

Greetings:

The study that Pastor Pat brings on Sunday mornings is a reflection of the study for that week. It represents a lot of research. Not all of what he has prepared is communicated. In an attempt to continue the learning process, he is making available his study notes to the congregation.

They are edited, but not “book” ready. To the critical eye mistakes can be found. So he asks that you take the material with humility, teach-ability, and charity.

Enjoy and if you should have any questions or corrections, please do not hesitate to email him at pastorpat@waukeshabile.org.

Date: May 31, 2009

Title: The Church Calendar, Pentecost and the Mission of the Local Church

Text: Acts 2:37-47, Misc.

Theme: The Holy Spirit inaugurates the final stage of God’s story, the ingathering.

Author: Patrick J. Griffiths ©2009

Waukesha Bible Church is a family of families seeking to live in **the Storyline of the Bible**. She is determined by design to have a **God-centered, Christ-exalting worship; a Word-centered teaching** focused on personal **discipleship** through intentional and systematic instruction; a **Global-impacting mission** that resolves to be a **church planting church**; and a **Grace-based fellowship** where disciples are invited to live under a **reigning grace** characterized by a **Gospel-driven sanctification** that celebrates a divine **monergism** to the Christian life.

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Introduction:

In my quest to preach Christ crucified, it is possible for me to leave you with a diminished view of the Holy Spirit. Each of the three persons of the Trinity is to be equally worshipped and adored. Our desire over the next several weeks is to pick up the storyline of God as it moves from the Hero's arrival, to His work, and final the legacy He left. It is of equal interest to note how the we often think of God the Father writing the story and weaving into it promise and picture, the Son fulfilling both in His arrival and work and now the ministry of the Holy Spirit in proclaiming and applying the gospel in the building of His body, the church. This is the key idea behind Pentecost.

What God promised, He has fulfilled. You and I are the living fulfillment of the promises noted in the Upper Room Discourse and Acts 2. Pentecost is a period of time rightfully noted as a transition. It is a transition from the Old Covenant to the New Covenant. Jesus Christ cut the New Covenant by His life and death. The Holy Spirit is a part of the New Covenant's content.

There are four dominant ideas in this part of God's story.

- First, the promise of the Holy Spirit by Jesus Christ in the Upper Room Discourse.
- Second, the confirmation of the promise at His ascension by Luke.
- Third, the perpetuation of the promise by Luke in Acts 1.
- Finally, the fulfillment of the promise in Acts 2.

The promise fulfilled guarantees the building of His church by the preaching of Jesus, the converting of sinners, the gathering of His people for worship and the scattering of the same for evangelism.

"The coming of the Holy Spirit is the gift inaugurating the final stage of the salvation story (or history, chronology); this era leads up to the end of time. His arrival is in fulfillment of Christ's promise, recorded in 1:8."¹

"One of the three pilgrimage festivals, Pentecost falls 50 days (seven weeks) after Passover, as its Greek name, *Pentecoste* (50th), preserves. It is also called the Feast of Weeks, an occasion to celebrate the gathering in of the harvest (Exod 3:14-17; Lev 23:15-22)."²

"This simple gathering in Jerusalem fifty days after the crucifixion of Jesus is a defining moment for believers and for the gospel. Pentecost is the birthday of the church. Until this moment in history, the faith, known as "the Way," is **an assemblage of eleven refugees from Galilee**. Their transformation and the transformation of the world are

initiated by the great event spoken of in today's lectionary scripture. **This is a monumental, paradigm-changing event.** From this event, we make the bold assertion: The Christian Church cannot and would not exist without the power and the presence of the Holy Ghost." [Emphasis added]³

"This particular Day of Pentecost was special because it occurred fifty days after Christ's crucifixion and resurrection. It also happened **ten days after His ascension** into heaven."⁴

Ten days pass from Luke 24 to Acts 2.

THE BIG PICTURE:

- The Birth of the Church in the Story of God
- The Centrality of the Church in the Mission of God
- The Structure of the Church for the Mission of God
- The Purpose of the Church in identifying, equipping, sending, and supporting

Its Eternal Value:

Without The Holy Spirit we can do nothing.

The Problem:

We live as if the Holy Spirit is of no real consequence in our lives.

The Storyline:

We forget the continuity of the Bible as story. When Jesus announced for the first time His impending and imminent death, He also said, "After three days rise again" (Mark 8:31) and "the Son of Man will come in the glory of His Father with the holy angels" (Mark 8:38). God was cementing this truth into their minds. The Mount of Transfiguration confirms this promise. What He then tells them in the Upper Room and at His ascension is a continued confirmation of a promise kept. You and I are working from this victory. Everything we do is a part of this story of ingathering.

"Acts is about mission, about speaking, proclaiming, the good news to people everywhere, in languages (and language) they can understand; Luke tells us that the Holy Spirit is the driving force behind this work. The Spirit is the launching pad for this mission."⁵

"This text stands as a book end to the story of Babel (Genesis 11:1-9). In Babel, the story begins with one language and a common understanding and purpose, but ends with many languages, confusion and scattering. In Acts the story begins with many languages, and ends with many languages, but contains in the middle a common hearing about God's deeds of power (verse 11)."⁶

Questions:John 14:15-20

1. How does Jesus describe the one who is to follow Him?
2. How long will this individual be with His people?
3. **Why is this so important at this juncture in the story of God?**
4. How else is this "Helper" described in verse 17?
5. Where will this "Helper" abide?
6. How will His people see Jesus?
7. What might this tell us about our message?
8. John 14:16, 15:26, 16:7 all refer to the Holy Spirit as the Helper. Who else is referred to in the same manner (cf. 1 John 2:1)?

John 14:25-27

1. What role does the Holy Spirit occupy in the lives of those early disciples?
2. Is this still true today? If so, note the contrasts and the comparisons.
3. What does Jesus leave His people, and how is this peace perpetuated?
4. Of whom does the Helper/Holy Spirit testify (cf. John 15:26)?
5. What might this tell us about our message?
6. What will the Holy Spirit do for those early disciples (John 16:13)? Is this the same or different than what He does for us?
7. What is the relationship between the Holy Spirit and Jesus Christ as noted in John 16:12-15?
8. What is the relationship between the Helper, teaching truth, glorifying Christ and the birth of the Church?
9. What does Jesus promise those early disciples just before He ascends to the Father (cf. Luke 24:49)?
10. Why is this so important at this point in the storyline of God?
11. How is this reaffirmed in Acts 1:7, 8?
12. What does the Holy Spirit's ministry look like in Acts 2:37-47?
13. What might this gathering of believers be called?
14. Is this passage merely descriptive or is it prescriptive?

"Acts is more descriptive than prescriptive. We can read about what happened two thousand years ago; that is descriptive. Does God command us to have the same experiences? If so, that would be prescriptive."⁷

15. Is this passage telling us what we look like or does it tell us what we are to be doing?
16. What's the difference between these two ideas?
17. What is the larger idea inside of Acts 2:37-47? Is it possible to miss the bigger picture by focusing too closely to the details?
18. Try to note the similarities between what Jesus promised in the Upper Room Discourse and what unfolds in Acts 2.
19. What might Acts 2 be telling us concerning the work of the Holy Spirit?

The Holy Spirit is calling to us from this passage to consider three ideas.

To Know: The Holy Spirit desires for us to know the person and work of the Holy Spirit in the storyline of God.

To Choose: The Holy Spirit desires for us to choose Him and His ways over our own.

To Feel: The Holy Spirit desires for us to feel the joy of resting in the person and work of the Holy Spirit.

Outline:

As our Lord's cross-work looms ever increasingly large, He sets His disciples apart and shares with them a message of life and light. The hope of what awaits them is tied directly into the Helper who is promised. Today's church often speaks of The Book of Acts as the Acts of the Holy Spirit. "The Holy Spirit is mentioned about sixty times in the Book of Acts, more than He is mentioned in all four Gospels put together."⁸ The appropriateness of this title is evidently seen by four dominant but straightforward thoughts.

- I. The Promise of the Holy Spirit in the Upper Room discourse (John 16)
 - A. The Holy Spirit continues the work of the Son, Jesus Christ (John 14:15-20).

In John 14, Jesus told Philip that He who has seen the Son has seen the Father (14:8, 9). This same principle is true as it relates to Jesus Christ and the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit brings with Him the presence of God.

¹⁵ "If you love Me, you will keep My commandments. ¹⁶ I will ask the Father, and He will give you another **Helper**, that He may be with you **forever**; ¹⁷ that is the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it does not see Him or know Him, but you know Him because He **abides** with you and will be in you. ¹⁸ I will not leave you as orphans; **I will come to you**. ¹⁹ After a little while the world will no longer see Me, but **you will see Me**; because I live, you will live also. ²⁰ In that day you will know that I am in My Father, and you in Me, and I in you" (John 14:15-20).

When Jesus said, "I will not leave you as orphans; I will come to you" (v. 18), He is referring to the Holy Spirit. We see Jesus in the church the Holy Spirit brings to pass.

- B. The Holy Spirit will provide presence to His people (John 14:16, 26; 15:26; 16:7; 1 John 2:1).

The word used for Helper is **parakletos**. It is one of my most important, and favorite, New Testament words. It means "to call alongside of."

"The Greek noun for Counselor is **parakletos**, frequently simply transliterated Paraclete. It literally means 'called to one's aid' (in a judicial sense) and therefore it is frequently translated 'an advocate, pleader, intercessor,' in which sense it is used of the Lord Jesus (1 John 2:1) with God the Father. Jesus called the Holy Spirit 'another Counselor,' whom He said the Father would give the disciples in response to His

request to be with them forever (John 14:16). The word 'another' is significant, because it means another of the same kind, in other words, one like Christ."⁹

It is a word designed to communicate hope and help. John is the only New Testament author who uses this word. It occurs four times in John's Upper Discourse and once in his Letters. In the Gospel it refers to the Holy Spirit and in the Letters it refers to Jesus.

¹⁶ "I will ask the Father, and He will give you another Helper, that He may be with you forever; . . . ²⁶ But the **Helper**, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in My name, He will teach you all things, and bring to your remembrance all that I said to you (John 14:16, 26).

"When the **Helper** comes, whom I will send to you from the Father, that is the Spirit of truth who proceeds from the Father, He will testify about Me" (John 15:26).

"But 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" (John 16:7).

"My little children, I am writing these things to you so that you may not sin. And if anyone sins, we have an **Advocate** with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous" (1 John 2:1).

I believe both the Holy Spirit and Jesus can be referred to as Helpers or Comforters or Advocates. In the great work of living the Christ-life, the Holy Spirit is our helper. He does simple enable, but quit literally takes our place. He is like the pinch hitter in baseball. He takes our place and hits in our behalf.

C. The Holy Spirit will bring the New Testament Revelation (John 14:25-27).

²⁵ "These things I have spoken to you while abiding with you. ²⁶ But the **Helper**, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in My name, He will **teach** you all things, and bring to your remembrance all that I said to you. ²⁷ **Peace** I leave with you; My peace I give to you; not as the world gives do I give to you. Do not let your heart be troubled, nor let it be fearful" (John 14:25-27).

²⁶ "When the **Helper** comes, whom I will send to you from the Father, that is the Spirit of truth who proceeds from the Father, **He will testify about Me**, ²⁷ and you will testify also, because you have been with Me from the beginning" (John 15:26, 27).

¹² "I have many more things to say to you, but you cannot bear them now. ¹³ But when He, the Spirit of truth, comes, **He will guide you into all the truth**; for He will not speak on His own initiative, but whatever He hears, He will speak; and He will disclose to you what is to come. ¹⁴ **He will glorify Me**, for He will take of Mine and will disclose it to you. ¹⁵ All things that the Father has are Mine; therefore I said that He takes of Mine and will disclose it to you" (John 16:12-15).

The primary meaning of this passage relates to the gospel as it relates to Jesus Christ. Those early disciples would receive from the Holy Spirit the revelation of Jesus Christ.

He would inspire them in their writings to secure for us the Words God desired for us to have and to know.

From the Upper Room Discourse our Lord continues this dominant theme at His ascension. Luke records the continuity of this idea from the Gospel of Luke to the Book of Acts.

II. The Promise of the Holy Spirit at the Ascension of Jesus Christ (Luke 24:44-49).

⁴⁴ “Now He said to them, ‘These are My words which I spoke to you while I was still with you, that all things which are written about Me in the Law of Moses and the Prophets and the Psalms must be fulfilled.’ ⁴⁵ Then He opened their minds to understand the Scriptures, ⁴⁶ and He said to them, ‘Thus it is written, that the Christ would suffer and rise again from the dead the third day, ⁴⁷ and that repentance for forgiveness of sins would **be proclaimed in His name to all the nations**, beginning from Jerusalem. ⁴⁸ You are witnesses of these things. ⁴⁹ And behold, **I am sending forth the promise of My Father upon you; but you are to stay in the city until you are clothed with power from on high.**” (Luke 24:44-49).

“There is a command and a promise. The command is to proclaim the gospel in all the world. That is a massive task for a small group of weak and frightened individuals. But they are not left on their own. God promises to give them power: the presence of the Holy Spirit in their lives.”¹⁰

It is this theme Luke not only ends with but lays down for us in the Book of Acts.

III. The Arrival of the Holy Spirit in Acts 1 and 2.

“This is a very clear sign that the Spirit has been given for a specific purpose: to help them spread the good news about Christ throughout the world. God is at work reversing the effects [of the Fall].”¹¹

“The day of Pentecost has come; it is now fifty days since Easter. The way Luke puts it shows that Pentecost is a milestone in the story of salvation: recall Luke 2:6, “the time came for her to deliver her child ...” and Luke 9:51, “When the days drew near for him to be taken up ...” These too are milestones, and the language is similar. Other translations have *was fulfilled* for “had come” (v. 1) – the coming of the Holy Spirit is *fulfillment*.”¹²

¹ “The first account I composed, Theophilus, about all that Jesus began to do and teach, ² until the day when He was taken up to heaven, after He had by the Holy Spirit given orders to the apostles whom He had chosen. ³ To these He also presented Himself alive after His suffering, by many convincing proofs, appearing to them over a period of forty days and speaking of the things concerning the kingdom of God. ⁴ Gathering them together, He commanded them not to leave Jerusalem, but to wait for what the Father had promised, ‘Which,’ He said, ‘you heard of from Me; ⁵ for John baptized with water, but you will be baptized with the Holy Spirit not many days from now.’ ⁶ So when they had come together, they were asking Him, saying, ‘Lord, is it at this time You are

restoring the kingdom to Israel?' ⁷ He said to them, 'It is not for you to know times or epochs which the Father has fixed by His own authority; ⁸ but you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be My witnesses both in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and even to the remotest part of the earth.'" (Acts 1:1-8).

"When the day of Pentecost had come, they were all together in one place" (Acts 2:1).

In the storyline of God, the Holy Spirit is the next person to move the story forward. What the Father initiates, the Son secures and the Holy Spirit completes. The Spirit of God takes the person and work of Jesus Christ and applies this to the people of God.

IV. The Work of the Holy Spirit in proclaiming, regenerating, and assembling His people.

³⁷ "Now when they heard this, they were pierced to the heart, and said to Peter and the rest of the apostles, 'Brethren, what shall we do?' ³⁸ Peter said to them, 'Repent, and each of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins; and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. ³⁹ For the promise is for you and your children and for all who are far off, as many as the Lord our God will call to Himself.' ⁴⁰ And with many other words he solemnly testified and kept on exhorting them, saying, 'Be saved from this perverse generation!' ⁴¹ So then, those who had received his word were baptized; and that day there were added about three thousand souls. ⁴² They were continually devoting themselves to the apostles' teaching and to fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer. ⁴³ Everyone kept feeling a sense of awe; and many wonders and signs were taking place through the apostles. ⁴⁴ And all those who had believed were together and had all things in common; ⁴⁵ and they began selling their property and possessions and were sharing them with all, as anyone might have need. ⁴⁶ Day by day continuing with one mind in the temple, and breaking bread from house to house, they were taking their meals together with gladness and sincerity of heart, ⁴⁷ praising God and having favor with all the people. And the Lord was adding to their number day by day those who were being saved" (Acts 2:37-47).

- A. He pierces the sin laden hearts of the unbelieving (v. 37).
- B. He indwells the believing (v. 38).
- C. He assembles and builds the body of Christ (vv. 41-47).

This is the story of God's triumph. He has won, and His story continues to unfold. Your life is a part of this one story. No matter how bruised and "lost" you might be at this moment, take heart and know that God's story in you and through you is being lived out. You are His story.

You and I are to pray that God would open our eyes and ears to see and hear where the story is being lived out and how we can embrace it fully.

As a local church we must understand the story and how we fulfill our role in the story.

Shepherding the Sheep (What's the NEXT STEP?)

This entire story has but one idea, to preach Jesus for the converting of sinner and the gathering of His people for worship and the scatter of the same for evangelism.

1. Are you living in an awareness of the Holy Spirit's presence in your life?
2. Do you trust Him to do His work in and through you?
3. Do you see the church as His unique work?
4. The church, all churches and this church, are uniquely the work of God.
5. What place does this church have in your life? Is this community of faith a priority in your life?
6. Is the message of your life Christ-centered?
7. Thomas Aquinas said, "Preach Christ and if necessary use words." Does your life preach Christ? How visible do you wish to make it?
8. Let us not be fuzzy of mind in this area. God has a mission and the church exists to see the mission fulfilled.

¹ <http://montreal.anglican.org/comments/archive/apentm.shtml>

² <http://wwwstaff.murdoch.edu.au/~loader/BEpPentecost.htm>

³ <http://www.theafricanamericanlectionary.org/PopupLectionaryReading.asp?LRID=88>

⁴ *Understanding Christian Theology*, Swindoll and Zuck, General Ed., 478.

⁵ <http://montreal.anglican.org/comments/archive/apentm.shtml>

⁶ <http://www.holytextures.com/2009/04/acts-2-1-21-pentecost-year-a-b-c-sermon.html>

⁷ *Understanding Christian Theology*, Swindoll and Zuck, General Ed., 485.

⁸ *Understanding Christian Theology*, Swindoll and Zuck, General Ed., 478.

⁹ *Understanding Christian Theology*, Swindoll and Zuck, General Ed., 365.

¹⁰ Vaughan Roberts, *God's Big Picture: Tracing the Storyline of the Bible*, 125.

¹¹ Vaughan Roberts, *God's Big Picture: Tracing the Storyline of the Bible*, 126.

¹² <http://montreal.anglican.org/comments/archive/apentm.shtml>