

Pentecost - The Promise of the Holy Spirit

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[0 : 0 0] So, this morning, we're going to look together at the promise of the Holy Spirit. What did Jesus mean by promising the Holy Spirit? What comes with the promise? Well, Pentecost, which is a name for the coming of the Holy Spirit, 50 days after the resurrection of Jesus, is a one-time event. In other words, you can point to it in history. It happened at that point.

I'm certainly not going to go into any of the other things this morning, but the reason it's a one-time event is because it follows a pattern. Jesus was born once, Jesus lived once, Jesus died once, and he will return once. And with Pentecost, the Holy Spirit comes once. And so, just like the resurrection, just like the birth of Christ, just like his death, it's a particular event in history that God is sort of benchmarking the beginning of the church. If you wanted to know when the beginning of the church began, well, it began with, in real terms, with the coming of the Holy Spirit. Now, you could say, argumentedly, that God had his church in the Old Testament, which is certainly true. Church, by definition, are those who belong to God. But in this sense, the coming of the Holy Spirit is the establishment of followers of Christ. And that's really important. You know, we don't just believe in God as in

God's singular. We believe in the triune God of Scripture, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. Now, one of the reasons why Jesus must go to the Father is so that the Spirit could come. In other words, if Jesus does not go to the Father, if Jesus does not resurrect from the grave and he does not ascend to the Father, then the Spirit doesn't come. And so, what would be the problem with that?

Well, the problem would be some of the issues that you would see highlighted here in the promise. The Spirit has come to do something that hasn't been done yet, because it cannot be done, because Jesus is on his own. For us to concentrate on what happened would simply be for me to give you a history lesson. It'd be much more important if we knew why the Holy Spirit came. So, if we ask the question this morning, why is the Holy Spirit come? You could come up with numerous answers that we are, so that we would be sealed with the Spirit until the day of redemption, assuring us of our sonship.

Yeah, but what is the reason Jesus gives here? Well, the reason that Jesus gives here is so that the Holy Spirit is promised so that he would multiply the ministry of Jesus. Okay, the Holy Spirit is promised so that the ministry of Jesus would be multiplied. And so, the Holy Spirit, in terms of understanding what he gets up to and what is his purpose, isn't now located to the past. This isn't just going to be a history lesson. We talk about evangelism. Well, you can't do any evangelism effectively without it being preceded by the Spirit, convicting the world of sin, righteousness, and the judgment to come. You just can't get any further forward unless the Spirit goes ahead of you. And so, in real simple terms, the Holy Spirit comes, as Jesus promised, to multiply the ministry of Jesus through his followers, through his followers. So, Jesus promised his disciples that they would do greater works than Jesus. Okay? Just think about that for a moment. Did you know that Billy Graham has led more people to Jesus Christ than Jesus Christ led to himself? Do you realize there's probably a few others in the world that have done more than Jesus has done? And this isn't to downgrade Jesus in any way whatsoever. It's simply to understand that Jesus now does his work through the likes of Billy Graham, the likes of you, and the likes of me. And the reason he is able to do that is because the work and ministry of Jesus is now multiplied through his followers, hence why more people can come to him, because there are now more servants proclaiming the name of Jesus. When Jesus was on the earth, how many were there? Just one. Just one. Just Jesus. And so, Jesus says here that you're able to do greater works than him, but you're only able to do greater works than him if the Holy Spirit comes to you. And when the Holy Spirit comes to you, you will be able to do greater works. Hence what Jesus said,

[5 : 06] John 14, verse 12. Truly, truly, I say to you, whoever believes in me will also do the works that I do, and greater works than these will he do, because I am going to the Father.

Well, I've always said, it was sort of taught to me when I came into ministry, that, you know, the church belongs to Jesus, and I'm certainly not going to compete with him. It's not my work. It's his work. But the significance of Pentecost is to understand that Jesus now does his work through the likes of you and me. That Jesus is actually still working, but he does it in a different way. And so, we could sit here this morning and focus on what does it mean to have a relationship with the Holy Spirit? Well, it means, first of all, that your relationship with God is totally real. It means that God has not only the right, but the ability to invade your personal life. In fact, you know when you've got a personal relationship with God, because that's the very thing that he starts doing. He starts invading your personal life, and he starts disrupting it.

And some of the things that we used to do, we're now convicted over. Some of the things we used to believe, we're now convicted over. Some of the money that we used to hold on to, we no longer hold on to, but we give it. Okay? Now, that's God sort of messing up in a very good way, invading our personal life. That's the crutch of what it means to have a living and a personal relationship with God.

The other thing is, is when the Holy Spirit comes to a believer at the point of conversion, that he is permanently there. We are sealed with the Spirit until the day of redemption, which means that once you have been sealed with God, you cannot be separated from God.

And I said, you know, it doesn't matter what sins we've committed in the past or in the present, or even in the future, okay, there is room for apostasy, and we're not going to deal with that now. But nevertheless, the Spirit seals us with him until the day of redemption. This is completely, thoroughly, totally, we are part of God in that sense. But the focus here that Jesus gives to the Spirit is that we're going to be able to do greater works than Jesus.

[7 : 38] All those other things are true, that we have this living relationship with God, we have this assurance, we have God. All of that's true, but the emphasis that Jesus places here is on you being able to do a greater work than Jesus. And so I want to ask the question, what does Jesus mean by doing greater works? Well, I'll put your mind and heart at rest. When Jesus says that you'll be able to do greater works than him, he doesn't mean better. He doesn't mean that you're going to be able to do it better than him. He simply means that you're going to be able to do more than him. So greater in this sense means more doesn't mean better. If you want a definition of greater here, it means that you're able to do more than Jesus. And the reason that you're able to do more than Jesus is because Jesus now throughout the church, which is all the believers in the world, works through and does his ministry through men and women. And we see this wonderful blessing coming to the world because Jesus now does his work through the Holy Spirit through us. That's what it means to be able to do a greater work than Jesus. It doesn't mean that we're going to be able to do works of a greater supernatural power. It doesn't mean that we're going to be able to do works that are more spectacular than Jesus, not even close. And those who think that are missing the point entirely. The only way these greater works can actually be achieved is if they're not done in the body of Jesus alone, but it's done in the body of Christ, his church. That's the only way, think about it for a moment, that the actual works of Jesus can be multiplied. Jesus can only do so much in his own physical body. He can only say so much in a day.

On a side note, did you know that most of us speak enough in a day to fill a short paperback book? Some of us, it could be a three volume.

I kind of feel that your eyes are on me for some reason. It's awful. The truth, however, is that Jesus is limited, not because Jesus is somehow less than God, but Jesus is limited by the fact that he's in a physical body who can only be in a certain place at a certain time and can only sort of expel so much from him in his three and a half years of earthly ministry. And so when Jesus is promising here that we will be able to do greater works than him, it is simply because the greater works, the more works, will happen in a greater amount of time.

So we're bound to do more with Christ in our life over 2,000 years than Christ could do on his own in three years. That's the point that we are to learn here. The next thing that he points out in verses 13 and 14 is about praying in the name of Jesus in order that these greater works would actually take place. This is John 14. Whatever you ask in my name, this I will do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son. In other words, Jesus answers the prayers of his people, especially when prayed in his name, because it brings glory to God. It's the very thing that brings sort of glory to God rather than to people. And listen, I grew up in an environment where people made some sort of wild claims about their giftings and the Holy Spirit and stuff like this. And so, you know, I'm not sort of,

I'm not reacting to that, but all the glory would go to them. They had these, you know, wonderful big websites, wonderful big brochures, wonderful big books. You know, their face was always on the front cover with folders arms and perfect teeth and, you know, your best life now and all of that kind of stuff. And I've said this before, the only way that somebody could write a book called Your Best Life Now is if he's assuming you're going to hell. Fair point? This is not your best life now. It is yet to come because you belong to Christ. And so, the person of the Holy Spirit takes everything that is true of Jesus, then indwells the life of every believer that belongs to Jesus, and therefore multiplies the work of ministry through the body, the church. That is how the church is able to do greater works than Jesus. Now, the reason why this is so encouraging is because, as I said, it's his work, not our own. And Jesus has not left us alone to get on with the work. Jesus has already promised that he'll be with us until the end of the age. And so, the coming of the Holy Spirit is not Jesus leaving us in the sense that he's not present. He's with us, but he's present in and through the Holy Spirit.

[13 : 06] And being present in and through the Holy Spirit, this is why we're able to do the works. This is why we're able to pray in the name of Jesus and see things happen that wouldn't otherwise happen if we didn't pray. And so, the promise of the Holy Spirit here is so that the church can actually be the vehicle by which multiplies the ministry of Jesus on earth. It doesn't mean that we can do it as well as Jesus. Personally, it doesn't mean, but it means corporately through the whole church, more people can speak about Jesus to more people on earth than Jesus could all on his own.

So, as Jesus says in John 17, it is to our advantage, it is to the church's advantage, it is to the disciples' advantage that he goes away. Because only when he goes away, as a singular person, can the Holy Spirit come and dwell in the lives of all believers, thus multiplying the work that he's come to bring. That's why it's to our advantage that he goes away. If you think about it, what other advantage could there be? I mean, if you had the choice between having Jesus down here on earth and in heaven, which would you choose? Well, I think you'd choose to have Jesus down here on earth with you. You'd want to stay with him all the time. You ever not ever read the Bible and think, I'd have absolutely loved to sit in on that conversation. You know, what was the look on Peter's face when Jesus said to him, get behind me, Satan? I'd love to have been a fly on the wall, you know.

But the point here is, is that the reason it's to our advantage that Jesus goes to be with the Father is so that the Spirit would come and dwell in every life of every believer. But you'll notice in John 16 that the Holy Spirit has a work to do all of his own. In other words, he even does this without us being present. It says in John 16, verse 8, and when he comes, he will convict the world concerning sin and righteousness and judgment. Verse 9, concerning sin, because they do not believe in me. Concerning righteousness, because I go to the Father and you will see me no longer. Concerning judgment because the ruler of this age is judged. One of the reasons why Jesus told his disciples to wait in Jerusalem and do nothing is because they couldn't do anything. You go wait in Jerusalem and wait for the Spirit to come, well that sounds like doing nothing. But there's nothing more prideful to think that you can do God's work without God. It's one of my biggest convictions. David White used to constantly say to me, you know, as I would sit under his teachings and he would, you know, as I began my ministry, and he would say, you know, God wants to see the front of your face more than he wants to see the back of your head. Don't ever think that God is more impressed by what you can do for him, than actually just coming before him and admitting your need, your constant need for God to be ever present in your life. So the reason Jesus tells his disciples to wait in Jerusalem is because they can't do anything. They can't go out into the world and convict someone of their sin. Now, you can go out and make someone feel bad, right? In the same way you can go out and make someone feel good, okay? Flattery, you know, flattery works. You know, if you said nice things about me, I'm just going to lap it up. Totally sinful, but I'm going to lap it up or repent of it later. But it works, okay? We like nice things said about us, but in the same token, you can go out and make someone feel bad. You can just say just a snide comment and stuff like that. And the trouble is, is when Christians think that they're somehow convicting somebody else of their sin. Now, the only person who's able to convict somebody else of their sin is the Spirit of God. The Spirit of God goes forth and says to a person that what you're doing is wrong in the light of God's standard, not the person speaking to you.

Hence why you can have people literally in the middle of nowhere that come under huge conviction, and then at a later date have it explained to them that this is Jesus Christ, the Savior of the world. You know, many people have feelings that they can't explain until they're much older, or they've learned exactly what those feelings are. And the conviction of the Spirit is, it seems to be one of those things for many. Have you ever seen somebody under the conviction of the Spirit?

I can remember leading a group once, and we were having this Bible study, it was similar to like Christianity explored, and you could just see this girl on the other side of the group in the circle.

[18 : 24] You could almost see the conversion, that all of a sudden she went from not getting it to getting it, and it was just incredible to witness.

Okay? The Spirit does that. You can't do that. That's the work of the Spirit. Hence why we need to pray to Jesus in his name, that the Spirit goes and does that work through us, through others in the world.

Now, when it comes to the Spirit convicting the world of its sin, you'll notice it's to do with the person of Jesus. In other words, never assume that when the Holy Spirit goes out to convict you of your sin, that it has something to do with smoking too much, or drinking too much alcohol, or sort of some kind of morality issue that you've got.

That that's certainly true. Okay? But the issue here, that the real conviction of the Holy Spirit comes with the fact that he brings you face to face with the teachings of Jesus.

All of a sudden you find yourself turning up in church one day, hearing the truth about Jesus Christ, and you feel, actually, I feel bad. Well, that sort of bad feeling will be removed by the Spirit, but it's to highlight to you that you really ought to believe in Jesus, and you're not currently there yet.

[19 : 44] You're not quite there yet believing in Jesus. So the Spirit of God takes everything that Jesus taught and brings it to a person and says, Do you believe him?

Do you believe what Jesus taught? Do you believe his teachings? Then if you believe Jesus and you believe his teachings, you'll believe that you'll need to repent and turn from your sin and ask God for forgiveness.

That's the conviction of the Holy Spirit concerning sin. Notice what it says, verse 8. Sorry, verse 9. Concerning sin, because they do not believe in me. The whole point of the Holy Spirit convicting people of their sin is to get that person to believe in Jesus Christ.

It is not for the Holy Spirit to go out into the world and somehow convict people of every act of immorality. It is actually to convict people of Jesus.

However, as Jesus says in John 3, because of their unbelief, they are condemned already. And those who remain in their unbelief will not receive life.

[20 : 55] And so the Holy Spirit goes out into the world and literally presses down with a real pressure, a real convicting pressure onto the hearts and minds of men, women, boys and girls of their need of Jesus.

Of their need of Jesus. And through that pressure comes great release. Through that pressure comes great freedom. But it's freedom in Christ, not freedom outside.

It's freedom that comes with receiving forgiveness in the name of Jesus Christ. The second thing is righteousness. The Spirit convicts the world of righteousness because Jesus is going to the Father.

Now why is that so important? Well, think about it for a moment. Have you ever sat next to someone in church who's been perfectly righteous? I mean, we're talking like...

You haven't? Has there ever been a time where anybody sat in church where there's been someone perfectly righteous? Yes, there is. Jesus. Jesus. Jesus. Jesus.

[22 : 03] And so what you have here is that the Spirit convicts the world of righteousness because Jesus goes going to the Father. In other words, the one righteous person is no longer going to be on earth for you to see his righteousness.

So because you can't look at Jesus and be convicted of his righteousness, the Spirit now has to do that job because Jesus is going to be with the Father. Make sense?

So now the Spirit brings home what true righteousness is like. I have this debate with my brother quite often, Savant.

I mean, I love Savant to bits, but I could also, in my unsanctified moments, really throttle him. But he's the one that phones me up saying, can I speak to Jesus?

At first, I didn't quite know what to do. And then I was ready for it the next time. So he said, can I speak to Jesus? And so I thought, I'll just go and get him for you.

[23 : 03] I went off and I got my Bible, opened it up to John or somewhere and just started reading. What's this? What's this? And I said to him, I'm not saying to you that you don't know the difference between right and wrong.

I know you know the difference between right and wrong. But I'm asking you where it comes from. How you give an accounting of how you know the difference between right and wrong.

I know that we would disagree or agree on the same things being bad as we would agree on perhaps the same things being right. But I said, I'm able to give an account for why things are right and wrong.

You're just able only to know on a purely earthly level that some things are right and some things are wrong. To give you an example of what this is like, a guy by the name of Psy10, and I'm going to, please forgive me, but you probably won't ever bump into him.

I should hope that I don't bump into him. Psy10 Birkenkamp. I think his name is. Psy10 Birkenkamp asked on the streets.

[24 : 14] He goes out on the streets and he talks to people and he asks questions. And this question comes up a lot about righteousness. The ultimate standard. The things by which are right and wrong.

And so he says to this boy, do you believe that he was on a college campus in America, which you have hundreds of students. And he just said to him, do you believe that most things are optional, that are open, that it's not really a good or bad, it's just all.

And he went, yeah, more or less. And I'd be pretty much open to everything. And he said to him, would you be open to child molestation?

He went, yeah, I'd be open to that. And then he went, no, I wouldn't. But I have to be consistent with my argument. See, at some point you have to close on everything.

There has to be a final line between what is right and what is wrong. I'm not saying that the world out there doesn't know the difference between right and wrong. God isn't saying that the world out there doesn't know the difference between right and wrong.

[25 : 21] The trouble is they're unable to give an accounting for it. And so the Spirit goes out into the world convicting it of not only what is right, righteousness, but also where the standard of righteousness comes from.

And then finally, the Spirit convicts the world of the judgment to come. The world can't make good judgments, but one of the judgments that the world does make is that it won't face a judgment.

One of the judgments that people make in the world is that they won't, they judge that they won't be judged in the future. And the Holy Spirit points out to them that there's a future accountability coming to every single man, woman, boy, and girl.

And so now we begin to see just how important the work of the Spirit is to precede and to fill our lives in order to be able to do the works of ministry that Jesus did on earth.

We're not Jesus. We don't have the perfect righteous life. We don't live a perfect standard. This is why Christians are open to hypocrisy and double standards. Of course we are.

[26 : 31] We're sinful. We're not perfect. We speak of the one who is and who will make us that way in the future, but we're not there yet.

And so the Spirit then comes to these disciples to bring to their remembrance everything that Jesus taught. And so I'm going to conclude with this. The Holy Spirit is given by Christ, by God, by the triumphant God of Scripture to multiply the ministry of the work of Jesus on earth.

So that we would go out and proclaim the gospel and the Spirit would go at work in the life of believers and unbelievers, though the work in those lives are different. The work in the life of believers is, of course, to convince us, convict us of our own sin and make us right with God.

But at the same time, it is to assure us of our salvation. In the world, it is to bring them to Jesus Christ. And most importantly, as Jesus said, that the Spirit, John 16, 14, is to glorify him.

Everything that the Spirit does is to bring glory to Jesus, not to the person, not to himself, but only to Jesus. So in the same way Jesus did everything that he saw his Father doing, the Spirit now does nothing unless given the authority by Jesus to do so, so that all the authority, glory rather, goes to Jesus.

[28 : 01] So how important is the Spirit's work? Well, without the Holy Spirit, we wouldn't have a church. Without the Holy Spirit, we wouldn't have any effective witness.

Without the Holy Spirit, we wouldn't have any conversions. In other words, the coming of the Holy Spirit is guaranteed success. Let me say that again.

With the coming of the Holy Spirit, it guarantees success. It means that men and women, boys and girls in the world, will actually come to know Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior.

We'll actually follow him. So the reason why we're able to do greater works in Jesus is not because we can do them better than him. But it's because there is more of us doing the work of witness in the world.

I want you to appreciate this morning, even if you do already, the role of the Spirit not only within your life, but also within the life of this world.

[29 : 00] I want you to understand that God is doing his work. He hasn't left us alone to get on with it. God precedes the work and we, in cooperation, this is the difference between the Spirit and Jesus.

Very beautiful word called vicarious. Vicarious means that Jesus does it all for us. But in the Spirit, it is cooperative. That is, we do it with the Spirit.

The Spirit doesn't do anything for us. Even in Romans 8, when it talks about the Spirit intercedes on their behalf, it never does it apart from us. It's always with us.

So the Spirit is a cooperative part of the triune God of Scripture, working with us and us with him. So we're brought into a new relationship to tell others about the relationship that's possible with Christ.

Never, let me just say at this point, never confuse service in the church for witness. This is something that I often have to point out. I know that it's obvious, but I want to point it out.

[30 : 05] Never ever confuse. We look for many leaders to fill areas of service in the church. Sunday school leaders, Watt leaders, YP leaders, Reach leaders, Crest leaders, you know, 55 leaders.

Okay, never confuse your service in those areas with witness. Witness is something that the Holy Spirit is given in order for you to be witnesses in the world, which means that you have a personal involvement with unbelievers.

So never think that if you're serving at Watt or YP, even though I speak the gospel at YP to those that are there when I'm there, and the same things no doubt happens at Watt through one person teaching, unless you're speaking to unbelievers and there's a personal investment there, you're not witnessing.

You can be serving in the church and never witness. So never confuse service with witness. Witness is proclaiming the gospel, okay, from a believer to an unbeliever.

That's gospel witness. Service is incredibly important, okay, but service isn't witness. Witness. So while there are many other things then that could be said about the Holy Spirit, this thing remains true.

[31 : 31] That the Spirit is given, as Jesus promised, to multiply the work of Jesus through his body, the church. That is how we are able to do greater works than him.

Amen.