

The Outpouring of the Spirit.

by Andrew Murray

Pentecost is the outpouring of the Holy Spirit, marking the culmination of Christ's work and the beginning of the Church's growth and strength.

Scripture: Acts 2:1

Topics: "Holy Spirit", "Empowerment of Believers"

Description

Andrew Murray emphasizes the significance of the outpouring of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost as the culmination of Christ's work, marking the fulfillment of God's promise to dwell within humanity. He explains that the Holy Spirit's coming represents the ultimate union between God and man, enabling believers to experience the presence and power of Christ in their lives. Murray urges the Church to recognize Pentecost as the greatest feast, a time when the Spirit empowers believers to witness and testify to the glory of God. He calls for a revival within the Church, encouraging every believer to be filled with the Holy Spirit and to live as a testimony of Christ's resurrection and glory. The sermon concludes with a prayer for the Church to awaken to the reality of the Holy Spirit's presence and power.

Transcript

And when the day of Pentecost was fully come, they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and began to speak, as the Spirit gave them utterance.'-Acts 1:1-4.

In the outpouring of the Holy Spirit, the work of Christ culminates. The adorable mystery of the Incarnation in Bethlehem, the great Redemption accomplished on Calvary, the revelation of Christ as the Son of God in the power of the Eternal Life by the Resurrection, His entrance into glory in the Ascension--these are all preliminary stages; their goal and their crown was the coming down of the Holy Spirit. As Pentecost is the last, it is the greatest of the Christian feasts ; in it the others find their realization and their fulfilment. It is because the Church has hardly acknowledged this, and has not seen that the glory of Pentecost is the highest glory of the Father and the Son, that the Holy Spirit has not yet been able to reveal and glorify the Son in her as He fain would. Let us see if we can realize what Pentecost means.

God made man in His own image, and for His likeness, with the distinct object that he should become like Himself. Man was to be a temple for God to dwell in ; he was to become the home in which God could rest. The closest and most intimate union, the indwelling of Love in love : this was what the Holy One longed for, and looked forward to. What was very feebly set forth in type in the temple in Israel became a Divine reality in Jesus of Nazareth: God had found a man in whom He could rest, whose whole being was

opened to the rule of His will and the fellowship of His love. In Him there was a human nature, possessed by the Divine Spirit; and such God would have had all men to be. And such all would be, who accepted of this Jesus and His Spirit as their life. His death was to remove the curse and power of sin, and make it possible for them to receive His Spirit. His resurrection was the entrance of human nature, free from all the weakness of the flesh, into the life of Deity, the Divine Spirit-life. His ascension was admittance as Man into the very glory of God; the participation by human nature of perfect fellowship with God in glory in the unity of the Spirit. And yet, with all this, the work was not yet complete. Something, the chief thing, was still wanting. How could the Father dwell in men even as He had dwelt in Christ ? This was the great question to which Pentecost gives the answer.

Out of the depths of Godhead, the Holy Spirit is sent forth in a new character and a new power, such as He never had before. In creation and nature He came forth from God as the Spirit of Life. In the creation of man specially He acted as the power in which his god-likeness was grounded, and which, even after his fall, still testified for God. In Israel He appeared as the Spirit of the theocracy, distinctly inspiring and fitting certain men for their work. In Jesus Christ He came as the Spirit of the Father, given to Him without measure, and abiding in Him. All these are manifestations, in different degrees, of one and the same Spirit. But now there comes the last, the long-promised, an entirely new manifestation of the Divine Spirit. The Spirit that has dwelt in Jesus Christ, and, in His life of obedience, has taken up His human spirit into perfect fellowship and unity with Himself, is now the Spirit of the exalted God-man. As the Man Christ Jesus enters the glory of God and the full fellowship of that Spirit-life in which God dwells, He receives from the Father the right to send forth this Spirit into His disciples, yea, in the Spirit to descend Himself, and dwell in them. In a new power, which hitherto had not been possible, because Jesus had not been crucified or glorified, as the very Spirit of the crucified and now glorified Jesus, the Spirit comes. The work of the Son, the longing of the Father, receives its fulfilment. Man's heart is now indeed the home of his God.

Said I not truly that Pentecost is the greatest of the Church's feasts ? The mystery of Bethlehem is indeed incomprehensible and glorious, but when once I believe it, there is nothing that does not appear possible and becoming. That a pure, holy body should be formed for the Son of God by the power of the Holy Spirit, and that in that body the Spirit should dwell, is indeed a miracle of Divine Power. But that the same Spirit should now come and dwell in the bodies of sinful men, that in them too the Father should take up His abode, this is a mystery of grace that passeth all understanding. But this, glory be to God! is the blessing Pentecost brings and secures. The entrance of the Son of God into our flesh in Bethlehem, His entrance into the curse and death of sin as our Surety, His entrance in human nature as First-begotten from the dead into the Power of the Eternal Life, His entrance into the very Glory of the Father--these were but the preparatory steps: here is the consummation for which all the rest was accomplished. The word now begins to be fulfilled: 'Behold! the tabernacle of God is with men, and He shall dwell with them.'

It is only in the light of all that preceded Pentecost, of all the mighty sacrifice which God thought not too great if He might dwell with sinful men, that the narrative of the outpouring of the Spirit can be understood. It is the earthly reflection of Christ's exaltation in heaven; the participation He gives to His friends of the glory He now has with the Father. To be apprehended aright, it needs a spiritual vision; in the story that is so simply told the deepest mysteries of the Kingdom are unfolded, and the title-deeds given to the Church of her holy heritage until her Lord's return. What the Spirit is to be to believers and the Church, to the ministers of the word and their work, and to the unbelieving world, are the three chief thoughts.

1. Christ had promised to His disciples that in the Comforter He Himself would again come to them. During his life on earth, His personal manifested Presence, as revealing the unseen Father, was the Father's great gift to men, was the one thing the disciples wished and needed. This was to be their portion now in greater power than before. Christ had entered the glory with this very purpose, that now, in a Divine way, 'He might fill all things,' He might specially fill the members of His body with Himself and His glory-life. When the Holy Spirit came down, He brought as a personal Life within them what had previously only been a Life near them, but yet outside their own. The very Spirit of God's own Son, as He had lived and loved, had obeyed and died, had been raised and glorified by Almighty power, was now to become their personal life. The wondrous transaction that had taken place in heaven in the placing of their Friend and Lord on the throne of heaven, this the Holy Spirit came to be the witness of, yea, to communicate and maintain it within them as a heavenly reality. It is indeed no wonder that, as the Holy Ghost comes down from the Father through the glorified Son, their whole nature is filled to overflowing with the joy and power of heaven, with the presence of Jesus, and their lips overflow with the praise of the wonderful works of God.

Such was the birth of the Church of Christ; such must be its growth and strength. The first and essential element of the true succession of the Pentecostal Church is a membership baptized with the Holy Ghost and with fire, every heart filled with: the experience of the Presence of the glorified Lord, every tongue and life witnessing to the wonderful work God had done, in raising Jesus to the glory of His Throne, and then filling His disciples with that glory too. It is not so much the Baptism of Power for our preachers we must seek; it is that every individual member of Christ's body may know, and possess, and witness to, the Presence of an indwelling Christ through the Holy Spirit. It is this will draw the attention of the world, and compel the confession to the Power of Jesus.

2. It was amid the interest and the questionings which the sight of this joyous praising company of believers awakened in the multitude that Peter stood up to preach. The story of Pentecost teaches us the true position of the ministry and the secret of its power. A church full of the, Holy Ghost is a power of God to awaken the careless, and attract all honest, earnest hearts. It is to such an audience, roused by the testimony of believers, that the preaching will come with power. It is out of such a church of men and women full of the Holy Ghost that Spirit-led preachers will rise up, bold and free, to point to every believer as a living witness to the truth of their preaching and the Power of their Lord.

Peter's preaching is a most remarkable lesson of what all Holy Ghost preaching will be. He preaches Christ from the Scriptures. In contrast with the thoughts of man, who had rejected Christ, He sets forth the thoughts of God, who had sent Christ, who delighted in Him, and had now exalted Him at His right hand. All preaching in the power of the Holy Spirit will be thus. The Spirit is the Spirit of Christ, the Spirit of His personal life, taking possession of our personality, and witnessing with our spirit to what Christ has won for us. The Spirit has come for the very purpose of continuing the work Christ had begun on earth, of making men partakers of His redemption and His life. It could not be otherwise; the Spirit always witnesses to Christ. He did so in the Scriptures; He does so in the believer; the believer's testimony will ever be according to Scripture. The Spirit in Christ, the Spirit in Scripture, the Spirit in the Church; as long as this threefold cord is kept intertwined, it cannot be broken.

3. The effect of this preaching was marvellous, but not more marvellous than might be expected. The Presence and Power of Jesus are such a reality in the company of disciples; the Power from on High, from the Throne, so fills Peter; the sight and experience he has of Christ, as exalted at the right hand of God, is such a spiritual reality; that power goes out from him, and as his preaching reaches its application: 'Know

assuredly that God hath made Him both Lord and Christ, this Jesus whom ye crucified,' thousands bow in brokenness of spirit, ready to acknowledge the Crucified One as their Lord. The Spirit has come to the disciples, and through them convinces the world of unbelief. The penitent inquirers listen to the command to repent and believe, and they, too, receive the gift of the Holy Ghost. The greater works Christ had promised to do through the disciples He has done. In one moment lifelong prejudice, and even bitter hatred, give way to surrender, and love, and adoration; from the glorified Lord power has filled his body, and from its power hath gone forth to conquer and to save.

Pentecost is the glorious sunrise of 'that day,' the first of 'those days' of which the prophets and our Lord had so often spoken, the promise and the pledge of what the history of the Church was meant to be. It is universally admitted that the Church has but ill fulfilled her destiny, that even now, after eighteen centuries, she has not risen to the height of her glorious privilege. Even when she strives to accept her calling, to witness for her Lord unto the ends of the earth, she does it too little in the faith of the Pentecostal Spirit, and the possession of His Mighty Power. Instead of regarding Pentecost as sunrise, she too often speaks and acts as if it had been noonday, from which the light must needs begin to wane. Let the Church return to Pentecost, and Pentecost will return to her. The Spirit of God cannot take possession of believers beyond their capacity of receiving Him. The promise is waiting; the Spirit is now in all His fulness. Our capacity of reception needs enlargement. It is at the footstool of the throne, while believers continue with one accord in praise and love and prayer, while delay only intensifies the spirit of waiting and expectation, while faith holds fast the promise, and gazes up on the exalted

Lord, in the confidence that He will make Himself known in power in the midst of His people,—it is at the footstool of the throne that Pentecost comes. Jesus Christ is still Lord of all, crowned with power and glory. His longing to reveal His presence in His disciples, and to make them share the glory life in which He dwells, is as fresh and full as when He first ascended the throne. Let us take our place at the footstool. Let us yield ourselves in strong, expectant faith, to be filled with the Holy Ghost, and to testify for Jesus. Let the indwelling Christ be our life, and our strength, and our testimony. Out of such a Church Spirit-filled preachers will rise, and the power go forth that will make Christ's enemies bow at His feet.

O Lord God! we worship before the Throne on which the Son is seated with Thee, crowned with glory and honour. We thank and bless Thee that it is for us, the children of men, that Thou hast done this, and that He in whom Thou delightest belongs as much to earth as to heaven, to us as to Thee. O God! we adore Thy love: we praise Thy Holy Name.

We beseech Thee, O our Father, to reveal to Thy Church how our Blessed Head counts us as His own body, sharing with Him in His life, His power, and His glory, and how the Holy Spirit, is the bearer of that life and power and glory, is waiting to reveal it within us. Oh, that Thy people might awake to know what the Holy Spirit means, as the real Presence within them of the glorified Lord, and as the clothing with Power from on high for their work on earth. Oh that all Thy people might learn to gaze on their exalted King until their whole being were opened up for His reception, and His Spirit fill them to their, utmost capacity!

Our Father, we plead with Thee, in the name of Jesus, revive Thy Church. Make every believer to be indeed a temple full of the Holy Ghost: Make every church, in its believing members, a consecrated company ever testifying of a present Christ, ever waiting for the fulness of the power from on high. Make every preacher of the word a minister of the Spirit. And let throughout the earth Pentecost be the sign that Jesus reigns, that His redeemed are His body, that His Spirit works, and that every knee shall bow to Him.

Amen.

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