

After offering comfort to his disciples before he was to leave them (Jn 14:1-6). Jesus goes on to promise a "counsellor", the "Spirit of truth" (Jn 14:15-20). He again reassures his followers they will not be left as orphans; & identifies himself with the Father & the Spirit to be given, as he encourages his disciples "*on that day* {when you receive the spirit} *you will realise that I am in my Father, and you are in me, and I am in you*" (V20).

In Acts 2 we find the festival of Pentecost occurring in Jerusalem. We read of the coming of that promised Holy Spirit, & of Peter's address to the crowds. And we gain a glimpse of how the believers at the time fellowshiped together.

Please also read Numbers 11. It tells the story of the Spirit of God resting on unexpected people.

God is angry with his people. At this point Moses has had it '*up to here*' with the Israelites & their grumbling. We read that God recommends Moses gather 70 elders of the people together. And we see God pouring out some of the Spirit, which is on Moses, on the elders too. This is great news for Moses. He has another 70 leaders to assist him. Shared leadership! 😊 That is until someone comes to him & says "*Oi, Moses, something's up! 2 who weren't part of the group have started prophesying*". Joshua, is put out saying "*Moses, my lord, stop them!*". But Moses simply replies, "*I wish that all the Lord's people were prophets and that the Lord would put his Spirit on them*". Moses is saying "*Relax! Who's in charge here; You; me; or God?*"

This event tucked away in the Old Testament is like coming on one of the 1<sup>st</sup> springs of a great river. It has much to say in preparing the way for the full-blown New Testament accounts of the Spirit's activity:

1. *We are reminded that to do God's work, we need God's Spirit*

The 70 elders were not equipped to do God's work & share the load with Moses until the Spirit had come on them. It is no different for us today.

If we are foolish enough to embark on the set demanding & cross-bearing business of living the Christian life without consciously depending on the Spirit, then we are heading for frustration, exhaustion & disappointment. The Holy Spirit is the energy of God. The New Testament does not tell us to be filled with the Spirit as an added extra "go large" sort of Christian. The presence & touch of the Spirit is an absolute necessity! And one which God makes continually available, to enable His work to be done.

2. *We are reminded that God gives the Spirit as He alone thinks fit*

The 2 elders, Eldad & Medad, who should have been at the tent of meeting but had stayed in the camp, were not punished, or neglected on account of their absence. No. God granted the Spirit to them *wherever they were!*

*"The wind blows where it pleases"* says Jesus in John 3:8. *"and so it is with everyone born of the Spirit"*.

Let us take heart. You never know when God is going to do something new by His Spirit. Nor indeed to whom or when He bestows it.

Let us enjoy the ordinary; the routine; & the predictable. But let us also never give up on the exceptional; the improbable or impossible; or the life-changing! More than that. Let us be alert to the moving of His Spirit & not allow our human condition to limit His work within & around us.

3. *We are reminded that the Spirit of God cannot be pinned down*

God told the elders to gather round the Tent of Meeting & then he goes & pours out His Spirit on 2 who never bothered to get there. Joshua was annoyed!

Plenty of others have adopted a similar line. In Mark 9:38 we hear John saying to Jesus "*we saw a man drive out demons in your name and we tried to stop him, because he is not one of us...*"

How many of us make the same mistake because we do not expect God to act in a certain way, or we find it difficult to accept it when he does? None of us are in possession of God's truth & power alone.

## Reflection

Grab a piece of paper:

- note down occasions in your life when you saw, or in hindsight now see, God's Spirit moving in & around you.
  - Keep it handy to add to, reflect upon, or pray over, thanking God.
- Also note down occasions you have seen God's Spirit at work among others.

Ponder on them all.

Thank God in prayer for each one.

Ask God in prayer for more & for the ability to see what you have not seen before.

## Questions of reflection to ponder over:

- ? Am I born again/filled with His Spirit? Have I asked, & am I allowing the Spirit of God to live in me?
- ? How do I live each day from the place of intimacy with God? How is it displayed?
- ? When was the last time I was surprised or even shocked at something God is doing?
- ? Am I guilty sometimes of limiting or quenching the Spirit (see also 1 Thessalonians 5)?

Shalom

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