

The Father's Promise

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[0 : 00] Welcome here for this Sunday, April 21st, 2024. My name is Kent Dixon, and it is my joy to be the pastor here. So I reflected, many of you know this, but not everyone does.

I post the sermons every week after we're done on Sunday. So I go home and do some editing, things like that. Brock helps me out by getting them on the phone line. So there's lots of steps afterwards.

So as I was preparing to post today's sermon, I realized, oh, 250. So today marks the 250th post. So that's mostly me, a few guests over the years, Paul at times, others at times, but it's largely been me. And that's not me blowing my own horn.

It's me recognizing that crazy milestone that I, first of all, I never thought I'd be a pastor. I never thought I'd be a preacher. And yet here's God using me in that way.

[1 : 02] And at the same time, I also said to Chiho this morning, every single Sunday, every single Sunday, I feel like I'm going to throw up before I get up to preach. Every Sunday, I feel anxious.

And Chiho said, well, no kidding. It's public speaking, man. Nobody likes to do that. So here we are. So we're continuing in our sermon series, Acts to All the World.

You can see it on the screen there. And through this series, we're exploring the New Testament book of Acts. And remember, if you ever want to revisit a sermon in this series, would like to check out any of the other sermons in the series that we've covered over the years, go to bramarbaptist.com.

You'll see the most recent sermon at the top, or you can click on Full Sermon Archive. And Full Sermon Archive will take you to a place where you can search. You can search by topic.

You can search by series or speaker. It's a really cool system that we've got there. So our sermon this morning is titled The Father's Promise. And someone could easily make the case that the Father made many promises to us throughout Scripture, right?

[2 : 08] We can recognize that. And that's definitely true. But for our purposes this morning, we're going to be focusing on a specific promise. And we find it in Acts 1, verses 4 to 5, which says, this is our focus passage for this morning.

And while staying with them, he, Jesus, ordered them not to depart from Jerusalem, but to wait for the promise of the Father, which he said, you heard from me, for John baptized with water, but you will be baptized with the Holy Spirit not many days from now.

Shortly before Jesus ascended to heaven, he gave his apostles instructions. He told them not to depart from Jerusalem, but to wait for the promise of the Father, Jesus calls it.

And we can also recognize that would have been the first time the apostle, would not have been the first time the apostles would have heard about this promise. So Jesus, in his own teaching, mentioned it in Acts, as we've just heard.

But Jesus also said in John 14, verses 16 and 17, And I will ask the Father, and he will give you another helper to be with you forever, even the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it neither sees him nor knows him.

[3 : 34] You know him, for he dwells with you and will be in you. In John 15, verse 26, Jesus said, But when the helper comes, whom I will send to you from the Father, the Spirit of truth who proceeds from the Father, he will bear witness about me.

In John 16, verses 12 to 13, Jesus said, I still have many things to say to you, but you cannot bear them now. When the Spirit of truth comes, he will guide you into all the truth.

For he will not speak on his own authority, but whatever he hears, he will speak, and he will declare to you the things that are to come. Jesus also made it clear in our passage from Acts that they would be baptized by the Holy Spirit in just a few weeks.

And that's how Jesus phrases it. And so we'll learn from Luke that John the Baptist also spoke about this in Luke 3, verses 15 and 16, which says, As the people were in expectation and all were questioning in their hearts concerning John, whether he might be the Christ, John answered them all, saying, I baptize you with water, but he who is mightier than I is coming. The strap of whose sandals I am not worthy to untie, he will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and fire. So this was not new information to the apostles.

[5 : 10] They would have heard this before. But then even long before John, long before Jesus, God began making promises about the Spirit.

And we can recognize the Father's promise appearing in the Old Testament. So let's look at that for a moment. Here's a big list of passages for you. So we're going to take a quick tour through the books of Joel, Isaiah, Ezekiel, and Zechariah.

And I promise, quick. So we're going to look at what they said about the promise of the Spirit. Joel 2, verses 28 and 29 says, And it shall come to pass afterward that 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 servants in those days, I will pour out my Spirit. So Joel prophesied that the Spirit would be poured out on all flesh, he says. He uses that pouring out expression a few times. And that God's Spirit would manifest Himself in many ways.

[6 : 24] So we get the sense the Spirit would also be available to all people, regardless of class, regardless of gender, regardless of other factors, available to all.

Isaiah 44, verse 3 says, again, pouring out language here, For I will pour water on the thirsty land and streams on the dry ground.

I will pour my Spirit on your offspring and my blessings on your descendants. It's such powerful imagery and language there of abundance and blessing, particularly after so much time spent in the desert.

Right? There's a huge contrast there. This idea of pouring out blessing. Isaiah 32, verses 15 to 17 says, Until the Spirit is poured upon us from on high and the wilderness becomes a fruitful field, and that fruitful field is deemed a forest.

Then justice will dwell in the wilderness, and righteousness abide in the fruitful field. And the effect of righteousness will be peace, and the result of righteousness, quietness, and trust forever.

[7 : 40] Through this lens, the outpouring of the Spirit can be seen as something that will result in justice, righteousness, peace.

This imagery of new life springing from wilderness. Did you see that progression there? It's also so powerful. So what about Ezekiel?

How many times have you said that? What about Ezekiel? Well, Ezekiel 36, verses 26 to 27 says, And I will give you a new heart, and a new spirit I will put within you.

And I will remove the heart of stone from your flesh, and give you a heart of flesh. And I will put my spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my statutes, and be careful to obey my rules.

Did you hear that language there? Put, place, my spirit within you, inside you, into your being. There's an intentional act happening there.

[8 : 47] The Father's promise to his people. And it's the power of his spirit at work within us that will give us the power, Scripture tells us, to live within his will, and by his rules.

Ezekiel 39, verse 29 says, And I will not hide my face any more from them. When I pour out my spirit upon the house of Israel, declares the Lord God.

This prophecy there in Ezekiel is looking forward to a time beyond Israel's captivity. Looking forward to its eventual restoration.

And we can now recognize from our perspective that it was only Jesus himself who made that possible, that restoration. So let's look at Zechariah 12, verse 10, which says, here's more pouring, And I will pour out on the house of David and the inhabitants of Jerusalem a spirit of grace, and please for mercy, so that when they look on me, on whom they have pierced, they shall mourn for him, as one who mourns for an only child, and weep bitterly over him, as one weeps over a firstborn.

See the prophecy of Christ there. From a post-crucifixion and post-resurrection perspective, that would have shone a very bright light on Jesus as the Messiah, as the one who would introduce the Holy Spirit in a way that God had always promised.

[10:28] So we can also see, not surprisingly, oh, I'm going crazy there, you can also see the Father's promise appear in the New Testament, in the preaching of John the Baptist.

Sorry, I forgot to change my title. Imagine old says new. I threw myself off there. In the preaching of John the Baptist, related in Matthew 3, verse 11, Mark 1, verses 7 to 8, Luke 3, verse 16, and John 1, 33.

The four are listed there. John the Baptist spoke of one coming who would baptize not with water, but as we heard before, with the Spirit and fire. John baptized people with water, but he was proclaiming that someone was coming who would bring a different kind of baptism.

And he made that proclamation to large crowds of people. So we're not quite there yet in our review of Acts, but we know this proclamation that John has made would somehow be tied to the events of Pentecost.

Jesus himself told the apostles to wait in Jerusalem for what was to come. So Jesus also taught a great deal about the Father's promise, not surprisingly.

[11:51] In Luke 11, verse... Sorry, I'm jumping around here. In Luke 11, verse 13, Jesus said that just as human parents love to give good gifts to our children, the Father will also give the Holy Spirit to those who ask him.

Jesus taught that the Spirit would be given as living water. Here the water references the pouring, the water. The Spirit would be given as living water to those who thirst and come to him in faith and drink.

In John 7, verses 37 to 39, we read, On the last and greatest day of the festival, Jesus stood and said in a loud voice, let anyone who is thirsty come to me and drink.

Whoever believes in me, as Scripture has said, rivers of living water will flow from within them. By this he meant the Spirit, whom those who believed in him were later to receive.

Up to that time, the Spirit had not been given since Jesus had not been glorified. Question for you. Have you ever considered Jesus' interaction with a Samaritan woman at the well?

[13:07] Jesus speaking of living water. Have you ever made that connection to the Holy Spirit there? Interesting. So it's not a big leap of this idea of living water.

Jesus mentions this plain as day, but maybe we didn't catch it. This idea of living water as being the Father's promise, his gift to people who come to Jesus in faith.

Jesus also spoke to the apostles and promised the Spirit of truth and that there were many qualities and characteristics that this Spirit would have.

So what are some of those things? These will be familiar in lots of ways. John 14, verses 16 to 17, we learn there that the Spirit would be a helper who would abide and remain with them.

In John 15, verses 26 and 27, we see a reminder of all that Jesus had taught them, along with the apostles, that the Spirit himself will bear witness to Christ.

[14:17] The Spirit will point to Jesus. In John 16, verses 7 to 11, we learn that the Spirit will convict the world of sin, of righteousness, and judgment.

In John 16, verses 12 and 13, Jesus says that the Spirit will guide the apostles toward the truth of God and God's will for the future.

And in fulfilling his many roles, the Spirit will also glorify Jesus because whatever the Spirit shares with them, Scripture tells us, will come from Jesus himself.

So in both Luke 24 and 49, not listed on this slide, in Acts 1, verses 4 to 5, we read that Jesus told his apostles to wait in Jerusalem until they received, Jesus says, the promise of the Father.

And there's a direct connection here between what John the Baptist had said about someone who was coming after him, who would baptize in the Spirit, and the means by which the apostles would receive power and become witnesses for Christ in the world.

[15:28] There's a connection between those things that we'll see in the weeks ahead. What about Peter? Well, in Acts, we learn Peter's teaching also reflected the Spirit.

Peter preached about the Spirit and made connections to him in his own ministry. In Acts 2, verses 14 to 16, Peter connected the outpouring of the Spirit to Joel's prophecy, which we heard.

Peter made that direct connection. And he expands on that in Acts 2, verses 33, when he identifies the outpouring of the Spirit as a promise that Jesus received from the Father.

Peter connected all those dots for us. Peter makes it clear in Acts 2, verse 38, that this promise of the Spirit is also available to anyone who recognizes Jesus as their Lord and Messiah, and who repents of their sin and is baptized.

What about Paul? So we can see the prominence of the Father's promise in the teaching of the Apostle Paul as well, the Spirit in his preaching.

[16:40] In Titus 3, verses 4 to 7, Paul says, People who have been saved through Jesus Christ have been washed by the Spirit, reborn and renewed by the Spirit.

And it's through Christ and the grace that we receive through his sacrifice that we stand justified before God and have the hope of eternal life.

It's the work of Jesus and the Holy Spirit done for us, though we didn't deserve it, that allows us to stand blameless before God.

Paul also says in 1 Corinthians 12, verse 13, For we are all baptized by one Spirit, so as to form one body, whether Jews or Gentiles, slaves or free, and we were all given the one Spirit to drink. All of humanity has the opportunity to receive the promise of the Father in the same way. And that same Spirit unites us as one body.

[18:27] Regardless of who we are, regardless of how the world views us, we all have the opportunity to receive that same living water. Romans 8, verses 9 to 13 says, You, however, are not in the realm of the flesh, but are in the realm of the Spirit, if indeed the Spirit of God lives in you.

And if anyone does not have the Spirit of Christ, they do not belong to Christ. But if Christ is in you, even though your body is subject to death because of sin, the Spirit gives life because of righteousness.

And if that Spirit of him who raised Jesus from the dead is living in you, he who raised Christ from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies because of his Spirit who lives in you.

Therefore, brothers and sisters, we have an obligation, but it is not to the flesh, to live according to it. For if you live according to the flesh, you will die.

But if by the Spirit you put to death the misdeeds of your body, you will live. Paul is clear here that if we have surrendered to Christ and if the Spirit lives in us, our mortal bodies will be given life.

[19:59] Those who have passed in Christ, we will see again. 1 Corinthians 6 verses 18 and 19 says that we are to, here's a very convict-y passage, flee from sexual immorality.

All other sins a person commits are outside the body, but whoever sins sexually sins against their own body. Do you not know that your bodies are the temples of the Holy Spirit who is in you, whom you have received from God?

You are not your own. That little phrase there, you are not your own. We can see it as a sense of guilt.

I'm not my own. Ooh, what have I done? What should I not have done? It actually is the seal of promise on your life. You are not your own.

You are greater. You belong to something more. You belong to the name above all names. So we have an obligation to live by the Spirit and according to God's will.

[21:06] We've been freed to do that. We don't do that under our own strength or our own power. As we sing often, we are no longer slaves to sin. But we need to repent of our sin and ask God for his strength to resist temptation, to turn from the past patterns of behavior.

Listen to the words of Paul over and over to the early church. Galatians 3.14 says, He redeemed us in order that the blessing given to Abraham might come to the Gentiles through Christ Jesus, so that by faith we might receive the promise of the Spirit.

Ephesians 1.13-14 says, And you also were included in Christ when you heard the message of truth, the gospel of your salvation.

I love this language. You believed, when you believed, you were marked in him with a seal. We don't seal letters anymore, but can you imagine that in your head?

Dripped fresh wax with a seal of ownership pressed into it. The promised Holy Spirit, love this too, who is a deposit guaranteeing our inheritance until the redemption of those who are God's possession to the praise of his glory.

[22:37] 2 Corinthians 1.21-22 says, Now it is God who makes both us and you stand firm in Christ. He anointed us, set his seal of ownership on us, and put his Spirit in our hearts as a deposit.

See all those little ideas, those phrases coming together in that one passage? As a deposit guaranteeing what is to come. 2 Corinthians 5.5 says, Now the one who has fashioned us for this very purpose is God, who has given us the Spirit as a deposit, guaranteeing what is to come.

This language is all so powerful. We've been redeemed. We've received the promise of the Father. We have been included in Christ, marked in him with a seal, given a deposit guaranteeing our

inheritance.

God has anointed us, set his seal upon us, and guaranteeing what is to come. So, now what? What is the obligation to live in the Spirit that I mentioned a moment ago? How are people called to live who have the Spirit of God living in and through them?

[24 : 05] Ready to be reminded of some good fruit and some rotten fruit? In Galatians 5, verses 16 to 25, Paul says, So I say, walk by the Spirit, and you will not gratify the desires of the flesh.

For the flesh desires what is contrary to the Spirit, and the Spirit what is contrary to the flesh. They are in conflict with each other, so that you are not to do whatever you want.

But if you are led by the Spirit, you are not under the law. The acts of the flesh are obvious. Sexual immorality, impurity and debauchery, idolatry and witchcraft, hatred, discord, jealousy, fits of rage, selfish ambition, dissensions, factions and envy, drunkenness, orgies, and the like.

It's a list, right? I warn you, as I did before, that those who live like this will not inherit the kingdom of God. But the fruit of the Spirit is, say it with me if you want, love, joy, peace, forbearance, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control.

Against such things there is no law. Those who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires. since we live by the Spirit, let us keep in step with the Spirit.

[25 : 44] So people who have received the Spirit will bear healthy fruit accordingly. And it will be evident in how they speak. How they speak about other people.

How they treat other people. How they serve others without seeking credit. how they seek God's power in turning away from sinfulness, from self-seeking, self-serving behavior.

The Father's promise. This morning we've taken a closer look at the Old Testament prophecies in the New Testament teaching on the Holy Spirit.

The Old Testament prophets foretold the coming of the Spirit. A significant event that would include the manifestation of special gifts and one that would also enable and empower God's people to seek and keep His will.

Both John the Baptist and Jesus spoke of a baptism in the Spirit that would come through Jesus Himself. Peter proclaimed that the Father's promise would be fulfilled when the Spirit was poured out and that the Spirit would be a gift available to all who obey the gospel of Jesus Christ.

[27 : 01] Paul wrote a great deal about the Spirit and his role in the life of a Christian. He often referred to the Spirit as the Holy Spirit of promise.

I'd like to dig deeper, if you'd like to, into the person of the Holy Spirit, speaking of archives, I preached a sermon on July 28, 2019 that explored that more deeply.

I think we tend to have an anemic understanding of the Holy Spirit at times. So that is a character study of the Holy Spirit in that sermon.

So with all we've heard and recognized about the Spirit this morning, we've set the stage for the amazing work of the Spirit that is yet to come as we continue our sermon series, Acts to All the World.

So we shouldn't be surprised at all that as we read more and more of the work of the Holy Spirit in Acts, in both the life of the church and the lives of individual Christians, we will see the Spirit at work.

[28 : 10] My friends, we talk about it, we sing about it, but do we live our lives in such a way that the world can see that the same power that raised Jesus Christ from the dead, the Holy Spirit, the living God, lives and is at work within and through us.

may that be our greatest witness that God is alive and at work in the world and may the Spirit convict and strengthen us in being a shining example of God's power to restore all people and all things according to His will and His ultimate plan for creation.

Amen.