

Release the lease; Let God into your life

Message for Pentecost Sunday, May 24, 2015
by Bruce Fraser

Scripture: John 14:15-17

Children's Message: Acts 2:1-12

I bring out a large birthday cake, light the candle, and start singing "Happy Birthday." When we get to the part "Happy birthday dear..." likely no one will sing, because they don't know who it's for.

Oh, did I not tell you who the birthday party is for? I'm sorry. Let's see if you can figure it out. It's not for a person; it's for a group. It's for a group which has been around for a very long time. How long? – almost 2,000 years! Today is the birthday of the Church!

Today is the day when the Holy Spirit came and filled the disciples. That's when things really changed. At that time, there were only a couple hundred people who were committed followers of Jesus. By the end of that day, there were several thousand. And thousands more joined them in the next few days. The Holy Spirit made the difference then, and still does today.

The Holy Spirit is God who comes and lives in us. I can't say I understand that, but that's OK. I don't understand either why music sounds so nice—but I sure enjoy it!

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During the time that Jane and I lived in Labrador, I toured the Churchill Falls hydroelectric project. Everything about it is staggering:

- The water from the lake falls through tunnels to the turbines 300 meters below (the height of a 100 story office tower).
- The turbines (the parts which catch the water's flow and convert it to electricity) are so huge that they built a special railway and special railcars just to bring them to the site. That's all the railway was ever used for.
- The room containing the turbines is as large as a football field. The ceiling is 30 meters above the floor. This huge cavern was dug out of solid rock, deep underground.

The key to producing the electricity are the turbines. They look like huge doughnuts, with an opening to catch the water, and another opening to let the water out. Inside are blades which spin around when pushed by the water. The whole thing is in a magnetic field, so the spinning motion produces electricity.

You know how heavy a pail of water is. Can you imagine trying to lift a pail of water that is 300 meters high?!! When that water is channeled through the turbines, the force is incredible! That is the key to producing such huge amounts of electricity.

I'm painting a picture of something we can understand, to help us get the picture of something which is beyond understanding: God's Holy Spirit dwelling inside of us.

I may be exaggerating to say that being filled with the Holy Spirit is similar to having enough electrical power to supply the needs of an entire city. In that case, we would be like comic book superheroes! Then again, maybe I'm not exaggerating. Consider the results of having that power in your life:

- Having a sense of peace and joy that nothing can take away, not even troubles and tragedy
- The ability to love someone, even though all your instincts tell you to despise that person
- An intimate relationship with God, not just as an all-powerful deity, but also as a Friend who is your companion.
- The strength to resist temptation – if that's *really* what you want.

If I were selling snake oil and made claims like that, you would be wise to save your money. But I'm *not* making these claims. I am simply passing on to you what God has promised to those who are disciples of Jesus Christ.

All of these are things everyone desires. The question seems to be: "How can I get these qualities in my life?"

David Watson, wrote about this in his book *Discipleship*:

What we need to realize is that all that we need is in Jesus Christ. Once we are truly alive in Christ, and he is alive in us, then we are complete. In him, we already have all the love, all the power, faith and wisdom we need. We simply have to claim it, and begin to enjoy the unsearchable riches God has already given us in Christ.

It is vitally important to see how different this is from our usual thinking. Instead of working to get something that we do not possess, it is a question of letting the Spirit release from within us what we already have in Christ. Our task is to abide in him, and then trust his Spirit to work in and through us.

Hear the words that Jesus himself spoke to the disciples:

John 14:15-17, New Living Translation:

“If you love me, obey my commandments. And I will ask the Father, and he will give you another Counsellor, who will never leave you. He is the Holy Spirit, who leads into all truth. The world at large cannot receive him, because it isn’t looking for him and doesn’t recognize him. But you do, because he lives with you now and later will be in you.”

In that last sentence, “and later” was the day of Pentecost. Jesus kept his promise. He still does. Like his promise of joy and peace that no one or no thing will ever be able to take away from you:

John 15:11, New International Version:

“I have told you this so that my joy may be in you and that your joy may be complete.”

John 16:33, New Living Translation:

“I have told you all this so that you may have peace in me. Here on earth you will have many trials and sorrows. But take heart, because I have overcome the world.”

John 14:27, New Living Translation:

“I am leaving you with a gift—peace of mind and heart. And the peace I give isn’t like the peace the world gives. So don’t be troubled or afraid.”

Many people have tried this promise and found it to be true. Here is the story of two, as related by Catherine Marshall in her book *The Helper*. Mary and George Greenfield began attending a church in Florida. During one service they prayed that the Holy Spirit would not just fill them, but flood them. Six days after that, their only daughter Patty was abducted during a robbery of the store where she worked.

By the next day hundreds of people were praying for Patty’s safety. During worship a week later, while the congregation was singing “Amazing Grace,” George Greenfield’s tears began flowing. At that moment, George knew that his daughter was with the Lord in heaven. Along with the news came a strong assurance in the words, “Don’t cry, Dad. I’m okay.”

Two days later Patty’s body was found by a local detective. Police later arrested two young men who confessed to the murder.

When a detective, an FBI agent, and the Greenfield’s pastor came together to tell them the sad news, they found the Greenfield’s attitude astonishing: they already knew and had been prepared. Though these parents did not understand the “why” of the senseless murder any

better than any of the rest of us, and while they grieved for their lovely daughter, there was a total calmness and no bitterness towards the killers. The newspaper reporters swarming over the case were at a loss to explain the inner strength and peace in the Greenfields – qualities they had never before encountered in such circumstances.

All this and much more God desires to give to us, if we are willing. That’s the key: are you willing? Some people are afraid to open the door to God, to let God really change their lives. It’s like they own the house, and are willing to let God be a tenant, as long as they hold the lease. This message is titled “Release the lease; Let God into your life.” I encourage you to be open to receive all that God has for you. Open the floodgates, and let the Holy Spirit flow with power in your life.

Next Steps:

- Surrender your life to Jesus; invite the Holy Spirit to come in.

Prayer:

Lord Jesus, thank-you for all that you’ve done for us:

- You came to our world to show us God’s way and God’s love;
- You gave your life for us, so that we might have eternal life;
- You call us to follow you, to fulfill the real purpose for our lives.

And you promise to be with us, through the Holy Spirit living in us. Come, Lord Jesus; come, Holy Spirit. Come and make this heart your home. Do your work of molding and shaping us so that we grow more and more like Jesus every day. Amen.