

The Holy Spirit and the Gospel

Disclaimer: this is an automatically generated machine transcription - there may be small errors or mistranscriptions. Please refer to the original audio if you are in any doubt.

Date: 14 May 2017

Preacher: Kevin Murphy

[0 : 0 0] Good morning. It's wonderful to be with you this morning. We have known of Watermark Church for a long time. About the last five years, I've heard of Watermark, and whenever friends of mine have moved to Hong Kong, I've often recommended you've got to go check out this church, Watermark, and so it's great to finally be with you this morning. This passage that was read to us this morning, it's a very well-known passage. It's the famous day of Pentecost, right? And it's the day in which God pours out His Holy Spirit on His church. It's the day that some people have described as the birthday of the church, the day that the church was born. And it's a wonderful story in the Bible, and we have much to learn from it. But what I want to do today is I want to set it in the context of a much bigger story. We can maybe read Acts chapter 2 and learn some lessons from it, but miss the big picture. And so I want to go back to the entire picture and place it in the context of the entire biblical narrative and see what we can learn from it there. And so let's go back to the beginning. And so right at the beginning of the Bible, we have God, Father, Son, and Spirit, dwelling in perfect unity and community. And out of their love for each other, they make mankind. They create humanity. And the Bible says that they make mankind in the image. In the image of God, He made them male and female. And Genesis tells us that the purpose for which God made us is that we would be image bearers of God. They would bear His image in creation. But in addition to that, that we would also be God's stewards of His creation. So both image bearers of God and stewards of His creation. In other words, to look after His creation, to bring and to demonstrate something of the wonder and the grandeur and the majesty of God into creation and to co-rule creation with God. And so Genesis 1 says this, God says,

Let us make mankind in our image, after our likeness, and let them be fruitful and multiply, having dominion over the fish of the sea, the birds of the air, the livestock, and over every creeping thing that creeps on the earth. And so God didn't just make humanity and say, best of luck, off you go, call me if you need me. He said, no, no, I'm going to make you, but I'm asking you to co-rule creation with me. You are my stewards to bring my image and my glory into creation. And God didn't make us for the purposes of self-actualization or self-fulfillment, as if God is just a butler who serves our needs whenever we need Him. God says, I've made you to work with me for your good and for my glory. And so God sends us out. And the primary gift or the means by which God enables and powers us to do this is Himself. He gives us Himself. And this is what it means to be human. It's to work with God, to join God in the stewarding of His creation for the glory of God and both for our good. But like all good stories, this story also has its issues. And it's not long before things spiral downhill and things go a little bit bad. And as human beings, we soon bought into the lie that we knew better than God and we knew what was good for us. And so we thought we know what will make us happy, what will make our lives worthwhile, what will fulfill us. And so we soon bought into the lie that actually we know better than God and that if we fulfill our own desires, that will make life worthwhile. And so we listened to the serpent, we listened to Satan, and we bought the lie saying that we know better than our Creator and our King. And soon we started to live life on our own terms, by our own strength and for our own glory. And the effects of this are nothing short of disastrous. Everything that's wrong with the world finds its origin in that first decision. And so the ramifications of Adam and Eve and their sin is that all creation is groaning.

Everything in the world is marred with a kind of brokenness. Our loves are disordered. Our lives are fractured. And all of us are marked with broken relationships. Our relationship with ourselves are broken. That's why we have strife and inner turmoil and anxiety. Our relationships with each other is broken. That's why there's racism and sexism and strife and prejudice and people looking down their noses and judging others. Our relationship with our world is broken. That's why we don't look after our creation the way we should. And earth itself is broken. But primarily our relationship with

God is broken. And so existentially in our heart of hearts and the depths of our being, we divorce from our Maker, divorced from our Creator. And Adam and Eve find themselves driven from the Garden of Eden. They're divorced from the presence of God. They're estranged from the lives that God designed them to live and designed them to make. And Augustine said it like this in the third century.

He said our hearts were made for you. You've heard this before, right? Our hearts were made for you and our hearts are restless until they find their rest in you. And so the reality is every one of us following in the footsteps of Adam and Eve, there's a restlessness that marks our lives and a sense of brokenness. And for the rest of the Old Testament, the rest of the scriptures, we see humanity, we see God's longing and looking for that Garden of Eden. And God gives them temporary solutions. He gives them a tabernacle. He gives them the temple. He gives them temporary makeshift solutions to enjoy God's presence and to dwell with God again. But forever people are looking to go back to the Garden of Eden. They're looking to once again connect with God, to find their home and to find their rest in God himself. And so God sets up these temporary solutions, but they could only be attained on the receipt of blood being shed through a sacrifice. Or they could only be attained through another mediator, sometimes through the law or through Moses or through an angel or through the temple or through the high priest. People were looking for God and you could meet with God, but often through a mediator, through someone else. And so for the rest of the Old Testament, there's this lingering longing to be restored with God for humanity, male and female, to find their place in God again. And so the story of humanity, which is my story and your story and every one of our stories, is the one of looking and longing for something transcendent, something that's going to fill our hearts again, searching for our maker, looking for someone or something in which to find our rest. And we see this throughout the Old Testament. And if we're honest, we'll see this in our lives as well. That's why we're addicted to shopping. We're looking for something transcendent in the shopping malls. We're looking for something transcendent in our workplaces. We hit the heights of our career. We're looking for something transcendent in our children. That's why we worship our families. Every one of us, the story of humanity is we're looking and longing for this place of rest. We will find God once again. And we see it in the Psalms, right? Psalm 63, right? Oh God, you are my God. Earnestly I seek you. My soul thirsts for you.

[7 : 53] My flesh faints for you as in a dry and a weary land, not in Hong Kong, where there is no water, right? Or Psalm 27, one thing I've asked of the Lord, this I will seek after, that I may dwell in the house of the Lord all the days of my life, to gaze upon the beauty of the Lord and inquire of his temple. And this is something that the prophets long for, that they long for the day when they wouldn't have to find God through a mediator, through someone else, but they themselves could encounter God in a life-transforming way. So Jeremiah, the prophet says it like this, behold, the days are coming, promises the Lord, when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel. I will put my law within them.

I will write it on their hearts. I will be their God and they will be my people. No longer will someone teach his neighbor saying, you should know the Lord, for they will all know me from the very least of them to the very greatest, declares the Lord. Enter chapter three.

So chapter one, God makes us creation for his glory and for our good. Chapter two, the fall and the longing. Chapter three, God delivers on his promise. And so God does the exact thing that he promises. He mediates a new covenant with his people. And he does so by bringing a new high priest, Jesus Christ himself. And the wonderful news of the gospel is that God did for us what we've all been longing for, but which we couldn't do for ourselves. God did for us what we all needed, but weren't able to do for ourselves. God sent himself born as a man to atone for the sins of the world and to bring us back to God. And previously, where humanity tried to access God through someone else, through another mediator or another high priest, God sends the ultimate high priest, Jesus Christ, so that we can meet God through him. And Jesus died on the cross so that all who will come to him no longer need to come on their own efforts or their own morality, but can come simply trusting and believing in him.

Jesus died on the cross so that like Adam and Eve, we don't, we no longer need to be cast out of his presence, but can be brought back into his presence. And so Jesus, at one point, he's, he's teaching his disciples and he says this, he says, if anyone is thirsty, let him come to me and drink. For as the scriptures have promised, out of his heart will flow rivers of living water. And then John,

who's writing this, says, this he spoke about the Holy Spirit, who had not yet been given because Jesus had not been glorified. So he's speaking about the day then Christ will die on the cross. He says, when that happens, after that, God will pour out his Holy Spirit. In fact, the Holy Spirit won't be something, the presence of God won't be in the temple, won't be mediated through a priest. The presence and the life of God will be a rivers of living water inside of you, bubbling up inside of you. And so when the psalmist says, God, I, I, I search for you, I seek for you, I'm thirsty. My soul is thirsty, like a land with no water. Jesus says, I will give you the Holy Spirit and he will become a river of living water bubbling up within you. No longer will you need to go and look for him and search for him. I will place him within you. Friends, Jesus died on the cross to atone for our sins. Yes. To deal with our past. Yes. To secure a future in us in eternity with him. Yes. But Jesus died on the cross to also secure us back to relationship with God today. Now to give us the life living waters of the Holy Spirit inside of us. That all who come to him may know him and love him and drink of him and enjoy him and experience him and encounter the living God today. And so Jesus dies on the cross, rises victoriously, and just before he ascends into heaven, he says to his disciples, wait here until the promised Holy

Spirit is given to you, which you've heard from me. For John baptized with water, but I will baptize you in the Holy Spirit. And then he says, you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes upon you and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, in Judea, Samaria, and to the ends of the earth. [12:22] Now, into that context, we get to Acts chapter 2. We get to Acts chapter 2. Now friends, the reason why we've taken this long detour, which is actually a very quick overview of the Bible, is because what we read in Acts chapter 2, when the Holy Spirit is poured out in the church, when the Holy Spirit fills their hearts, when the Holy Spirit encounters them, this isn't just for one section of the Christian church. This isn't just for the charismatics. This isn't just for those that are extroverted by personality. This isn't just for those that are happy-clappy by personality. This is what it means to be a follower of Jesus. But more importantly, this is what it means to be human.

The way that God made us in the very beginning is to walk with Him, to dwell with Him, to co-steward creation with Him, to bear His image for God to live with us and us to live with God. But the fall has messed that all up. But this is what it means. When we read Acts chapter 2, this is what it means not just for Watermark. This is what it means for Hong Kong. This is what God wants for Hong Kong, for every human being in Hong Kong to know God and walk with Him, for us to experience the life-giving waters within us.

And so I myself, I am not a very extroverted person. I'm not very boisterous. I don't like hype. I don't like emotional manipulation in the church. And I don't like hysteria. But friends, Acts chapter 2 is not just for certain branches of the church. This is what God has got for everyone. This is what it means to be a follower of Jesus, to love God and to be loved by Him, to know Him, to be known by Him, and to experience and encounter the living God. And so I want to ask you, are you walking with God?

Is the life of God real in your home, in your marriage, in your parenting? Do you walk with the person of the Holy Spirit in your workplace? Is He a part of your life, or is this just a Sunday thing? Now, let's dive into Acts chapter 2. What does it mean to encounter the person of the Holy Spirit? What does it mean to be filled or baptized with the Holy Spirit? Three things we learn from Acts chapter 2 about being filled with the Spirit. We learn the Holy Spirit is an outside power. The Holy Spirit is a non-prejudicial power or an indiscriminate power, unprejudiced power. And we learn about the wonder of Jesus. Okay? So firstly, the gift of the Holy Spirit is an outside power. Look at what was read for us with Echo and Grace. Acts chapter 2 verse 1 says this, When the day of Pentecost arrived, they were all together in one place. And suddenly they came from heaven a sound like a mighty rushing wind, and it filled the entire house where they were sitting.

[15:17] And divided tongues as of fire appeared to them, and rested on each one of them. And they were all filled with awe with the Holy Spirit, and began to speak in other tongues as the Spirit gave them utterance. So when the Holy Spirit comes upon these believers, as Jesus promised would happen, there are various manifestations. And we read in the book of Acts that the manifestations were different at different times. You can't say, this is what it means to be filled with the Holy Spirit because you will fall down, or this is what it means. At different times, it looks like different things. They're different manifestations. But when they encounter it, the one manifestation is there's this loud wind, or what sounds like a wind. There's a loud noise.

It sounds like a rushing wind. Now, I've never been in a hurricane or a typhoon, but I hear that you all have, right? They're quite common here in Hong Kong. And when you have a T8, is that, or a T10 typhoon, everyone stays indoors, you don't go to work. Why? Because it's dangerous. It's scary. It doesn't leave you the same. If you're on the star ferry crossing over, and there's a serious typhoon, you're not going to get out of there the same as when you arrived, right? You're going to look different. Having an encounter with a hurricane or a typhoon leaves you different, I'm sure. In the same way, these people encounter the Holy Spirit, and it leaves them different. But notice this. Notice the source of the power. Where does this life-transforming power come from? Does it come from within them? No, it comes from outside. I'm not sure if this is true in Hong Kong, but this is true in South Africa, and it's true in most of the West, and I think it's true here as well.

Well, most people in the world know that the world is not the way that it's meant to be. Our world is marked with brokenness and discord. They're things that are not right with our world.

[17:14] Now, most people blame the problems with the world out there, right? It's the government. It's my parents. It's my education. It's Hong Kong's housing problem, right? The problem is out there, and the solution we are told is where? Inside. If only I'm strong enough, if I'm diligent enough, if I work hard enough. There's a famous poem called *Invictus* where there's a line that says, you are the master of your faith, the captain of your destiny. Have you heard that line before?

That's the narrative of at least South Africa and the West. We believe I am the captain of my faith. I am the master of my destiny. If I am going to make my life a success, it comes to me. The problems are out there, but I have the power within myself to solve my problems and to make my life a success.

But friends, the Bible tells us that most of the problems with the world are actually in here. It's in my heart. It's the fact that my heart is disordered. My loves are disordered. I love all sorts of things in the wrong order. I love myself more than I love God. I love myself more than I love my wife. I love myself, and I pursue my self-glory more than God's glory. But the solution is not found within me. The solution comes from outside. The solution comes from the hope of the gospel. The solution to the problems of the world are not work harder, strive better, be better.

The solution is to found in submission to an outside power called the Lord Jesus Christ. Friends, every religion in the world tells you the same thing. You have the power to fix your life. You have the power to become the person you want to be. If you can discover the four noble truths, right?

If you can discover the eightfold noble path, right mindfulness, right thinking, right this, right that, you will achieve peace. But what Acts chapter tells us and what the Bible has been telling us, what the gospel tells us, that the deepest problems are not out there, they're in here.

[19:19] And that the solution is found in coming to the Lord Jesus Christ. You see, friends, the power of the gospel is not something you earn. It's not a gift. It's not a reward that you earn or achieve. It's a gift that you receive. You see, it's not a power that you can earn and you're entitled to.

It's simply a gift that you receive when you submit to the Lord Jesus Christ. This powerful encounter with God is not reserved for the good enough, the powerful enough, the wealthy enough, or the strong enough. It's reserved for those who come on their knees and say, God, I need you.

God, I need you. Second thing is this. The gift of the Holy Spirit is an unprejudiced power, an indiscriminate power. And this follows on because if the gift of the Holy Spirit is not something you can earn or achieve, but it's something that you receive as a gift, it's freely available to everyone and anyone. And we see this with a variety of people that are mentioned. Did you notice how many diverse groups of people are mentioned in Jerusalem that are witnesses to the power of the Holy Spirit and later on many of them come to know God? It says, now in Jerusalem, we were living people under every nation under heaven, Parthians and Medes, Elamites and residents of Mesopotamia, Judea, Cappos, Docia, Pontus, Asia, Phrygia, Pamphylia, Egypt, Libya, Crete, Rome, Jews and Proselytes, Cretans and Arabians, people from every nation. And many of these get to encounter the life-transforming power of God later on when Peter tells them about Jesus. And later on, Peter says this, it says, this promise of the Holy Spirit is for you and for your children. It's for every generation. It's not just for the adults, for you and for your children. It's for those near and far off, those in the outermost regions of the world and those that are in the center of Jerusalem. It's for everyone who believes on the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and calls him to himself. Friends,

this is the wonder of the gospel. This is the wonder of Jesus. It doesn't matter who you are or what your background is.

God is indiscriminate. God is unprejudiced and pouring out his grace to sinners like you and me. What about those that are still growing in their faith? Do they get to experience the power of God, the life of God? See, some people think that the gift of the Holy Spirit is only for those that are super Christians. If you're really mature, right? If you've been praying and fasting, if you know your Bible backwards, if you know your Bible very well, then you deserve the Holy Spirit, right? That's what some people think. And yet here we see there are people that don't know their Bibles.

They're not even believers at first. And God pours his Holy Spirit on them. The Holy Spirit is not just a gift for those that are super Christians that know everything and know their Bibles backwards.

Friends, if you have simple faith in Jesus, God will pour his Holy Spirit out on you.

[22 : 12] Now, having said that, having said that, some people think that what Acts 2 tells us is that being a person who is filled with the Spirit doesn't mean that we don't need our Bibles, right? So some churches, especially in South Africa, there are many churches which are either Bible churches or they are Holy Spirit churches. And so some churches say, you don't need the Holy Spirit. All you need is the Bible. You just read the Bible. If you want to hear from God, read the Bible. If you want to hear God speaking to you audibly, read the Bible out loud, right?

There's some people that say, man, the Bible is Old Testament. We've got the life of God. All we need is the Holy Spirit. But what do we see in Acts chapter 2? The Holy Spirit is poured out on them in power. And then Peter stands up and he quotes the Bible. He quotes the Old Testament.

He quotes Joel. He quotes David's Psalms. He quotes another Psalm of David. Peter here is filled with the Holy Spirit. And yet he's not pushing the Bible aside. The Bible isn't just for academics and the Holy Spirit for spiritual creative people. If we're going to know God and love God and follow Him and worship Him and make a difference in our cities in which we live, we need to be filled with the power of the Holy Spirit. And we need to be saturated with the life and the Word of God and know the Scriptures. What about those of us that have got questions?

Well, I know Hong Kong is full of people that are often very academic. Some of the best and the brightest from around Asia come to study in Hong Kong. What about those of us that aren't so intellectual? Is the Holy Spirit discriminating? No, the Holy Spirit is for everyone. The Holy Spirit is not just for those who have PhDs and masters in economics or those who have studied theology. Friends, maybe you don't understand everything in the Bible. Maybe you've got some doubts. Maybe you've got some questions. Maybe there are lots of things in the Bible that you don't understand. Friends, God wants to pour the Holy Spirit in you. He wants you to encounter the life and the power of God. You don't need to be an investment banker, qualified, or even very intellectual. You just need to love Jesus and trust the gospel. I remember Michael Eaton, who's a British preacher and theologian. He spent lots of time in Africa. And he was pastoring his very first church. He was a young man, and he thought he had preached a wonderful sermon. And it was a Baptist church. And so in the traditional Baptist church, at the end of the sermon, the preacher goes, walks down the aisle, stands at the end, and shakes everyone's hand as they walk out, right? And so he's shaking hands with everyone. And a very educated, very sophisticated, and wealthy businessman in the church comes to him and says, Pastor, I don't have a clue what you're trying to say this morning, and walks out. And he was so discouraged. He thought,

I tried my best. I worked so hard. I really thought that was a good sermon. He was so discouraged. Anyway, the next morning, he's at the office, and a lady comes in who is cleaning the cups. She's washing the cups. And this lady didn't have the opportunity to have much of an education.

[25 : 23] She wasn't very educated. She comes in whistling and singing. She's got a bounce on her step. And she says, Pastor, Pastor, that was the best sermon I've ever heard in my life yesterday. Here you have a very educated, sophisticated man. It missed it completely. Here you have a simple lady, hasn't had the opportunity to have a wonderful education. And she encountered God in the sermon.

She encountered the Holy Spirit. Friends, the wonder of the gospel is that Jesus didn't just die for the educated. Jesus didn't just die for the wealthy. Jesus didn't just die for those that understand everything. He died for everyone. And he gives us the gift of the Holy Spirit for those who will come to Jesus and believe in him. Now, although, having said that, one of the things we see in Acts chapter 2 is that Peter doesn't ask them to switch their brains off. He doesn't say, listen, the gospel is either for the educated or the uneducated. He's not saying that you need to be simple. Some

people say that to follow Jesus, you just trust the Spirit, and we mustn't be logical about it. Don't trust your mind. Don't think about things too much. Just trust the Holy Spirit. But the Holy Spirit isn't the opposite or the antithesis of being logical, of thinking about things. Peter doesn't ask them to switch off their brains when they come to church. Look at what he does here. He follows a logical argument. He reasons with them. He says, you guys know David. David was the greatest king in Israel.

But David speaks of another king, a king who won't die. Now, we all know that David has died. So logically, David can't be speaking about himself. He must be speaking about another king that doesn't die.

Well, I put it to you that Jesus died, but he rose again. David was speaking about Jesus. And Peter goes through a logical, rational argument to help them see and understand the gospel and who Jesus is.

And in Romans chapter 8, talking about the life of the Spirit, it says, some people fix their minds on the flesh, and that just leads to death. But you, followers of Jesus, we have to fix our minds on the Spirit, for that leads to life and to peace. But the point is, fix your minds. Think about the things of the Spirit. Colossians chapter 3 says this, therefore, because you've been raised with Christ, set your minds on the things above, where Christ is seated. Set your heart on the things above, not on the things of earth, for you have died and your life is hidden with Christ in God. But the point is, think about it. Set your minds where Christ is.

[27 : 53] Friends, being filled with the Spirit doesn't mean that we are to not be thinking people as well. God pours out His Spirit in all of us. What about those of us that are still battling with sin?

Are we disqualified from experiencing the Holy Spirit? We're not told the moral state of those in Jerusalem. But I don't think that all of them were morally perfect.

I'm sure some of them still battled with sin. And I think when we think of the life of Paul, previously Saul, a man who was a murderer, on his way to persecute and kill and jail Christians, and yet God pours out His Holy Spirit in him. When I think of my own life, very far from perfect, and God has graciously given me the gift of the Holy Spirit. Friends, the Holy Spirit is in reserve just for those that have got it all together.

Now, having said that, in Acts chapter 2, we realize that God does not, He's still serious about sin. A few years ago, I was talking to a businessman who joined our church, and he had just been part of a church that had gone through a very difficult church split.

There had been a leadership tussle, and it was messy and horrible, and the church had split, and he joined our church. And he said to me, he's a very successful businessman, and he said, Kevin, the problem with you guys is there's too much Holy Spirit in the church.

[29 : 13] And I thought, what are you talking about? The problem is there's not enough Holy Spirit. And then he went on to explain, he said, you know, in business, we hold people accountable. When people mess up, or when people are out of line, we hold them accountable.

You guys in the church, there's too much Holy Spirit. You're flowery, you're soft, you're gentle, there's too much lovey-dovey. You never hold anyone accountable. But friends, when we read Acts chapter 2, look at what happens here.

Peter quotes from Joel chapter 2, and he says, he's explaining what happened. And Joel prophesies that when the Holy Spirit comes, there'll be prophecy, there'll be signs, there'll be wonders, there'll be prophetic words, there'll be gifts of the Spirit.

But he also says, I will show wonders in the heavens above, signs on the earth below, blood and fire, vapor and smoke. The sun will be turned to darkness, the moon to blood, before the day the Lord comes, the great and magnificent day.

And the context here is the holiness and the awesomeness of God, the majesty of God. Joel says, the Holy Spirit will come, but he won't come soft and flowery and just putting up with sin. He'll come in majesty and power.

[30 : 18] He'll open your eyes to see the wonder of God, and people will turn to Christ in repentance. And God will deal with our sin. And so he's calling them to forsake their idols, which destroyed their life of God and them, and only caused damage and pain.

He's calling to turn from themselves and to turn to Jesus. Friends, the presence of God is a precious gift. The Holy Spirit God gives us, but he's not discriminant. It's not only for those that have got it together.

It's not only for the super spiritual. God pours out his gift on anyone that will come to him in faith and repentance. And then the last thing is this. The gift of the Holy Spirit magnifies the wonder of Jesus. The gift of the person of the Holy Spirit is one of the most beautiful aspects of the gospel. God himself comes and dwells within us. And the wonderful thing about the gospel is that we're not playing religion here.

We're not philosophizing about life. We're not trying to come up with a couple of ways to make life more convenient or to work better. We're not playing religion. We're having an encounter with God. God the Creator is living inside of us and moving us and changing us on the inside.

[31 : 24] And Romans tells us that in fact it's not possible to know God apart from the Holy Spirit. Romans 8 says this. You, however, are not in flesh but in the Spirit, if in fact the Spirit of God dwells within you.

For anyone who does not have the Spirit of Christ does not belong to him. So in order to be a follower of Jesus, you must be filled with the Spirit. It's not possible to know Jesus without the Holy Spirit.

But notice here, how does Paul call the Holy Spirit? What name does he use for him? He calls him the Spirit of Christ. And later on in Acts, Paul calls him the Spirit of Jesus.

And isn't this exactly what Jesus said in John chapter 16? Jesus said that when the Holy Spirit comes, he will make much of me, the Holy Spirit of Jesus. He says, when the Spirit of truth comes, he will guide you in all truth.

He will not speak of his own authority. But whatever he hears, he will speak. For he will glorify me. That's Jesus. And he will take what is mine and declare it to you.

[32 : 28] Friends, sometimes the gift of the Holy Spirit, the Holy Spirit ministers so beautifully, so wonderfully. He comforts us. The Holy Spirit is so wonderful.

But sometimes we can think the primary ministry of the Holy Spirit is for us. The way he comforts us. He consoles us. He makes God known to us.

Sometimes we think the primary ministry of the Holy Spirit is all about us. But actually, he does that. But first and foremost, the gift of the Holy Spirit is to magnify Jesus.

To make much of Jesus. That's what Jesus said. He said, he will glorify me. The gift of the Holy Spirit is to open our eyes to see the wonder of Jesus. And that's exactly what's happening here in Acts chapter 2.

And that's what happens in the rest of the book of Acts. And that's what happens in the history of the church. And friends, that's still what's happening today. When God pours the gift of the Holy Spirit upon us, it's to open our eyes to see the wonder and the majesty of Jesus.

[33 : 27] It's to help us fall more in love with Jesus. A few years ago, there was a big revival in America. About 10 years ago. And it was very famous.

It was all of the news. There were people flying from all over the world to go to this revival and experience it. There were stories of wonderful healings. And there were some interesting things.

And I was a little bit suspicious. I wasn't so sure what to make of this. But it was all of the news. But I remember one day, the guy that was leading the revival, he was on news there, interviewing him.

And he said this. He said, An angel came to my room last night and told me to stop talking about Jesus. People know enough about Jesus. It's time to start talking about the Holy Spirit.

Friends, when I heard that, I knew that this was rubbish. I knew that this was the beginning of the end. But the ministry of the Holy Spirit is to magnify and make much of the wonder and the beauty and the glory of King Jesus.

[34 : 28] And it wasn't long before that man was caught in adultery and the whole thing blew up and became a massive scandal. The way you could tell was because he had forgotten about Jesus. And the ministry became all about himself and his ministry and the fame that he was getting.

And we see the same thing here in Acts chapter 2. The Holy Spirit is poured out in the church. And what does Peter do? He stands up and he tells them about Jesus. He tells them about the wonder of Jesus. He tells them about the Jesus who is a greater king than even the greatest king Israel had had, David.

He tells them about Jesus who, though he had died, is not dead. He tells them about Jesus who didn't die as a result of political expediency or because of a political turmoil.

Jesus who died because he laid down his life. He tells them about Jesus who died according to the definite plan and the foreknowledge of the sovereign God. He tells them about the Jesus who's

coming again.

He tells them about Jesus who makes known to us the paths of life and whose right hand there is joy forevermore. And when these men and women hear the gospel and the Holy Spirit comes upon them, they cry out, what should we do?

[35 : 36] And what does Peter do? He doesn't say join a small group. He doesn't say sign up. He says, be baptized every one of you in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ.

Peter makes much of Jesus. And we see the same thing in Acts chapter 4. The disciples are praying for boldness, praying for the Holy Spirit to come upon them. The Holy Spirit comes upon them.

And what do they do? They tell people about Jesus. We see the same thing in Acts chapter 10. Peter is preaching to some Gentiles. He tells them all about Jesus.

And it says, while he is speaking, the Holy Spirit fell on all those who heard the word. And the believers from amongst the circumcised who had come with Peter were amazed that the gift of the Holy Spirit was poured out even on the Gentiles.

That's why Paul writes in 1 Corinthians chapter 12. Therefore I tell you, no one speaking by the Spirit of God can say Jesus is accursed. And no one can say Jesus is Lord except for the Holy Spirit.

[36 : 33] Friends, God gives us the most beautiful and precious gift. He gives us himself. He says, this is what it means to be human. This is what I've designed you for. This is how I've made you. To walk with me.

To know me. To love me and to be loved by me. To know me and to be known by me. I'll give you myself. But he gives us the Holy Spirit to wonder and marvel in the person of the Lord Jesus Christ. God the Father and Christ the Son and the Holy Spirit. I wonder if we can pray together. Can we pray? Why don't we do this? Can I ask us to do something different?

Would you mind standing? We're not going to do anything spooky or strange. I wonder if you're comfortable just to open your hands.

And when I often pray for the Holy Spirit, I open my hands just as a sign of saying, God, I'm not coming to you closed. I'm not waiting for you. I'm anticipating something.

[37 : 35] God, I want to meet with you. And I wonder if we can just wait just for two minutes and just ask the Holy Spirit to just refresh us. As I was praying last night about this morning, I just felt that some of us here maybe are tired.

You know, spiritually tired, existentially tired. It's like the river of living water is running thin. And Jesus said, if anyone is thirsty, come to me.

And as the scriptures have said, within him will flow rivers of living water. Holy Spirit, will you come and just refresh us? Holy Spirit, we need you.

We want you. We want you to minister to us. We want you to open our eyes that we will behold the wonders of Jesus. Holy Spirit, we want to fall in love with Jesus again.

We don't want to play religion. We don't want to do church. We want to be in awe of Jesus. Come, Holy Spirit. Holy Spirit, would you just minister to us, to whoever you want to, however you want to.

[38 : 51] You are God and we are not. Come and have your way. Come and have your way.

Holy Spirit, I pray that as we go from this place, as we go to work tomorrow, some of us are traveling this week out of town. Will you go with us and be with us?

Will you draw near to us, we pray. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen.