

PENTECOST NO. 511

A SERMON
DELIVERED ON SUNDAY MORNING, MAY 24, 1863,
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AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON.

“When the day of Pentecost was fully come, they were all with one accord in one place. And suddenly there came a sound from heaven as of a rushing mighty wind and it filled all the house where they were sitting. And there appeared unto them cloven tongues like as of fire and it sat upon each of them. And they were all filled with the Holy Ghost and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance.”
Acts 2:1-4.

HOW absolutely necessary is the presence and power of the Holy Spirit! It is not possible for us to promote the glory of God, or to bless the souls of men, unless the Holy Spirit shall be in us and with us. Those who were assembled on that memorable day of Pentecost were all men of prayer and faith, but even these precious gifts are only available when the celestial fire sets them on a blaze. They were all men of experience—most of them had been preachers of the Word and workers of miracles. They had endured trials and troubles in company with their Lord and had been with Him in His temptation. Yet even experienced Christians, without the Spirit of God, are weak as water.

Among them were the apostles and the seventy evangelists, and with them were those honored women in whose houses the Lord had often been entertained and who had ministered to Him of their substance. Yet even these favored and honored saints can do nothing without the breath of God, the Holy Ghost. Apostles and evangelists dare not even attempt anything alone. They must tarry at Jerusalem till power is given them from on High.

It was not a want of education. They had been for three years in the college of Christ, with perfect wisdom as their Tutor, matchless eloquence as their instructor, and immaculate perfection as their example. Yet they must not venture to open their mouths to testify of the mystery of Jesus until the anointing Spirit has come with blessed unction from above.

Surely, my brethren, if so it was with them, much more must it be the case with us. Let us beware of trusting to our well-adjusted machineries of committees and schemes. Let us be jealous of all reliance upon our own mental faculties or religious vigor. Let us be careful that we do not look too much to our leading preachers and evangelists, for if we put any of these in the place of the divine Spirit, we shall err most fatally. Let us thank God for all gifts and for all offices, but oh, let us always be reminded that gifts and offices are but as sounding brass and tinkling cymbals, unless the quickening influence be present.

It has been said by certain modern theologians, that we make this doctrine of dependence upon the Holy Spirit far too prominent, and that our constant teaching of this truth has a tendency to numb all human effort and foster indifference and sloth. Surely it is not so, my brethren. Let us refute this slander by our own earnestness and let it be seen that those of us who confess that without their Lord they can do nothing, are able with His aid to do everything.

O may we be so inflamed by the eternal fire that our life may be all zeal and love, self-sacrifice and labor, so shall we teach the gainsayer that the worshippers of the gracious Spirit are not loiterers in the vineyard of the Lord. I am persuaded that so far from speaking too frequent upon this matter, we do not often enough extol the Blessed Spirit and certain ministries almost ignore His existence. You might attend some chapels and not even know that there was a Holy Ghost at all except for the benediction. And were it not for the liturgy and the, “Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Ghost,”

there are many of our national edifices where you might never know that a Comforter had been sent to us.

Now, I earnestly pray that this morning I may stir up your minds by way of remembrance, by a simple exposition of the descent of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost. We are not observers of days and months, but it happens to be the season of the year in which the early church was accustomed to celebrate the outpouring of the Spirit at Pentecost. We commonly talk of Whitsuntide, or White Sunday—which name is not without its lesson.

In the earlier centuries, on this particular day, in commemoration of the great baptism of the three thousand converted under the preaching of Peter, it was the custom of the church to hold a great baptism and the candidates for immersion being, as with us, robed in white—(therefore the name “Candidates,” or “White Ones”)—and so that Sunday was called White Sunday. It was not ill that the outpouring of Pentecost should be celebrated by the baptism of converts, for the cause is always best remembered by the effect. May our Lord help us to enjoy a Pentecost all the year round and may the baptism pool be stirred every week.

I shall call your attention to *the season* when the Spirit was poured out, to *the manner* in which it was manifested, to *the matter itself*, and fourthly, to *the results* which followed.

I. There is much holy teaching in THE SEASON when the Spirit of God was given.

“When the day of Pentecost was fully come.” We may observe, first, that the Spirit of God was given in *God’s chosen and appointed time*. There is a set time to favor Zion. The Spirit is not at all times alike active in His manifest workings. Both to try our faith and to prove His own sovereignty, the right hand of the Lord is sometimes thrust into His bosom and He will only make bare His arm at such times and seasons as He shall have Himself appointed. “The wind blows where it listeth,” is a truth well calculated to hide pride from man.

Brethren, if every drop of rain has its appointed birthday, every gleam of light its predestinated pathway, and every spark of fire its settled hour of flying upward, certainly the will, foreknowledge, and decree of God must have arranged and settled the period of every revival and place of every gracious visitation. Times of refreshing, in a church or a commonwealth, come not except as the Creator-Spirit has determined. The day of salvation to each individual is an appointed time. The second birth is not left to hazard.

Yea, more, every breath of that divine Spirit which sweeps across the mind of the believer, every drop of sacred oil which anoints him, or of the holy dew which quickens him, comes to him according to that irresistible will which loosens the bands of Orion, or binds up the sweet influences of the Pleiades. In God’s accepted and appointed time, therefore, the light of heaven shall go forth and although this is not to withhold or restrain us from asking for the Spirit every day, it is to encourage us if He does not at once begin to work, for if the vision taries, we are to wait for it, it shall come in due time—it will not tarry.

There was a further mystery in the season, for *it was after the ascension*. The Spirit of God was not given till after Jesus had been glorified. The various blessings which we receive are ascribable to different parts of Christ’s work. His life is our imputed righteousness, His death brings us pardon, His resurrection confers upon us justification, His ascension yields to us the Holy Spirit, and those spiritual gifts which edify the body. “Wherefore he says, when he ascended up on high, he led captivity captive and gave gifts unto men. And He gave some, apostles, and some, prophets, and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers; for the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ.”

As when Roman heroes returned from blood-red fields and the Senate awarded them a triumph, they rode in their chariot drawn by milk-white steeds through the thronging streets of the capitol, so did Jesus Christ when He led captivity captive receive a triumph at His Father’s hands. The triumphal chariot bore Him through the streets of glory, while all the inhabitants, with loud acclaim, saluted Him as Conqueror.

***“Crown Him! Crown Him!
Crowns become the Victor’s brow!”***

It was the custom of the Roman conqueror, as he rode along, to distribute large quantities of money which were scattered among the admiring crowd. So our glorified Lord scattered gifts among men, yea, to the rebellious also. He gave those gifts that the Lord God might dwell among them, in this manner, then, to grace the triumph of Jesus, the Spirit of God was liberally poured out upon the church below.

Perhaps, you remind me that our Lord had ascended ten days before. I know He had, but the delay might teach them patience. Not always does the flower bloom from the root in one hour. Christ has ascended and heaven is ringing with His praise, they have kept ten days of joyous holiday before the eternal throne and now, when Pentecost is fully come, the rushing mighty wind is heard.

Do you think, my brethren and sisters, that we plead Christ’s ascension enough as a reason why the church should be blessed with the Spirit? I know we often reach as far as, “By Your agony and bloody sweat, by Your cross and passion, by Your precious death and burial, by Your glorious resurrection”—but do we proceed to, “By Your ascension, we beseech You, to hear us?” I am afraid we fail to perceive that the ascension of Christ is to be used as an argument in prayer, when we would have the church revived by the holy breath of God, or have gifts bestowed upon her ministers and church officers.

Moreover, there is yet more teaching in the season. It was at *Pentecost*. Many of the early writers say that Pentecost was the time when the law was proclaimed upon Mount Sinai. Others think it doubtful, if it be so, it was very significant that on the day when the law was issued amid thunders and lightning, the Gospel—God’s new and better law—should be proclaimed with mighty wind and tongues of fire.

We are clear, however, that Pentecost was a harvest festival. On that day, the sheaf was waved before the Lord and the harvest consecrated. The Passover was to our Savior the time of His sowing, but Pentecost was the day of His reaping, and the fields which were ripe to the harvest when He sat on the well, are reaped now that He sits upon the throne.

But certainly the Spirit of God was given at Pentecost because *there was then the most need of it*. On that occasion vast crowds were gathered from all regions. The God of wisdom always knows how to time His gifts. What would have been the use of granting the many tongues when no strangers were ready to hear? If there had been no Parthians, and Medes, and Elamites, and dwellers of Mesopotamia collected in Jerusalem, there would have been no need for the cloven tongues. But inasmuch as the city was full and the high festival was being kept by unusual multitudes, it was most fit and right that now the Lord should say, “Thrust in your sickle, for the harvest of the earth is ripe.”

Dear friends, I think that whenever we see unusual gatherings of men, whenever the Spirit of Hearing is poured out upon the people, we ought to pray for and expect an unusual visitation of the Spirit of God. And when I look upon these crowds assembled in this house every Sabbath year after year, I can but entreat you to cry mightily to Him with whom is the residue of the Spirit, that He would give us a Pentecost, for though neither Parthians, nor Medes, nor Elamites are here, yet there scarcely ever passes a Sabbath without there being representatives of almost all nations under heaven who hear the wonderful works of God, not in their own tongue, it is true, but yet in a language which they understand. Oh! pray that the Spirit of God may fall upon the unparalleled hosts assembled here.

Still, dear friends, we have not dwelt upon a leading reason why the Holy Spirit descended at this special season. “*They were all with one accord in one place.*” We have been expecting to see the days of heaven upon earth. Our soul has longed to hear the voice of God thundering out of heaven. We have hoped for days such as our fathers have told us comforted them in the old time. We looked to see thousands born in a day—alas, the vision comes not.

But look at our country. We have had spasms of revival—that is as much as I can say. Even the Irish revival, for which we can never sufficiently bless God, was but as a passing cloud. It was not an abiding, resting shower and so with all the shakings we have had in these later times. We have had but glimpses

where we wanted sights. We have had but twilight, where we needed the sacred, everlasting noon. What is the reason of this?

Perhaps it is to be found in our want of union. "They were all with one accord in one place." Christians cannot all be in one place. We have no room that would be large enough to hold them, blessed be God! But if they cannot all be in one place, yet they can all be of one accord. Oh! when there are no cold hearts, when there are no prejudices to divide us, no bigotries to separate, no apathy to hold us down, no false doctrine to separate the flocks from one another, and no schism to rend the one sacred garment of Christ, then may we expect to see the Spirit of God resting upon us. And in any church where there is no strife as to who shall be the greatest, no division about peculiarities, no fighting for respectabilities and selfishnesses, but when the church is of one accord, then may we expect to hear the sound of abundance of heaven's rain.

Note, dear friends, what they were doing. They were not merely unanimous, but they were earnest about one grand object. *They had all been praying.* Read the first chapter and you will perceive that they had been much in prayer. The whole of the time, since the ascent of our Lord, they had been occupied in constant supplication, and so pleading both day and night, it was no great wonder that the granaries of heaven should be unlocked.

We have had weeks of prayer at the beginning of the last few years and it was well, but if we had continued in prayer all the weeks of the year, if we had always been with one accord still crying unto heaven, still wrestling with the angel, still interceding, surely the little cloud, like a man's hand, which the eye of faith has seen, would, by this time, have covered all the heavens and have discharged a plenteous shower upon all nations of men. There must be unity, but that unity must not be the frozen union of death, but the glorious welding of a glowing furnace heat.

They had been much in prayer and now I see them sitting still. Why do they sit so quietly? It is *the quietude of expectation.* When God's church adds expectation to supplication, then a blessing tarries no longer. We ask, but we do not expect to receive. We pray, but probably nothing would so alarm us as the answer to our prayers. If after having pleaded with God to send His Holy Spirit, the Holy Spirit did come, there are many who would not believe it. There are others who would think it a mere excitement and there are multitudes who would shut their eyes to it altogether. Oh, Spirit of God! Work in the hearts of Your children perfect harmony, intense anxiety, and confident expectation, and then will You come to do Your mighty deeds once more.

These remarks concerning the season may lead to many practical questions, I will but put them rapidly and leave them. Do I help to hinder the coming of the Spirit by any bitterness of my temper? Do I by any want of love tend to divide the church? Are my prayers such as are likely to prevail? And when I pray do I expect the blessing of God? If not, how mournful that I should be the means of restraining and limiting the Holy One of Israel, that I should be a church robber and commit sacrilege against the church of God—not by stealing its gold and silver—but by closing the treasury of God! Let us as a church humble ourselves under the hand of God and then, girding up the loins of our mind, to wait upon Him with patience and earnestness until the Spirit is poured out from on high!

II. I come now, dear friends, in the second place, to notice THE MANNER IN WHICH THE SPIRIT WAS GIVEN.

Each word here is suggestive. "*Suddenly.*" No herald sounded his trumpet, but as they were expecting, in a moment the celestial tempest came. If the Lord is about to do any great work in the world we must not be astonished if we hear of its coming like a thunderclap. Man sits down and plans, and arranges, and works, and everybody knows what he is aiming at. God also plans and arranges and forestalls Himself, but He does not tell man what His purpose is. It is the glory of God to conceal a thing and so, though the Spirit may have been secretly preparing men's hearts, yet the real work of revival is done suddenly to the surprise of all observers.

You will have noticed it was so in the great revival in New England, when Jonathan Edwards stood up and read his manuscript sermon, holding the manuscript close to his eye, because he was

nearsighted—a method of preaching which I should think would be the very least likely to ever cause an excitement in the audience—and yet while he preached from that text, “Their feet shall slide in due time,” the Spirit of God suddenly came down, the people began to tremble, and even cry out under the terrors of conviction, and the awakening spread throughout all that region, and many thousands were added to the church of Christ.

Was it not so with Livingstone at the Kirk of Shotts? The presbytery had been holding long services and preaching sermons without any very great results, and just at the close Livingstone was asked to preach. Standing on a gravestone, in the midst of a driving shower, he addressed the assembled crowd and down came the Holy Ghost, more mighty than the shower which fell from heaven, and hundreds were born in one day to Christ.

It was the same under George Whitefield, in the notable revivals of which he was the agent, the Spirit came like lightning from the skies. Do not be suspicious when you hear of these things suddenly appearing. You remember yourselves an instance which wakes all your hearts to gratitude. You remember a chapel with but a handful of people in it who could scarce see from one to another. Did the crowds come by slow degrees? Was it a life-work to build up a church? Nay, but the trumpet sounded, the prepared ears heard it, the house was thronged, the church grew and multiplied, and now, we who are members of it bless God for His mercies every day. When God says, “Let there be light,” there is light.

Then, there was a *sound*. Although the Spirit of God Himself is silent in His operations, yet the operations are not silent in their results. The sound would teach them that the Spirit of God was not come to be concealed in their hearts as a silent guest, but to be heard throughout the world as the voice of God. For now faith was come by hearing and hearing by the Word of God, and a sound as of a mighty rushing wind, was a type to them of the sound of their own testimony which was to go forth throughout all the world even unto the ends thereof. To their ears, the speaking hurricane would say, “Even so, we, a handful of converted men, are to sweep around the globe like a mighty wind and men are to be compelled to hear the sound of mercy.”

Then, it was a sound, notice, *as of wind*. It is remarkable that both in the Greek and in the Hebrew tongues, the word used for wind and for Spirit is the same. Hence, when the Savior said to Nicodemus, “The wind blows where it listeth, and you hear the sound thereof,” the type might have been suggested to him by the fact of the word wind, having the double signification of the wind and of the Spirit. The wind is doubtless chosen as a significant emblem because of its mysteriousness, “You cannot tell from whence it comes, nor whither it goes,” because of its freeness. “It blows where it listeth,” because of diversity of its operations, for the wind blows a gentle zephyr at one moment and later it mounts to a howling blast. The Holy Spirit at one time comes to comfort and at other times to alarm—at one season, softly with the promise—and at another time, terribly with the threatening.

Observe, it was *rushing*. This portrayed the rapidity with which the Spirit’s influences spread, rushing like a torrent. Within fifty years from that date of Pentecost, the Gospel had been preached in every country of the known world. Paul and his brothers, the apostles, had journeyed east, west, north, and south. Iron gates had been opened and bars of brass had been snapped, and the glorious life-giving Word had been preached to every creature under heaven for a witness against them. God’s Spirit does not creep and crawl as too often our unspiritual agencies do, but when He comes, it is a rush, and half the world is lit with divine light before we dream that the match has been struck.

Nor is this all, for it was *mighty*, a wind against which nothing could stand, the house itself might be shaken. They may have been greatly alarmed for fear the house would fall about their heads. The wind was irresistible and so is the Spirit of God—where He comes, nothing can stand against Him. O Spirit of God, if You would but now come as a rough north wind, the crescent of Mohammed would be prostrate in the dust, and the gods of the heathen would fall upon their faces like Dagon before the ark. You have but to proceed in Your sevenfold operations and the harlot of Rome would lose her enchanting power. You can dash in pieces the hoary systems which have resisted all human attack. Mightier than the tooth

of time, Your finger, O sacred Spirit, could destroy what man reckons to be his everlasting workmanship.

Glory be to God, wherever the Spirit comes He proves Himself to be divine by the omnipotence which He displays. They heard, then, a sound as of a rushing mighty wind. Although we never expect to hear a sound like this, yet we do expect, dear Christian friends, to have the reality. We hope yet to see the Spirit of God mysteriously at work and we hope to hear the sound thereof, the glad tidings cheering our hearts. We love to see nations born in a day. We do yet believe that before our eyes are closed in death, we shall see God's arm stretched out and the irresistible might of His Spirit felt by His enemies.

Consider the next sentence. "*Which filled all the place where they were sitting.*" The sound was not merely heard by the disciples, but it appeared to penetrate the other chambers besides that large upper room where they were probably gathered together. Ah! and when the Spirit of God comes, He never confines Himself to the church. The influence may not be saving to those without, but it is felt by them. A revival in a village penetrates even the tavern. The Spirit of God at work in the church is soon felt in the farmyard, known in the workroom, and perceived in the factory. It is not possible for the Spirit to be confined when once He comes.

Oh! if He should but visit this place, Walworth, and Camberwell, and Southwark must all know it. The very streets should be made to wear a different aspect, and whereas we now have to walk down long rooms of shops still open on the Sabbath-day, we should doubtless see them closed, for the Spirit of God would fill all the place where His church was located. May such glad times come, when from one end of England to another, the Spirit of God shall fill all men in all places, because He dwells specially with His chosen people.

But this was not all. I must now mention what I think was the appearance seen. It was a bright luminous cloud probably, not unlike that which once rested in the wilderness over the tribes by night. A fiery pillar was seen hovering in the upper part of the room. The cloud is mentioned as "it," so that it seems to have been one and yet it is called, "tongues," so that it must have been many. In the Greek, there is a unique commingling of singular and plural in the verbs, which can hardly be accounted for, unless there really did exist a singularity and a plurality at the same time. There floated in the room, I think, one mass of flame, a great cloud of fire. This suddenly divided, or was cleft, and separate tongues of fire rested upon the head of each of the disciples.

They would understand that thus a divine power was given to them, for such a figure was by no means unusual or far-fetched. Heathens have been accustomed to represent in their statues, beams of light, or flames of fire proceeding from their false deities, and to this day the cloudy radiance with which Roman Catholic painters always adorn the heads of saints is a relic of the same idea. It was said by the ancients of Hesiod, the first of all the poets, that whereas he was once nothing but a simple cow herder, yet suddenly, a divine flame fell upon him and he became henceforth one of the noblest of men.

We feel assured that so natural a metaphor would be at once understood by the apostles. A tongue of fire resting upon them would be a token of a special inspiration from God. Notice first, it was *a tongue*, for God has been pleased to make the tongue do mightier deeds than either sword or pen, and though the pen shall speak to ages yet to come, yet never with that living force which trembles from the tongue, for what we read in a book is but dead, but that which we hear with the ear comes as a living word to the soul. It pleases God, by the foolishness of preaching, to save them who believe.

Then it was a tongue *of fire*, to show that God's ministers speak, not coldly as though they had tongues of ice, nor learnedly as with tongues of gold, nor arrogantly as with tongues of brass, nor plaintively as with tongues of willow, nor sternly as with tongues of iron, but earnestly and in a mystery, not as with tongues of flesh, but with the tongue of flame. Their words consume sin, scorch falsehood, enlighten the darkness, and comfort the poor.

Notice, moreover, that "It SAT upon them." It did not flicker or remove, it remained there. So the Spirit of God is an *abiding* influence and the saints shall persevere. It sat *upon each of them*, so that

while there was but one fire, yet each believer received his portion of the one Spirit. There are diversities of operations, but it is the same Lord.

I will not tarry longer with the description of how the Spirit came, except to observe that I would to God that He would manifest Himself in the same manner this day. We want our young men to have tongues of fire. And you, fathers, we long to see you also kindled by the live coal which touched the lips of Isaiah. Even you, my sisters—for doubtless that tongue of fire rested upon the Virgin Mary and upon the other women—we would like to see it rest on you, that in your families, in your Sunday school classes, or in your visitations and nursings of the sick, you may have the holy fire abiding in you.

Oh! may God be pleased to send forth the Comforter to each of us. May none of us be without His power, for the set time to favor Zion shall have come, when both men and women of every rank and degree shall have received the Spirit of the blessed God.

I am afraid this does not interest you, you think it happened a long while ago, and is not likely ever to occur again. And I am afraid it is not while we remain so indifferent to it, but oh! if we had the anxiety to desire it and the faith to expect it, we might see greater things than these. Without the outward sign, which was but for the babyhood of the church, we might receive the inward and spiritual grace fit for the full grown man of the advanced believers of our time.

III. Consider now THE MATTER ITSELF, the boon which now was given.

Of the matter itself, we react very briefly that, “They were all filled with the Holy Ghost.” The sound was not the Holy Ghost, nor was the tongue of fire the Holy Spirit—these were but the symbols of His work, the real work was done when all present were filled with the Holy Spirit.

What is this? What is this strange mystery? The skeptic sneers and says, “There is no such thing.” The formal religionist says, “I have never felt it.” And most Christians think it something to be devoutly believed in, but by no means to be experienced. Is there a Holy Ghost?

My hearer, you dare not ask that question, unless you are prepared to involve a doubt of your own conversion, for, “Except a man is born of the Spirit, he cannot see the kingdom of God.” And if, therefore, the Holy Ghost do not dwell in you and has not made you a new creature by His miraculous operations, you are still in the gall of bitterness and in the bonds of iniquity. Only the true Christian knows what it is to receive the Spirit, but there are only a few Christians who know what it is to be filled with it—to be filled with it to the brim.

There are times when the preacher has known it, when he had no need to ask himself what he should say, nor in what language he should couch his thoughts, for the thoughts were born all dressed and armed, and they sprung not *from* him but *through* him, of the Holy Spirit. There are times when the soul is full of calm, for the dove is there—full of passion for the fire is there—full of life, for the wind is there—full of growth, for the dew is there—full of divine priesthood and the power to bless, for the oil is there—full of knowledge, for the light is there, and purged and cleansed, because the fountain of living water flows within.

There are, it is true, seasons when the man has to complain that he cannot discover any of these signs, but oh! there are glad and high days when God’s anointed servants feel borne upon the mystic wind aloft in thoughts sublime, no longer weak men, but men inspired to break hard hearts, to stir emotions, to quicken the dead, to open blind eyes, and to preach the Gospel to the poor, and all by the power from on high.

You who have felt the sublime sensation of being filled with the Spirit may read of Ezekiel’s being lifted by a lock of his hair between earth and heaven, but you know that to be filled with the Spirit is a greater wonder still, for that lifts a man up from worldly cares, enables him to lay hold upon God in prayer, bathes him in the joy of heaven, and then sends him down with shining face to bless his fellow-men. The flesh trembles in the dust because the great Spirit has come to our spirit’s help and flesh must lose all dominion, but the Spirit rejoices with great joy.

Observe the difference between Peter with the Spirit and Peter without the Spirit! There he is, cursing and swearing like a trooper, he never knew Christ, he says. There he is, sinking in the sea. He

does not believe that he can walk upon the waters and he cries, “Lord, save, or I perish.” Peter, the braggart, the rash man and yet the coward!

See him now the Spirit of God has come upon him. How different is Peter! Fearless of all the jeers and taunts which the vulgar crew might cast at him, he stands up to preach. Whence has this man eloquence? He speaks mightily and not as the scribes. Lo, the people are moved under him as the green corn is moved by the wind, or as the waves of the sea are swept by the gale, and when he has finished preaching, he goes up to the temple and commands a lame man to leap, and the miracle is wrought!

He is brought before the rulers and commanded to hold his peace, and he answers like a hero, “Whether it be right to obey man rather than God, judge you.” Peter is found traveling over every country, preaching the Word in every tongue and at last, he who was once a coward cheerfully stretches out his aged arms to be nailed to a cross, and head downwards, as though he felt he was not worthy to die like his Master. He expires upon the tree, glorifying Christ in his death! There is no comparison to be drawn. It is a case of clear contrast between Peter the unspiritual and Peter full of the Holy Ghost.

No man or woman amongst you knows what he might be if he were filled with the Spirit. What is that rough Luther? He is only fit to have been a killer of bulls, or a feller of oaks in the forest, but fill Luther with the Holy Spirit and what is he? He takes the bull of Rome by the horns, slays wild beasts of error in the great arena of the Gospel, and is more than a conqueror through the might which dwells in him!

Take John Calvin—fit naturally to be a cunning lawyer, cutting and dividing nice points, judging this precedent and that, frittering away his time over immaterial niceties, but fill him with the Holy Ghost and John Calvin becomes the mighty master of grace, the reflection of the wisdom of all past ages, and a great light to shed a brilliant ray even till the Millennium shall dawn! Chief, and prince, and king of all uninspired teachers, the mighty seer of Geneva, filled with the Spirit of God is no more John Calvin, but a God-sent angel of the churches!

Who knows what yonder young man may be? I know today he is but as other men—fill him with the Spirit, let it move him in the camp of Dan and woe to the Philistines! Who knows what that young woman may be? She may sit under the oak quietly with Deborah now, but the day may come when she shall stir up Barak and put a song into his mouth, saying, “Awake, awake, O Barak, lead your captivity captive, you son of Abinoam!”

Only let us be filled with the Spirit and we know not what we can be. We shall, “Laugh at impossibility and say, ‘It shall be done.’” We shall attempt what we never dreamed of before and accomplish that which we always thought to be far beyond our grasp.

IV. Our last point is—THE RESULT OF IT ALL.

Well, well, you will think it a very commonplace sort of thing. After all this rushing mighty wind, this fire, and so on, what are you expecting? Kings trembling in the dust or riding in their chariots to do homage to the apostles? Shall the wind blow down dynasties—shall the fire consume dominions? Nothing of the kind, my brethren. Nothing of the kind. Spiritual and not carnal is the kingdom of God. The result lies in three things—a *sermon*, a *number of inquirers*, and a *great baptism*! That is all! Yes, but though it is all, it is the grandest thing in all the world, for in the judgment of the angels and of those whom God has made wise unto salvation, these are three most precious matters.

There was a *sermon*. The Spirit of God was given to help Peter to preach a sermon. You turn with interest to know what sort of a sermon a man would preach who was full to the brim with the Holy Ghost. You expect him to be more eloquent than Robert Hall or Chalmers, of course—more learned than the Puritans, certainly. As for illustrations, of course you will have the loftiest flights of poetic genius. You may expect now to have all the orations of Cicero and Demosthenes put entirely in the shade, we shall have something glorious now.

No such thing! No such thing! Never was there a sermon more commonplace than that of Peter’s and let me tell you that it is one of the blessed effects of the Holy Spirit to make ministers preach *simply*. You do not want the Holy Spirit to make them ride the high horse and mount up on the wings of the

spread-eagle to the stars. What is wanted is to keep them down, dealing with solemn subjects in an intelligible manner.

What was the theme of this sermon? Was it something so intellectual that nobody could comprehend it, or so grand that few could grasp it? No, Peter just rises up and delivers himself somewhat like this, “Jesus Christ of Nazareth lived among you. He was the Messiah promised of old. You crucified Him, but in His name, there is salvation, and whosoever among you will repent and be baptized shall find mercy.”

That is all. I am sure Mr. Charles Simeon in his, “Skeleton Sermons,” would not have inserted it as a model and I do not suppose that any college professor alive would ever say to his students, “If you want to preach, preach like Peter.” Why, I do not perceive it firstly, secondly, thirdly, or fourthly, to which some of us feel compelled to bind ourselves. It is, in fact, a commonplace talking about sublime things—sublime things which in this age are thought to be foolishness and a stumbling block.

Well then, may the Spirit of God be poured out to teach our ministers to preach plainly, to set our young men talking about Jesus Christ, for this is absolutely necessary. When the Spirit of God goes away from a church, it is a fine thing for oratory, because then it is much more assiduously cultivated. When the Spirit of God is gone, then all the ministers become exceedingly learned, for not having the Spirit they need to supply the emptiness His absence has made and then the old-fashioned Bible is not quite good enough. They must touch it up a bit and improve upon it, and the old doctrines which used to rejoice their grandmothers at the fireside are too stale for them. They must have an improved and a new theology and young gentlemen nowadays show their profound knowledge by denying everything which is the ground and prop, and pillar of our hope, and starting some new will-o'-the-wisp which they set their people staring at.

Ah, well, we want the Spirit of God to sweep all that away. Oh that my dear sister who conducts the female class, and all who are in the Sunday school, may be helped just to talk to you about Christ. When you get the Spirit of God to come upon you like fire and like a rushing mighty wind, it will not be to make you doctors of divinity, and scholars, and great elocutionists—it will only be just for this—to make you preach Christ and preach Him more simply than ever you did before.

The next result was that the people were pricked in the heart and began to cry, “*Men and brethren, what shall we do?*” What a disorderly thing to do at a sermon. Usher! put that man out of the church. We cannot allow people to be calling out, “What must I do to be saved?” Blessed disorder, blessed disorder, which the Spirit of God gives. This will be the result of all sermons in which there is the presence of God. Men will feel that they have heard something which has gone right into their inmost nature, that they have received a wound which they can by no means heal, and at the next inquiry meeting, there will be many saying, “How can I find peace? How can I get my sins forgiven?”

What next? Why, where the Spirit of God is, there will be faith and there will be an *outward confession of it in baptism*. “Well, well,” says one, “I did not think we were to see all this rushing mighty wind and tongues of fire all just to get a few commonplace sermons, and conversions, and baptisms.” But I tell you again, it is just the conversions and baptisms which make the arches of heaven ring. I do not believe there was one extra note in heaven on the day when the Princess of Wales rode through London. *We* all went, and gazed, and admired, but I do not believe that one angel ever opened one eye to look at it. He saw nothing there which struck him.

But wherever there is a groaning, and a sobbing, and a sighing after the Savior, a longing after reconciliation, and above all where there is a renewed heart dedicating itself openly to Jesus—where there is a soul that says, “I will be buried with my Master. I will be obedient to His command, and despite every opposition, I will go down with Him into the liquid grave. I will be numbered with the ridiculed men and women who acknowledge that they are dead to the world and only alive to Christ”—I say, it is in such a case that angels rejoice and this it is for which we want the Spirit of God.

I have done when I have sown this thought. See, dear friends, see the absolute importance of repentance, and of faith, and of baptism. I pray you, if the Spirit of God comes all the way from heaven

to work these, be not satisfied till you receive them. See, again, the importance of preaching, for the Spirit of God descends only to help the preacher. And then see, last of all, the all-importance of the Holy Ghost. Without Him we cannot preach, we cannot hear so as to believe and be saved. May I beg you, as you go your way, to entreat the Lord to be with us according to His own promise, “If you being evil know how to give good gifts unto your children, much more shall your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to them that ask him.”

Taken from The C. H. Spurgeon Collection, Version 1.0, Ages Software. Only necessary changes have been made, such as correcting spelling errors, some punctuation usage, capitalization of deity pronouns and minimal updating of a few archaic words. The content is unabridged. Additional Bible-based resources are available at www.spurgeongems.org.