

Transformed by the Spirit

Joel 2:28-32

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We are in the season of Pentecost, a time when the Holy Spirit came down and enlivened the disciples.

What happened on Pentecost was foretold by the prophet Joel:

Joel 2:28-32

I will pour out my Spirit on all people.

Your sons and daughters will prophesy,

your old men will dream dreams,

your young men will see visions.

²⁹Even on my servants, both men and women,

I will pour out my Spirit in those days.

³⁰I will show wonders in the heavens

and on the earth,

blood and fire and billows of smoke.

³¹The sun will be turned to darkness

and the moon to blood

before the coming of the great and dreadful day of the LORD.

³²And everyone who calls

on the name of the LORD will be saved

And Peter quotes this in Acts 2:17-21

The Holy Spirit has come down and enlivened Jesus' disciples and we see an incredible transformation. Let's take a look at the transformation brought on by the Holy Spirit.

Throughout the gospel accounts of Jesus, Peter is

- Trying

But always falling short

That sounds like us too Hmmmmm

Luke 9:28-33 The Transfiguration

²⁸About eight days after Jesus said this, he took Peter, John and James with him and went up onto a mountain to pray. ²⁹As he was praying, the appearance of his face changed, and his clothes became as bright as a flash of lightning. ³⁰Two men, Moses and Elijah, appeared in glorious splendor, talking with Jesus. ³¹They spoke about his departure, which he was about to bring to fulfillment at Jerusalem. ³²Peter and his companions were very sleepy, but when they became fully awake, they saw his glory and the two men standing with him. ³³As the men were leaving Jesus, Peter said to him, "Master, it is good for us to be here. Let us put up three shelters—one for you, one for Moses and one for Elijah." (He did not know what he was saying.)

Peter is witnessing this incredible event ... but he did not know what he was saying
He was talking ... but he might not as well have been

Peter struggles with more than just talking

Matthew 14:25-31

²⁵ Shortly before dawn Jesus went out to them, walking on the lake.²⁶ When the disciples saw him walking on the lake, they were terrified. "It's a ghost," they said, and cried out in fear.

²⁷ But Jesus immediately said to them: "Take courage! It is I. Don't be afraid."

²⁸ "Lord, if it's you," Peter replied, "tell me to come to you on the water."

²⁹ "Come," he said.

Then Peter got down out of the boat, walked on the water and came toward Jesus. ³⁰ But when he saw the wind, he was afraid and, beginning to sink, cried out, "Lord, save me!"

³¹ Immediately Jesus reached out his hand and caught him. "You of little faith," he said, "why did you doubt?"

Peter had good intentions and tried to put his faith into action ... and still be doubted and was afraid

Could Peter think of the eternal? The Kingdom of God? Apparently Not

Matthew 16:21-24

²¹ From that time on Jesus began to explain to his disciples that he must go to Jerusalem and suffer many things at the hands of the elders, the chief priests and the teachers of the law, and that he must be killed and on the third day be raised to life.

²² Peter took him aside and began to rebuke him. "Never, Lord!" he said. "This shall never happen to you!"

²³Jesus turned and said to Peter, "Get behind me, Satan! You are a stumbling block to me; you do not have in mind the concerns of God, but merely human concerns."

²⁴Then Jesus said to his disciples, "Whoever wants to be my disciple must deny themselves and take up their cross and follow me."

Peter, a disciple, rebukes Jesus, his rabbi, his teacher.

From Jesus' response, it's clear that Peter doesn't have a clue.

Although Peter has a good heart and is trying, he fails at almost every level.

This can't be a shock to us.

Many people today have the Peter foot-in-mouth syndrome.

Many people have good hearts ... want to serve God ... are honestly trying ...

But are still floundering.

What's happening?

Too often we talk to God and **we tell God** what we are going to do for him.

Then we wonder why our follow through is so poor.

Instead, what we need to do is remember the Lord's pray where we say, "Thy will be done."

ASK God what he wants us to for him.

Then when God answers ... do it!

The focus should be on GOD, not what we can do for God!

Was Peter any better after Jesus rose from the dead and appeared to Peter?

Nope

John 21:15-17

¹⁵When they had finished eating, Jesus said to Simon Peter, "Simon son of John, do you love me more than these?"

"Yes, Lord," he said, "you know that I love you."

Jesus said, "Feed my lambs."

¹⁶Again Jesus said, "Simon son of John, do you love me?"

He answered, "Yes, Lord, you know that I love you."

Jesus said, "Take care of my sheep."

¹⁷The third time he said to him, "Simon son of John, do you love me?"

Peter was hurt because Jesus asked him the third time, "Do you love me?" He said, "Lord, you know all things; you know that I love you."

Jesus said, "Feed my sheep."

At this point, Peter had seen the resurrected Christ.

Peter was with Him when this took place.

Yet Peter was still thinking about himself loving Jesus.

Jesus wants Peter to understand that he love Jesus, then he has to love EVERYONE ELSE.

Jesus wants **US** to understand that if we love Jesus, then we have to look at the face of everyone

- Black or white
- Male or female
- Gay or straight
- Conservative or liberal
- Short or tall
- Tattooed or balding

We are to look at the face of **EVERYONE** and treat that person as if we are looking in the face of Jesus.

Throughout Peter's time with Jesus, Peter was not able to serve Jesus well.

Peter was rather ... ineffective.

You could say – hey, he was only a student, and that's true.

But what brought about the change in Peter?

The answer is the Holy Spirit filled Peter!

Acts 2

Verses 14-15

¹⁴Then Peter stood up with the Eleven, raised his voice and addressed the crowd: "Fellow Jews and all of you who live in Jerusalem, let me explain

this to you; listen carefully to what I say. ¹⁵These people are not drunk, as you suppose. It's only nine in the morning!

Verses 22-24

²²"Fellow Israelites, listen to this: Jesus of Nazareth was a man accredited by God to you by miracles, wonders and signs, which God did among you through him, as you yourselves know. ²³This man was handed over to you by God's deliberate plan and foreknowledge; and you, with the help of wicked men, put him to death by nailing him to the cross. ²⁴But God raised him from the dead, freeing him from the agony of death, because it was impossible for death to keep its hold on him.

Verses 29-33

²⁹"Fellow Israelites, I can tell you confidently that the patriarch David died and was buried, and his tomb is here to this day. ³⁰But he was a prophet and knew that God had promised him on oath that he would place one of his descendants on his throne. ³¹Seeing what was to come, he spoke of the resurrection of the Messiah, that he was not abandoned to the realm of the dead, nor did his body see decay. ³²God has raised this Jesus to life, and we are all witnesses of it. ³³Exalted to the right hand of God, he has received from the Father the promised Holy Spirit and has poured out what you now see and hear

Verses 36-37

³⁶"Therefore let all Israel be assured of this: God has made this Jesus, whom you crucified, both Lord and Messiah."

³⁷When the people heard this, they were cut to the heart and said to Peter and the other apostles, "Brothers, what shall we do?"

Now, Peter is proclaiming the gospel of Jesus of Nazareth and people are responding in a big way!

What's the difference?

Peter was filled with the Holy Spirit!

The Holy Spirit brings about great transformation!

Jesus knew this would happen!!

John 14:12-15

¹²Very truly I tell you, whoever believes in me will do the works I have been doing, and they will do even greater things than these, because I am going to the Father. ¹³And I will do whatever you ask in my name, so that the Father may be glorified in the Son. ¹⁴You may ask me for anything in my name, and I will do it.

¹⁵“If you love me, keep my commands. ¹⁶And I will ask the Father, and he will give you another advocate to help you and be with you forever

Jesus knew that his disciples would do great things ... when they were filled with the Holy Spirit – the advocate Jesus spoke of!

Indeed, from Peter’s preaching in Acts 2:41

Those who accepted his message were baptized, and about three thousand were added to their number that day.

Three thousand came to believe that day!

The Peter we read about Acts is very different from the Peter of the Gospels.

The Holy Spirit has refined and honed his good qualities and pared away the bad.

The courage to speak out, for example, remained, but the words spoken are no longer impetuous and without thought, but cogent, considered and wise.

Peter was still Peter.

The Holy Spirit had not destroyed his essential self and replaced it with something alien. His basic personality remained the same, but had been refined and strengthened, so that he became closer not only to what God wanted him to be, but closer also to what he himself wanted to be.

Peter's courage was demonstrated on several occasions in the Gospels, but while Peter trusted in his own strength, it inevitably let him down at the crucial time and led him to deny Jesus. This same courage, strengthened by the Holy Spirit, became infinitely dependable and sure.

And for us?

The Holy Spirit does not invade us unasked but, if we truly wish to receive it, it is there for each one of us for the asking.

If we truly want the Holy Spirit to enter our lives, it will be because we want to change and will welcome the changes that the Spirit will bring.

It will also mean that we have recognized our inability to bring these changes about on our own and have realized our need for God's.

CONCLUSION

Erasmus, the famous Renaissance scholar, once told a classic story which was designed to emphasize how important it is that we take up the torch of Christ's

ministry with great commitment. In the story, Jesus returns to heaven after his time on earth. The angels gather around him to learn all that happened during his days on earth. Jesus tells them of the miracles, his teachings, his death on the cross, and his resurrection.

When he finishes his story, Michael the Archangel asks Jesus, “But what happens now?” Jesus answers, “I have left behind eleven faithful disciples and a handful of men and women who have faithfully followed me. They will declare my message and express my love. These faithful people will build my church.”

“But,” responds Michael, “What if these people fail? What then is your other plan?” And Jesus answers, “I have no other plan!”

As the body of Christ, we, like the apostles, are charged with the duty of preaching the Gospel. It is up to us to bring to today’s world this wonderful, glorious Gospel of love, salvation and redemption that has sustained and comforted people for 2000 years. Jesus is counting on you and me.

But the good news is, we are not alone. The Holy Spirit is here to melt us, mold us, fill us, and use us.

At Pentecost nearly 2000 years ago, the Holy Spirit gave the disciples the ability to speak in the language their listeners needed in order for them to hear and understand. I don’t know if this was literally the ability to speak in different languages or whether the Holy Spirit was so powerful in them that the need for language was transcended, allowing the Holy Spirit to speak directly to the heart.

We need to ask the Holy Spirit to help us find this language. We have a message to deliver - it is quite literally a life or death message.

We need to find the language that will speak to people today, that will reach out and touch their lives and their hearts. We need to do this both as individuals and collectively as a church.

Be warriors and not worriers!