

Pentecost Power --- Supernatural Church

Ezekiel 37:1-14 & Acts 2:1-41

Peter said to them, "Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ so that your sins may be forgiven; and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. For the promise is for you, for your children, and for all who are far away, everyone whom the Lord our God calls to him."

Acts 2:38-39

Ezekiel 37:1-14

1. The hand of the Lord came upon me, and he brought me out by the spirit of the Lord and set me down in the middle of a valley; it was full of bones. 2. He led me all around them; there were very many lying in the valley, and they were very dry. 3. He said to me, "Mortal, can these bones live?" I answered, "O Lord God, you know." 4. Then he said to me, "Prophecy to these bones, and say to them: O dry bones, hear the word of the Lord. 5. Thus says the Lord God to these bones: I will cause breath {Or [spirit]} to enter you, and you shall live. 6. I will lay sinews on you, and will cause flesh to come upon you, and cover you with skin, and put breath {Or [spirit]} in you, and you shall live; and you shall know that I am the Lord." 7. So I prophesied as I had been commanded; and as I prophesied, suddenly there was a noise, a rattling, and the bones came together, bone to its bone. 8. I looked, and there were sinews on them, and flesh had come upon them, and skin had covered them; but there was no breath in them. 9. Then he said to me, "Prophecy to the breath, prophesy, mortal, and say to the breath: {Or [wind] or [spirit]} Thus says the Lord God: Come from the four winds, O breath, {Or [wind] or [spirit]} and breathe upon these slain, that they may live." 10. I prophesied as he commanded me, and the breath came into them, and they lived, and stood on their feet, a vast multitude. 11. Then he said to me, "Mortal, these bones are the whole house of Israel. They say, "Our bones are dried up, and our hope is lost; we are cut off completely.' 12. Therefore prophesy, and say to them, Thus says the Lord God: I am going to open your graves, and bring you up from your graves, O my people; and I will bring you back to the land of Israel. 13. And you shall know that I am the Lord, when I open your graves, and bring you up from your graves, O my people. 14. I will put my spirit within you, and you shall live, and I will place you on your own soil; then you shall know that I, the Lord, have spoken and will act, says the Lord."

Acts 2:1-41

1. When the day of Pentecost had come, they were all together in one place. 2. And suddenly from heaven there came a sound like the rush of a violent wind, and it filled the entire house where they were sitting. 3. Divided tongues, as of fire, appeared among them, and a tongue rested on each of them. 4. All of them were filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other languages, as the Spirit gave them ability. 5. Now there were devout Jews from every nation under heaven living in Jerusalem. 6. And at this sound the crowd gathered and was bewildered, because each one heard them speaking in the native language of each. 7. Amazed and astonished, they asked, "Are not all these who are speaking Galileans? 8. And how is it that we hear, each of us, in our own native language? 9. Parthians, Medes, Elamites, and residents of Mesopotamia, Judea and Cappadocia, Pontus and Asia, 10. Phrygia and Pamphylia, Egypt and the parts of Libya belonging to Cyrene, and visitors from Rome, both Jews and proselytes, 11. Cretans and Arabs--in our own languages we hear them speaking about God's deeds of power." 12. All were amazed and perplexed, saying to one another, "What does this mean?" ¹³ But others sneered and said, "They are filled with new wine." ¹⁴ But Peter, standing with the eleven, raised his voice and addressed them, "Men of Judea and all who live in Jerusalem, let this be known to you, and listen to what I say. ¹⁵ Indeed, these are not drunk, as you suppose, for it is only nine o'clock in the morning. ¹⁶ No, this is what was spoken through the prophet Joel: ¹⁷ 'In the last days it

will be, God declares, that I will pour out my Spirit upon all flesh, and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, and your young men shall see visions, and your old men shall dream dreams.¹⁸ Even upon my slaves, both men and women, in those days I will pour out my Spirit; and they shall prophesy.¹⁹ And I will show portents in the heaven above and signs on the earth below, blood, and fire, and smoky mist.²⁰ The sun shall be turned to darkness and the moon to blood, before the coming of the Lord's great and glorious day.²¹ Then everyone who calls on the name of the Lord shall be saved.'²² "You that are Israelites, listen to what I have to say: Jesus of Nazareth, a man attested to you by God with deeds of power, wonders, and signs that God did through him among you, as you yourselves know—²³ this man, handed over to you according to the definite plan and foreknowledge of God, you crucified and killed by the hands of those outside the law.²⁴ But God raised him up, having freed him from death, because it was impossible for him to be held in its power.²⁵ For David says concerning him, 'I saw the Lord always before me, for he is at my right hand so that I will not be shaken;²⁶ therefore my heart was glad, and my tongue rejoiced; moreover my flesh will live in hope.²⁷ For you will not abandon my soul to Hades, or let your Holy One experience corruption.²⁸ You have made known to me the ways of life; you will make me full of gladness with your presence.'²⁹ "Fellow Israelites, I may say to you confidently of our ancestor David that he both died and was buried, and his tomb is with us to this day.³⁰ Since he was a prophet, he knew that God had sworn with an oath to him that he would put one of his descendants on his throne.³¹ Foreseeing this, David spoke of the resurrection of the Messiah, saying, 'He was not abandoned to Hades, nor did his flesh experience corruption.'³² This Jesus God raised up, and of that all of us are witnesses.³³ Being therefore exalted at the right hand of God, and having received from the Father the promise of the Holy Spirit, he has poured out this that you both see and hear.³⁴ For David did not ascend into the heavens, but he himself says, 'The Lord said to my Lord, "Sit at my right hand,³⁵ until I make your enemies your footstool."³⁶ Therefore let the entire house of Israel know with certainty that God has made him both Lord and Messiah, this Jesus whom you crucified."³⁷ Now when they heard this, they were cut to the heart and said to Peter and to the other apostles, "Brothers, what should we do?"³⁸ Peter said to them, "Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ so that your sins may be forgiven; and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.³⁹ For the promise is for you, for your children, and for all who are far away, everyone whom the Lord our God calls to him."⁴⁰ And he testified with many other arguments and exhorted them, saying, "Save yourselves from this corrupt generation."⁴¹ So those who welcomed his message were baptized, and that day about three thousand persons were added.⁴² They devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and fellowship, to the breaking of bread and the prayers.

Let us pray Come, Holy Spirit, come in your power! Come in your glory! Come and fill this place! Come, Holy Spirit, and fill our hearts. Come, Holy Spirit, fill our minds to understand your Word. Come, Holy Spirit, fill our hands and feet to be Your servants. Amen

Today is Pentecost Sunday! Pentecost literally means "fiftieth." Pentecost was the Jewish celebration of the Feast of Weeks or Feast of the Harvest that took place fifty days after Passover. The Feast of Weeks -- the Feast of the Harvest was a required observance for all the Israelites to bring the first fruits of their labors, the first fruits of the fields to God to show their gratitude. On Pentecost they were to do no work and offer up their first fruits to God as a thank offering.

Jesus ascended from the Mount of Olives 40 days after His resurrection. The ascension of Christ is recorded at the end of the Gospel of Matthew, Mark, and Luke and in the first chapter of Acts. In Matthew's record of the Ascension, we are given the Great Commission--found in verses 18 and 19 of chapter 28. *And Jesus came and said to them, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything that I have commanded you. And remember,*

*I am with you always, to the end of the age.” Luke’s full account of the Ascension is recorded in the first chapter of Acts right before we are told the story of what happened on the first Pentecost--when the Holy Spirit came in power and glory. Listen again to Luke’s account found in Acts 1:4-8 --- *While staying with them, he ordered them not to leave Jerusalem, but to wait there for the promise of the Father. “This,” he said, “is what you have heard from me; ⁵for John baptized with water, but you will be baptized with the Holy Spirit not many days from now.” ⁶So when they had come together, they asked him, “Lord, is this the time when you will restore the kingdom to Israel?” ⁷He replied, “It is not for you to know the times or periods that the Father has set by his own authority. ⁸But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth.”**

As I was preparing this message for Pentecost Sunday, I thought, “What can I say that you have not already heard or read?’ Some of you have been sitting in church for over fifty years; listening to sermon after sermon on Pentecost about the Holy Spirit. For others, you have probably heard ten --- twenty --- thirty sermons regarding the coming of the Holy Spirit on Pentecost. What can I add or say?

This past week, I went to my computer and reread all of the sermons I have preached on Pentecost and the Holy Spirit. I have over a dozen Pentecost Sunday sermons and probably another dozen sermons on the Holy Spirit. I would be more than happy to send them to you! I would love to sit and talk with you for hours on end about the person and the work of the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit is one of my favorites subjects and I’ve decided that I will make the Holy Spirit the focus when I return to school for my Doctorate of Ministry. I would be glad to share any of my books on the person of the Holy Spirit and how the Holy Spirit is working in the church today. I’ve even thought that we should have some evening services where we seek the Holy Spirit’s wisdom and guidance.

Our Thursday morning women’s group, the “Yahweh Sisterhood,” are studying Beth Moore’s “Fruit of the Spirit.” Our Thursday morning men’s group, “Band of Brothers --- aka the B.O.B. Boys” are studying the book, “Forgotten God --- Reversing Our Tragic Neglect Of The Holy Spirit,” by Francis Chan. The thesis of this book is that we--the church--have neglected the third person of the Trinity. In many Christian circles the Holy Spirit is neglected, forgotten, or misunderstood. The One --- the Holy Spirit promised by Christ, and given to unite the church is often the center of conflict and controversy.

The late Dr. A. W. Tozer, author and pastor, said, "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."¹

I have thought about that comment a lot. Is that true? If so, what would the “supernatural church” look like? As we have had two different groups studying the Holy Spirit the past month, I have watched and observed as the Holy Spirit is being studied and as the Holy Spirit is being invited more and more into the life of our congregation.

The Person of the Holy Spirit

The Holy Spirit is the third person of the Trinity! The Holy Spirit is not an “it.” The Holy Spirit has a personality and is a part of the Trinity. When Jesus promises the Holy Spirit to His disciples, He uses the word “parakletos” --- “the comforter, the counselor, the convictor, the advocate, the one who comes alongside” to describe the Holy Spirit. Listen to John 14:15-16 --- *“If you love me, you will keep my commandments. And I will ask the Father, and he will give you another Advocate (or Helper) to be with you forever.”* Jesus uses the Greek word, “allos” for “another” meaning “one exactly like the one

before.” In essence, Jesus is saying, “I am going away so you can have my identical twin. My identical twin will be with you forever.” What does the supernatural church look like when the Holy Spirit—the identical twin of Jesus Christ-- is with us forever?

The Work of the Holy Spirit

The Holy Spirit has been involved in the Holy Trinity from the very beginning. The Holy Spirit was with God the Father and God the Son at creation.

“In the beginning when God created the heavens and the earth, the earth was a formless void and darkness covered the face of the deep, while a wind from God (the Spirit of God or mighty wind) swept over the face of the waters.” (Genesis 1:1-2)

Sounds a lot like Acts chapter two!

“Then the LORD God formed man from the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and the man became a living being.” (Genesis 2:7)

The work of the Holy Spirit—the Identical Twin of Jesus-- is to bring life! Prophets like Isaiah, Ezekiel, and Joel proclaimed the promise of the Spirit and the life the Spirit creates anew.

“For I will pour water on the thirsty land, and streams on the dry ground; I will pour my spirit upon your descendants, and my blessing on your offspring.” (Isaiah 44:3)

“Then they shall know that I am the LORD their God because I sent them into exile among the nations, and then gathered them into their own land. I will leave none of them behind; and I will never again hide my face from them, when I pour out my spirit upon the house of Israel, says the Lord GOD.” (Ezekiel 39:28-29)

“Then afterward I will pour out my spirit on all flesh; your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, your old men shall dream dreams, and your young men shall see visions. Even on the male and female slaves, in those days, I will pour out my spirit.” Joel 2:28-29

Our reading of the prophecy found in Ezekiel tells us that the power of the Holy Spirit can bring life to our dry bones. Do you remember the last verse in our reading from Ezekiel this morning? **“I will put my spirit within you, and you shall live, and I will place you on your own soil; then you shall know that I, the Lord, have spoken and will act, says the Lord.” (Ezekiel 37:14)**

The work of the Holy Spirit is to bring life! The big, theological word for the work of the Holy Spirit is “regeneration.” Regenerate means “to form again, to replace broken body parts with new growth, to restore spiritually.” For all you computer techies, “regenerate” means “to restore signals to original wave shapes.” Now, I can’t tell you how to do that electronically but what I can tell you is that the Holy Spirit wants to regenerate us! The Holy Spirit wants to form us into the image of Christ! The Holy Spirit wants to heal the broken parts of our life. The Holy Spirit wants to heal the broken relationship between each one of us and God--because of our sin. The Holy Spirit wants to heal the broken relationships we have with others because of brokenness of the world. And, BTW--by the way--regenerate is a **verb** so that means that the regeneration work of the Holy Spirit is not a noun but an action! The third person of the Holy Trinity—the Identical Twin of Jesus—the promised Holy Spirit wants to form us anew, wants to replace our broken parts with new growth, and wants to restore us spiritually!

So What?

The Holy Spirit is God's promise of power! The Holy Spirit is God's promise of fullness so that we can be God's witnesses! That is our action! The Holy Spirit comes and brings gifts to each of us—gift to be used in the church. Gifts like prophecy, teaching, preaching, giving, healing, speaking in tongues, interpretation of tongues, discernment just to name a few. The gifts of the Holy Spirit are recorded in Romans 12, II Corinthians 12, I Peter 4 and Ephesians 4. The gifts of the Holy Spirit are given to us to build up the body of Christ--- the church. I have Spiritual Gift tests if anyone would like to take one. If you take one, you have to promise to bring it back so we can discuss what the Holy Spirit is doing in your life! The important thing to remember about the gifts of the Holy Spirit is we each have been given different gifts whenever we accepted Christ as Lord. The gifts we have been given are so that the church, the body of Christ, can work together and be built up. What would happen if each and every one of us started using and sharing our gifts? The church would become supernatural!

The Holy Spirit blesses us. First, we are each given gifts—but they aren't for us alone, we are to share our gifts with the Church! It's the way we work best: when we allow the Holy Spirit to regenerate new life in us! Second, the Holy Spirit will also bless our individual lives. The fruit of the Holy Spirit is found in Galatians 5:22-23. Listen to these words from Paul found in Galatians --- *“By contrast, the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, generosity, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control. There is no law against such things.” (Galatians 5:22-25)*

Paul tells us that if we live by the Spirit we are to be guided by the Spirit. In Acts chapter two we have the record of the falling and filling of the Holy Spirit. When all those people heard Peter give his first sermon they were cut to the heart and they asked --- What does this mean --- What should we do? Peter told them, ***“Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ so that your sins may be forgiven; and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. For the promise is for you, for your children, and for all who are far away, everyone whom the Lord our God calls to him.”*** That very day, that very hour, that very minute, 3,000 people believed, repented, were baptized and filled with the Holy Spirit.

After Jesus rose from the dead, he visited over 500 people during the 40 days before He ascended. In Luke 24:49 Jesus says, *“And now I will send the Holy Spirit (my Identical Twin), just as my Father promised. But stay here in the city until the Holy Spirit comes and fills you with power from heaven.”* Then they went to Bethany and right before Jesus ascends into heaven, he tells them to: go and make disciples, baptize these new disciples in the name of the Father, and the Son and the Holy Spirit—and to teach these new disciples to obey all of His commands.

In other words, Jesus is saying, “You're not going anywhere until I send the Holy Spirit. Once you've received the Holy Spirit—go! Get busy! Witness! Be the supernatural Church! Use the gifts of my Identical Twin to build up my body (the Church) and use the fruit of my Identical Twin to build up your body!”

We started with A. W. Tozer, we'll end with Tozer:

God dwells in a state of perpetual enthusiasm. He is delighted with all that is good and lovingly concerned about all that is wrong. He pursues His labors always in a fullness of holy zeal. No wonder the Spirit came at Pentecost as a sound of a rushing mighty wind and sat in tongues of fire on every forehead. ... Whatever else happened at Pentecost, one thing that cannot be missed by the most casual observer was the

sudden up surging of moral enthusiasm. Those first disciples burned with a steady, inward fire. They were enthusiastic to the point of complete abandon.ⁱⁱ

Ninety-five percent of what the early church did was done by the power of the Holy Spirit. What if they hadn't waited? What if they had gone out in their own power? That's the real "so what" for us this morning! They waited. They received the power of the Holy Spirit. They burned with a steady, inward fire. They were enthusiastic to the point of complete abandon. They turned their entire world upside down.

Will we?

Let us pray ---

Round Rock Presbyterian Church
Round Rock, Texas 78681
May 23, 2010 --- Pentecost Sunday
Reverend David Peters

ⁱ Alan Redpath in "Christian Life" magazine. *Christianity Today*, Vol. 29, no. 18.

ⁱⁱ A.W. Tozer, "Of God and Men", *Christianity Today*, Vol. 37, no. 14.