

The Power of Pentecost

June 11, 2017

What gave birth to the Church, is the only thing that will sustain and empower the Church today.

Acts 2:1-4 NASB

1 **When the day of Pentecost had come, they were all together in one place.**

2 **And suddenly there came from heaven a noise like a violent rushing wind, and it filled the whole house where they were sitting.**

3 **And there appeared to them tongues as of fire distributing themselves, and they rested on each one of them.**

4 **And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit was giving them utterance.**

Why speaking in tongues to birth the Church?

Why not prophecy? Why not the working of miracles? Why not the gift of healing? Why not the gift of evangelism or teaching?

1. **So God would receive all the glory - man would receive no glory.**
2. **So no human wisdom or strategy would be mingled with God's method.**
3. **So that partaking is only possible by faith and not sight or human reason.**

"It is now common practice in most evangelical churches to offer the people, especially the young people, a maximum of entertainment and a minimum of serious instruction. It is scarcely possible in most places to get anyone to attend a meeting where the only attraction is God. One can only conclude that God's professed children are bored with Him, for they must be wooed to meeting with a stick of striped candy in the form of religious movies, games and refreshments." — A.W. Tozer, Man: The Dwelling Place of God

"I say that a Christian congregation can survive and often appear to prosper in the community by the exercise of human talent and without any touch from the Holy Spirit! All that religious activity and the dear people will not know anything better until the great and terrible day when our self-employed talents are burned with fire and only that which was wrought by the Holy Ghost will stand forever!"

-- A.W. Tozer, Tragedy in the Church: The Missing Gifts, 30.

Acts 2:5-12 NASB

5 **Now there were Jews living in Jerusalem, devout men from every nation under heaven.**

6 **And when this sound occurred, the crowd came together, and were bewildered because each one of them was hearing them speak in his own language.**

7 **They were amazed and astonished, saying, "Why, are not all these who are speaking Galileans?"**

8 **"And how is it that we each hear them in our own language to which we were born?**

9 "Parthians and Medes and Elamites, and residents of Mesopotamia, Judea and Cappadocia, Pontus and Asia,
10 Phrygia and Pamphylia, Egypt and the districts of Libya around Cyrene, and visitors from Rome, both Jews
and proselytes,

11 Cretans and Arabs--**we hear them in our own tongues speaking of the mighty deeds of God.**"

12 **And they all continued in amazement and great perplexity, saying to one another, "What does this mean?"**

Matthew 28:19-20 NASB

19 "Go therefore and make disciples **of all the nations**, baptizing them in the name of the Father and
the Son and the Holy Spirit,

20 teaching them to observe all that I commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end
of the age."

SETTING THE STAGE

Acts 1:13-15 NASB

13 When they had entered the city, they went up to the upper room where they were staying; that is, Peter and
John and James and Andrew, Philip and Thomas, Bartholomew and Matthew, James the son of Alphaeus, and
Simon the Zealot, and Judas the son of James.

14 **These all with one mind were continually devoting themselves to prayer**, along with the women, and Mary
the mother of Jesus, and with His brothers.

15 At this time Peter stood up in the midst of the brethren (**a gathering of about one hundred and twenty
persons was there together**), and said...

Acts 2:41 NASB "...that day (*Pentecost*) there were **added about three thousand souls.**"

What happened from 120 people to 3,000 people in 1 day?

COMMITMENT TO ASSEMBLE

Acts 2:1 NASB

1 **When the day of Pentecost had come, they were all together in one place.**

*"There is an ongoing silent migration away from the church of an estimated 3,500 individuals each and
every day. A 2014 study indicated that over 1.2 million people will leave the church in the next year."*

*"This movement away from the church has been ongoing for several decades. In 2015, it is estimated
that over 10,000 churches will close their doors."*

-- The Christian Post, "3500 People Leave the Church Every Day", May 27, 2015

*"I know many congregations are struggling. And I fully expect we will continue to have a net loss of
churches for the next several years."*

-- Thom Rainer, "9 Hopeful Signs About The Church's Future", June 1, 2017

"In the context where I serve (an affluent, church-saturated suburb in the South), I see two primary barriers (to discipleship): isolation and distraction. Faith in Jesus withers in isolation, but it flourishes in community. The vast majority of people I interact with are too busy to cultivate deep connections with others. Relationships require time, energy and risk. Many people are simply unwilling to go there because they are preoccupied with other things like... It often takes a crisis to wake a person up from a life of chaos and distraction."

--**Josh Patrick** is the teaching and discipling minister at Harpeth Christian Church in Franklin, Tennessee, and co-author (with Bobby Harrington) of *The Disciple-Maker's Handbook: 7 Elements of a Discipleship Lifestyle* (Zondervan, 2017).

2 Thessalonians 2:1-3 NASB

1 Now we request you, brethren, with regard to the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ and our gathering together to Him,

2 **that you not be quickly shaken from your composure or be disturbed either by a spirit or a message or a letter as if from us, to the effect that the day of the Lord has come.**

3 **Let no one in any way deceive you, for it will not come unless the apostasy comes first...**

Hebrews 10:24-25 NASB

24 **let us consider how to stimulate one another to love and good deeds,**

25 **not forsaking our own assembling together, as is the habit of some, but encouraging one another; and all the more as you see the day drawing near.**

Ephesians 2:21-22 NASB

21 **in whom the whole building, being fitted together, is growing into a holy temple in the Lord,**

22 **in whom you also are being built together into a dwelling of God in the Spirit.**

The responsibility for the "silent migration" out of church rests in two places:

1. *people who come to church*
 - a. *for selfish motives*
 - b. *those who fall away because of the temptations and trials of this world*
2. *the pastors and churches that cater to those selfish motives*

To prevent people (and money) from leaving, a ministry must either:

1. *become domineering, authoritative, controlling, intimidating*
2. *resort to people-pleasing through marketing strategies, sales gimmicks, celebrity leaders, doctrinal compromise, psychological self-help*

2 Timothy 4:1-5 NASB

1 **I solemnly charge you in the presence of God and of Christ Jesus, who is to judge the living and the dead, and by His appearing and His kingdom:**

2 **preach the word; be ready in season and out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort, with great patience and instruction.**

God counts obedience (to preach the Word) as success, not apparent results.

3 For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine; but wanting to have their ears tickled, they will accumulate for themselves teachers in accordance to their own desires,

4 and will turn away their ears from the truth and will turn aside to myths.

5 But you, be sober in all things, endure hardship, do the work of an evangelist, fulfill your ministry.

"God seems to be dismantling the predominant expression of the church that arose in the late 20th century. The scorecard of the church is changing. Church leaders are less enamored with drawing crowds and seem more interested in making disciples. I'm also hearing more pastors say that they're fed up with pacifying immature consumers and are eager to equip the hungry of heart. Questions that drove us in the past like 'How can we attract people to this building once a week?' are giving way to better questions like, 'Where is the brokenness in this city and how can we bring the hope of Jesus to it?' or, 'What does the ministry of Jesus look like in this context?'"

"The church must resist the urge to engage in culture wars and return to its original purpose—making disciples of Jesus...We have wasted too much time and energy on causes that have nothing to do with the core mission of the church. Imagine what would happen if every churchgoer in America redirected his or her political and social angst toward the Great Commission. I believe that we would witness an unprecedented spiritual awakening."

"Relativism is now the prevailing worldview of our day. Truth is perceived as a subjective reality. This is a destructive myth that sweeps people into a tidal wave of unbelief and emptiness."

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DEVOTED TO PRAYER

When the apparent and human signs of success (recognition, attendance, money) are missing, we very naturally turn to human methods for growth strategies, marketing schemes and psychological solutions in search of results.

"...all with one mind were continually devoting themselves to prayer..." (Acts 1:14)

Philippians 3:3 NASB

"...for we...glory in Christ Jesus and put no confidence in the flesh..."

2 Corinthians 3:4-6 NASB

4 Such confidence we have through Christ toward God.

5 **Not that we are adequate in ourselves to consider anything as coming from ourselves, but our adequacy is from God,**

6 **who also made us adequate as servants of a new covenant, not of the letter but of the Spirit; for the letter kills, but the Spirit gives life.**

Zechariah 4:6 NASB

6 Then he said to me, "This is the word of the LORD to Zerubbabel saying, '**Not by might nor by power, but by My Spirit,**' says the LORD of hosts.

Psalms 127:1-2 NASB

1 A Song of Ascents, of Solomon. **Unless the LORD builds the house, They labor in vain who build it; Unless the LORD guards the city, The watchman keeps awake in vain.**

2 **It is vain for you to rise up early, To retire late, To eat the bread of painful labors; For He gives to His beloved even in his sleep.**

"We now demand glamour and fast-flowing dramatic action. A generation of Christians reared among push buttons and automatic machines is impatient of slower and less direct methods of reaching their goals...The tragic results of this spirit all about us: shallow lives, hollow religious philosophies...the glorification of men, trust in religious externalities....salesmanship methods, the mistaking of dynamic personality for the power of the Spirit. These and such of these are the symptoms of an evil disease."

— A.W. Tozer, The Pursuit of God

"If the Holy Spirit was withdrawn from the church today, 95 percent of what we do would go on and no one would know the difference. If the Holy Spirit had been withdrawn from the New Testament church, 95 percent of what they did would stop, and everybody would know the difference." — A.W. Tozer

"I remind you that there are churches so completely out of the hands of God that if the Holy Spirit withdrew from them, they wouldn't find it out for many months." — A.W. Tozer, Tozer Pulpit

The Holy Spirit in the life of the Church

1 Corinthians 12:18 NASB

18 **But now God has placed the members, each one of them, in the body, just as He desired.**

Acts 2:47 KJV

47 **And the Lord added to the church daily such as should be saved.**

Is it by the initiative of man, or God, that people are added and placed in churches?

Acts 4:31 NASB

31 **And when they had prayed, the place where they had gathered together was shaken, and they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak the word of God with boldness.**

We can't force the Holy Spirit to move or manifest in a certain way, but we can make ourselves available.

Acts 5:3 NASB

3 But Peter said, "Ananias, **why has Satan filled your heart to lie to the Holy Spirit** and to keep back some of the price of the land?

The Holy Spirit is the divine, invisible and presiding superintendent of all church assemblies. He sees all, knows all and will move to protect the purity and innocence of our gatherings.

Acts 10:44 NASB

44 **While Peter was still speaking these words, the Holy Spirit fell upon all those who were listening to the message.**

When was the last time the Holy Spirit fell upon believers listening to Bible teaching?

Acts 13:2 NASB

2 **While they were ministering to the Lord and fasting, the Holy Spirit said, "Set apart for Me Barnabas and Saul for the work to which I have called them."**

The Holy Spirit initiates and gives birth to the ministries and activities within the assembly. The Church is not to consist of clever and appealing man-made marketing and media techniques and strategies.

Acts 19:6 NASB

6 **And when Paul had laid his hands upon them, the Holy Spirit came on them, and they began speaking with tongues and prophesying.**

"I believe that entertainment and amusements are the work of the Enemy to keep dying men from knowing they're dying; and to keep enemies of God from remembering that they're enemies."

— A.W. Tozer

"The world is perishing for lack of the knowledge of God and the Church is famishing for want of His Presence."

— A.W. Tozer, The Pursuit of God