

THE SPIRIT WORKING AMONG BELIEVERS



Background Reading

Acts 2:42-47;
1 Corinthians 11:24

Devotional Reading

Matthew 19:21-30;
Hebrews 10:24-25



Central Verse

**“And all that believed were together
and had all things common.”**

Acts 2:44, KJV

**“And all the believers met together
in one place and shared everything
they had.”**

Acts 2:44, NLT

Key Terms

Vertical—Going straight up or down from a level surface.

Horizontally—Relating to, directed toward, or consisting of individuals or entities of similar status or on the same level.

Miracles—An extraordinary event manifesting divine intervention in human affairs; an extraordinary event taken as a sign of the supernatural power of God.

Introduction

After the twelve disciples, Mary, the mother of Jesus, and the others who were in the Upper Room (about 120 people) received the baptism of the Holy Ghost, the Church began to grow. Peter had preached, and about three thousand souls were added to the Church. Not everyone was happy about this new church, so they faced opposition from many areas.

Believers can rest assured that when Jesus is with them, He is greater than the entire world that comes against them. Opposition comes to help strengthen the believer's trust and faith in God. If they don't have problems, they would never experience the wonder-working power of God in their lives. When believers make up their minds to follow Jesus, they can also

be assured that Satan is coming, for Satan comes to steal, kill, and destroy (John 10:10). “It is an honor for a man to cease from strife: But every fool will be meddling” (Proverbs 20:3).

In this lesson, we will study the seven important characteristics of the Spirit-filled Church immediately after Pentecost. The believers who received Jesus as their Savior were viewed by many as outcasts. They were looked down upon by the established religions of that time.

Discussion

1. Apostles' Teaching: The early Saints were discipled and nourished in the Word. They were taught the Word by the men who had followed and lived with Jesus. They heard Jesus as He told the Scribes and other church leaders that they err not knowing the scriptures in Matthew 22:29. The early Church was centered around the Word. The Apostles knew that the Word of the Lord gives life, so they taught as Jesus did with anointing and authority. Some of the teachings that they taught later became the New Testament.

2. Fellowship: The disciples knew at that crucial time they needed to knit themselves together with God, Jesus, and the Holy Spirit, as well as with one another. The believers must have a special love for those who are of the household of faith. They developed a personal relationship with God as well as nourished a warm, honest, open, healing, redeeming, and fellowship-based life together in Christ. Living in a community together provided safety for the believers, for they faced some very hostile people in their surrounding communities. Their being together provided strength and comfort as they faced many unbelievers in their towns. It's important for believers to have good relationships with other believers and with God.

3. Breaking of Bread: Breaking of bread speaks of intimacy among believers. The early believers came together regularly and went from house to house having fellowship, which included sitting down together, getting to know one another, and eating together. As believers, they are admonished to know them that labor among them and esteem them very highly in love for their work's sake (1 Thessalonians 5:12-13). They also came together often to observe the Lord's Supper as Jesus had commanded them to do. They were adamant about remembering what Jesus said to them at the first Communion in the Upper Room. We don't find a specific time in the Bible to have Communion in our churches, but many of the Pentecostal

churches observe this practice on first Sundays, by wearing their white dresses and suits.

4. Prayer: In the early Church, just as it was in the early Church Of God In Christ, prayer was a priority and a very integral part of the believer's life. The founder of the Church Of God In Christ, Bishop Charles Harrison Mason, spent many hours on his knees in prayer. Jesus told the believers in Luke 18:1 that "men ought to always pray and not to faint." When the Saints of God pray, the Holy Spirit is free to work among and through them. More can be accomplished through prayer than through hours of talking and other activities. Prayer and faith work together, and, as the Word says, the just shall live by faith. In the early Church, many hours were spent in all-night prayer meetings—three- and seven-day shut-ins, no water or food, just prayer, praise, preaching, singing, and the reading of the Word.

5. Miracles, Signs, and Wonders: Miracles, signs, and wonders are important aspects of the Holy Spirit at work in the lives of believers. In the presence and power of the Holy Spirit coupled with prayer, faith, and praise comes forth miracles, signs, and wonders. Miracles, signs, and wonders draw sinners into the Church, for they are blessed when they see, and seeing causes them to believe. The early churches were filled with wheelchairs, canes, and walkers, which were evidence of God's healing power.

6. Sharing Community: No man is an island and can stand alone. Human beings were made to share their lives with their communities. The early Church experienced community because they only had each other. They were rejected by the other established religions, so they learned to depend upon each other and the Holy Spirit. When they accepted Jesus Christ as their Lord and Savior, they were cast out from their biological families. They were viewed as traitors and heathens. So, their comfort, their love, encouragement and help came from each other.

7. Making Disciples: After the believers received the baptism of the Holy Spirit, they were empowered to witness for Jesus Christ. They were so excited about what Jesus had done for them, that they were anxious to tell others about their testimonies. The righteous influence and the witness of these believers effectively permeated the city. People were able to see changes in the disciples' lives, and it caused a stir throughout their surrounding cities.

Conclusion

Because of what God had done for the believers, they were able to say that they were not ashamed of the Gospel of Jesus Christ. For it was power unto

salvation, unto deliverance, to those who would listen, hear and receive. It is important that believers share their story and let others know who their God is.

The same Holy Spirit that worked in the early Church is alive today, and He works in the Body of Christ when given the chance. For this is not by man's power nor might, but by the Spirit of Almighty God. God's Church, His Kingdom cannot be built by intellect alone. The believer must be led by the Spirit, and if he accepts the leading of the Spirit, there is nothing that he won't be able to do for the building up of God's Kingdom.

Questions

1. What is the major work of the Holy Spirit among believers?
2. Why was living together as a community so important for the early believers?
3. Name two of the things that the Holy Spirit did among the believers that promoted church growth.
4. What was the purpose of miracles, signs, and wonders?
5. How can someone receive miracles, signs, and wonders?

Essential Thought

The same Spirit that raised Jesus from the dead will quicken your body and raise you to heights unknown.