

MAXIMUM IMPACT IN OUR WORLD

September 27, 2009

SERMON TITLE- ACTS-traordinary: The Birth of a New Community

Power Surge

(Acts 2:1-21)

NOTES BY BILLY GROSS

Thanks, Keith, for bringing us this inspiring, challenging word from the Lord. May we honestly engage this call to believe in the power of the Holy Spirit to work in and through our lives . . . for our transformation and His glory. ~Billy Gross

Review:

- Two parallel tracks that run through the book of Acts:
 - The Fingerprints of God (His presence and power) all over the place
 - The human struggles and difficulties of everyday life . . . all over the place
- The early church was made up of everyday, ordinary people (mostly poor, uneducated, of insignificant social standing)
- Acts 1:8 declares the promise of the outpouring of the Holy Spirit to empower God's people (the church) to be His witnesses in the world.

Acts 2:1-21 The day of Pentecost . . .

- Marks the initiation of the fulfillment of Jesus' Acts 1:8 promise . . . rooted also in Joel's prophecy (Joel 2:28-32) and Jesus' prophecy – John 14:16-20
- "Suddenly" (the Spirit came) – this was God's initiative, not man's planning
- **WIND** (sound) – a biblical expression for the Spirit of God – representing His **LIFE**
- **FIRE** (tongues of some sort) – representing the **CLEANSING** power of God's Spirit
- **LANGUAGES** (of all the people present that day) – declaring the gospel and power of God for **ALL** people (a reversal of the Tower of Babel where God confused the people of ONE tongue into many tongues to disperse them (from their arrogant idolatry). At Pentecost, God's ONE Spirit speaks in many tongues to **unite** dispersed people into ONE faith and ONE Spirit (as they humbly surrender to Him).

This outpouring of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost IS . . .

- The final "movement" of Jesus' saving work: Incarnation, Crucifixion, Resurrection,

Ascension, . . . **Release of His Spirit**

- The birth of the Church, *The Body of Christ*. We, **the people**, are now God's physical presence in the world, empowered by His Spirit who indwells us.
- The Power Surge that **transforms** Jesus' disciples to be agents of change (salt & light) in the world.

This power surge was not a one-time event . . . the surge continues on in the church from then until Jesus comes again. The Holy Spirit is in us, **with power**, to be agents of transformation - - if we will but believe and surrender.

So WHY don't we see God's transforming power at work in and through us? Why do we feel so powerless? Where is the power?

Three hindrances:

- **Ignorance**. Many believers either know nothing about the power of the Spirit or they misunderstand His presence and power.
- **Fear**. Wind, fire, power (*dunimus – the root for dynamite*) are not tame elements. The Holy Spirit is not a safe one we can control and predict. **BUT** God is certainly good and we can trust Him. He has demonstrated His love for us in Jesus' death for us on the cross.
- **Doubt & Confusion**. Changes we ask for don't always come; there are often times of disappointment or disillusionment.

Final stokes:

- Experiencing the power of the Holy Spirit is really about Him getting more of ME (than me getting more of Him). Every believer has all of the Holy Spirit (He is not doled out in pieces), but we come to points in our journey where we are ready to surrender more freely to Him; in these moments we experience His presence and power more fully.
- The Holy Spirit is BIGGER than me. I cannot control Him or figure Him out. God's ways are higher than my ways. If I venture into the deep waters of His life, I will have to loose my "foothold" on the bottom and surrender to His current.
- Will I trust in Him implicitly – NO MATTER WHAT. Even through disappointment and disillusionment. (Again, Jesus' sacrificial death for us on the cross is our unshakable assurance).

Questions:

1. Have I ever experienced the power of the Holy Spirit in my life? When did I LAST experience the power of God in my life?
2. Which of the 3 "hindrances" above do I struggle with in my faith journey?
3. "Lord show me one tangible way I can surrender to you more freely and let you have more of me."