

FRESH FIRE

THE HOLY SPIRIT IN ACTION

Helen Turner p.m. 30/5/10

Those who were filled with the Holy Spirit on the day of Pentecost had a radical change in their lives. Jesus had said:

Acts 1:8 *you shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be witnesses to Me in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth."*

They did receive power, and began to carry out the commission. Peter and John were soon in trouble with the authorities after being used to heal a man who had been lame from birth – a notable miracle. They were told not to speak in Jesus' Name any more – but they went away and held a prayer meeting...what should you do when there's trouble? And God shook the building they were in – could we really have prayer meetings like that today? Why not? Let's read it...

Acts 4:29-35

*Now, Lord, look on their threats, and grant to Your servants that with all boldness they may speak Your word, 30 by stretching out Your hand to heal, and that **signs and wonders may be done** through the name of Your holy Servant Jesus." And when they had prayed, the place where they were assembled together was shaken; and they were **all filled with the Holy Spirit, and they spoke the word of God with boldness**. Now the multitude of those who believed were of **one heart and one soul**; neither did anyone say that any of the things he possessed was his own, but they had **all things in common**. And **with great power the apostles gave witness** to the resurrection of the Lord Jesus. And **great grace** was upon them all. **Nor** was there **anyone among them who lacked**; for all who were possessors of lands or houses sold them, and brought the proceeds of the things that were sold, and laid them at the apostles' feet; and **they distributed to each as anyone had need**.*

This is really the Holy Spirit in action! Before Pentecost the Jesus followers were weak, powerless, afraid, even though they believed and saw He was alive from the dead. But when Jesus sent the Holy Spirit, there was a radical change. There was evidence in how they lived. The Holy Spirit did not come so Jesus followers could merely say 'I have been filled with the Holy Spirit' so that His followers would have power to fulfil the commission....Acts 1:8 – and so we have 'the Acts of the Apostles' the Holy Spirit in action.....

1. WHAT WERE THE 'ACTS'...THE ACTIONS OF THE HOLY SPIRIT...

They were filled, spoke with other tongues –

Acts 2:1-4 *When the Day of Pentecost had fully come, they were all with one accord in one place. And suddenly there came a sound from heaven, as of a rushing mighty wind, and it filled the whole house where they were sitting. Then there appeared to them divided tongues, as of fire, and one sat upon*

each of them. And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance.

This was only the beginning of something that continued – and so it should be today for us.

Many wonders and signs – and vibrant church life....

Acts 2:40-43 *And with many other words he testified and exhorted them, saying, "Be saved from this perverse generation." Then those who gladly received his word were **baptized**; and that day about three thousand souls were **added** to them. And they continued **steadfastly in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship**, in the breaking of bread, and in prayers. Then fear came upon every soul, and **many wonders and signs** were done through the apostles.*

The work of the Holy Spirit produced solid doctrine (Jesus said the Holy Spirit would lead us into all truth), and a vibrant fellowshiping church, with many wonders and signs – read the book of Acts – an angel let Peter out of prison, Phillip was supernaturally transported, Tabitha was raised from the dead, a man who had never walked since birth walked, an opponent was struck blind, an earthquake opened prison doors after a praise meeting at midnight, and all prisoners chains fell off, the shadow of Peter passing over people brought healing...many wonders and signs. God has not changed! This is for today.

Powerful prayer,

Acts 4:31-2 *And when they had prayed, the place where they were assembled together was shaken; and they were all filled with the Holy Spirit.*

Boldness speaking the Word,

V.32-4 *and they **spoke the word of God with boldness**. And with great power the apostles gave witness to the resurrection of the Lord Jesus. And great grace was upon them all.*

They were enabled, empowered to preach powerfully – the ones who had not so long before ran away, and even denied Jesus, and gathered behind closed doors in fear. Now they spoke the Word boldly.

But how did the acts of the Holy Spirit look to the community?

Acts 2:44-45 *Now all who believed were together, and had **all things in common**, and sold their possessions and goods, and divided them among all, as anyone had need.*

Acts 4:32-35 *Now the multitude of those who believed were of **one heart and one sou**; neither did anyone say that any of the things he possessed was his own, but they had **all things in common**. And **with great power the apostles gave witness** to the resurrection of the Lord Jesus. And **great grace** was upon them all. **Nor was there anyone among them who lacked**; for all who were possessors of lands or houses sold them, and brought the proceeds of the things that were sold, and laid them at the apostles' feet; and **they distributed to each as anyone had need**.*

This was a spontaneous move where people started re-distributing wealth – those who had need received from those who sold up possessions. The Holy Spirit infilling so radicalised the first decade church that they gave better than money to the

lame man at the temple gate – healing. There was a **blending of Holy Spirit supernatural action with care for the poor, needy, hurting, sick, oppressed** (healing, signs and wonders, fervent Spirit-filled prayer, sharing with the needy). The widows were taken care of on a daily basis. **Even the practical ones who took care of this ministry did great signs and wonders** (Stephen – **Acts 6:8, 10**).

Jesus blended the spiritual and the natural compassionate care for people:

Acts 10:38 *God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Spirit and with power, who went **about doing good and healing all who were oppressed by the devil**, for God was with Him.*

The Holy Spirit wants to work through us today and bring His supernatural action along with care for the needy around us, in our world.

2. THE HOLY SPIRIT USES INSTRUMENTS

The Holy Spirit usually uses people, instruments. Jesus said that the Holy Spirit empowering was to carry out His commission. The Holy Spirit empowering is for His followers to do His Kingdom work. The Holy Spirit does the work, but He uses us.

We are instruments.

Rom 6:12-14 *Therefore do not let sin reign in your mortal body, that you should obey it in its lusts. And do not present your members as instruments of unrighteousness to sin, but present yourselves to God as being alive from the dead, and your members as **instruments of righteousness** to God. For sin shall not have dominion over you, for you are not under law but under grace.*

We are to be instruments of righteousness – instruments are **to do a job**, not to be simply admired and be in the kitchen or toolshed. The word means (in Greek): an implement or utensil or tool (literally or figuratively, especially offensive for war): - **am I a tool, even a tool for offensive warfare, in God's hand?** I am not here to sit and let the world be taken over by the enemy of my soul. I am a tool, a weapon, a utensil in God's hand to wage this war. Under His hand of grace, I function.

This week, Gladwyn and I had a wonderful opportunity to have a helicopter joyride across the city of Sydney. When I took my turn, in the one passenger seat of a dual control little R22 helicopter, I was given the opportunity to have a flying lesson, and started to work the controls (under supervision). I soon discovered that was not what I wanted to do right then – if I had been left to my own devices (which incidentally was not going to happen!) I would have crashed. The expert in the pilot's seat knew exactly what he was doing. How sad if we give our life to Jesus, into His control, and then try to take over the controls ourselves. **The Holy Spirit is the One who should be in control.** We are His temple, His dwelling place – and He is supposed to be in control, not ourselves, or sin controlling us.

Last week we had a 'cleanup' at home. Under our dressing table in the bedroom, we found in a pile of things where you put whatever you don't have a 'place' for – a large box which on investigation contained a lot of wonderful Sidchrome spanners and screwdrivers. They had been hidden away, safely, but totally unused, unfunctioning. It reminded me of **some who have given their lives to the Lord, and are shaped for use, but are hiding away, not functioning, not 'at hand' ready to be used.** We are to be instruments, tools for a purpose, for the Holy Spirit to take up and use.

So **what does an instrument of righteousness do?** They are a tool, utensil for God to use. Righteousness and justice are hand-in-hand linked in meaning. We are instruments of His justice....bringing God's Kingdom values to those around us. We are His hands. His feet. Ask Him when you are on the train, in the workplace who He wants to touch. Be ready.

Present yourself to God. Be ready. Be 'waiting in the toolbox' Stay close to His hand. Wait on Him. Ask what do you want me to do today? Lord let me see the need. Where is Your righteousness lacking? Where is there oppression around me? What do you want me to do? Is there something you need to give away? A hurt you need to heal?

Let's yield control to the Holy Spirit, be ready for Him to use us, and be His instrument of righteousness. This is the Holy Spirit in action.