

“The Spirit of the Sovereign Lord” (Isaiah 61:1–11, Acts 2:1–4)(5.23.21)

Acts 2:1–4 (NIV84) *The Holy Spirit Comes at Pentecost*

2 When the day of Pentecost came, they were all together in one place. ² Suddenly a sound like the blowing of a violent wind came from heaven and filled the whole house where they were sitting. ³ They saw what seemed to be tongues of fire that separated and came to rest on each of them. ⁴ All of them were filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other tongues as the Spirit enabled them.

Isaiah 61:1–11 (NIV84) *The Year of the Lord’s Favor*

61 The Spirit of the Sovereign Lord is on me,
because the Lord has anointed me
to preach good news to the poor.

He has sent me to bind up the brokenhearted,
to proclaim freedom for the captives
and release from darkness for the prisoners,

² to proclaim the year of the Lord’s favor
and the day of vengeance of our God,
to comfort all who mourn,

³ and provide for those who grieve in Zion—
to bestow on them a crown of beauty
instead of ashes,

the oil of gladness

instead of mourning,

and a garment of praise

instead of a spirit of despair.

They will be called oaks of righteousness,
a planting of the Lord

for the display of his splendor.

⁴ They will rebuild the ancient ruins
and restore the places long devastated;
they will renew the ruined cities
that have been devastated for generations.

⁵ Aliens will shepherd your flocks;
foreigners will work your fields and vineyards.

⁶ And you will be called priests of the Lord,
you will be named ministers of our God.

You will feed on the wealth of nations,
and in their riches you will boast.

⁷ Instead of their shame
my people will receive a double portion,
and instead of disgrace
they will rejoice in their inheritance;
and so they will inherit a double portion in their land,
and everlasting joy will be theirs.

⁸ “For I, the Lord, love justice;
I hate robbery and iniquity.

In my faithfulness I will reward them
and make an everlasting covenant with them.

⁹ Their descendants will be known among the nations
and their offspring among the peoples.

All who see them will acknowledge
that they are a people the Lord has blessed.”

¹⁰ I delight greatly in the Lord;
my soul rejoices in my God.

For he has clothed me with garments of salvation
and arrayed me in a robe of righteousness,
as a bridegroom adorns his head like a priest,
and as a bride adorns herself with her jewels.

¹¹ For as the soil makes the sprout come up
and a garden causes seeds to grow,
so the Sovereign Lord will make righteousness and praise
spring up before all nations.

The word of God for the people of God.

LET US PRAY.

Title: **“The Spirit of the Sovereign Lord”**

INTRODUCTION:

The Reverend Samuel Chadwick wrote in *The Way to Pentecost*: “The Church still has a theology of the Holy Ghost but it has no living consciousness of His presence and power. Theology without experience [of the Holy Spirit] is like faith without works: it is dead.

The signs of death abound. Prayer-meetings have died out because men did not believe in the Holy Ghost. The liberty of prophesying has gone because men believe in investigation and not in inspiration. There is a dearth of conversions because faith about the New Birth as a creative act of the Holy Ghost has lost its grip on intellect and heart.”

The Way to Pentecost was published in 1932. Would you say that it is more or less true today? I venture that it is more true today.

My proposition is that The Spirit of the Sovereign Lord announced in Isaiah 61:1 came in fullness on Pentecost. The Church of Jesus was birthed, or maybe more appropriately, inaugurated in that Coming of the Holy Spirit. This chapter of Isaiah was quoted directly by Jesus in the Gospel of Luke. Jesus paraphrased it in the sermon on the Mount. Jesus claimed Isaiah 61 as his mission, the mission of the Messiah. And, we the Church have been commissioned by Jesus to continue that mission.

We will look at that commissioning. We will examine the mission as outlined in Isaiah 61. While doing those two things, it will be shown that God the Holy Spirit is central and critical to successfully establishing and expanding the kingdom of God.

BODY:

Let us begin with Jesus announcing his ministry in the synagogue of His hometown of Nazareth.

Luke 4:17–21 (NIV84)

¹⁷ The scroll of the prophet Isaiah was handed to him. Unrolling it, he found the place where it is written:

¹⁸ “The Spirit of the Lord is on me,
because he has anointed me
to preach good news to the poor.

He has sent me to proclaim freedom for the prisoners
and recovery of sight for the blind,
to release the oppressed,

¹⁹ to proclaim the year of the Lord’s favor.”

²⁰ Then he rolled up the scroll, gave it back to the attendant and sat down. The eyes of everyone in the synagogue were fastened on him, ²¹ and he began by saying to them, “Today this scripture is fulfilled in your hearing.”

The people knew that Isaiah 61 was referencing the work of the Messiah. Therefore, Jesus was making an outrageous claim of messiahship. They said, “Hey, isn’t this Joseph’s son?” Luke 4:29–30 (NIV84)²⁹ They got up, drove him out of the town, and took him to the brow of the hill on which the town was built, in order to throw him down the cliff. ³⁰ But he walked right through the crowd and went on his way.

In the Gospel of Matthew chapter five, we find The Beatitudes and the Sermon on the Mount. The first four beatitudes parallel verses in Isaiah 61. 5:1–6 (NIV84)

5 Now when he saw the crowds, he went up on a mountainside and sat down. His disciples came to him, ² and he began to teach them, saying:

³ “Blessed are the poor in spirit,
for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

⁴ Blessed are those who mourn,
for they will be comforted.

⁵ Blessed are the meek,
for they will inherit the earth.

⁶ Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness,
for they will be filled.

Surely, you can see that Jesus is owning His Messiahship as outlined in Isaiah 61. Remember also, that Jesus’ primary preaching was the coming of the kingdom and the need for repentance. Because I have demonstrated that in other sermons in recent memory and the shortness of time, I won’t cite those passages. My point is that the work of the Messiah is intimately involved in the ushering in of the kingdom of God.

As you know, during Jesus’ ministry, He had twelve primary disciples that lived with Him. They grew intimately close as He taught them. There were many other followers too. Jesus was preparing His disciples to take over his ministry after He was to be seated beside God the Father in heaven.

Jesus says in John 14:12–17 (NIV84)

¹² “I tell you the truth, anyone who has faith in me will do what I have been doing. He will do even greater things than these, because I am going to the Father. ¹³ And I will do whatever you ask in my name, so that the Son may bring glory to the Father. ¹⁴ You may ask me for anything in my name, and I will do it.

¹⁵ “If you love me, you will obey what I command. ¹⁶ And I will ask the Father, and he will give you another Counselor to be with you forever — ¹⁷ the Spirit of truth.”

Acts 1:4–5 (NIV84)

⁴ On one occasion [before Jesus ascended], while he was eating with them, he gave them this command: “Do not leave Jerusalem, but wait for the gift my Father promised, which you have heard me speak about. ⁵ For John baptized with water, but in a few days you will be baptized with the Holy Spirit.”

So, ten days after Jesus ascended, the Spirit of the Sovereign Lord fell on Peter and the other disciples. They were all filled with Holy Spirit and they began to speak in all the various languages of the Pentecost Pilgrims visiting Jerusalem for the Pentecost feast. Peter stood up and boldly preach as the Spirit led Him. Three thousand people believed the gospel Peter preached. They were filled with the Holy Spirit and were baptized. Now, the Church of God would be the vehicle of the Sovereign Spirit of God.

There is further evidence for that statement. In Isaiah 61, the pronouns changed from singular pronouns to plural pronouns and nouns. I and me became they. It is pretty clear that the plural pronouns are referring to The Chosen People. Because the Church has been grafted into the vine of Israel, we have subsumed their role as the source of blessing to the world.

Likewise, notice the language of Isaiah 61:6 has been assimilated by the Church. In Isaiah: And you will be called **priests** of the Lord, you will be named **ministers** of our God. In 1 Peter 2:9 (NIV84) But you are

a chosen people, a royal **priesthood**, a holy nation, a people belonging to God. And, in 2 Corinthians, Paul says we have been given a **ministry** of reconciliation.

Again, Reverend Samuel Chadwick wrote, “The work of the Church is to “minister the Spirit,” to speak His message, and transmit His power. He calls and distributes, controls and guides, inspires and strengthens.”

But, how can we minister what we do not have? Jesus gives us the solution in Luke 11:13 (NIV84), “If you then, though you are evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Father in heaven give the Holy Spirit to those who ask him!” Ask, ask, ask. We cannot have too much of God the Holy Spirit and any honest evaluation of the Church in America would show we have too little of the Holy Spirit.

Chadwick laments, “We are acting as though the only remedy for decline were method, organization, and compromise. The Church is failing to meet modern needs, grip the modern mind, and save modern life. The saints are the ordained rulers of the earth, but they do not rule; indeed, they have dropped the scepter and repudiated the responsibility. The helplessness of the Church is pathetic and tragic. There might be no such Person as the Holy Ghost.”

“He makes possible greater works than His. He is the Spirit of God, the Spirit of Truth, the Spirit of Witness, the Spirit of Conviction, the Spirit of Power, the Spirit of Holiness, the Spirit of Life, the Spirit of Adoption, the Spirit of Help, the Spirit of Liberty, the Spirit of Wisdom, the Spirit of Revelation, the Spirit of Promise, the Spirit of Love, the Spirit of Meekness, the Spirit of Sound Mind, the Spirit of Grace, the Spirit of Glory, and the Spirit of Prophecy.”

My friends, it occurred to me that we might need to be reminded of the metanarrative of the Bible. What is the overarching story that God is revealing? Is it not God pursuing His people? Adam and Eve broke the one law they were given and were expelled from the Garden of Eden. Revelation ends with God once again dwelling with His people.

Within that story we have a smaller story. The Tower of Babel was about a rebellious people going their own way. They would find their own way to heaven. God confused their language and sent them to the corners of the world. Pentecost was the reversal of Babel – through the Holy Spirit, people of all languages could hear the good news of Jesus the Christ. And, the mission of the Church is to gather all of God’s people into the Body of Christ.

The human race is a toddler always pulling at the harness. Left to our own devices, we are constantly getting into trouble. We do not understand that the fullness of life is experienced when we stay close to God. In the 8th verse of Isaiah 61, our loving Father says, “In MY faithfulness I will reward them.” When the Prodigal Son starts the journey home, the Father is watching and sees him from afar. Then the Father runs to embrace the wayward child. That is OUR Father.

Rebuild, restore, and renew – what great promises these are. Ruins and devastation will be reversed. Instead of shame we will have the inheritance of the first-born – a double portion.

Notice this beautiful word “instead.” On one side there is death, grieving, despair, and disgrace. On the other side there is the oil of gladness; a garment of praise; and, the righteousness of God seen in His people for the display of His splendor. Do you have such an anointing? Do you wear your praises and thankfulness to God? Is your daily walk honoring your faithful Father?

The Messiah promised a crown of beauty. How do you wear yours? Maybe you dropped it into the dirt. Maybe it is chipped and dented. So, you have put it on a shelf in the closet. The Holy Spirit can cleanse you and make you whole again. You are a child of God; let the Holy Spirit wash over you and make you a new creation. We do not wear our crowns to bring glory to ourselves; but rather, to point others to the One Who bestows it, the Lord Jesus.

We will rejoice in our inheritance. Everlasting joy will be ours. We have an everlasting covenant with God. We are a people the LORD has blessed. We are to delight greatly in the LORD. Our soul is to rejoice

in our God. Does that sound like the modern Church? Does it sound like this church? Unfortunately, I fear the needle on our joy meter rarely does more than flutter from its stop.

CONCLUSION:

On the third Thursday of each month, there is a gathering of pastors at Beacon Church. We share what is happening in our personal lives and what is happening in our ministry. Then we pray for each other, for the Church, and for our nation.

This past week, Pastor Al brought in a bunch of books as he is thinning out his library. He suggested to Pastor Tom that he could give away some of the books at the Atlantic County Jail. Pastor Tom has a long-standing ministry at the jail, but he said, "Since the pandemic, I have not been able to visit the jail."

This struck me as particularly sad. These were books about faith in God and living out Christian lives. Jesus said, "The Spirit of the Sovereign Lord is on me because he has anointed me to proclaim freedom for the captives and the release from darkness for the prisoners." Surely, those in the Atlantic County Jail need to hear the Good News of Jesus.

I took one of the books: *The Holy Spirit, The Key to Supernatural Living* by Bill Bright. The author, who died in 2003, is the founder and president of Campus Crusade for Christ International. He established this ministry on a university campus in 1951. It now encompasses the globe and includes a staff in the tens of thousands, who are dedicated to introducing others to Jesus Christ and the Spirit-filled life. As of 2013, they had a ministry presence in 190 countries, which represents 99.6 percent of the world's population.

On the website it says: "Our purpose is to help fulfill the Great Commission of Jesus Christ in the power of the Holy Spirit by winning people to faith in Him, building them in their faith, and sending them to do the same.

We help the body of Christ to do evangelism and discipleship through a variety of creative ways. We are committed to the centrality of the cross, the truth of the Word, the power of the Holy Spirit, and the global scope of the Great Commission."

In the introduction to this book, Bill Bright writes: "The weakest one of God's children, when utterly surrendered to the Spirit of God, is empowered to accomplish the supernatural...No truth is more important to the believer than an understanding of the ministry of the Holy Spirit and how to be filled by Him. As I often say, if I had only one message to share with the Christian world, it would be on this subject. For that reason, I have written this book, *The Holy Spirit – The Key to Supernatural Living*." Throughout the next several weeks, we will be exploring life led by God the Holy Spirit. We will be exploring church led by God the Holy Spirit. When you look at our church and a high percentage of churches, you can see that we are failing to implant the seed of the gospel in the upcoming generations. Heavenly Father, it is our prayer that The Spirit of the Sovereign Lord would be on us. Fill your church with the power from on high. Baptize us mightily with the Holy Spirit. Equip us we pray for the ministry of the kingdom of God, on earth as it is in heaven.

Amen and amen. Let us pray.