

The Church - Part 5

by Les Wheeldon

The sermon emphasizes the foundational link between the outpouring of the Holy Spirit and the existence of the church, urging believers to seek a genuine experience of the Spirit in their lives.

Duration: 1:06:55

Scripture: 1 Kings 18:31, Matthew 6:33, John 1:1, Acts 1:14, Acts 2:47, Acts 16:18, Ephesians 2:20

Topics: "Church"

Description

In this sermon, the speaker emphasizes the importance of responding to the witness of the Holy Spirit. He acknowledges that it is not wrong to have normal entertainment and relaxation in life, but warns against the sin of not heeding the Holy Spirit's prompting. The speaker highlights the significance of the outpouring of the Holy Spirit, which was prophesied by Jesus and fulfilled in the early church. He emphasizes that true repentance involves not just feeling sorry for specific actions, but also a change in one's entire way of living. The sermon emphasizes the need to recognize the cost of the Holy Spirit's outpouring and respond with gratitude and a desire for transformation.

Transcript

Tonight we turn, um, so the last time we were looking at the revelation of Christ, the foundation of the church, and tonight we turn to the subject, another subject in itself, of the outpouring of the Holy Spirit. And I think when we turn to that we all sense we are on essential foundational ground, the outpouring of the Holy Spirit. That's what we all want, isn't it? We all want an outpouring of the Holy Spirit.

Now, um, I remember a friend going to, I've never been to North America, but he went to North America and he went to a Pentecostal church, members of God, 5,000 people in this church, 112 full-time staff, secondary school as well, various things, um, 5,000 people, and he, in the meeting, just, uh, well he hadn't gone to preach or anything, he was just an ordinary brother really, but in the morning meeting he felt he had a prophecy, so he prophesied during the worship, and afterwards he was absolutely staggered at the response, he had never heard prophecy before in that church, 5,000 people. Incredible, isn't it? You know that when you talk about the Holy Spirit, we make assumptions. One of the assumptions we make is that we know a lot about the Holy Spirit.

Why? Because we believe very firmly in the Holy Spirit. A Pentecostal church would, uh, and you call yourself a Pentecostal church here, I would call myself a Pentecostal, with a small p, because I believe fervently, ardently, in Pentecost, and in the outpouring of the Spirit and the gift of the Spirit, but you know

that the great danger is no doubt there that to become an expert in something is, is, one of the first steps is to losing it. Strange, isn't it? To become an expert in it, and you know that the other day I was thinking about prayer, and I, uh, I thought, I wonder if in our thinking about ourselves as a church, talking about Epston now, I'm talking about myself, I'm not talking about anybody else in the church, but I thought if, I wonder if we think ourselves pretty good at prayer, and I wonder if we are, because you can think something about yourself that's not true.

Maybe you can think we spend a long time in prayer, maybe we mention that we think the prayer meeting is very important, but none of these things make us good at prayer, and, uh, not believing a lot about the Holy Spirit makes us know the Holy Spirit. It's interesting that the outpourings of the Holy Spirit come to hungry people, and I think it was perplexing to the Pentecostal churches in the 1960s and 70s that the Holy Spirit was being poured out upon Anglicans. It was perplexing.

Anglicans and Baptists and other people were receiving the Holy Spirit, and things were happening in other places, and you could almost feel the Pentecostal saying, wait a minute, the Holy Spirit belongs to us. She doesn't belong to you, she belongs to us. Well, I'm not saying that was commonly felt among the Pentecostals, but you know what I mean, it's something that the, we know the Holy Spirit, how, what, and the difference was that the Anglicans knew they hadn't got the Holy Spirit, and became aware they needed Him.

But the Pentecostals were taught, we've got the Holy Spirit, what more do we need? And one of the key things in God's pouring out of His Spirit is not expertise, it's hunger and thirst. And God has to bring us again, He has to humble us. We who have had much experience have to be humbled again and again, to the point where we thirst again.

It is not enough to talk of past experience, and it is not enough to know that we believe everything. We have to ask ourselves, what are we experiencing? Because the Holy Spirit is given to us for experience. Now you might say, well that's a dangerous statement, speaking of experience.

But you know this, if you said to me, you believe in the Holy Spirit, but you don't experience Him, I would say to you, well that's wonderful, but how do you know that the Holy Spirit has come, if you don't experience Him? And I could also ask you, how do you know when He goes? How do you know when He's gone, if you don't experience Him? If you don't know when He's there, how do you know when He's not there? You may say, well it's an article of faith, we believe it and therefore it is. But when I read the book of Acts, and I read the promises of Jesus concerning the Holy Spirit, I am so aware that the outpouring of the Holy Spirit was to be experienced, biblically of course, we could make up all our little theories of what we experience or not, but the thing is, there is a biblical foundation for the experience of the Holy Spirit. And we are to know, not just believe, we are to know.

Jesus said, that's the word he used most commonly when talking about the Holy Spirit, he said, you shall know. You will know that you're in the Father, and the Father is in you, and I'm in you, and you'll know all these things, and lots of things we shall know. But we're talking about the church really, aren't we? This is my subject, I've strengthened my subject, like a naughty boy that I am.

Don't worry, I shall come back to it. But in Acts chapter 2, we're going to find our subject again, because in Acts chapter 2, for the first time, we have the word which is my subject, the very last verse of the chapter, Acts chapter 2 verse 47, and it says there, the Lord added to the church daily such as should be saved. And the first mention of the church in the scripture as existing, not as prophesied, but as existing, is here.

Jesus mentioned something about the church, which we already mentioned back there in Acts 16 and 18, he mentioned the church twice. But here, in Acts chapter 2, is the birthday of the church. We all know that, we all believe that, it's the birthday of the church.

And he poured out the Holy Spirit, and the church was born. Praise the Lord, there's a church. So, the church and the outpouring of the Holy Spirit are foundationally linked, they cannot be separated.

No outpouring of the Spirit, no church. We can call ourselves a Baptist church or a Pentecostal church, so we call ourselves that from Christian fellowship. So, but whatever we call ourselves, we are only a church through the dimension of the Holy Spirit flooding into our lives.

So, here we are on really important ground, and we have to ask ourselves, what was the basis on which the Spirit was poured out? That's what I want to talk about tonight. What was the basis? What was the provocation? What caused the outpouring of the Holy Spirit? What made it happen? It could be argued, and it is certainly said by some, that if the conditions are right, it will happen. And I certainly believe you cannot really believe anything else than that, because otherwise you would never strive to put anything ready for God.

It is true that to get things ready is an act of God in itself. It is not an act of man, but it is true that if God, if hearts will cooperate with God, I believe that God will pour out his Spirit. It is not an act of man, it is not the will of man, it is an act of God.

God will cause things to come into place for the outpouring of the Holy Spirit. Now, just to pause for a moment, you do notice that nothing that Jesus did in the Gospels was foundational to the Church. What do I mean? In other words, Jesus was always leading up in his ministry to Pentecost.

He was not building the Church before Pentecost. Now, I know that in one way he was preparing Pentecost, though he was building the Church. What I am saying is this, Jesus never organized people together into churches.

He had thousands of converts, there were thousands healed, thousands witnessed miracles, but nothing that he did made him organize those people into churches. There were no churches formed by Jesus on the earth until after the death, the resurrection, the ascension and the outpouring of the Holy Spirit. Jesus never called any group a church until that point, and I believe that God will never lie to anybody.

I always struggle in my speech not to mislead people, and therefore when I say I'm going to the meeting on Sunday morning, I describe the hall as our meeting hall. I always seek to avoid calling it the fellowship or the church. We slip into those habits very easily, but I am certain that Jesus would never call, would never say you're going to church on Sunday morning.

He would never say it, because he would never utter something that is not true. You are the church, Sunday morning, Monday morning, Tuesday morning, wherever you are, you are the church, and you never go to church. You always gather, the church gathers in different places, but we never go to a place called church.

So if you use that phrase, banish it from your list, and seek to be righteous and true in your speech, not misleading. Now that's something I feel very personally strongly, not that I want to impose it on you, but I personally seek never to say I'm going to church, because it's not true. But here we are in Acts chapter 2, looking now at the outpouring of the Holy Spirit, and I want to suggest to you that the important thing for

you is to ask yourself, are you experiencing the fullness of the Holy Spirit? And if not, seek God until you know it.

Seek God until you know the fullness of the Holy Spirit. Do not give up and assume. Seek God until you know the outpouring of the Holy Spirit.

On your life, and the continuing in the fullness of the Holy Spirit. All right, now I mentioned that I made a list here of things that were before Pentecost, and a list of things that were after Pentecost. It's a very interesting list.

One of the things that was three years before Pentecost was the anointing of power. Jesus gave them power three years before Pentecost, and the apostles cast out demons and various things. They did not receive an anointing of power on the day of Pentecost.

Now you'll contradict me and say Jesus said you should receive power. He says it there in Acts chapter 1, but you see they knew the power before, and it wasn't enough. They knew forgiveness of sins before.

Jesus said your sins be forgiven you, but it wasn't enough. I'm not belittling any of these things, they're tremendous, they're foundational. Forgiveness of sins is foundational to all, but it is not enough to gather people as a church.

And there was the healing of the sick, the casting out of demons, there was the bodily presence of Jesus, there was the presence of the Holy Spirit with them, not in them. There was the preaching of the word, there was evangelism. All these things were not enough to found a church, to call it a church.

And you can have all those things and still not be a church. Not in the New Testament definition of it. And in one way you can see that the Christian world can be divided up into different groups which are pre-Pentecost and post-Pentecost, even today.

And you can see groups that are settling back into something less than their inheritance, though they have roots in their movement that believes in Pentecost. By the way, when I think of the the Pentecostal movement was a fresh outpouring of the Holy Spirit in the first part of the century. But when you look at the history of the church, the church has been marked by a fresh outpouring right through its history.

The outpouring of the Holy Spirit on the Moravians is one of the most beautiful. And I do recommend you get some of the books that describe it. And it describes how they all gathered to pray one night late through.

And as they were, I don't know what time they reached in the night, but the Holy Spirit was poured out on them and they just didn't go to bed that night. They stayed up all night and the people continued praying. And in the day that there were children, everyone was filled with the Holy Spirit.

They were all transformed. This was about 1700, I forgot the date, before Wesley, just before Wesley. And from that they all went out over the whole world in the power of the Holy Spirit.

And the Wesleyan revival was actually a part of that revival and that outpouring. So those are the things that were there before Pentecost. What was there after Pentecost? Well, the things that were after Pentecost were new birth.

Here's another thing that wasn't before Pentecost. Prayer. There's no prayer.

Never talked about prayer meetings, either in the Old Testament or in the Gospels. It doesn't talk about prayer meetings. That doesn't mean there's no prayer at all.

Of course David prayed. But when we think of prayer, we are thinking particularly of the Church. My house shall be called of all nations a house of prayer.

And we read of prayer really after Pentecost. We read of the indwelling Spirit, we read of the knowledge of God, Christ the head of the spiritual body, the gifts of the Spirit, and local churches. These are things that are after Pentecost.

What comes between the two? The cross. The cross. And so between knowing evangelism and some healings and some preaching and some forgiveness and some understanding coming and then entering a whole new world is an experience of the cross.

Dividing what I would call a groping to follow God and a discovery of God in power and might. Between those two things, the New Testament document is divided by this great difference before and after Pentecost. One of the most beautiful studies you can ever do is before and after Pentecost.

What was before? What was after? What came with Pentecost? And it's so wonderfully simply true that what came with the gift of the Spirit was so radical, so empowering, so life transforming, so invigorating, so revealing. Words fail, but that is the promise of God foundational to the forming of a church. God does not want simply to forgive you and send you on your way, struggling through life, battling with terrible weaknesses and habits and sins.

He wants to forgive you and flood you and transform you and give you a new dimension to living and you will still be a church. Well I'm not describing what you will be. I trust you are a church.

I trust these are what make you, what quicken in you the knowledge. We are a church. You see again I come back to this that churches back in the 60s and 70s, what made them into these things was the realization what they didn't have.

You know I believe that the Pentecostal movement turned a corner. I don't know hardly anything about the Pentecostal movement really, but from the little I know I believe that the Pentecostal movement turned a corner in recent history when different ones began to realize that they were missing out on what other churches had. They had the doctrine, they had the reality and it's not enough to have the doctrine, you've got to have the reality and first must come again among the people of God to know the fulfillment of his promises to us.

And all right now we can approach this different ways but that's the, let's go to that chapter two for a moment and here in chapter two it says this, when the day of Pentecost was fully come they were all with one accord in one place. Who were they? Well they were 120 and you know that there were 12 and there were the rest making them up to 120, Mary the mother of Jesus was there and various quantities, they were there in chapter one and they were praying, they'd been praying, they'd been praying for about 10 days really. They'd not known anything about prayer but they were praying for 10 days, just waiting, looking, asking God to fulfill his promises, 120 of them.

120 people with one heart, nobody was unwilling to be there, nobody was looking at his watch, that's the curse of a prayer meeting when people are not looking over their shoulders, a cup of cocoa at home or some of the book they want to finish or or something else, you know that something else, somewhere else

they want to be. These people were of one heart, 120 people. Now I have not often seen 120 people of one accord and that's what makes things weaker.

But when you get people agreed we're going to seek God, very wonderful. But remember this, that they weren't gathering under their own imagination, they hadn't decided that they would be an outpouring, which is dreadfully disappointing thing to do. You decide that you're going to seek God so you get an outpouring in your own strength, idealism, you might end up very disappointed.

Why did they gather? So certainly, why did they gather so in faith that it would happen? Well here's the reason, because Jesus had said it would. He had prophesied to them in a few days, in a few days, it was a prophecy. He said various prophecies, he prophesied their whole life.

He said that when the Holy Spirit has come you will preach the gospel in Jerusalem, Judea, Samaria, you know the most parts of the earth. Those men lived in the power of the prophecy of Jesus for the rest of their life. They saw it fulfilled and they were carried to the far parts of the earth.

Thomas was there and preached to India, Peter in Rome and others. We don't know exactly but possible various ones may have reached China, furthest parts of it. Who knows, one of them might have had the blessing to step on these shores and preach here too.

But you understand, it was the fulfilment of prophecy and so one of the things that God has to do is bring prophetic utterance to the people of God. You have to hear God speak, you have to hear God speak. You know that when we begin to talk about the working of God, the great desire must come to hear God and be directed by God and the belief that he will.

Unless God speaks, nothing shall happen. It's God who is the great initiator, it's not man. I can do nothing that myself should make your heart despair of yourself to the point where you trust only in God.

Because there's only one who is sufficient for these things, it's God. And it's the speaking of God. And you know that the outpouring of the Holy Spirit was on the word of Jesus.

Here's one preparation for the outpouring of the Spirit. There's the word given first, followed by the Spirit. The word followed by the Spirit.

And you find that it's true throughout the New Testament or throughout the book of Acts. Jesus sent his word, then his Spirit. Philip preached in Samaria, then the Holy Spirit fell.

They received the word before they received the Spirit. He sent Peter to preach and while he was preaching the word, the Holy Spirit fell on them that were hearing the word. This is the key in the book of Acts.

And it is wonderful to note this dimension. And one of the things you should pray for, if you are hungry for the Holy Spirit and hungry for the reality of God, you should pray for the ministry of the word in the church. You should join together to pray for those who bring the word.

And if you're one who preaches, you should spend time in the book, but also in prayer, seeking God for the prophetic word. Now we can get all tied up in saying, what kind of word is it? Sort of something especially deep or whatever it is. Don't get tied up in not simply go on from where you are.

Don't get some wild imaginations in your mind that, you know, everything's going to stop until you've got this or that. Go on from where you are, seeking God to move from where you are. God can't move from where you want to be.

He wants to move from where you are. One of the basic things is simply to realize our awful neglect of some of these things. I sometimes have asked, I don't do it very often, it's a bit mischievous really.

I sometimes ask on a Sunday morning, if your prayers are going to be fulfilled in this meeting, what is going to happen? Tell me. A bit mischievous. Why? Because I know that some people have come and not even thought about the meeting, they don't pray for it.

They're coming with needs and hurry and stress and this and they want God to meet them. But I ask, if your prayers are to be fulfilled in this meeting, tell me what's going to happen. Wonderful.

I know a man who, I was just talking to a man last week, who said that he went to a meeting and before he went he was waiting on the Lord for that meeting. He wasn't preaching, he didn't preach that night. But as he was sitting meditating, he suddenly became aware as he was praying for people, that people were going to be saved that night and baptised with the Holy Spirit.

And he felt the Lord saying, how many do you want? And he said, three Lord. No, no, more. And he prayed more.

And that night seven people, the preaching came, however it came was not the vital thing, but people received the Word. God moved and seven people stood up and were baptised with the Holy Spirit that meeting. I'm not talking about something that will happen 10 years from now.

I don't believe that God is talking about, God is simply talking about start where you are, praying, humbly, believe in God, seek his face and confess where you failed. Don't pretend and start from where you are. You know one of the things I believe that ruins people's prayer lives and their faith lives is pretense.

Let's pray for aunt so-and-so, she's ill. How are you going to pray? Lord I believe you to heal her. Or are you going to say, Lord I feel in my heart, I don't sense anything.

You've got to move from reality. You've got to. Nothing else.

Do you believe in pretense or you believe in moving the Spirit and in truth. So move from where you are and if your heart's Lord asks you a cold and indifferent to this prayer, to this prayer request. I've got nothing in me that's responding to it.

Forgive me, give me a tender heart. Whatever it is, let's be real. Don't pretend.

Start from where you are. All right, so this was one of the things that was being laid in their lives and Jesus had preached for three and a half years. He preached for three and a half years and he sorted things out and he readied their lives, made them ready.

You know that in the working of God, it is not normal for people to wait three and a half years before they receive the Spirit. They had to wait three and a half years because the cross had to come. But after Pentecost, they received the Spirit.

The word came and then within a matter of hours in some cases, in a lot of people's lives, a matter of days or weeks, whatever it was, but it was not ever declared that they would have to wait for years to receive the Holy Spirit. It can be so because God may have to deal with something very radical in you, but what you have to do is simply walk with God, believing his word and receiving the word and believing him that he will give you the Holy Spirit. You know, I'm not frightened of any of these truths because I know that God is God.

I read, I had bought a book the other day, and I found a paper cutting, an old paper cutting about 90 or 90 years ago, something like 80 years ago, and in it, it must have been just after the death of Oswald Chambers, they wrote about his life story in this paper cutting. One of the things they commented on was this. I read it, I've kept it.

If you want to, I'll show it to you sometime. It's interesting, but it says that this man prayed for the Holy Spirit, Oswald Chambers, and his own testimony was that for the next, I don't know, three or four years, he went through the dealings of God until he came through. God has to prepare his vessels, doesn't he? Some people have stubbornness, some people have all kinds of things, but God is God.

It's not normal. I don't find that to be a typical God would say, here you are, four years later, you can have the Holy Spirit. That's not God's way, but God knows how he deals with each one of us.

So, Jesus preached the gospel, he preached the word to them, and refined them, and that was not the typical way of doing it. He gives the Holy Spirit, and the refining process in the Christian life is not something that three and a half years of refining followed by the Holy Ghost. It's, he gives the Holy Spirit.

Cornelius received the Holy Spirit. I don't think he knew what was happening. And then, I'm certain, he went through many of the things that followed, that were there, and so on, that had to be worked through.

He went through many things. So, there's one thing that the word of God, and pray for the word of God. You know that you must not be indifferent to these things.

One of the essential foundations of the work of God is the word of God. In the beginning was the word. Pray for the ministry.

Pray for the ministers. Pray for, seek God, but the word will come in prophetic power. And the next thing we can bring out from this is this, these men who had received the word, they were there, 120 of them, 12 particularly, but doubtless all of them, in some measure received the word.

But these men, they were like 12 foundation stones. You know that when Elijah built the great altar there on Mount Carmel, he took 12 stones, a bit like the 12 apostles, one for every tribe of Israel. And he took them, and there they were, these 12 men, ready, waiting for the Holy Spirit.

What was the mark of these 12 men? Well, we're not going to go back throughout all the Gospels, but the mark of these 12 men, on the day of Pentecost, was deep brokenness. That was the mark of them. They were broken.

If you talked to Peter on the day of Pentecost at eight o'clock in the morning, at nine o'clock he was going to be baptized with the Holy Spirit. Talk to him at eight o'clock. Come and say hello Peter.

Are you ready for everything today? He would say, what do you mean? What's going to happen? Well, you're going to preach today, and 3,000 are going to be saved, and you know, it's going to be a tremendous day, and you're going to establish the doctrine of the New Testament church. He would just say, oh come off it. He said, I'm Peter, don't you know who I am? I'm nobody.

But you're a great apostle. He would say, no, no, no, I'm just, I'm the one who denied him. He's forgiven me, but no, I'm no one great.

And in that founding of the church, he had 12 men. You know, later on when he started the church at Ephesus, the Lord poured out the Spirit on 12 men. It's interesting, this foundational number.

God chooses men, key people, and pours his Spirit out on key persons, and they are used in the building of a church. Now, what I noticed particularly here, is that these 12 men were in no way trusting in themselves. They were just helpless, absolutely helpless.

You know, one of the things that I think people believe is that these men of God became such strong men of God, that they were there saying, oh come on, we're going to get it today, we're going to believe God. Peter would have just been absolutely broken. The only thing Peter knew was the love and mercy of Jesus.

That's all he knew. He knew that he was true, and he knew that he was unworthy. He knew he had nothing special to bring or offer.

He was just nothing. And there he was, on the day of Pentecost, presenting himself, perhaps even confused in some things, not very clear. It says one heart, well it doesn't say one heart, it says one accord in one place.

But they weren't all, that they all worked out. They didn't know hardly anything. All right, so that's what we've got to see.

They were all there, with one accord in one place. Now, the next question is, how were they going to pay for the outpouring of the Holy Spirit? Well, fortunately, they didn't even think of that. I'm sure they weren't thinking of it.

But you see, one of the truths is this, that the Holy Spirit had to be purchased. The outpouring of the Holy Spirit had to be purchased. It had to be paid for.

And one of the things we can think is that we must pay for the Holy Spirit. Now, I don't think anybody here would expect to pay with money. It would be easier if we could, wouldn't it? Take out a mortgage and buy the Holy Spirit.

I'm sure many people would do it if it was that easy. But if you took out, if you mortgaged the whole earth, you wouldn't be able to pay for the Holy Spirit. He's beyond your ability to pay.

You cannot pay for God's gift. So, when you begin to look at what can be done to purchase the gift, you have to look at what it costs God, not what it costs us. The gift of the Holy Spirit costs us nothing.

But it costs God everything. And when you look at the outpouring of the Holy Spirit, you have to see indirect answer to the cross. The cross is the offering, the sin offering, the burnt offering, the peace offering.

The cross is the offering of the sacrifice. And down here we have the 12 stones around that sacrifice. There's the offering on the altar, there's the stones around the altar, and the fire is going to fall on the sacrifice and on the stones.

In other words, when we look at the price necessary to pay for this outpouring, it's paid on the cross. He paid for it on the cross. It is not paid for by us.

When we think of prayers to receive the Holy Spirit, you must never ever think of prayer as building up your account book with God. You must never think, I'm going to deserve it now, because I fasted and prayed. You know, one of the perplexing things about the outpouring of the Holy Spirit is that some people just do nothing.

All they've done is live a life of horrible sin and made a mess of their lives, and they come to the Lord in repentance and faith, and they just receive the Holy Spirit. And you've got this cry in your heart, it isn't fair. Praise God it isn't fair.

It isn't fair by man's standards. The outpouring of the Holy Spirit is not man paying for it without virtue. It's God's mercy and grace to a group of people who are utterly unworthy.

Which is the best group in Bracknell? We are. Who is most worthy to be chosen to receive the greatest graces of the Spirit? We are. But by those very thoughts we disqualify ourselves.

God will pour out his Spirit on a group of down-outs rather than on those who think they're good. He will, and he does. You know that when you look at God's outpouring, it is true that God gives, God gives way to this hunger, and it doesn't matter who it is.

You can, you, you will be surprised when you see Catholics and, you know, but his doctrines are right, but his thirst was right. And it's humility. There's all kinds of mix-ups come because we think we are something, and we think we are this, and we think that God says, I can't, can you just recognize where you're really at, I'll fill you with the Holy Ghost as a gift.

And the only reason I do it is because of the cross. It's the only reason I will do it is because of the cross. There is nothing about you that makes God do it for you.

You understand what I mean? No virtue about you, no righteousness, no, no good as God does not say, I am going to give you the Holy Spirit because you are very diligent in prayer. Prayer is not earning the Holy Spirit. Prayer is simply standing in the place where you receive.

There's a vast difference in the two mentalities. One believes in grace, the other believes in works. And all of God's workings is through grace, not through works.

It is made manifest that we have received grace because of the things that happen in our lives, but they are not our virtue, they are the virtues of grace, they are the adornings of grace. We have to have our eyes fixed on that place, on that crucified one. We have to look long and hard and realize that what happened on the cross was the foundation for what happens in me.

God will only pour out the Holy Spirit because his Son has paid the price. And that's why when he comes to us he says, he says this, ask and you shall receive. We say, but only ask, is it that simple? He says, well it's that simple for you, but it costs me everything.

And the outpouring of the Holy Spirit is always in the, if I can call it the shadow, in the shadow of Calvary. They are totally linked. It's that we stand on Calvary's ground and receive the Holy Spirit, we stand nowhere else.

They were one accord in one place. What was the one place? It was Calvary. Whether they were standing in Calvary or in a street in Jerusalem doesn't interest me.

They were standing at Calvary. When you receive the Holy Spirit you stand at Calvary. There is no other place.

And you realize in that place how utterly unworthy and against all righteousness it would be to give you the Holy Spirit. It is not God's giving to us what we deserve, it's the very opposite. It's God giving to us what he longs to do, to fulfill his own plans of mercy and grace for us, and pour out the Holy Spirit.

That's the wonder of that day, that there was this group of men and women. Who were they? We say there were great apostles and there was great people there, but they weren't. Their only greatness lay in their utter humility, which itself was a gift from God because of the things he'd done in their lives.

You know, you go on thinking that certain things are great, this thing is great, but I am certain that some of the greatest responses to God are some of the simplest. Brokenness when you see your own sin. Openness to the mercy of God.

Brokenness in the face of all you've done, everything that you've failed in, but still you're just looking to him saying, Lord I trust in your mercy. You know that one of the greatest acts of faith recorded in the New Testament was a woman whom Jesus called a dog. And she said, that's right Lord, that's the right estimation of me.

She said, you're right, but I'm a little dog, but I can have a strong contact. We can go to God and say, well I've come here, I'm really belonging here, and I deserve a few loaves here, and I deserve some good butter, and some good cheese, and the best humming. Give me the very best because I deserve it.

God says, what about that in your life? That was a mistake. Wasn't a sin? No, it was a mistake. I was a sinner, now I'm a saint.

I've been forgiven for so many years and I'm all right. But God says, was it not sin? Is it not sin? You know that in the work of God I believe that if I were to ask God, what's the greatest sin I've ever committed? You might ask him. But I don't think you'll be, I don't, I think you may be shocked if you really receive the answer from God.

It may not be what you think it is. He said, what's the greatest sin being committed in England tonight? You might be shocked. Oh it's those homosexuals.

Oh it's those, oh it's them, it's them, and God said, it's my people. They know the truth. I'm here at the cinema laughing away their lives, got some fools running around here and they've missed the prayer meeting.

It's the greatest sin in England tonight by my people. I tell you this is true. You cannot measure sin.

Sin is not measurable by man. It's measurable by him or his holy. He alone knows what is real sin.

Some people have been born in darkness and have wallowed in it and never known any different. And the first crumb of light they hear, they respond. And others grow up in light for years and receive light and truth and live as if the world was just a playground.

We don't know. But I assure you of this, if you ask God what's your greatest sin, you may find it more recent than you think. It may not be something you did before your conversion.

It may be something you've been doing even recently. God is the God who knows how to humble his people and make a thirsty for spiritual realities. If I were to describe these people on the day of Pentecost, one of the words I would describe is this, they were repentant.

They were repentant. And when Peter preached, he said, when they said what shall we do? He said repent. And he did not mean feel sorry for something you've done.

He meant feel sorry for what you are and the way you are living. Turn to God and he'll change what you are and he'll change the way you are living. If you only feel sorry for something you've done, you might only get forgiveness for it and you'll go and do it again because you're the same person.

If the outpouring of the Holy Spirit costs God everything, what's my response to that? Well done God. Pretty good. Fine.

A nice Bible study on Tuesday. Now what are we going to do afterwards? Oh there's a good program on. I hope he finishes soon tonight.

Could that be one of the greatest things? I'm not preaching to make you heavy. I believe that the diet of a normal man includes a variety of things. Some very light.

I don't believe it's wrong to have normal entertainment and relaxation. I'm not putting on you heaviness. I'm talking about the sin of not responding to the witness of the Holy Spirit to do certain things at certain times because you grow dull, because men give themselves to the pleasure, selfish pleasure.

There is a time and a place to relax and to yes, but if that's all your life is, then it's a shame to the gospel. Is it not an honor? Now he wants to pour out the Holy Spirit. He wants to pour out the Holy Spirit.

It's almost when you when you begin to look at Calvary is like a great black cloud. Excuse me for calling it that. Black rain.

It's going to rain. It's to run. We won't get home tonight.

We've all got cars. They're all right. It's going to rain.

You've ever been caught in a real thunderstorm? I have in Africa and I've also been caught in a real thunderstorm in England. I remember once we went out to a sports day. It was so hot and the sun was blazing down.

We rubbed sun cream on us, on the kids, and there was all this. We went out to the sports day and we were hot. We had, you know, anything, just the drinks and everything, and then suddenly, your fault, it suddenly turned black and we couldn't go back to get our coats because we were in this field far away from anywhere, and before we could do anything, the heavens opened and we were all doing, we've been jumping, we jumped in this swimming pool.

None of us had umbrellas or anything. We were drenched. Run, it's going to rain.

Suddenly we saw the sky, black Calvary is a sky all heavily laden with rain. Run! Not to avoid the rain, but to get in it. You see, what Calvary is, is God saying, look, it's going to rain, it's going to rain, it's going to be pouring down any second, and there'll be a person here and a group there, and they'll be there thirsty for God, and they'll be wherever they are now, but where they'll be next year is the question, isn't it? Where will they be? Full of the Holy Ghost, going on with God.

Wonderful, isn't it? God's going to pour out, God said, I will pour out my spirit on anybody that will receive, you could say. I know there's more to it than that, but you understand, it's this God, God, God, I will do it, and Calvary is the preparation for it, and it's already in there, look, it's going to happen, look, it's going to happen, you don't have to make it rain, it's going to be poured out, all this is going to happen, it's happening already, it's not the question of whether it will or won't, it's happened. Calvary is a fact, the sky is laden heavy with rain, it's almost as if you couldn't stop it raining, the only thing you can do to stop it raining on you is a hard heart of traditional stoic, I'm right, behold it is the greatest season to do the right thing for the wrong reason.

There's a poem for you, oh I'm right, but wrong, you can be right and wrong at the same time, you can believe the right thing but you're wrong if you're not full of the Holy Ghost. What's the point in believing the right things, you know, the rationalists, I don't want to be a Pentecostal rationalist, I've got all the right ideas but just no experience, I don't want to be a Pentecostal rationalist, I don't want to be mindless, I want the right ideas, I want to know what I believe, I want to know, but I want God, I want him in my experience, because the outpouring of the Spirit is the gift of God himself, he gives himself. Well the other thing I notice here, and we'll finish with this one, but this is in chapter 1 verse 14, these all continue on accord in prayer and supplication, and I don't know very much about this 10 days, it doesn't tell you much, but they were a bit confused, you can see them making a bit of a go at making a 12th Apostle, but the 10 days of prayer, how do we get 10 days? Well it's because from the resurrection to the day of Pentecost was 50 days, he appeared to them for 40 days from the resurrection, and then after his ascension, 40 days after his resurrection, they were these 10 days you see, so the 10 days, and there they were 10 days, you can exaggerate, but the truth is that they were obeying the prophetic word of Christ to pray, and I don't believe there's any other way to pray in faith, you've got to be all ears for God in prayer, all ears, oh Lord speak.

I believe as I've said before to you that the chief faculty, the most developed faculty in Jesus Christ was his hearing, I believe he devoted his whole being in eternity and on the earth as a man, to hear his father, it wasn't a torture, it wasn't a trial, it wasn't a, it was his whole set of life to hear and obey, and it also speaks of the Holy Ghost as he heareth he shall speak, Jesus said that of the Holy Ghost he hears, it teaches me that the Holy Spirit is a listener, and then you come to the Christians and they're a load of chatterboxes, hear, any man of ears to hear, let him hear what the Spirit is saying to the churches, we do supplicate, we plead, our longings come forth as we wait, we spend time listening, we spend time waiting, we spend time praying, we spend time supplicating, we spend time feeling empty, we spend time feeling nothing, but it is not our duty in prayer to wick up our own false joys, prayer is not to be just a happy time, it is to be a discovery time, to seek and you shall find, well we've touched on it haven't we, but when the Holy Spirit came, look in church history, you know that church history has been marked out by this, that God has poured out his Spirit, that's what he's done, and if there's a gospel tonight it's only because of that, only because of that, many movements were not built on this, that explains why there's such a such a diversity of movements, there's movements abroad which are not built on the outpouring of the Holy Spirit, some of the reformation preachers were not built on the outpouring of the Holy Spirit, you won't hear of

these things through Luther, Calvin, these are the things of the Wesleys, the Foxes, the Zinzendorfs, Booth, the Pentecostal movement in this century, various ones, but this is it, a mighty baptism of the Holy Spirit came on Charles Finney, Moody, read it, discover it, they were absolutely taken beyond, let's pray shall we, easy to receive, just ask him, ask him and he will fulfill it because of Calvary, nothing you can do to make it happen other than ask him, and if you wonder if there's a hindrance say Lord what is it, show me, is there something that's hindering you doing to me, show me, I will give it up Lord, whatever it is, I'll forsake it, I will change my ways Lord, I will repent now, Lord, lead me and I will pour out my heart to you in prayer, if I can't I'll just bring my cold stony heart but I will come to you, pray mercy, he is the God of mercy, receive the Holy Spirit, receive, not a doctrine, it's God himself pouring out into you, ask him, say Lord come in and fill me with the Holy Spirit, let me know the love of God pouring into my heart, let me know the unstopping of my ears and my inner eyes to hear God and see God, change me, transform me, make me new, Lord God to the outpouring of the Holy Spirit.

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