

St. Paul: On The Same page

06.08.14 for Pentecost

Day One: Numbers 11:24-30

Then the LORD came down in the cloud and spoke with [Moses], and he took of the Spirit that was on him and put the Spirit on the seventy elders. When the Spirit rested on them, they prophesied, but they did not do so again. (In response to two of them prophesying among the people, Moses said,) "I wish that all the LORD's people were prophets and that the LORD would put his Spirit on them!"

People were questioning the leadership of Moses and complaining about their food. God decided that more leaders were needed. So he had Moses assemble 70 of the strongest leaders of the people, and he gave to them the same gift of the Holy Spirit that he had given to Moses. He called them to be prophets.

When we think of prophecy, we think of predicting the future. But do you suppose that 70 men were all telling the future at once? That would be confusing! Actually, this word is often used to tell about speaking the

word of God, teaching and preaching. So these 70 men began to faithfully tell what God wanted.

When you have a large crowd of people threatening to riot and complaining about their conditions, you might think that what they need is stern discipline, or harsh correction. Or maybe you think they need an entertaining or persuasive speaker. But that is not what God sent.

God gave them men who could faithfully and correctly tell them God's will. That is what they all needed to know. And if, or when, they chose to reject God's word, then the discipline came.

What would it be like if ALL of God's people were prophets? We would not all have to preach or proclaim. We would not even all have to teach. But what if we shared God's word of encouragement and correction, comfort and guidance and forgiveness? How might our world be changed?

Prayer: *Heavenly Father, send your Spirit upon me. I will speak many words today. Let them come from you, and serve your purpose. Amen.*

Day Two: Acts 2:1-21

All of [the disciples] were filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other tongues as the Spirit enabled them. ⁵ Now there were staying in Jerusalem God-fearing Jews from every nation under heaven... Utterly amazed, they asked: "Are not all these men who are speaking Galileans? ... Amazed and perplexed, they asked one another, "What does this mean?" ¹³ Some, however, made fun of them and said, "They have had too much wine."

God sends an amazing miracle. The people all see it. And how do they respond? Many of them make fun of the believers. That sounds familiar, doesn't it? No matter what God does among us, many people will refuse to believe.

If someone is healed of cancer, that's only because of doctors. Or they say you were lucky, sometimes the medicines work better. If someone's life is spared in an accident, then they point to those who were injured. If war is averted then people credit their political favorites. If men suddenly speak in other languages they didn't know, then they must be drunk!

Faith in Jesus seems foolish to most people. Some people make fun of Christians, saying that they believe in an "invisible friend." How should we respond?

Peter points to Jesus. Just Jesus. He reminds them of what they saw happen with their own eyes. Jesus came. He preached. He did miracles. He was crucified. And he rose from death. His resurrection was proof of all that he taught, that he was truly the Son of God, and that God was reconciling the world to himself by Jesus' death.

God kept his promises. He had promised to send a Savior, and he did. God had promised that he would send his Spirit, and that's what he did. His audience could accept it, or reject it, but they could not say they had not heard it.

God still has promises for people today, even those who are tempted to laugh. The same Spirit fills us, and he will use your words to do his work.

Prayer: *Dear Spirit of God, you have made my body your temple. Now also make my voice your instrument, to achieve the good things you have planned. Amen.*

Day Three: Acts 2:17ff

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.”* ¹⁸ *Even on my servants, both men and women, I will pour out my Spirit in those days, and they will prophesy.* ¹⁹ *I will show wonders in the heaven above and signs on the earth below, blood and fire and billows of smoke.* 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.* ²¹ *And everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved.’*

In the Old Testament lesson God put his Spirit on 70 of the leaders of Israel. He gave to them many more spiritual leaders in order to bless them and lead them in the right direction.

After Jesus’ ascension, God sent his Spirit to the 12 apostles, and he gave his Spirit to many others as well in order that the whole world would hear the good news about the forgiveness of sins in Jesus.

The prophet Joel promised that in the last days God would send his Spirit to all the believers. And so, as Paul told us, we know that our bodies

are the temples of the Holy Spirit. That invites the question: how should the world change because all God’s people have his Spirit?

The 70 elders led the nation to the Promised Land, although of course there were still problems and the people still often rejected God’s will.

The 12 apostles preached the good news among their enemies and “the word of the Lord grew.” Many people came to faith in Jesus and the gospel was spread across the world.

Now we have this same Spirit. What have we done? We have not always witnessed as we should, but many of our siblings in Christ, especially those who are the poorest and the most persecuted, have shared the good news with millions. Like the Israelites, we still fail. But the word still grows and spreads. And Heaven’s door is still open. And even now “everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved”.

Prayer: *Dear Jesus, we have called upon your name. Now lead others as well to seek you, to know you, and to find salvation in you. Amen.*

Day Four: John 7:37-39

On the last and greatest day of the Feast, Jesus stood and said in a loud voice, "If anyone is thirsty, let him come to me and drink."³⁸

Whoever believes in me, as the Scripture has said, streams of living water will flow from within him."³⁹

By this he meant the Spirit, whom those who believed in him were later to receive. Up to that time the Spirit had not been given, since Jesus had not yet been glorified.

What do people who are filled with the Spirit act like?

You may have seen pictures of a whirling dervish, people in the Sufi branch of Islam who seek an ecstatic experience in a dizzying dance. Another group who recently claimed to receive the Spirit began to bark like dogs and bray like donkeys. Some say that being filled with the Spirit means you will fall on the floor and quake. But what does Jesus say? He says that "streams of living water will flow from within" you.

We don't expect to meet people who have a fountain of water gushing from them. (Although I think there was once a Candid Camera episode like that). But do you expect to see Spirit-filled Christians who

have a stream of living water flowing from their lives?

If you have not met such a person, I feel sorry for you. Picture a person who struggles with sin, who feels guilty sometimes, who is sometimes sad. But imagine a person who listens – who shares some refreshment from God's word that has been a blessing to him or her – who offers to pray for you or with you – who is willing to share with you the one most important thing in all the world, the eternal life they have received in Jesus.

Perhaps in some the stream is small and slow today. Perhaps in some believers it is a refreshing shower of blessing. But in every Christian, in every one who has been given God's Spirit in their baptism, that fountain flows! And what do we do with a fountain? We drink from it – we stand in it – we enjoy watching it – we are washed clean in it. Refresh yourself in one another today!

Prayer: *Dear Jesus, I know your Spirit dwells in me. Move me to freely and gladly share with others the refreshing life you have given to me. Amen.*