



## **The Power of Pentecost Today**

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There is an old saying that goes like this: "Everybody who is talking about heaven ain't going there". In the same way, I believe that it would be safe to say that everybody who is talking about the Holy Spirit doesn't have Him. I say this because Jesus Himself said that not everybody who would say, "Lord, Lord", would enter into the kingdom of Heaven.

He even spoke of an incredible time in which some would say, "But Lord in your name we did all kinds of miracles" and he would say to them, "Depart from me ye workers of iniquity. I never knew you!" (Matthew 7:22,23)

It is not my purpose to define how we can know that we have the Holy Spirit to say, "I don't have the Holy Spirit, but neither do you", or "I've got it you don't". The purpose of this message is that we might have a clearer picture of what the Holy Spirit does in the life of the Christian and it is my prayer that each of us will invite the blessed presence of the Holy Spirit unto our lives. Jesus said he would give the Holy Spirit to those who ask (Luke 11:13) and who obey Him. (Acts 5:32)

Can't you see it now, if the ground becomes Holy when God's presence is there and if the Ark of the Covenant was Holy because of the His presence so if we will ask God for the fullness of the Spirit, for the indwelling of the Holy Spirit. Then we shall begin to comprehend what it means ... "know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost which is in you..."(1Corinthians 6:19). O wonder of wonders! Glory of glories! The responsibility of the Christian in relationship to the indwelling of the Spirit is

wonderful and awe inspiring because once the Spirit takes up his abode with us, we become responsible to Him and he that would defile the temple of the Holy Ghost whose temple we are him will God destroy (1 Corinthians 3:17). Why? Because to whom much is given shall much be required! (Luke 12:47)

Is it possible to put too much emphasis on the Holy Spirit? Yes. You see, the Spirit does not create his own special interest group. A significant number of Christians have developed a cult of the Holy Spirit. They worship Him. He is the theme of their Christian lives.

This is not to be. The Spirit was not sent to testify of himself or for His own glory. He is transparent, nearly invisible if you please. His task is to not testify of himself but to testify of Jesus "But when the Comforter is come, whom I will send unto you from the Father, even the Spirit of truth, which proceedeth from the Father, he shall testify of me." (John 15:26).

Jesus sent the Holy Spirit so that we would abide in Him. After all, Jesus, Himself, said that He is the vine and we are the branches (John 15:1-9). It is the Holy Spirit that makes this relationship possible.

Let me explain it another way. You see, life in the Holy Spirit is a process. Not a product. Though life in the Holy Spirit will produce results. It is not so much a result as it is a process. The Holy Spirit's work itself is better thought of as a process that is being affected in us.

Just as the branch of a tree is alive because of its connection to the tree, (the tree provides life to the branch), So every inclination that we have toward Christ, every true spiritual inclination that we have comes from the Spirit of God.

How can we know we have the Holy Spirit?

There are Christians that approach us and ask "Do you have the Holy Spirit?" This can be a little embarrassing because usually these people have had what they call "experiences". What they are saying is do you speak in "tongues" or have some other physical phenomenon.

They tell me about a famous healer who will say, "I feel the Holy Spirit and I'm going to give it to you." He waves his arm and the choir falls out of its seats. You may have seen these charismatic ministers touch the people on their foreheads and they fall down backwards and the ushers are there waiting to catch them.

There is a large church in South America where people all over the congregation would stand up, start going slowly in circles and then fall down "smitten in the spirit". Is this what the Lord wants us to do? When we say we need the infilling of the Holy Spirit is this what is meant? Must we mumble some kind of gibberish, fall out of our chairs or fall backwards on the floor?

When our ministers are filled with the Holy Spirit does it mean they will be able to do mass healing no questions asked? I believe correct prayer for the sick is found in James 5 and you can see that it is not standing up before the television cameras and shouting, "Heal, heal, heal ..."

James 5 gives rather clear and concise instructions as to prayer for the sick and believe it or not it has to do with confession of sin and repentance. It says "...if he hath committed any sin it will be forgiven him." James 5:15. Healing in the 21st century is not to be with no strings attached but always for the

glory of God and not of man.

I don't believe we should use a "miracle" yardstick to measure the blessings of God or the work of the Holy Spirit. We need to measure the Holy Spirit not by the gifts of the Spirit but by the fruit of the Spirit.

If being able to do miracles means for sure that a person has the Holy Spirit then the devil must have the Holy Spirit because the Scripture speaks of the spirits of devils working miracles. "For they are the spirits of devils, working miracles, which go forth unto the kings of the earth and of the whole world..." (Revelation 16:14)

This is why I believe that we must not look to the gifts of the Spirit as a sure test of having the Holy Spirit. The sure test of the Holy Spirit in the life is the fruit of the Spirit. Satan is a great imitator but the true fruit of the Spirit in the life cannot be counterfeited.

Notice the text in Galatians doesn't refer us to the fruits of the Spirit plural but fruit singular. Galatians 5:22-23 - "But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, Meekness, temperance..." This is what being full of the Spirit is all about.

As an example, it certainly cannot be proven from the Bible that God would sanction the gift of tongues to a couple living in a common-law relationship. But yet you will find many claim that they are filled with the Holy Spirit.

I know from experience that God would not give his crowning gift, the actual indwelling of His Spirit, to a person who was living in adultery.

Maybe I'm just not educated enough but I can't understand how God would give his crowning gift the actual indwelling of His Spirit to a person who was knowingly disobedient to the will of God.

A lady once explained why she didn't feel she needed to keep the Sabbath. She said that she had had a back problem, if God had wanted her to keep the Sabbath, he wouldn't have healed her back.

A Sunday minister said that if God wanted him to keep the Sabbath, he wouldn't be blessing him the way he is. I'm not saying here that you have to be a Seventh-day Adventist to have the Holy Spirit work in your life because first and foremost the work of the Holy Spirit is to convict of sin of righteousness and of judgment and it is obvious that he is doing that work in the lives of the righteous of all persuasions. In fact He is doing his work on the hearts of sinners.

It is for this reason I'm praying that in the 21st century he will pour out his Spirit on all flesh.

But I'm not talking about a first work of the Holy Spirit. I'm talking about the most precious of all gifts-the infilling of the Holy Spirit.

A person in the 21st century who has the Holy Spirit dwelling with him, will be a totally surrendered person who is living up to all the light that God has given him. We must understand that the indwelling Spirit will lead us into all truth (John 16:13).

The indwelling of the Holy Spirit may be seen as being a seal of God. The Holy Spirit is an internal seal which is given to every child of God who asks and who is living up to all of the light that they have. It is

the Holy Spirit, after all, that seals us unto salvation. In Ephesians 4:30 we read, " And grieve not the Holy Spirit of God, whereby ye are sealed unto the day of redemption."

Yet there is an ever greater blessing of the Holy Spirit promised in what the Scripture says is the Latter Rain. This will be the most precious experience of all and living in the 21st century you qualify for it if you want it with all your heart and are willing to have it happen to you with all that it means.

It is important for me to remind you that the main reason we don't have the indwelling of the Spirit is because the majority don't want the lifestyle that the Spirit brings. There is a kind of conflict of interest. A kind of I do but I don't. Like the man who had the dog who he named Stay.

He would say, "Come, Stay. Come, Stay." and you can imagine how confused this made the dog! Many of us do this knowingly or unknowingly with the Holy Spirit. Our prayers say, "Come" but our lives say "stay".

Whether you consider yourself a liberal or conservative Christian - Do you have to be a charismatic to have the Holy Spirit?

I am convinced there is a special blessing for each of us if we truly understand the Holy Spirit.

We have talked about the Holy Spirit in terms of the Latter Rain. We speak of preparing for the Latter Rain. This means that the Holy Spirit tends to be always something for the future. I believe, a special infilling of the Holy Spirit is for us and it is for now.

I believe in the Latter Rain, But how do you prepare for it. How does a wheat field prepare for the spring rains? It just has to be there.

In the case of the Latter Rain, the preparation that is necessary for the outpouring of the Spirit can only be by the Spirit Himself in our lives as we have the in filling of the Holy Spirit now.

In other words the truth is we cannot prepare ourselves for the Latter Rain only the Spirit Himself can do that. We can only pray sincerely with all our hearts, that God will do for us what needs to be done. A person who is out in the rain without a covering is going to get wet. And so a person who wants the Holy Spirit with all their heart and prays sincerely for it is going to get wet! Those who receive the Latter Rain will already have receive the in-filling of the Holy Spirit.

In Acts Chapter 1, the account is told that the disciples continued with one accord in prayer and supplication and when the day of Pentecost came they were filled with the Holy Ghost.

With the disciples, Pentecost came as an answer to prayer. Pentecost was continued as they gave themselves to continued prayer. So then persistence and unwearied prayer is the price we will have to pay for the great final outpouring of the Holy Spirit in the 21st century.

I would like to ask - Have you received the Holy Ghost since you believed? I didn't say, Can you speak in tongues or do miracles or fall backwards.

How can we know when we have received the in-filling of the Holy Spirit? How can we know that He is dwelling in us?

First of all, one will acknowledge the death of Christ on the cross for us as the only and all-sufficient ground upon which God pardons all our sins.

We must put away every known sin. We continually go to our heavenly Father and ask Him to search us through and through bringing to light anything in our outward life or inward life that is wrong in His sight. If He does bring anything to mind that is displeasing to Him, we will put it away, no matter how dear it is to us. A person who has the infilling of the Holy Spirit renounces sin in his life. We are talking about known sin.

Third, we will openly confess Christ before the world. The Holy Spirit is not given to those who are trying to be disciples in secret, but to those who obey Christ and publicly confess Him before the world. "...Whosoever shall confess Me before men...."(Luke 12:8).

Fourth, in order to receive the Holy Spirit, there will be absolute surrender of our lives to God. We will go to Him and say, "Heavenly Father, here I am. You have bought me with a price. I am Your property. I renounce all claim to do my own will, all claim to govern my own life, all claim to have my own way. I give myself up unreservedly to You, all I am and all I have. Send me where You want, use me as You like, do with me what You want. I am Yours."

If we hold anything back from God, no matter how small it may seem, that spoils everything. But if we surrender all to God, then God will give all He has to us. There are some who shrink from this absolute surrender to God, but absolute surrender to God is simply absolute surrender to infinite love. It is surrender to the Father, the Father whose love is not only wiser than any earthly father's, but more tender than any earthly mother's.

The person who has the infilling of the Holy Spirit will have asked for His presence in their lives. Our Lord Jesus says in Luke 11:13, "If ye then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children: how much more shall your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to them that ask Him?" Just ask God to give you the Holy Spirit and expect Him to do it. He says He will.

Finally, we know by faith that we have the infilling of the Holy Spirit. Simply taking God at His Word. No matter how positive any promise of God's Word may be, we enjoy it personally only when we believe. Our Lord Jesus says, "...What things soever ye desire, when ye pray, believe that ye receive them, and ye shall have them. (Mark 11:24).

Let's talk about the relationship between Jesus, His followers and the Holy Spirit.

It is almost incredible to realize that Jesus once lived here! That means that God used to live here. Yet much of the face to face communication Jesus had with the disciples was lost. Even His closest disciples were often deaf and dumb to what Jesus was saying and doing because they were not yet truly spiritual men.

It is truly amazing that Jesus spent three and a half years in almost constant companionship with those men. But though He was with them physically, it wasn't until after Pentecost that He was really in their very lives.

Anybody can try to explain spiritual truths, but only spiritual people can understand them. "But the

natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned." (1 Corinthians 2:14). This is why Jesus said that we must be born again through the Holy Spirit. The Word of God is unintelligible to the person who is not born again. It cannot be understood as an experience unless one is spiritual.

For this reason, it is not an option that the remnant church in these last days pray for and receive the fullness of the Holy Spirit. Some think that the problem in the Christian life is that we don't understand some fact or other about the Christian life. And so we teach and study to the place that we have now just about reduced everything to a seminar.

Some think the problem is we are not organized enough and so we have installed databanks in our churches. Some church offices have so many computers and other equipment that they look like an insurance company.

Some think our problem is that we have lost the spirit of corporate worship, and that if we would revitalize church and Sabbath School our problems would be over.

In regard to worship I would like to suggest that, in our current focus to do meaningful worship, many of us seem to have forgotten that Jesus said that if you bring your gift to the altar and have anything against your brother, leave your gift at the altar and be reconciled first to your brother (Matthew 5:23).

It is funny how we over-emphasize first one thing and then another. Fanaticism is often simply the act of over-emphasizing one truth at the expense of other truths.

It is true that the last message to the world is a message of worship. Revelation 14:7, "...Fear God, and give glory to him; for the hour of his judgment is come: and worship him that made heaven, and earth, and the sea, and the fountains of waters." But there is another message that is preached in the last days and it is found in Malachi 4:5,6: "Behold, I will send you Elijah the prophet before the coming of the great and dreadful day of the LORD: And he shall turn the heart of the fathers to the children, and the heart of the children to their fathers..."

Somehow we must understand that worship is more than what we do on Sabbath at eleven o'clock. Israel seemed to think worship was what you did in church. God said, I'm fed up with your sacrifices of bulls. What I wish is that you would realize that worship is not something you do; rather it is something you are (John 4:23).

What does all this have to do with the Holy Spirit? Everything, because the Holy Spirit is not something on the outside, but something on the inside. If we have troubles on the outside of our lives, it is because we need to be reformed on the inside.

I have entitled this message, The Power of Pentecost Today, because I don't believe we need to get back to Pentecost AD 31, but I believe we need to have an even greater experience in the 21st century than they had at Pentecost.

For some reason there seem to be some who are insisting on what I would call a pre-Pentecost experience. Not only are some obsessed with going back to Pentecost, they somehow want to have an Old Testament experience. Some of us are trying, it seems, to be what we might call "Old Testament Christians."

Why would we make David the role model for the Christian life? Though David was a role model for repentance, he was surely not a role model for victorious Christian living. Though David was a man who was inspired by the Holy Spirit, I can't conceive that we would say that he was a man who was constantly filled with the Holy Spirit. Notice even the difference between David's attitude toward his enemies and Jesus' attitude and Paul's attitude toward their enemies; the difference is between night and day.

I'm not saying that the Holy Spirit did not move upon men of God in the Old Testament for He certainly did. But let us not make the mistake of putting them on Perfection pedestals. The fact is they all were sinners needing a Saviour!

But then, if you want a Christian experience modeled on the pre-Pentecost days of the Old Testament, or even if you want an experience that the disciples had with Jesus when they walked with Him for three and a half years, fighting among themselves as to who was the greatest, you're welcome to it.

I don't even want the experience of Peter when he got up and walked out of a meal with a group of Gentiles rather than be embarrassed by his prejudiced Jewish Christian colleagues. I want an in-filling of the Holy Spirit that is beyond racism and that is not confused over law and grace. I want the Pentecost that God has for his people in these last days--an experience that will purify, sanctify; an experience that will give us a witness that leads people to have a burning heart.

I don't want an experience with the Holy Spirit that has me climbing the walls, swooning in the aisles, or jumping up and down and clapping my hands. Though God is the God of wind, He is not in the wind. Though God is the God of fire, He is not in the fire. But He is in the still small voice.

I seek not an experience in the Holy Spirit that is hysterical or hypnotic. "One thing have I desired of the LORD, that will I seek after; that I may dwell in the house of the LORD all the days of my life, to behold the beauty of the LORD, and to enquire in his temple." (Psalm 27:4).

I don't even want the Holy Spirit in my life because I want power. I want the Holy Spirit in my life because I love the Lord Jesus Christ with all my heart. And though Jesus left us physically 2,000 years ago, in the Holy Spirit we have the most wonderful gift of all--Christ in us, the hope of glory.

I repeat, I don't want the Holy Spirit because I want power. I want Him to live in me because I love Him and crave His blessed presence. You know, marriage has many benefits. In a marriage you share expenses. You have someone to keep you company and vice versa. You share physical intimacy. And you may share children and grandchildren together.

These are all benefits of being married! But the best part of all is that you love one another, and when you love someone you just want to be with them. The blessing that the Holy Spirit is in my life is best summed up in the words, "Emmanuel"--God with us. You see, that is what it's all about. The Holy Spirit is the most wonderful of all of God's gifts. I guess you can say that, when the Holy Spirit is in your life, it is God moved in with you.

A lot of problems disappear or become mute or irrelevant when that happens. You see, God is Holy, and when a Holy God moves in with you, His Holy presence will prepare, if you please, a sterile field in your life.

It is for this reason that Scripture says, "...old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new." (2 Corinthians 5:17). It also gives meaning to the words, "...for what fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness? and what communion hath light with darkness?" (2 Corinthians 6:14). When you and I have the Holy Spirit in our lives, we will hate the world, and as we sing, the things of earth grow strangely dim in the light of His glory and grace.

If only God's people in this generation would pray for the Holy Spirit and mean it. We sometimes pray for the Spirit like a young man with passion prays for a woman in his life. Though marriage has a sexual component, marriage is not built on sex.

A person who seeks the Holy Spirit for gratification of His spiritual fantasies or for personal gain in power or popularity may very well receive a spirit and exhibit those characteristics, but they will not be from the Holy Spirit of God, but from another spirit. God will not be used by us. He is not God because of us. But we are created by Him for His pleasure and for His glory.

When the Holy Spirit dwells in its fullness in our hearts, then we will grow and experience what it means. "...Forever, O God, thy word is settled in Heaven" (Psalms 119:89). And also, "I delight to do Thy will, O My God; Yea, thy law is written in my heart." (Psalm 40:8).

Our worldliness or spiritual instability--the direct hit that many of us are taking from the flesh and the devil--are the direct result that we have not asked for, and thus have not received, the fullness of the Spirit.

Of one thing you may be sure, and that is, when you and I ask for and experience the indwelling of the Holy Spirit: All known sin will go. We will seek first the Kingdom of Heaven and His righteousness. Sin will not have dominion over us.

We will no longer be under the law of sin and death. We will know what it means when it says, "There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit." Romans 8:1.

Listen friend. If your life is dominated by a bad temper, if you nurture a spirit of criticism, if you love to keep up with the Jones, if you have secret immoral practices, if you enjoy watching people break the law of God on television programs, and I could go on and on, you are not under grace but under law.

The Spirit of God in Christ has made us free from the law of sin and death. You may be thinking, "Are you saying that when the Holy Spirit is in us, we will be perfect? That we will never sin again?" I didn't say that. But this I know, and that is, when the Spirit of a Holy God dwells with us, we will begin to hate the things we have loved and we will begin to love the things we have hated.

As the Holy Spirit dwells in your heart, if you will ask Him and cooperate with Him, He will give you an ongoing victory over the sins that have so long ruined our quality of life. The promise is sin shall not have dominion over you: "For sin shall not have dominion over you: for ye are not under the law, but under grace." (Romans 6:14).

One thing we all need to be reminded of - the more the Holy Spirit works in our lives, the more unworthy and sinful we will appear in our own eyes. That's the bad news. But the good news is, your

wife and children, the people you work with, and your friends will be able to tell the difference!

Why does the spiritual life have to be so complicated? I believe it is because, in the days of Pentecost, the truth about the Holy Spirit had not been yet distorted or misrepresented. But it must have been messed up before long though, because of Simon Magus. He wanted to buy it.

Remember the Holy Spirit does at least two levels of work: Convicting of sin, of righteousness, and of judgment: "And when he is come, he will reprove the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment: Of sin, because they believe not on me; Of righteousness, because I go to my Father, and ye see me no more." (John 16:8-10).

Then there is an in-filling of the Holy Ghost. This is much more than a work of conviction. It is an on-going condition by which we are actually purged of sin and changed fundamentally and permanently. This is the sealing work-the Holy Spirit settling us into the truth so that we cannot be moved.

Once we know what the Holy Spirit is for and what He does, we may decide it's not for us. But we must not linger. The Spirit will not always strive with men. Someone has said he believes the Holy Spirit is even now being redistributed.

We're in the 21st century now. We can't go back to Pentecost but, full of the Spirit of the indwelling Christ, we must go on to the Latter Rain. For too long what has been marketed as being full of the Holy Spirit is not being full of the Holy Spirit at all.

It is high time that we wake up and begin to pray with all our hearts to be filled with the Holy Spirit in the truest sense of the word. Some of us have seen what the devil can do in our lives. Why don't we get serious now and see what the life-changing, sealing power of the Holy Spirit can do in our lives?

People may have asked you, "Do you have the Holy Spirit?" You might have hemed and hawed. Now is the time to pray that God will give you and I the full indwelling of the Holy Spirit. He is answering those prayers.

We have tended to equate praying for the Holy Spirit with a view to church growth instead of personal spiritual growth. It seems to me that the foundation of Christian witnessing is not just being able to explain what we believe. It must be much more. It seems to me that the foundation of Christian witnessing is based upon being able to tell others what Jesus has done and is doing in our life. It seems to me that the foundation of Christian witnessing is that our families and friends will see what Jesus has done and is doing in our life. As this happens, the church will grow, but not only numerically, but in Spirit and truth.

I invite you to pray for and receive the indwelling of the Holy Spirit into your life. From this moment forward you will never be the same.

Those who are watching this message have the Spirit working upon their lives or you would not have taken the time to watch.

When we have the indwelling of the Spirit, He will stabilize the direction of our lives.

We will not feel that we are no longer sinners because the Spirit does an on-going housecleaning in us!

His presence is a consumable fire. When the Spirit is dwelling in us we are more conscious of sin than we ever were before and we are aware that without Him we cannot be victorious.

The life in the Spirit is the process where the chains of sin which have so long held us are broken off. The indwelling of Spirit makes habitual sin impossible. The Holy Spirit is the one who through the life and death of Jesus really "gives us a break" from the power of sin.

When someone asks us if we have the indwelling of the Holy Spirit we should be able to say, "yes". At first you may feel embarrassed to answer that way, but then you will have confidence.

We must not feel that to have the Holy Spirit in our lives we must take up where the Charismatic churches leave off. I invite you to accept the true in-filling of the Holy Spirit that God has for you today.