

Thread
Pt. 1 - Before Day 1
Author: Steve Ely

I. Introduction

It is small. It is usually unnoticed . . . until . . . the moment a thread is pulled you suddenly recognize its significance and how essential it is to the overall garment, tapestry or storyline. If the thread is removed the picture is incomplete. If the thread comes unraveled the whole is destroyed. Over the next few weeks, we are going to examine the most important thread in history. It is a thread that not only runs through our entire story but also ties the story and us together.

Just a few weeks ago we celebrated Easter and now we are screaming towards Pentecost Sunday. After the resurrection of Jesus, the disciples were told to wait and they would receive power. It is the most profound introduction of the Holy Spirit. However, make no mistake it was not the first. The involvement and importance of this thread is unmistakable.

As Pentecostals we tend to focus all of attention on Acts 2 and the Day of Pentecost. I think it is crucial to back up and lay this thread bare so that we know what we have rather than just looking at the end garment.

II. Text

Genesis 1:1-2

In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth. Now the earth was formless and empty, darkness was over the surface of the deep, and the Spirit of God was hovering over the waters.

One of the key principles to learn when examining Scripture is the Law of First Mention. Often in Scripture importance and significance is revealed by the fact that something is mentioned first. It is prominent and preeminent. We should take notice and give proper attention to that which is mentioned first.

Now in the Creation Account, long before the Day of Pentecost, and here that we see the first glimpse of the thread that weaves all the way forward to Acts 2. This thread is seen at various times in the creation narrative. On the 6th day, as God creates man He has a conversation with His triune self and says "Let US make man in OUR image." The Holy Spirit was involved in the entirety of the creation process. Day One through Day 7 the Holy Spirit is there, threading His way through our story.

However, again I draw your attention to first mention. I can't even say on Day One because this is prior to there ever being a day! Prior to any "Let Us" statements, prior to any explosion of creative power, before any light, sun, moon, plant, fish, or the crescendo of designing and breathing into man the thread is there. He gets into the act early.

Verse 2 - The Spirit of God hovers over the waters.

God is a God of order and will set things into place, put things in line, and provide structure. But here we get a glimpse of not only what things were like before the beauty we see around us now, but this account in Genesis gives us a clear picture of the nature of the Holy Spirit long before the fire-filled day of Pentecost.

It is an odd statement. The Spirit hovered over the waters. Perhaps another version gives greater understanding and insight.

First this: God created the Heavens and Earth—all you see, all you don't see. Earth was a soup of nothingness, a bottomless emptiness, an inky blackness. God's Spirit brooded like a bird above the watery abyss.

From hovering to brooding like a bird.

Any clearer?

We are given a word picture of the Holy Spirit hovering or brooding over the chaos of our world. The picture is that of a mother bird settling over and watching over the eggs before they hatch. Protecting. Buffering.

Think about this action of the Holy Spirit . . . the powerful but at this point wordless Spirit of God is preparing for God's cosmic Word.

The Holy Spirit settles over the chaos, nothingness and prepares for order and the creative Word of God!

The Holy Spirit watches over our mess until our mess gets the message that God said to come into order! Straighten up!

The first time we see the thread and see Him at work He is setting up to change chaos to order!

As Pentecostals we have historically focused on tongues and we will before this series is over. However, we can't allow that focus to cause us to forget that His first work was order!

If you don't think that is a great gift, then just stop and realize that everything in life naturally moves towards disorder.

"Chaos" means disorder!

Once God put things in order everything naturally moves from order back towards chaos. Think of your kitchen; you clean it and put everything in order, but as soon as you are done, the slow process towards disorders starts.

Yet before Day One the Holy Spirit has been working to get and keep things in our world and ultimately in our life ordered!

The same Holy Spirit that hovered and brooded over the chaos of our world is now preparing our chaos for the Word that will give shape and meaning to what made no sense before. In fact, that is why He got you here. To hear His Word so that order could come!

You think your world is a mess right now? You think you are surrounded by chaos, confusion, and brokenness? Empty? Formless? That is a familiar backdrop against which the Holy Spirit does His best work. In fact, what would it be if it wasn't for the hovering of the Holy Spirit over our life. He keeps us until order can come.

We will get to Pentecost where we will see and hear the tangible presence of the Holy Spirit. However, if we rush to that and miss this great gift then we have done you a great disservice.

If there is chaos (spiritually, physically, socially or emotionally) and that seems like normal life. . . it is! But we must also remember that God is not the author of confusion. It is the enemy that steals, kills and destroys or in other words specializes in chaos! The remedy to that is the thread. You must allow the Holy Spirit to hover over your situation. Let Him get involved. Let Him brood over the blackest, emptiest places in your life and He will reveal Jesus. Do you remember what Jesus did? He set things right! He can do that for you today!

God can make you a new creature! The recreative powers of God can come to bear on your life. However, you must have a before day one understanding that Holy Spirit is in charge and is watching over your mess just so you could get the message today! Unseen, like a thread, but He is here this morning hovering, holding it together long enough for you to get this word . . . God cares, God can correct, God can create, God can change . . . there is hope, there is life, there is purpose! In fact, when Jesus talked about the Holy Spirit He said, in John 16:8, "When Spirit comes He will reprove or convict, confute, convince the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment: In other words, He will try to get us to deal with our disorder and chaos.

III. Close

If you are here today and your life seems to be spiraling out of control. If at every turn, there is chaos and confusion. If situations bring emptiness and brokenness, then why not allow the Holy Spirit to draw you today and let Him hover over you until order can come?

Thread
Pt. 2 - What are you waiting on?
Author: Steve Ely

I. Introduction

It is small. It is usually unnoticed . . . until . . . the moment a thread is pulled you suddenly recognize its significance and how essential it is to the overall garment, tapestry or storyline. If the thread is removed the picture is incomplete. If the thread comes unraveled the whole is destroyed. Over the next few weeks, we are going to examine the most important thread in history. It is a thread that not only runs through our entire story but also ties the story and us together.

We went backwards last week and showed how this thread runs all the way back to the beginning to see some of the first words ever spoken about the thread. Today we will move forward and we look at last words. How many of you know that the last thing someone says is extremely important? When you know are uttering the last words to those who are closest to you those words are weighty. Those words are valuable. Those words are most important. Jesus spoke last words to His disciples. Before He exited the scene and turned this movement that He gave His life for over to this rag tag, uneducated, inexperienced, unlikely group of men He spoke last words. Most of us think the last thing that Jesus said to His disciples is when He instructed them to "Go into all the world and make disciples!" Last marching orders. Last instructions. However, that isn't the last thing He said. After His resurrection and appearing multiple times to them, Jesus measures His last words and looks at them and in:

II. Text

Luke 24:49

"I am going to send you what my Father has promised; but stay in the city until you have been clothed with power from on high."

This is then validated again in the beginning scene of Acts 1:4 where the writer once again discloses Jesus' last words to them.

His last word to them was to wait! Not go but wait. He tells them that they should gather together in Jerusalem and wait on power.

Acts is the account of obedience to that command to wait. Here we see the scene of the demoralized, frightened, uncertain, discouraged group of men and women who huddle together and wait. That is Acts 1. Then we read Acts 2. Then the rest of Acts (and the New Testament for that matter) is different. It is chalk full of miracles:

lame folks are healed

snake bite being shaken off

dramatic releases from prison

resurrection of the dead

mass salvations

The rest of Scripture is simply a revelation of what happened after they waited. I think it is safe to say that the waiting certainly worked. The waiting was worth it.

This backwards, fearful and weak group of individuals are so clothed in the power of the Holy Spirit that by the time we arrive in Acts 17 the writer informs us that the people of the community described these men as the "ones who turned the world upside down!" What they waited on changed everything for them and for us. To this day the encounter these men and women had in the upper room has launched the fastest growing movement in the world!

I do think it is important at this moment to back up so that we don't make the mistake of thinking that this thread that clothed these men and women with great power was just for them. Let's go back and pick up Joel 2 and learn the truth.

Joel 2:28

And it shall come to pass afterward, that I will pour out my spirit upon all flesh; and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, your old men shall dream dreams, your young men shall see visions: (another version says "I will pour out my spirit on every kind of people)!

So, if the wait was worth it (and it is undeniable that it was) and if what they waited on was designated for every type of person and not some special class or section of society, then the question begs to be asked today . . . "What are you waiting on?"

This great and promised gift from God is ours to have and utilize. And yet many of us haven't encountered or experienced the Holy Spirit. A recent survey revealed that less than 40% of folks attending Pentecostal churches have even personally experienced the baptism of the Holy Spirit! Why? Could it be we are waiting on the wrong thing?

The disciples waited on power.

What are you waiting on? I would submit that we have been waiting on the wrong thing. We wait on powerful services! We wait on goose bumps! We wait on tongues or a prayer language and act as if that is the goal and the end all, climax of the experience rather than the indicator of the beginning of the experience! We wait on gifts! We wait on spiritual shows and displays. We wait on more instruction. We wait on a different answer/solution because this one requires faith/trust and makes us uncomfortable. And many times, we see and experience those things and discover that the wait wasn't worth it because they are fleeting and don't produce the one thing the Holy Spirit was promised to produce.

May I suggest that what we need is the power! Power to change the world. Power to witness. Power to live uprightly. Power to bring the kingdom of Heaven to bear on the earth today. Power to bring freedom. That is what was intended! That is what Jesus said would be the product of the Holy Spirit in our lives! Everything else the Holy Spirit produces is incredible but if we are not endued, clothed with power, then we are missing the point! Clothed . . . not something we only have during a good service. Permanently infused, covered with, consumed with power! An encounter that changes how we live.

Changes how we think. Changes how we behave. Changes our goals, desires, purpose, and attitude!

I am tired of us waiting on something that is only used to produce a good service on Sunday, but then we live a struggling, weak life the rest of the week! This thread should bring power!

Let me ask those of you who have experienced the Baptism of the Holy Spirit a tough question . . . "Are you any stronger? Have you demonstrated any more power? Have you caused any change? Are you overcoming the things that use to overcome you? Are you withstanding attacks that used to overtake you?" I am glad you spoke in tongues. I am glad you felt great. I am glad you glow. However, have you exhibited any power? If not, then I would suggest that maybe it is time for a re-filling so that you can tap into the purpose of the Holy Spirit!

III. Close

Maybe you are one of ones who has never experienced the power of the Holy Spirit as promised by Jesus. I simply want to encourage you to begin the process of waiting and seeking. Over the next two weeks we will begin giving you more insight into this gift and give you the opportunity to receive!

Maybe you are one of the ones like me who experienced the Baptism of the Holy Spirit as a young person but now you need a fresh touch of power.

Together, over the next couple of weeks, let's wait on something that will produce permanent change!

Thread
Pt. 3 - The Third Time Is The Charm
Author: Steve Ely

I. Introduction

It is small. It is usually unnoticed . . . until . . . the moment a thread is pulled you suddenly recognize its significance and how essential it is to the overall garment, tapestry or storyline. If the thread is removed the picture is incomplete. If the thread comes unraveled the whole is destroyed. Over the next few weeks we are going to examine the most important thread in history. It is a thread that not only runs through our entire story but also ties the story and us together.

Jesus' final instruction was to wait. Wait for what? Last week, I read to you Jesus' last words.

Luke 24:49

"I am going to send you what my Father has promised; but stay in the city until you have been clothed with power from high.

The writer of Acts repeats this instruction in Acts 1 with one small word change.

Acts 1:4

4On one occasion, while he was eating with them, he gave them this command: "Do not leave Jerusalem, but wait for the gift my Father promised, which you have heard me speak about.

He said wait for power. He also told them to wait on the The promise. What promise? The baptism in the Holy Spirit.

He makes no doubt about that because in verse 5 He says, "For John baptized with water, but in a few days you will be baptized with the Holy Spirit."

Jesus told His disciples to "wait" before they "go" change the world. He knew if they went without the empowerment of the Holy Spirit, nothing would happen. He was telling them, "Don't try to do anything I've instructed and called you to do until you've received this additional baptism. You'll only be striving in your own natural ability, and nothing of lasting spiritual value will be accomplished. Wait! Wait for what I promised you—a Helper."

Jesus commands them to wait on power and on a promise. He apparently knew that the third time was the charm. He knew that if they were going to be able to change the world in them and around them they would need a 3rd baptism.

III. Three Baptisms

a. Baptism of the Holy Spirit.

The first baptism is of the invisible baptisms that produces an after affect. You probably already know about this baptism, but you might know it by a different name: salvation. 1 Corinthians 12:13 says, "For by one Spirit we were all baptized into one body—whether Jews or Greeks, whether slaves or free.

Who is doing the baptizing in this verse? The Holy Spirit. When we experienced salvation, we were baptized into the same body—the body of Christ. The Holy Spirit is the agent who did the baptizing.

In fact, we are told concerning the work of the Holy Spirit in John 16:8-11, that "And when he comes, he will convince the world of sin and of righteousness and of judgment; of sin because they do not believe in me; of righteousness, because I go to the Father, and you will see me no more; of judgment, because the ruler of this world is judged."

The Holy Spirit convinces us of our need for Jesus and the salvation He has so graciously provided.

This is the baptism of the Holy Spirit, but it's not baptism in the Holy Spirit.

b. Water baptism.

The second baptism I already mentioned. Many Christians are unfamiliar with the baptism in the Holy Spirit. In fact, most believers only know about water baptism. The disciples were probably familiar with this baptism as well. They most likely saw this with their own eyes via John the Baptist's activity in the Jordan River.

Water Baptism is seen with physical eyes. It is a visible indicator of an inward change. This outward and visible baptism is to be sandwiched in between two baptisms you can't see with your physical eyes; you can only see the after-effects of them in a person's life.

This baptism falls directly between the 2 invisible baptisms.

If we are obedient to the commands of Scripture, we choose to experience a second baptism, this one in water. This type of baptism is what Jesus had in mind when He said, "Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit" (Matt. 28:19). Jesus wanted His disciples to witness so that folks would be baptized of the Holy Spirit and then choose to be baptized in water symbolically showing their friends, family, and associates that they had entered a new life in Christ.

After you have experienced the first baptism of salvation most of understand that we also need to be baptized a second time as a visible statement of faith. We understand the need of baptism 1 and 2, however, Jesus understood that we also need a 3rd baptism.

c. Baptism in the Holy Spirit.

The 3rd baptism (invisible with visible affects) is the baptism IN the Holy Spirit.

In Matthew 3:11, John the Baptist refers to Jesus, saying, "I indeed baptize you with water unto repentance, but He who is coming after me is mightier than I, whose sandals I am not worthy to carry. He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and fire."

Scripture clearly shows us Jesus is the one who performs this baptism, immersing us in the Holy Spirit.

This promise of the baptism in the Holy Spirit came powerfully to the disciples in Acts 2. Peter delivers a sermon immediately after the outpouring of the Holy Spirit on the day of Pentecost. In response to Peter's preaching, a number of his Jewish listeners fall under the conviction of the Holy Spirit. Acts 2:37 tells us, "Now when they heard this, they were cut to the heart, and said to Peter and the rest of the apostles, 'Men and brethren, what shall we do?'"

How does Peter respond?

"Then Peter said to them, 'Repent, and let every one of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins; and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. For the promise is to you and to your children, and to all who are afar off, as many as the Lord our God will call'" (vv. 38-39).

Notice that in the active verbs in these verses, Peter outlines three baptisms. He says:

1. Repent. This is the vital primary step in the baptism of salvation.
2. Be baptized. Peter urges his listeners to follow Jesus' example by submitting themselves to water baptism.
3. Receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. This is the third baptism. As Peter indicates here, the Holy Spirit will not force Himself upon anyone. He must be "received."

From here on out, the third baptism continually follows the first two as an essential, critical part of the Christian life.

For example, in Acts 8 we find the evangelist Philip preaching and teaching in Samaria. After a revival breaks out, many people are healed, delivered from demonic oppression and saved. Then, verse 12 tells us, "But when they believed Philip as he preached the things concerning the kingdom of God and the name of Jesus Christ, both men and women were baptized."

Two of the three baptisms are found in this verse. "They believed" means the people received the baptism of salvation. Then they were baptized in water—that's two. What about the third baptism—immersion in the Holy Spirit? Let's keep reading:

“Now when the apostles who were at Jerusalem heard that Samaria had received the word of God, they sent Peter and John to them, who, when they had come down, prayed for them that they might receive the Holy Spirit. For as yet He had fallen upon none of them. They had only been baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus” (vv. 14-16).

Many years after the Pentecost outpouring, we hear about the apostle Paul’s ministry in Ephesus, recorded in Acts 19: “And it happened, while Apollos was at Corinth, that Paul, having passed through the upper regions, came to Ephesus. And finding some disciples he said to them, ‘Did you receive the Holy Spirit when you believed?’ So they said to him, ‘We have not so much as heard whether there is a Holy Spirit’” (vv. 1-2, emphasis added).

Interestingly, the people Paul encountered were “disciples” who already “believed,” meaning they were followers of Jesus Christ. Now notice Paul’s question: “Did you receive the Holy Spirit when you believed?” Paul doesn’t seem to have any doubt in his mind that someone can come to saving faith in Jesus Christ yet not receive the fullness of the Holy Spirit. In other words, Paul knows that a person can be baptized by the Holy Spirit into Christ (salvation) yet not be baptized by Jesus into the Holy Spirit.

By the way, I love the response of the believers: “We have not so much as heard whether there is a Holy Spirit.” Maybe these people went to church today! Someone told them enough about Jesus so they could be saved, but they hadn’t even heard of the Holy Spirit.

Paul found this so puzzling that he decided to check and make sure these people were actually saved: “And he said to them, ‘Into what then were you baptized?’” (v. 3).

When they said, “Into John’s baptism,” Paul explained what they were missing: “Then Paul said, ‘John indeed baptized with a baptism of repentance, saying to the people that they should believe on Him who would come after Him, that is, on Christ Jesus.’ When they heard this, they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus. And when Paul had laid hands on them, the Holy Spirit came upon them, and they spoke with tongues and prophesied” (vv. 4-6).

Notice what happens when the Ephesian believers receive the baptism in the Holy Spirit: they spoke with tongues and prophesied. We see this pattern again and again throughout the book of Acts.

Do you see the pattern as practiced in the New Testament? The New Testament is supposed to be our pattern, isn’t it? So why do we stop short?

Each one of the baptisms represents a distinct work of grace God wants to do in our hearts and lives. Salvation is a miraculous work of grace upon the heart. Water baptism is a work of grace in and upon the heart of man. And a believer’s baptism in the Holy Spirit releases within us the supernatural empowerment to do all that God calls us to do.

III. Close

The disciples waited for power. They waited for the promise. I hope you are waiting. What baptism do you need? Next Sunday we will give you an opportunity to experience all 3 baptisms. As is our practice every Sunday we will give you an opportunity to be saved. We will have water baptisms next Sunday. If you haven't been baptized a second time just bring a change of clothes we will provide the towel. And we will give you the opportunity to be baptized in the Holy Spirit.

Thread
Pt. 4 - Obedience and Hunger
Author: Steve Ely

I. Introduction

We have taken the last 3 weeks to discuss the activity of the Holy Spirit in our history and also to discuss our desperate need for this experience.

Today we are not here to discuss how spiritual someone is or to judge someone's depth of love for God. Today we will simply talk about obedience and hunger.

Today we find ourselves at Pentecost. We are 50 days removed from Jesus' resurrection on Easter Sunday. It was because of His crucifixion, the shedding of His blood and then His demonstration of divinity by coming back from the dead that we now have access to a right relationship with God. According to the law of God there had to be a sacrifice. There is no forgiveness from sin without blood being shed. So, the Father sent His own Son to become that perfect and blameless sacrifice so that we could be saved. On our own we could never access right relationship. So, Jesus came. Jesus died. Jesus rose again. So, this morning I can thankfully stop and offer every person an opportunity to experience the first baptism we talked about last week which is salvation. I have been praying all week that the Holy Spirit would accomplish His job description which is, according to Jesus, to convince us of our sin. Right now, if you are aware that you are far from God. If you realize you are not in relationship. If you have come to grips with the dread of being headed for punishment and judgment. That is the Holy Spirit! He is convicting and convincing so that you will make the step and surrender your life to Jesus today.

Is there one?

There is a 2nd step that we are instructed to take after we submit our lives to Jesus. It is interesting to me that the early church was so adamant about this and we are passive and sometimes even dismissive of this step. When someone in the early church surrendered their life to Jesus, they were then walked to the 2nd baptism . . . baptism in water. No misunderstanding that there is anything magical or mystical power in the water. However, we must also realize that the symbolic death and burial represented by going under the water stands as a powerful and convicting witness and testimony of our new faith.

It is here that rather than questioning spirituality or our love of God that we must address obedience. Jesus was very clear in example by participating in water baptism Himself and also by instructing His disciples to perpetuate this step when He said, "Go into all the world preaching the gospel and baptizing those that believe!" Have you been obedient to His example? Have you been obedient to His teaching? Remember, I have stated in the past that partial obedience is complete disobedience. We allow our schedule, our pride, our stubbornness will to get in the way. We should simply obey! Today, we give you an opportunity to participate in this 2nd baptism. You may think you aren't prepared. We have you covered. We have towels, bags for your wet clothes, etc.

We have everything you may need. If you want to be baptized in water this morning, would you quickly respond?

So, we have talked about obedience. So, as we move forward to what this day in history is all about, let me challenge your hunger.

I draw your attention to what may seem to be an odd passage of Scripture.

2 Kings 7:1-10, 16-17

Elisha said, "Listen! God's word! The famine's over. This time tomorrow food will be plentiful—a handful of meal for a shekel; two handfuls of grain for a shekel. The market at the city gate will be buzzing." The attendant on whom the king leaned for support said to the Holy Man, "You expect us to believe that? Trapdoors opening in the sky and food tumbling out?" "You'll watch it with your own eyes," he said, "but you will not eat so much as a mouthful!" It happened that four lepers were sitting just outside the city gate. They said to one another, "What are we doing sitting here at death's door? If we enter the famine-struck city we'll die; if we stay here we'll die. So let's take our chances in the camp of Aram and throw ourselves on their mercy. If they receive us we'll live, if they kill us we'll die. We've got nothing to lose." So after the sun went down they got up and went to the camp of Aram. When they got to the edge of the camp, surprise! Not a man in the camp! The Master had made the army of Aram hear the sound of horses and a mighty army on the march. They told one another, "The king of Israel hired the kings of the Hittites and the kings of Egypt to attack us!" Panicked, they ran for their lives through the darkness, abandoning tents, horses, donkeys—the whole camp just as it was—running for dear life. These four lepers entered the camp and went into a tent. First they ate and drank. Then they grabbed silver, gold, and clothing, and went off and hid it. They came back, entered another tent, and looted it, again hiding their plunder. Finally they said to one another, "We shouldn't be doing this! This is a day of good news and we're making it into a private party! If we wait around until morning we'll get caught and punished. Come on! Let's go tell the news to the king's palace!" So they went and called out at the city gate, telling what had happened: "We went to the camp of Aram and, surprise!—the place was deserted. Not a soul, not a sound! Horses and donkeys left tethered and tents abandoned just as they were." The people then looted the camp of Aram. Food prices dropped overnight—a handful of meal for a shekel; two handfuls of grain for a shekel—God's word to the letter! The king ordered his attendant, the one he leaned on for support, to be in charge of the city gate. The people, turned into a mob, poured through the gate, trampling him to death. It was exactly what the Holy Man had said when the king had come to see him.

I draw your attention here to say 3 things!

1. The famine is over.

This day is a famine ending day. There is obviously a famine of power. But the Holy Spirit was sent to resolve that issue once and for all.

2. You must do more than hear. You must believe.

The prophet stood up and declared it was over but even though the people hear they didn't believe it. They would have stayed holed up in the city and died from lack of food had it not been for the 4 lepers. Listen, I can stand here and declare the famine is over all day long but until you get to the place where you accept that, believe that you can take God at His Word, and fully believe that you can have any and everything He has said you could have then you will live your entire life walled up in powerlessness! You will continue to call famine fullness.

3. Hunger must overtake us.

It was hunger that caused the 4 lepers to take action. How hungry are you? Are you hungry enough to push past fear? Past false teachings? Are you hungry enough to fight your way out of the box you have put God in? Are you hungry enough to pursue everything God has even if it means marching out of your comfort zone?

I have good news. Like the lepers of the story my hunger caused me to take a chance at 12 years old and simply trust God that He wouldn't hurt me and only had the best for me. I came to the place where I believed what He said about Holy Spirit just as much as I did what He said about salvation. My hunger drove me to be willing to ask and receive. Good news the famine is over. All you must do is ask and receive. It is a gift that has been promised!

Instructions

a. God has offered us a gift.

To receive a gift all we must do is accept it. We can't earn it nor do we need to beg for it. Peter's instructions on the Day of Pentecost are still good. Repent and receive. Simply accept. You don't have to be in some emotional euphoric state to get this gift. You simply have to believe and receive. Luke 11:11-13. You need to understand that God wants you to have the Holy Spirit. He will not withhold Him from you! (\$5 to kid. If he had to do something it wasn't a gift but a bribe.)

b. Open your mouth - Acts 2:4

It is the Spirit that speaks, but it is your voice. They spoke. They had to open their mouth and use their voice and then the Holy Spirit took over. We must open our mouth. You need to understand that every time any one in the Bible was filled with the Holy Spirit they had to speak. We must understand that out of our praise in our own tongue the Holy Spirit will give utterance. That means you simply step out in faith and say what you hear the Spirit saying. I am afraid it is me . . . in your own power you can't. In His power you can. Call people to receive and they clamp their mouth shut. How can the Spirit speak if you don't give Him voice?

So this morning I think where we are is those that have been filled need to understand that, according to Jesus in John 7:37-39, the Holy Spirit is like the water flowing to your house right now. It is constant and it is consistent. The only thing stopping that flow is the faucet . . . you. You need to release that flow again. Be refilled with power. Don't dam it up. Access what you have been given. An encounter 20 years ago and never

used again means you need a new experience. That is a memory not a daily, active, power giving experience. Too many of us are like the lepers. We eat and then hide it.

So here is your opportunity to experience the 3rd baptism. If you have been filled and need to be refilled or if you have never been filled, I am imploring you today, begging you to let hunger rule the day. Come to the place where you will simply become so hungry for all that God has and has promised that you will hit your face and simply ask for more.

Open altars. If you have repented simply receive.