

DID JESUS FINISH HIS WORK HERE BEFORE HE WAS RESURRECTED?
PSALM 51:1-17; DEUTERONOMY 6:5-9; ACTS 1:1-11
2026-05-31

Last week we celebrated **Pentecost**. Jesus told the disciples to wait for the coming of the HS **who would make them His witnesses and bring His power to them**. It's difficult to know what exactly happened that day, but it was both a remarkable and great day, the day that the Holy Spirit came to the Church in a very special way.

The Spirit of God has been in every age, revealing His truth to humanity (Genesis 1:2). But after Pentecost **the Holy Spirit became the dominant reality in the life of the early Church**. The Spirit does these things:

- 1) **The source of all guidance**; It moved Philip to make contact with the Ethiopian Eunuch (Acts 8:29)
- 2) The Holy Spirit **prepares us**; It prepared Peter for those coming from Cornelius' household and directed Peter to go with them (Acts 11:12, 28).
- 3) The Holy Spirit **sanctifies**; He sets us apart, both from regular life and for special assignment; It **set apart** Paul and Barnabas to take the Gospel to the Gentiles (Acts 13:2, 4).
- 4) The Holy Spirit **helps us make decisions**; It guided decisions at the Council of Jerusalem (Acts 15) and **kept** Paul away from Asia, but sent him to Troas. **The early Church was led by the Spirit**. And we should be too.
- 5) **The Spirit is the source of daily courage and power**. The disciples received power when the Spirit came (Acts 1:8). We talked about people changed by the cross and the Resurrection, for example how boldly Peter spoke before the Sanhedrin. On Pentecost **Peter** explained what had happened, quoting from Joel. Do you think those verses were his own thoughts? I doubt it. The power of the Spirit came upon him and gave him the words to say. 3,000 became believers that day!

Have you had a time when something you hadn't thought about suddenly left your lips and there's this, "**Where did that thought come from?**" Jesus said expect that and don't worry about what to say; the Holy Spirit will speak for us.

- 6) **The Spirit gives us courage to meet dangerous or daunting situations. He gives us power to cope** more than adequately with the challenges that come before us.
- 7) **He gives us joy that is independent** of circumstances. **Have you got** the joy of Jesus, the joy of the Spirit in your heart?
- 8) In Acts 5:32 **the Holy Spirit is given to those who obey God. So the measure of the Spirit within a person is** conditioned by the kind of person you are. If you're sincerely trying to do the will of God, you will experience more and more of the wonder of the Spirit.

Acts is written by Luke and picks up where his Gospel left off. He was a doctor, a Gentile. In Acts, he writes about the beginning of the church and Christian life—a unique perspective.

"Did Jesus finish His work here before He was resurrected?" Well, at the cross, Jesus did say, "It is finished." However, it is easy to see that statement was in the context of Jesus'

faithfulness and obedience to fulfil the Father's requirement of Jesus atoning for the sins of the world.

And in the first verse Luke says in his earlier book he wrote "about all that Jesus *began* to do and teach. Hold on to that thought because we'll come back to it. Today's passage focuses on the period between Christ's resurrection and ascension—40 days—an important number. The rains from the great flood lasted 40 days. The Israelites journeyed 40 years in the wilderness—both times of great judgment and tribulation. And 40 is the number of days that Jesus was in the wilderness, tempted by evil. Paul said that Jesus came as the second Adam; He also came as the last Adam. The first Adam failed his mission. The second Adam could not fail, the consequences too much.

In this 40 day period between Christ's resurrection and ascension, the disciples are taught and strengthened by Jesus, just as He Himself was taught and strengthened by His Father during His days in the wilderness. **Again, wiping out evil is at stake.** It was time for the disciples **to pick up** the ministry. Remember that Jesus said His disciples would do even greater things than He had done after He returned to the Father—quite a remarkable statement, wouldn't you agree?

Are you a disciple of Jesus? Then you too (and I) are **to pick up** and do His work. **So, in that sense, Jesus' work isn't anywhere close to being finished. In the Gospels** the focus is on Jesus, His works and suffering. **In Acts** what the disciples did and thought and taught takes the place that Jesus occupied in the Gospels. **Acts tells** of the Church that carries on the life of Christ. The chief aim of Acts is given in verse 8: "*You shall be my witnesses in Jerusalem, in all Judea and Samaria and to the end of the earth.*", or, as we might say, in Minden, Haliburton County and to the end of the earth. Christ continues to work through us to accomplish His purpose. But how can we do that?

Well, the fact is we cannot. John 15:5 says that apart from Jesus, we can do nothing. So Jesus and the Father sent the Holy Spirit to enable us. **The coming of the Spirit is the fulfilment of Jesus' promise** that He's with us always, to the end of the age. The Holy Spirit enables us to know and put into practise what Jesus taught. (pause) **So, what are the big picture things that Jesus taught?**

First, the disciples needed **a faith based on facts**: Love the Lord your God; Love your neighbour as yourself; the love of God; His teaching: "Come, follow me."; He reminded them who He was.

Second, **He taught about our need** to repent of our sins. **He came to be** our substitute because He Himself had no sin. **The cross of Christ is the climax of all history.** His death is the centre of our forgiveness, our redemption.

Third, Jesus taught about the Kingdom of God. **To experience His Kingdom requires** "yieldedness" in our hearts, submitting to Christ as King. Maybe you've heard of two kingdoms: the Kingdom of God and of Satan. **Wrong.** Satan has never been called a king. Maybe you think about the world being all evil. It can never be all evil because the Kingdom of God is still here!

If you are a Narnia fan, there's a line where one of the young people says "we're resting between the great paws of Aslan. Now let us step forward and see what adventure he has for us." Similarly, we rest in the arms of Christ who keeps us and protects us and carries us.

Deuteronomy 6:5-9 tells us to intentionally talk about matters of faith with our children. We're to be living, breathing, walking, talking extensions of Jesus. Though God is the ocean and I'm only a teacup, I can fill the teacup. **We are to pick up and do** the work of Christ—enabled by the Holy Spirit.

So the whole world changed when Pentecost came. Prior to this, the Holy Spirit "came upon" people at certain times—**only for some people or briefly for a special event**. When Samuel anointed David to be the future king of Israel, God's Spirit came upon David; at the same time, the Holy Spirit departed from Saul. Psalm 51 conveys that understanding with David, who wrote the psalm, pleading that God would not take away the Holy Spirit from him. A contemporary chorus from Psalm 51 goes like this: *"Create in me a clean heart, O God/And renew a right spirit within me. Cast me not away from your presence O Lord; Take not Your Holy Spirit from me. Restore unto me the joy of Your salvation And renew a right spirit within me."*

But since Pentecost, it's not like that. When you receive Jesus into your heart, born-again, you also receive the gift of the Holy Spirit who moves right in with you, **full time, with no cancellation clause**. He's always with us so we're never alone. He knows our thoughts. In short, at Pentecost, the Holy Spirit came to stay. You can't go shopping without the Holy Spirit. You can't mow the lawn without the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit makes it possible for us to accomplish God's will. He immerses you into Christ, into the body. It's possible for us to know and walk in the power of the Holy Spirit. You can't be a blessing to anyone without the Holy Spirit. Are you walking in His power?

Jesus came to change lives. As you cooperate with the Holy Spirit, you will be changed to be more like Jesus. Then He'll use you to change others for Him too. **The Holy Spirit and Jesus both intercede for us in our prayers—especially** when we don't know what to pray (Romans 8).

The Wind of Change! This is the breath of new life, sent by God through His Spirit. God is doing a new thing! **As that happens in you** people will see the difference in you and will be drawn to God. **That's why we're here**—first to respond to God in worship, then to share Him.

So, once you know Christ and you know the Holy Spirit, what are you expecting God to do? Are you clear in your heart and mind what you expect of God?
First, it's clear we can expect He is going to love you.
Second, Romans 8:28: We can expect *"All things (to) work together for good for those who love God and are called according to His purpose."* God will use everything in our life to turn it to good, even things which appear bad or evil to us at the time.
Third, we can expect that the Kingdom of God is with us and will never leave us, Acts 9-11: Those were Jesus' words immediately prior to the Ascension: *"After He said this, He was*

taken up before their very eyes, and a cloud hid Him from their sight. They were looking intently into the sky as He was going, when suddenly two men dressed in white stood beside them. 'Men of Galilee, 'why do you stand here looking into the sky? This same Jesus, who has been taken from you into heaven, will come back in the same way you have seen Him go into heaven.'"

Only Luke tells this story of the Ascension, and he also told it in the Gospel of Luke. The Ascension is an absolute necessity. There had to be a final moment when Jesus went back to the glory which was His. The unique 40 days of His post-resurrection appearances had passed and were not to go on forever; the end to that period had to be definite. It would be quite wrong to have the resurrection appearances just fade out.

The flip side of the Ascension is also critically important, for it lifts humanity to the highest level imaginable. Jesus, in His humanity was lifted up to heaven in the presence of those who knew and loved Him. **And if He was lifted up in His humanity, then we can be certain that each of us are worthy in God's eyes, because of the work and sacrifice of Jesus on our behalf, to be lifted up as well.** That's our certain reward for taking Jesus at His Word and believing in faith. **So, the Ascension declares to all the dignity and glory of human nature. Humanity, joined with God, has ascended into the holiest place of the universe.** After the Ascension, no one could be considered common or unclean because we've all been made in the image of the Son of God.

There is a coming divine event to which the entire creation is moving. The **Ascension** marked a clear separation between the Jesus of earth and the Christ of heaven and **brings us** face to face with the Second Coming, making clear that God has a plan for His world. History isn't careening off-course haphazardly. **Humanity is heading to a future divine event** when Jesus will come as Judge and Lord of all. It's a call to ready ourselves. And Pentecost transitions Jesus' limited earthly presence to His unlimited heavenly presence with us.

To know Jesus is to know that peace and certainty. To not know Jesus is to know no peace and no certainty. Do you know this Jesus, and not just know about Him, because He is coming back. May each of us say, "I will follow You, Lord Jesus. I won't be king any more. You be King." Second, I need the **power** of the Holy Spirit. "Holy Spirit, empower and embolden me to do what Jesus wants done." Third, I need the **hope, the expectation** of what God will do, so that I can continue to carry on what Jesus began to teach. Thank you that Your Kingdom is here and will never leave me. Amen!