

Sermon Topic: Evidence of a Spirit-filled Life by Pr Wendy Chiang-Cheong

Sermon Text: Acts 2: 32-47

There can be several responses to the belief of the Holy Spirit. To pre-believers, the Holy Spirit can be an eerie impersonal force. To some believers who believe the miraculous have ceased, the Holy Spirit can be seen as a quiet Agent who directs the Christian through Scripture. They can admit to the possibility of the power of God infilling the Christian but live without the reality of it. To some other Christians, the Holy Spirit is not only essential to Christian living, He is the power for Christian living.

QUESTION: READ THE PARAGRAPH ABOVE. DO YOU AGREE?

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Many Christians feel frustrated and defeated because they are ignorant of the power sent from God above to live victoriously. Thus they trust in their own effort to be a Christian. As a result, they are often defeated and discouraged.

Bad News: Like a body with breath is a corpse, so a Christian without the Holy Spirit is lifeless.

- Without relying on the Holy Spirit, the Christian life is impossible.
- Without relying on the Holy Spirit, following Jesus is a meaningless to-do list.

Good News: The Holy Spirit is the power of God at work in the lives of all who believes in Jesus.

- The Christian who depends on the power of the Holy Spirit can be fruitful and victorious.
- In fact, today’s passage demonstrates that a Spirit-filled life is anything but mediocre.

If everything about being filled with the Holy Spirit is speaking in tongues, the book of Acts would be forgotten. The Gospel would not have traveled places. We would still have not heard the Gospel. Instead, Luke the evangelist aims to demonstrate the evidence of the Spirit-filled life and Spirit-filled Church.

Big Idea: A Spirit-filled life brings about an increase in boldness, brokenness, believers and bond in the family of Christ.

A. GREAT BOLDNESS

“Brothers, I can tell you **confidently**...God has raised this Jesus to life...God has made this Jesus whom you crucified, both Lord and Christ” (Acts 2:29, 32).

Boldness is the 1st evidence of a Spirit-filled life. Who was this bold and frank messenger?

The old Peter was impulsive, insecure, quick-tongued, a “Rock/Stone” (named Cephas, John 1:42) far from being stable and steadfast, had cold feet and turned to sand at Jesus’ trial and tragedy. Failed as a disciple, failed as a fisherman, defeated till the **TURNING POINT**:

- Resurrected Jesus reached out to restore and renew him.
- Instructed him and 120 followers to wait till “clothed with power from on high” by the Holy Spirit for new assignment (Luke 24:49).
- The Holy Spirit filled the room and all 120 Christians (Acts 1:8, 2:4).

The new, Spirit-filled Peter may be uneducated and culturally backward (Acts 2:7) but set aflamed for Jesus, steady as the rock as Jesus called him to be, courageous to preach the Gospel despite hostility, stood on the forefront as a source of strength to others.

Without the infilling of the Holy Spirit, we are like the old Peter in many ways:

- Hear the words of Jesus but do not comprehend His Person and mission.
- Follow and serve Jesus so long as it doesn’t require us to submit our self-ambition, self-will, strong-will to Him.
- Bail out on Jesus when He did not turn out as we expect Him to be.
- Feel beaten by current failures and fearful of what that future holds.
- Feel timid to tell others that we are with Jesus at trials and tragedy.
 - All because we try to live the Christian life on our own efforts. You are the old Peter. I am the old Peter.

But there is Good News:

- Jesus has NOT LEFT US TO DEPEND on our own resources for Christian living.
- He has NOT LED US TO TRUST HIM AT CONVERSION only to have us revert back to the old us.
- He wants to make us a new person through “the Holy Spirit as a gift to everyone who repents and are be baptised for the forgiveness of sins” (Acts 2:38).

Water baptism and Holy Spirit baptism can be compared this way:

	Water Baptism	Holy Spirit Baptism
Candidate	Believer of Jesus Christ	Believer of Jesus Christ
Baptizer	A pastor, evangelist, deacon (Acts 8:38)	Jesus Christ (Matthew 3:11, Mark 1:8)
Baptismal Element	Water (Acts 8:36-38)	Holy Spirit (Mark 1:8)
Purpose	A witness to conversion, salvation, the forgiveness of sins and entry into the Body of Christ (Mark 16:16, Acts 2:38, 22:16, Galatians 3:27)	To infuse the Christian with power and gifts for Christian growth, living, service and witness (Luke 24:49, Acts 1:8, Acts 8:14-17, 1 Corinthians 12:4-13)
Result	Salvation and entry into the body of Christ (,)	Reception of the Holy Spirit with accompanying gifts and power for character formation, service and witness. (Acts 2:4, 8:14-17,)

To be baptised is to be immersed, not just in water alone but also in the life of the Holy Spirit. So that we can have revolutionary power over sin, revolutionary power to worship God, revolutionary power to be witnesses for Jesus Christ. A Spirit-filled life will STOP magnifying self and START magnifying God.

QUESTION: ARE YOU EXPERIENCING THIS POWER OF THE HOLY SPIRIT IN YOUR LIFE DAILY? ARE WE AS A CELL GROUP EXPERIENCING AND TALKING ABOUT THE POWER OF THE HOLY SPIRIT IN OUR LIVES? IS THE CHURCH RECEPTIVE TO THE POWER OF THE HOLY SPIRIT WORKING IN CHURCH LIFE?

The Christian without power is the Christian who needs the immersion of the Holy Spirit.

B. GREAT BROKENNESS

Brokenness before God is the 2nd evidence of the Spirit-filled life. Brokenness is described as a cut in our spirit by the Word and Spirit of God. How did brokenness happen in the text that led to the people's immersion with the Holy Spirit? What did Peter say?

1. We need to **HEAR** the proclaimed word of God.
 - The Word that proclaims Jesus' crucifixion, resurrection and ascension.
 - He triumphs as both Savior and Lord of the universe.
 - He offers forgiveness of sins and spiritual renewal.
 - The Word must be proclaimed so it can be heard.

2. We need to **RECEIVE** the proclaimed word of God (vs 41).
 - To receive is to EMBRACE what God says such that it becomes a part of you.
 - Embrace with ATTENTIVE LISTENING to God for ourselves (Ps 32:8a, 2 Tim 3:16-17):
 - What is God saying to me?
 - What is God calling me to do?
 - Not to gossip/talk about others.
 - Embracing God's Word always leads us to REPENTANCE:
 - Cut to the heart by the sword of the Spirit: we repent, we turn.
 - It is a lifetime movement of the heart towards God
 - From self-made provisions, paths, powers and promises.
 - Towards Christ for new paths and new power.

3. We must have an **OPEN EXPRESSION OF OBEDIENCE** to Jesus Christ.
 - Water baptism was the universal experience of all Christians in the New Testament.
 - It isn't merely a ritual or formality. It is a commandment of Christ, an act that expresses that we are immersed with Christ in His life, death and resurrection.
 - Note the immediate obedience and its effect.

God gives us His Holy Spirit to indwell and fill us so that we can participate in the divine life of God and become His legit witness in the world. The day of Pentecost is an unique and unrepeated historical event. But all of God's people can now always and everywhere benefit from the ministry of the Holy Spirit to make us BOLD and BROKEN (self-emptied) for a powerful life in Him.

QUESTION: WHAT DO YOU HEAR HIS SPIRIT SAY TO YOU? WHAT IS HIS SPIRIT TELLING YOU TO DO?