

“Cherish the Spirit”

Psalm 51

Today is “Whitsunday” or more commonly known as “Pentecost Sunday.” The former celebrates the white garments used by the baptismal candidates while Pentecost commemorates the descent of the Holy Spirit fifty days after Passover. To the Jewish community it was a day of Thanksgiving for the first wheat harvest.

It was on that day that the new society which we call the church celebrates her birthday. On that day the Holy Spirit empowered and endorsed the 120 believers gathered in the upper room. This fulfilled the prophesy of Jesus in Acts 1:8, “But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth.”

Let us reflect on that dramatic event as we read Acts 2:1-4.

When the passionate sermon of Peter was heard and believed three thousand people responded in repentance, faith and water baptism.

It would be a mistake to say that this was the birthday of the Holy Spirit as some say. A thousand years before the mighty outpouring of the Holy Spirit on Pentecost David prayed a penitential Psalm in which he showed his passion for the Holy Spirit. One of his deep requests was to retain the Holy Spirit as seen in Psalm 51:11. “Do not cast me from your presence or take your Holy Spirit from me.”

The book of Psalms is often described as a hymnbook, but I believe it should be strongly looked upon as a manual on the art of praying. We learn from the superscription of many of the psalms that they were born in a crisis moment. Notice the following superscriptions:

- Psalm 3—When he fled from Absalom his son.
- Psalm 16—When the Lord rescued him from the obsessed King Saul;
- Psalm 34—When he acted like he lost his mind before Abimelech.
- Psalm 56-- When the Philistines captured him in Gath.
- Psalm 51—When the prophet Nathan came to him after David had committed adultery with Bathsheba.

So this is a heart wrenching lament. It is a prayer of a man coming empty handed with a shattered spirit. There is nothing I could bring you to appease you. I only hope for mercy.

David's prayer shows us how a believer needs to "Cherish the Holy Spirit." Let me share three evidences found in those who cherish the Spirit.

1. There is an evidence of a deep reverence for the Holy Spirit. David was a Trinitarian. He totally embraced the Godhead of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit. The communicator may want to develop this thought via the Messianic Psalms. But here we have the indwelling life of God known as the Holy Spirit. While David should admit to his sins against Uriah which included robbing him of his wife and taking his life, he knows that he has mostly grieved the person of the Holy Spirit. The communicator will tie into the verse found in Ephesians 4:30. The closest friend and the holiest of all persons to the believer is the Holy Spirit. No doubt we fail our family and friends, but after all they often fail us. But to hurt and bring pain to the Holy Spirit is monumental abuse to the Spirit. David felt that way, "Against you, and you only, have I sinned and done what is evil in your sight." v. 4

[Transition: This lament no doubt was generated by a review of what the Holy Spirit had done to make it possible for David to become a success. Let us look at the second evidence.]

2. There is an evidence of a strong appreciation for the Holy Spirit.
[The communicator will want to see the blessings bestowed by the Spirit upon David by reviewing several of the events in which David was aided by the Holy Spirit. In essence all he had accomplished was impossible without the involvement of the Spirit. Let me share two:
 - His appointment to be king, I Samuel 16:13
 - His skill as a musician, II Samuel 23:2
 - His prophetic gift, Matthew 22: 43-44

[Transition: David was overwhelmed by the benefits he had derived from the Holy Spirit and his passion to keep the Spirit was one of thanksgiving in words like this, "After all you've done for me." Based on David's deep regard for the personhood of the Holy Spirit and the countless help received from the Holy Spirit we understand his passion to keep the Spirit. That may

be expressed in words such as, “Life would not be worthwhile without the Holy Spirit.]

3. There is an evidence of a passion for the Holy Spirit.

I believe that David’s lament touched the very person of the Holy Spirit to such an extent that David was forgiven. Nathan said to him, “The Lord has taken away your sin. You are not going to die...” II Samuel. 12:13

David will live differently from that point. He will write the most popular Psalm 23 in which he will testify “he restores my soul.”

He will set the bench mark for all the kings that followed him. The y will be judged by the measure of King David. I Kings 15:3 and 15:11. The communicator can find that idea in many of the chapters of the successive kings. The summation of David’s life and rule is given in Acts 13:36

I believe this Psalm is a call not only to you and me as believers, but to the church in our time. Certainly the people of God since Pentecost are given the security of the permanency of the Holy Spirit, but we are warned that our faithless and foolish ways hinder the ministry of the Spirit in us. We are urged to “be filled with the Holy Spirit.” We are subject and urged to submit to the Spirit. Ephesians 5:18

You may think that only kings, preachers and talented types need the Holy Spirit, but we all need the Spirit of God. God is eager to give us the Holy Spirit. He comes and stays in the life of those who receive Jesus as the One and Only Savior. See Luke 11:13.