

Opening prayer and insights from the last week

Acts 2:38, 39 Peter replied, “Repent and be baptized, everyone of you, in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins. And you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. The promise is for you and your children and for all who are far off – for all whom the Lord our God will call.”

Acts 2:16 – 18 No, this is what was spoken by the prophet Joel: “In the last days, God says, I will pour out my Spirit on all people. Your sons and daughters will prophesy, your young men will see visions, your old men will dream dreams. Even on my servants, both men and women, I will pour out my Spirit and they will prophecy.”

These words were spoken in a public declaration at the spiritual birthing of the church after Jesus released the Holy Spirit on those waiting for him. What relevance does this have for us today?

John 1:1-14 In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was with God in the beginning. Through him all things were made; without him nothing was made that had been made. In him was life, and that life was the light of men. The light shines in the darkness but the darkness has not understood it. ... The true light that gives light to every man was coming into the world. He was in the world, and though the world was made through him, the world did not recognize him. He came into that which was his own, but his own did not receive him. Yet to all who received him, to those who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God – children born not of natural descent, nor of human decision or a husband’s will, but born of God. The Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us. We have seen his glory, the glory of the One and Only, who came from the Father, full of grace and truth.

John 20:29 (memory) Then Jesus told him, “Because you have seen me, you have believed; blessed are those who have not seen and yet have believed.”

Jesus is Lord of this world and yet he wants to work through us as his mouth, hands and feet to accomplish his purposes and intervene in the natural order of things. What do these passages have to say about: a) trusting your life into his hands? b) how he looks upon your belief and trust from the Father’s side?

Matthew 13:3-9 Jesus speaks – A farmer went out to sow his seed. As he was scattering the seed, some fell along the path, and the birds came and ate it up. Some fell on rocky places, where it did not have soil. It sprang up quickly, because the soil was shallow. But when the sun came up, the plants were scorched, and they withered because they had no root. Other seed fell among thorns, which grew up and choked the plants. Still other seed fell on good soil, where it produced a crop – a hundred, sixty or thirty times what was sown. He who has ears let him hear.

The seed is the Word spoken by the Spirit through people today. The various places of soil are the people in various states of heart and capacity for the words to take root and build that person. It requires discipline of attitude to keep focused on the Lord as you go through life. Is it worth your life to allow God to build you – not only for this life but the one to come?

1 Corinthians 3:6-9 I planted the seed, Apollos watered it, but God made it grow. So neither he who plants nor he who waters is anything, but only God who makes things grow. The man who plants and the man who waters have one purpose, and each will be rewarded according to his own labour. For we are God's fellow workers; you are God's field, God's building.

Is it the work of God's Spirit through them that they are rewarded for or simply their own labour?

As God's Spirit begins to work in you, he can inspire concepts and words in you to speak. As God's Spirit works through you to build others up, you are being strengthened also. Do you believe; a) he wants to work through you? b) and that he will bless you for whatever his Spirit will do through you?

1 Corinthians 2:9-16 However as it is written: "No eye has seen, no ear has heard, no mind has conceived what God has prepared for those who love him." But God has revealed it to us by his Spirit. The Spirit searches all things, even the deep things of God. For who among men knows the thoughts of a man except the man's spirit within him. In the same way no one knows the thoughts of God except the Spirit of God. We have not received the spirit of the world but the Spirit who is from God, that we may understand what God has freely given us. This is what we speak, not in words taught us by human wisdom but in words taught by the Spirit, expressing spiritual truths in spiritual words. The man without the Spirit does not accept the things that come from the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness to him, and he cannot understand them, because they are spiritually discerned. The spiritual man makes judgements about all things, but he himself is not subject to any man's judgement: "For who has known the mind of the Lord that he may instruct him?" But we have the mind of Christ.

Here is a series of questions on the last passage to consider one at a time as a group.

- a) If the Lord of all wants to build people so he can work through them – can he do it in you?
- b) We are not consciously aware of what is in our heart's desires – can he bring them out for us?
- c) God can inspire in us concepts of his will to express in spiritual words – is this how we learn?
- d) Is it possible that even if we have the Spirit in us, we act apart from it and don't rely on it but our own perceptions? Sometimes? A lot?
- e) Using spiritual discernment, we are able to make judgements in situations by his Spirit according to his will. How is that different from our being judgemental.
- f) Do you think because we are spiritual that it makes our mind like Christ? Or do you think that the mind of Christ is in the Holy Spirit within us and that we have access to it?
- g) How are you to know what God's will is for you as you go through life?

Briefly discuss any other questions related to this study and pray accordingly.