in you, he who raised Christ Jesus from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies through his Spirit who dwells in you.

**Get Ready! Live by the Spirit: (MORE THAN JUST BELIEVE!)**

1. **Repent from sin in your life**
  - a. **Acts 3:19-21** Repent therefore, and turn back, that your sins may be blotted out, that times of refreshing may come from the presence of the Lord, and that he may send the Christ appointed for you, Jesus, ...
2. **Get involved in sharing the Gospel of the Kingdom! MAKE DISCIPLES of the nations!**
  - a. **Matthew 28:18-20** And Jesus came and said to them, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age."
3. **Regularly ask for fresh fillings of the Spirit!**
  - a. **Acts 4:31** And when they had prayed, the place in which they were gathered together was shaken, and they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and continued to speak the word of God with boldness.
  - b. **PRACTICE RIGHT NOW... Release your Spirit... half sing, half receive... switch.... Pray for filling of the Holy Spirit**

#### **We need the Spirit: (IF TIME)**

1. New heart – desire to obey, ability to obey
2. To endure in the face of hardship
3. To keep our hope fixed on eternity
4. To empower us to live for God
5. To witness effectively
6. To operate the gifts of the Spirit
7. To bear fruit for the kingdom
8. To overcome sin in our lives
9. To grow our character

#### **AFTER SERVICE PRAYER – PRAYER ROOM – 9AM ONLY**

**MARANATHA!! Come soon Lord!**

[Care@mysouthland.com](mailto:Care@mysouthland.com)

#### **SC CHURCH WIDE PRAYER REQUESTS 2023**

**Cruise ship → → → → → Battleship**

1. **Life on Mission** (Mt 28:18-20, Mt 22:37-40): Love, serve & disciple people to Jesus
2. **Next Gen** (Ps 78:7-8): Encounters with Jesus, strong mental health, boldness & belonging
3. **Persecuted Church** (Lk 21:13): Faith, fortitude & wisdom "to not waste the opportunity to share the Gospel"
4. **Heart of Prayer** (Ps 27:4): Every generation to find Jesus & learn to bring their needs to Him in prayer
5. **Church Renewal**: Directors for India and other new countries & many global disciple makers