

## KEEP IN STEP WITH THE SPIRIT

# THE HOLY SPIRIT ON A ROLLERCOASTER

Centuries have brought many ups and downs in our understanding of the Holy Spirit - Sometimes unleashed with a vengeance and other times subdued to non existence.

- But what of the Holy Spirit today?

## ATTENTION:

- Some observations to consider:
  - When the people of God grow comfortable, satisfied, sleepy and bored; when they think they have things pretty much nailed down; when the call of God's mission to the whole world recedes, it is the tendency of the Spirit to shake up the church and dislodge it from its ease and self-satisfaction.
  - An awakening to our need for an active and involved Holy Spirit will occur as commitment to God's mission is renewed.
  - A new openness to the Holy Spirit will follow an absolute surrender of the church to her God assigned mission.
  - When Christians live outside of their human control the working of the Holy Spirit will be a part of every conversation
    - Our fear will no longer be of the Holy Spirit acting outside our doctrinal walls but of the Spirit not acting directly in this day, this world, and this life - our lives.
    - The more institutional the church becomes the less open she is to the Holy Spirit as active in its life and world.
      - ...the less the church acknowledges the need for the Spirit as helper, in living Kingdom lives.
      - ...the church becomes essentially an institutional keeper of God's grace focused primarily on maintaining the institution.
      - ...the church becomes more of a holding tank—a place to wait for rescue form heaven.
      - Mission becomes insignificant to the reason for church.
      - We become caretakers of a "Christian" culture.

## ATTUNE:

- Scripture tells us of the activity of the Holy Spirit:
  - He was **personally** active in creation - hovering over and bringing order from chaos.
  - After the work of creation the prophet Joel prophesies the **out pouring** of the Spirit, Peter quotes Joel's prophecy (**Acts 2:16f**) (given 800+ years earlier) - **this is what Joel was talking about!**
    - Coming at a time when God's mission takes new direction
      - Christ is gone - Apostles need a helper - all believers are in need of the Holy Spirit.
  - After Pentecost, the Spirit, guided and empowered the continuation of that mission to **every creature in all nations**.
    - That same mission along with the help of the Holy Spirit continues today in His church/Christians/you/me.
    - This help/working of the Spirit will be what He determines it will be not our theology.
  - The New Testament presents the Holy Spirit as dynamic and engaged in making things happen!

## BODY:

### • THE NEW TESTAMENT HOLY SPIRIT

- The Spirit as the dynamic force and guide for the mission of God, **beginning in Jerusalem, extending to Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth (Acts 1:8)**.
  - The church lives not by savvy, worldly wisdom, and techniques but by absolute dependence on the gifts and working of the Holy Spirit.
  - Therefore the Holy Spirit is nothing less than a life-and-death matter for the people of God in the 21st century and it has been every day since the beginning when **God created the heavens and the earth!**
  - The prayer **Come, Holy Spirit!** will come before any breaking out into the divine mission.
    - Only then will Christians' true identity as strangers and exiles be renewed.

## • THE TIMES WITHOUT THE HOLY SPIRIT

- The definition of "Post-Christian" includes this dynamic:  
**The Christian faith that has shaped its society loses its influence upon that society.**
  - It is pushed to the margins and left without impact - without cultural power.
  - We now live in a Post-Christian culture in the US.
- This loss of cultural power in America is waking Christians up to the reality that we are in a missionary situation in our own culture—or in any culture.
  - This is forcing us to rethink our mission, our theology, and our priorities.
  - Christians are being forced to lean by faith on God's control of history rather than America's governance
  - ...must confess with renewed urgency that Jesus, not Caesar, that Jesus, not modern democracy, is Lord!
- We've been living more or less comfortably in a culture that has permitted our faith, and has even propped it up for us.
  - What have we need the Holy Spirit for—except the occasional sweet comfort of the Spirit in struggle.
  - But we now find ourselves more and more on the margins, as strangers and exiles, out of power and out of favor.
  - It dawns on us that we need the power of God's Spirit to live on God's mission.

## • THE TIMES WITH THE HOLY SPIRIT ON MISSION

- Our mission comes to us from the Triune God.
  - The Father through the Spirit sent the Son into the world out of His love, the Spirit was poured out to continue that mission, and the Son sends his followers into the world in the power of the Spirit.
    - The Mission Of The Triune God - Father/Son/Spirit
  - Jesus prayed to his Father,  
*I am sending them into the world, just as you sent me.*  
John 17:18
  - And later declared to his disciples,  
*<sup>21</sup> After Jesus had greeted them again, he said, "I am sending you, just as the Father has sent me." <sup>22</sup> Then he breathed on them and said, "Receive the Holy Spirit.*  
John 20:21-22

- The Holy Spirit—God's Missionary guides God's mission.
  - The Father sent Jesus, into the world in the power of the Holy Spirit for the salvation of the world.
  - The Spirit of the Father, poured out by the Son works to bring a broken creation back through the Son to the Father.
  - Since Acts 2/Pentecost, the mission of the Spirit is to empower and complete the reconciliation of all creation to the Father through the ministry of Jesus the Son.

## PROJECT:

- Scripture tells of 2 sendings:
  - The sending of the Son and the sending of the Spirit.

*<sup>4</sup> When the time came to completion, God sent his Son, born of a woman, born under the law, <sup>5</sup> to redeem those under the law, so that we might receive adoption as sons. <sup>6</sup> And because you are sons, God sent the Spirit of his Son into our hearts, crying, "Abba, Father!"*

Galatians 4:4-6

- The TRINITY Father/Son/Spirit have worked together on mission every day since the beginning when God created the heavens and the earth!.
  - And Nothing Has Changed!
  - The mission is as wide and broad as all creation and the Holy Spirit is poured out on all believers
    - Giving new life and mission.
- As a church's/Christian's involvement in God's mission declines, the Spirit is quenched and the church weakens.
  - It becomes club-like, inward focused, comfortable, squeamish about outsiders, and . . . bored and sleepy.
  - The impulse is strong to contain and control the Spirit
    - ...by our own tastes and feelings,
    - ...by the comfortable ease of our familiar traditions

## ACTION: We Will Choose...

- ...to contain the Spirit, = spiritual death
- ...to open ourselves to the Spirit = regain the Spirit's life.