



The Holy Spirit # 6

Hello everyone. Welcome to “Notes From the Presence.” This is the sixth in a series of short articles on the Holy Spirit. In our last post, we talked about the death and resurrection of Jesus and how He released the Holy Spirit into the disciples by "breathing on them." Today we are going to talk about the days leading up to the day of Pentecost when the Holy Spirit came to rest "upon" humankind once again.

After Jesus' resurrection, He appeared to the apostles over a span of 40 days. It is interesting that their designation changed from disciple to apostle at this time. At one point in time, He gathered them together and gave them some instructions:

Acts 1:4-5 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; for John baptized with water, but you will be baptized with the Holy Spirit not many days from now.”

I have always been fascinated by this passage and have heard numerous sermons on this topic over my lifetime. They have ranged in subject from the upper room, to the way the apostles prayed in the ten days before the Holy Spirit fell, to the one heart and mind of the 120 that were gathered. Everyone seems to have a different idea as to why the Holy Spirit was released in power on the day of Pentecost. However, only one thing seems to grab me as I read these verses. It is one simple word: "wait." Jesus told them to not leave Jerusalem but to wait. I can almost imagine the disciples hearts sinking at this point in time. I'm sure they would have loved to hear just about any other instruction but the word "*wait*" was all they got.

So, I am going to get a bit controversial here. I am not generally a person that tries to draw out controversy but this subject is very dear to my heart and it actually represents the way that I have come to know the Holy Spirit. I first need to say, I would never be so

proud as to claim to be an authority on this Spirit of Life. The more I get to know about Him, the more in awe I am of His absolute defiance of any description that people try to place on Him. He is, as it says in the book of John, like the "wind." However, having invested many thousands of hours in the Presence of God, there is one thing I have learned about the Holy Spirit. You have to wait for Him. The Holy Spirit will not jog up along side of you as you are going about life at a mighty pace, and yell in your ear. No, instead, you will have to stop for Him, and give Him first place honour and time to speak to you. What am I trying to say here? I have been in multiple personal and corporate settings where there is an agenda attached to the order of the day. In the end, for the most part, we try to get the Holy Spirit to work with our program.

In a corporate setting, for instance, we build our agenda weeks, months, and even years in advance. This is the rational we use for such actions: "The Holy Spirit knows what He wants to do in our midst a year in advance just as well as the day before so what is so wrong with planning ahead?" It makes life much easier, it makes things easier to communicate to a group of people, and it gives us a comfort level to work with knowing what we are going to do next. However, if there is one common human fault/trait that God has been trying to bust in our kind for almost 6000 years, it is the idea that we always want to know what lies ahead. God, on the other hand, always asks us to "trust" Him, not knowing the future, but knowing that He will provide what we need at the moment we need it. Think of the manna, the very bread of heaven. The children of Israel were not even allowed to gather enough for 2 days. God is a "now" God. He is present and active in the moment. He is also extremely creative and loves to surprise us with His momentary outlandishness.

In my personal life, I have learned not to go too far in advance. If I do, it seems that the Holy Spirit activity in my life is nearly on life support. By contrast, I have learned that it is faith that attracts the activity of the Holy Spirit into my life in an exciting and crazy way. It is usually when I am out on a limb, strung way out beyond my human ability that the Holy Spirit is crazy active in my life. We humans love comfort. Often, I feel that the Holy Spirit has no respect for our comfort and is constantly calling us out onto that limb, to a place where if He doesn't show up, we are seriously hooped.

In the story of the days leading up to the day of Pentecost, Jesus instructed the apostles to simply "wait." He didn't tell them to pray, to get in a position of being in one heart and one mind, or to gather together in an upper room. He simply told them to do the most difficult thing that we humans ever have to do - wait. They had no clue how long it would take. It could have been 10 minutes, or 10 years as far as they were concerned. So what did they do to fill the time? They did the only thing that they knew how to do, they devoted themselves to prayer and corporate gatherings. All I am trying to say here is that

in the end, it was the "waiting" that brought the Holy Spirit on the day of Pentecost, not necessarily the praying. And, that is about as controversial as I will get - I guess that wasn't too bad, was it? Here is a subsequent set of verses that further emphasizes my point:

Acts 1:6-8 So when they had come together, they were asking Him, saying, "Lord, is it at this time You are restoring the kingdom to Israel?" He said to them, "It is not for you to know times or epochs which the Father has fixed by His own authority; 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."

Once again, the apostles were concerned about the future of the Kingdom. Jesus responded by telling them that it wasn't theirs to know, but they would receive power when the Holy Spirit would come "UPON" them. Wahoooo! In essence He told them, "Don't worry about the future, just wait until the Holy Spirit comes upon you. Then you will have understanding and everything will fall into the correct context." Without the Holy Spirit presence in our lives on a momentary basis, very little makes sense and we always default to wanting to know the future. In our quest for future comfort level, the Holy Spirit most often, leaves us up to our own devices. For the most part, this is just our attempt to try to get God to do things our way; however, He is interested in simple childlike trust and wild faith.

In our next article, we are going to talk about the day of Pentecost and how the Holy Spirit came to once again rest "*upon*" humankind. It will complete the cycle we started at the beginning of this series in the Garden of Eden - very exciting!

Thanks for reading. Jesus is real – and He is definitely worth waiting on!!