

The Spirit Departed 8-1-99
Acts 2:1-4/4:31
Numbers 11:14-17,25-29/14:2,21-24

Pentecost and 120 are immersed in the Spirit. This is what John the Baptist said Jesus was coming to do, baptize us, immerse us in the Holy Spirit. Is that where you are at this moment; immersed in the Spirit? Why in Acts 4 were the same people reimmersed – rebaptized? Aren't the same people included that were in Acts 2? What had happened? Fear had gripped them. Concern for the threats of the world had seized their hearts. Let's look at how they responded to that condition, 4:24,29,30 - They went to the Lord in united prayer. What was God's response? Verse 31

Now let us take a look at the other example: Moses needed help to carry the burden of leadership. God called out the 70 elders to help him. God placed the same anointing Moses had on those elders. But where were they two chapters later when the spies return. 14:2 ALL – does that include the 70 elders? What happened to the Spirit that was upon them? What was the problem they were facing that caused the Spirit to depart? See verse 9. Rebellion that had its source in fear of man!

Let us contrast the two situations without getting into the differences of the anointing in Old and New Testament:

In Acts the people of God were faced with threats. It was intimidating.

In Numbers the people of God were faced with an enemy that was intimidating.

Is the world often intimidating to you?

In Acts they went to prayer as one to ask for God's help and boldness.

In Numbers they whined and turned their back on God

What is your first response?

In Acts they were filled again and granted boldness

In Numbers they faced God's judgement and went into battle without God, lost.

Same fear of man in both cases just the response was different and therefore God's response to them was different. When you sense a fear of man in your heart how do you respond? Do you run to a brother or sister in the Lord and pray together – or do you whine like Israel and forget what God has done for you in past? The miracles He has worked in your life should be grounds for your confidence today that He will answer. He will fill you with His Spirit if you ask. Do you believe that? Lk 11:13 He wants to fill you! He's ready to fill you again.

After hearing the words of Nathan David realized – faced his sin – owned up to it and repented. Psalm 51 is that prayer of repentance. In it he pleads with God not to cast him from His Presence, and not to take His Holy Spirit from him. V11 This was David's concern. He did not want to face his enemies without God, like the Israelites did when they went ahead into Canaan presumptuously thinking they could fight the enemy without God's assistance.

The enemy of your soul daily tries to get you into a place where God must withdraw his Spirit from you. You see God is light and in Him is no darkness at all. And if you turn from the light and from the fear of God and allow the fear of man to seize your heart, or allow lust to blind you and drive you into its chains you will need to be refilled –

rebaptized just as the early church was, just as those elders of Israel needed, just as David feared. We can walk in the Light or we can turn and walk toward the darkness.

I'm not talking about eternal security; I'm talking about walking in a living vital relationship – being in God's presence. Are you in His Presence or have you let fear or some habitual sin push you out? David did what the early church did and went to prayer – He sought God's perspective, God's heart, and humbled himself.

But let me give you an example of one who did not. Saul was told by the prophet Samuel to destroy the Amalekites. He brought back the king and the best of the livestock. The once humble Saul had grown hard and proud and disobedient. 1Sam 16:14 "Now the Spirit of the LORD had departed from Saul, an evil spirit from the LORD tormented him."

We can choose to no longer walk in the Presence. Demas has left me having loved this world, the Apostle Paul wrote. Walk in the Light... Let it expose your secret sins. Constantly come to the Lord with a heart like David, "Search me and know my heart, test me and know my anxious thoughts and see if there is any offensive way in me. And lead me in the way everlasting." Is that where you are walking today? If not do like David, like the early church. Cry out, "touch me again Lord". Recognize how great your need is moment by moment and how sufficient Jesus is to meet it. Keep your relationship fresh! Gen 5:22,24 6:9 Can you live moment by moment with Jesus? Col 2:6 As you have therefore received CJ the Lord so walk ye in Him...

Henri Nouwen wrote that, "The real enemies of our life are the 'oughts' and the 'ifs'. They pull us backward into the unalterable past and forward into the unpredictable future. But real life takes place in the here and now. God is a God of the present. God is always in the moment, be that moment hard or easy, joyful or painful." God lives in the eternal now and though you are a work in progress, the main goal is you walking in fellowship with Him NOW. Where are you at with God this moment? Peace is not the absence of trouble but the presence of God. Has the peace left? Move back into his presence. Be filled with the Holy Spirit. Go to God again and ask. If you are not holding back, He will not hold back. You see He can only fill you as much as you are willing to empty yourself of your own ways and plans and reservations.

Let us never settle into routine but always openly and honestly ask what we should do differently, where we need refreshing, staying in His Presence. The Bread of Communion is also the bread of the Presence. The Lord is here. He sees our hearts, our shallowness, our commitment. And He loves us. He wants us to remain in communion, in His Presence. He wants to make us like His Son who always walked with His Father.

The bread is His body broken for you. Are you willing to be broken for those around you God loves so much? The wine is the blood He spilled to cover our sins – so we could walk with Him. How can two walk together unless they agree? Before you take the bread and the wine I would ask you, do you agree with your Savior? Is there something He has been trying to tell you that you will not hear? Are you walking with him, filled with His Spirit today? Take time to examine where you stand with your Savior and make sure you are where He wants you before you partake.