

Wednesday Word 4/10/2024

**Acts 13:52 “And the disciples were filled with joy and with the Holy Spirit.”**

I will never forget my “conversion experience.” As you know I was raised in the church and learned many of my childhood and boyhood lessons in God’s House. When I was about 16 years old, I decided I didn’t want to serve God and wanted to go the way of the prodigal son. As you may well guess, the world has nothing at all to offer. After about 4 years of living my own way, I was invited at age 20 to a Young Adult and Youth revival service in Tacoma. I was hesitant at first but ended up going anyway. When I walked into the door of the church, I was amazed at what I saw. There were teenagers and young adults sitting in circles in the main entrance of the church, all of them with their Bibles in their laps studying and discussing scripture. I saw other kids in groups and pairs praying for one another. I saw other kids in the sanctuary worshipping and singing even before the service officially started. I realized one thing very quick: The God these kids were pursuing was very real!

As the service got going and moved into the evening I was amazed at how focused and passionate these young people were. Many were kneeling, others were standing with arms held high, some just sat quietly pouring out their heart before God. The preacher came up to speak, a fiery Hispanic preacher named Benny Perez who pastored in Las Vegas. He came up and opened the scriptures with such passion and care my jaw just hit the floor. I had been in church my whole life, I had gone to Sunday school, three services a Sunday, sang in the choir, competed in Bible Quiz and so much more. But this was the first time the Holy Spirit became real and present. I could feel my heart beating out of my chest as the conviction of the Holy Spirit was calling me to repentance. I knew right then and there that whatever sin was holding me back, I no longer wanted it.

At the end of the service the pastor asked if anyone wanted to come to the Altar and pray or repent. I ran up to the altar and confessed all my sin, almost 4 years of living the worlds way, before God. I remember feeling a spiritual weight lift from my soul and my spirit-I was truly free from my sins.

To be honest, it wasn’t the great preaching or music that captured my attention that night. It was the young people who had turned all their affection and passion toward the Lord. They arrived hours early to have bible studies and prayer before church even started. They didn’t care what other people thought-they just wanted to offer a sacrifice of worship to their God.

As I think back to that night, and all that has happened since, I must ask myself this question: What do people see when they look at my spiritual life? Are people inspired and curious about my God or do they see nothing but dry religious practice and duty? I strongly believe one of our biggest and most effective witnesses is how we love our God. Is our love and passion for God seen be others in our daily life? I believe we must overflow with the

Holy Spirit and allow our passion, devotion, and love for God touch the world around us.  
We never know who may be watching!

I love you and God loves you!

Pastor Eric