

Saturated with the Holy Spirit

(Video 31 May 2020)

It is Pentecost and I want to take a look at how Pentecost affects us today and the times we're living in – uncertain times - almost 2000 years after that first great Pentecost day. Is it still relevant? Does it still affect us?

After preaching his sermon on the day of Pentecost in Acts chapter 2, Peter ends as follows:

Acts 2:36 "Therefore let all the house of Israel know for certain that God has made Him both Lord and Christ – this Jesus whom you crucified."

Peter is very blunt with the people. He says, "**You** have crucified Jesus." The audience, moved with conviction, responds:

2:37 "Now when they heard this, they were pierced to the heart, and said to Peter and the rest of the apostles, 'Brethren, what shall we do?'"

What shall we do?

This has happened, but what now? What should we do? Peter answers them with a definite, positive word and says,

*Acts 2:38 "... **Repent**, and let each of you **be baptized** in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins ..."*

Repentance and *baptism* are both mentioned in the same sentence, therefore they go hand in hand; they are in actual fact one concept. Repentance is a turning away from sin. Baptism is a very deep, spiritual symbol in which I declare that I have died to the old sinful life.

In 1 Corinthians 10, Paul speaks of baptism when he refers to Israel leaving Egypt. They went through the Red Sea and left Egypt behind forever. The Egyptians couldn't pursue them. Israel's slavery in Egypt was now a thing of the past and now a new life of freedom and victory awaited them.

Baptism is portrayed symbolically here in that Israel *passed through the Red Sea* on their way to the land of Canaan. Therefore baptism, in this context, speaks of a *death* to the old life (in Egypt) and the start of a new life (the land of Canaan).

"... let each of you be baptized ... and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit."

The Holy Spirit is offered, but with a proviso, we *first* need to make the decision to lay down that old life of sin (Egypt) and to willingly receive a new life in its place, a life of freedom and of victory over sin.

Acts 2:39 "For the promise is for you and your children, and for all who are far off, as many as the Lord our God shall call to Himself."

This indicates that the promise of the Holy Spirit was not only to them, but also to their children and grandchildren and great grandchildren and to all who are afar off. In other words, He is looking to the future,

to us. The significance and effectiveness of that great day of Pentecost would be felt throughout the ages. It was not just meant for that day, nor for the people of that day only. It would be forever applicable, for all the future generations to come; therefore, it is for us.

Living water

However, in order for us to gain a fuller understanding of these things, I would also like to take a look at what Jesus said of the Holy Spirit and particularly of the *baptism* of the Holy Spirit. In John 7 He says,

John 7:37-38 "... If any man is thirsty, let him come to Me and drink. He who believes in Me, as the Scripture said, 'From his innermost being shall flow rivers of living water.'"

Something happens when we come to Jesus. In the next verse He says,

*7:39 "But this He spoke of the Spirit, whom those who believed in Him were **to receive** ..."*

Here He is referring to the *baptism* of the Holy Spirit, that moment when we *receive* the Spirit, and experience the Holy Spirit *filling us*, filling you and me.

This experience (the baptism of the Holy Spirit) brings about such a dramatic change in our lives that streams of living water begin to flow from our innermost being. Our life changes dramatically. The way we talk, changes. Our mindset changes. The way in which we do things, changes. Our response to situations changes.

A preparation

Where do repentance and water baptism fit in the big picture? John the Baptist's ministry offers more insight.

Mat 3:1 "Now in those days John the Baptist came, preaching in the wilderness of Judea, saying,

*3:2 "**Repent**, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand.*

*3:3 "For this is the one referred to by the prophet Isaiah, saying, The voice of one crying in the wilderness, **make ready the way of the Lord, make His paths straight!**"*

*3:6 "And they were being **baptized** by him in the Jordan river, as they **confessed their sins.**"*

This *baptism* of John the Baptist was accompanied by *repentance* and confession of sins. It was a *preparation* for something that was to come. What was coming? We read about it a little further on, John the Baptist preaching;

*Mat 3:11 "As for me, I **baptize** you with water **for repentance**, but **He who is coming after Me** is mightier than I, and I am not fit to remove His sandals; **He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and with fire.**"*

As wonderful as this revival was, with many thousands of people repenting and being baptised in water, these actions were really preparing the nation for something much greater to come. They heralded the coming of Jesus, the Messiah, who would come to baptise them with the Holy Spirit.

Repentance, in conjunction with baptism, is thus a preparation for the coming of the Holy Spirit. In water baptism we *die* to our old life and take on a new life, a changed life of victory from the bondage of a sinful life. One could say this is equivalent to the circumcision of the heart. We read about it in Ezekiel:

*Ezek 36:25 "Then I will sprinkle **clean water** on you, and you **will be clean**; I will **cleans**e you from all your filthiness and from all your idols.*

36:26 "Moreover, I will give you a new heart and put a new spirit within you; and I will remove the heart of stone from your flesh and give you a heart of flesh.

*36:27 "And I **will put My Spirit within you** and cause you to walk in My statutes, and you will be careful to observe My ordinances."*

Here the prophet begins with the cleansing process, where *firstly* the *sins are removed* and the heart is prepared, and *only then the Holy Spirit is given* to the people.

When the Holy Spirit fills our hearts, streams of living water begin to flow from our innermost being. Somewhere inside of us a dramatic change begins to take place. How does this happen? What is the requirement?

John 7:37 "If any man is thirsty, let him come to Me and drink ..."

The Psalmist compares this to the thirst of a deer.

*Psa 42:1 "As the deer pants for the water brooks, so my soul **pants** for Thee, O God."*

We don't long for the things that God can do for us. Rather, we long for *Hím*. It is *Hím* that we desire. We ask the Holy Spirit, "*Holy Spirit, I ask You to fill me, I long for You.*" We long for Him, for when He is in us, everything changes. Our whole life changes.

The seed must fall and die

Let's take a look ahead at John chapter 12. Here Jesus again teaches about the Holy Spirit. Remember that the happenings in John chapter 12 took place on the day of the last supper, on the eve of the crucifixion. So this passage describes an event that took place the day before the crucifixion.

John 12:20 "Now there were certain Greeks among those who were going up to worship at the feast;

12:21 "These therefore came to Philip, who was from Bethsaida of Galilee, and began to ask him, saying, 'Sir, we wish to see Jesus.'"

This is a remarkable request - "*We wish to see Jesus.*"

12:22 "Philip came and told Andrew; Andrew and Philip came, and they told Jesus.

12:23 "And Jesus answered them, saying ..."

This is a simple request, "*Sir, we wish to see Jesus.*" Jesus replies in answer to that request. Therefore, the words that Jesus utters next, are the answer to this

simple request, "*We wish to see Jesus.*" Yet, the answer Jesus gives is an unusual one. He says:

John 12:23 "... The hour has come for the Son of Man to be glorified.

12:24 "Truly, truly, I say to you, unless a grain of wheat falls into the earth and dies, it remains by itself alone; but if it dies, it bears much fruit.

12:25 "He who loves his life loses it; and he who hates his life in this world shall keep it to eternal life."

This is a strange answer to a simple request, "*Sir, we wish to see Jesus.*" Let's take a closer look at this answer ...

Firstly, the grain of wheat must fall to the ground and die. He is referring to His own death which would happen the very next day. That seed must fall into the ground and die. But friends, a few days later (three days) the seed germinates into a new plant. Something new happens. This new plant grows into a mature plant and eventually it yields a great harvest.

In one of His parables Jesus gives an indication of the harvest it would bear, 30-, 60- and 100-fold which that one single grain of wheat would bear. (By the way, this is not 30%, 60%, 100%. This is 30-, 60- or 100-fold. In other words each grain would be multiplied by 30, 60 or 100. 100-fold is equal to 10,000%. That is a massive harvest.)

And when you look at those new grains of wheat, what, may I ask, do they look like? *They look exactly like the original grain.*

Jesus duplicates Himself

Therefore Jesus is speaking of *duplicating Himself*. Because, dear friends, He knows that it is not only the Greeks who desire to see Him, but also the Romans, as well as the Barbarians and the Scythians, and in the future also the Russians, the English and the Afrikaaners, the Chinese and the Japanese and the Americans. Everyone wants to see Him; the whole world wants to see Jesus.

In His humanity it is impossible for Him to see everyone. He also knows that these people don't merely want to see Him from a distance and say, "Oh, I saw Jesus today." No, perhaps they might want to speak with Him, or ask Him to pray for them, or give advice or counsel. In His humanity as one Man, it would be impossible for Him to do that for all the people.

"... unless a grain of wheat falls into the earth and dies, it remains by itself alone ..."

Therefore, Jesus has a plan that will enable the whole world to see Him. That grain of wheat must not remain **alone**. It must first fall into the ground and die; germinate, and then grow into a new, mature plant that will duplicate Himself exponentially. That new plant represents the birth of the Body of Christ, where we, as multitudes of believers forming the Body of Christ throughout the earth, represent Him.

Friends, from here on, Jesus begins to speak about the coming of the Holy Spirit and He teaches that the Holy Spirit would fill people. He teaches that the purpose of the Holy Spirit is to work *in and through us, His followers*, in order to reveal Jesus to the world. Streams of living water would flow from our innermost being by the power of His Holy Spirit, causing us to become a part of the *Body of Christ*, and living as Jesus would. When people begin to see the working of the Holy Spirit through us, they would see Jesus. Thus, Jesus is "*duplicated*".

When the apostles were arrested a few days after Pentecost and stood before the Sanhedrin, they answered the authorities' questions with confidence and wisdom. The authorities realised that these men were just ordinary, uneducated men. They wondered how it could be possible then for the disciples to speak with such authority? They perceived that the disciples *"had been with Jesus"* (Acts 4:13). *They saw Jesus* in these disciples.

During Jesus' life on earth, the Pharisees sent their soldiers to arrest Jesus. When, after a while, the soldiers returned without Jesus, the authorities asked, *"Why did you not bring Him?"* The soldiers answered, *"Never did a man speak the way this Man speaks."* (John 7:46) There is something about Jesus, whose spiritual authority – the living water – flows out of Him whenever He speaks. There has never been a person like that before.

The Sanhedrin witnessed the same authority in the apostles; they saw Jesus in those men. Friends, that same Jesus must also flow through us. That is why the

Holy Spirit has come, so that He can reveal Jesus to the world through us. Jesus is duplicated in and through us by the power of the Holy Spirit who enters us when we are baptised by Him.

Saturated

We read about something precious in 1Corinthians 12:13. Paul speaks about all of us who are part of the Body of Christ, who are made to *drink* of one Spirit. The 1953 Afrikaans translation uses the word "*deurdronge*" here, which means to be *drenched* or *saturated*. The Greek word used is *ποτιζω (potizo)*, and according to Strong's concordance, is a derivative of another Greek word meaning '*to imbibe*' (in other words to drink heavily to the point of being drunk). One can therefore almost understand the mockery of the crowd on the day of Pentecost, deriding these Galileans as being *drunk*.

When we are filled with the Holy Spirit, we are *drinking* from the same Spirit – *saturated, drenched*. What does this mean?

Let me explain it in this way. Imagine holding *a sponge* under water and squeezing it repeatedly until all the air bubbles have been released, and there is no more air left in the sponge. Then you slowly open your hand under the water so that the sponge can absorb the water. You then carefully lift the sponge out of the water and place it on the table. That sponge is *saturated* with water.

For the sake of this study, let's call it *living water*. When you and I, like that sponge, are *saturated* with the Holy Spirit, what would happen if that sponge is

squeezed? Or if you hit the sponge? Water would come out of it, of course.

Friends, what would happen if we were filled, *drenched*, with the Holy Spirit and we were harassed or persecuted, or people thought the worst of us or did bad things to us? Or if we had enemies who wanted to hurt or kill us? What would happen if we were truly *saturated* with the Holy Spirit, and those negative things happened to us? Surely that is when Jesus would flow from our innermost being. We would forgive our enemies. We would not try to get them back – take revenge – for the harm they caused us. We would forgive them. We would do good to those who harmed us. We would walk the second mile.

Isn't that what Jesus taught in that great Sermon on the Mount (Matt 5, 6, and 7)? He wants us to be like Him. In Matthew 5:48, Jesus says, "*Therefore, you are to be perfect as your heavenly Father is perfect.*" This is only possible by the power of the Holy Spirit – when we are *drenched – saturated* – of the Holy Spirit.

How does this happen?

Friends, something great awaits us through the work of the Holy Spirit, but we must first be filled with the Holy Spirit. How does this happen? How do we get there? Remember the steps that Peter mentioned:

1. *Repent*. It is foolish to think that one can be so *saturated* with the Holy Spirit, while you are still a slave to sin, full of the ways of the world, full of Egypt. Those two don't mix. *Repentance* must take place – a turning away from the world.

2. Then there is a *baptism* which must take place. These two steps are integrally connected.

Once I ministered at a men's gathering in Pretoria, and when I had finished speaking, a man in the back of the hall stood up and asked, "May I ask you a question please?" I said, "Yes, you may." He asked, "What do you believe regarding baptism?" Now, friends, that is a hot issue in South Africa. I answered him,

"You must understand that I minister in many different places, and each of them has their own way of baptising. Some sprinkle babies with water, others place their hands over the baby's mouth and nose and dunk the baby under the water; still others dunk adults in the water; backwards, forwards, three times backwards." I said, "I don't care how you have been baptised, but I would like to say **this** to you with regards to baptism: *if your baptism hasn't brought about a remarkable change in your life, then it was merely a dead ritual.*"

Dear friends, the Holy Spirit has come to set us free from *dead rituals* and to give us a new life and reality of a daily relationship with Jesus. Baptism is when you *die*; under water, like at a funeral when the dead person is buried under the ground. You *die* to your old life of bondage in Egypt, and you come out on the other side as a new person – *resurrected* from the dead; ready for a new life, ready to receive the Holy Spirit, ready to live that new life of victory – the land of Canaan!

Jesus and the apostles often speak of that death – if you are not willing to die, if you are not willing to surrender everything to Jesus, so that He takes first place in your life, then you will not be able to live this new life of victory in the Holy Spirit. Repentance and baptism are a *preparation* for a new life of victory which the Holy Spirit lives in you.

I want to encourage you. This is a *time for repentance* in our nation. This morning I was reading from the book of Ezekiel where Ezekiel prophesied against the prophets – those who prophesied from their own inspiration - and he said, *"How is it that you are proclaiming 'Peace!' to these people, when there is no peace. And when anyone builds a wall, behold, they plaster it over with whitewash, making it sound as if everything is going to be good ... but you have not led My people to repentance ..."* (Ezek 13:1 – 14:11 – paraphrase my own)

God desires repentance. And this is what I desire, because it is God's desire. God desires that all should repent (2Pet 3:9). It is not merely a ritual; it is not an empty religious practice He is looking for. In the book of James we read the following with regard to a person who hears the Word but does not practice it: *"... this man's religion is worthless."* (James 1:26b) Did you know that? God is seeking **true repentance**, resulting in a changed lifestyle.

If our religion is merely a dead ritual - things that are done simply out of tradition without any real life-changing results - friends, then that *religion is worthless*. The Lord wants us to *die to the old life*. That is what *repentance* and *baptism* are all about.

Repentance is a complete turn-around from our sinful life, and baptism is the death of that old life. Together these two mark the end of the old sinful life; they bring forth a prepared, willing heart, ready to begin a new life in the Holy Spirit, so that when people see us and how we respond to situations, and how we live, they will see that we are *saturated* with the Spirit. That is when they will *see Jesus*.

Testimony from Zimbabwe

While I was still living in Zimbabwe, the government's agents confiscated my farm. The Lord had already warned me prior to this, and He had asked me if I was willing to surrender everything to Him. I had told Him, *"Yes, Lord, I am willing."* And then they came to take my farm. They told me, *"This is no longer your farm, you are living on this farm illegally."*

There were approximately 30 men surrounding me, and they were cruel men, ready for a fight. When they told me that they were taking my farm, I answered, *"I bless you with this farm."* They did not expect such a kind answer and didn't know how to respond to it. They had come prepared for a fight, but instead of a fight, I blessed them in love. When the *new owner* asked me, *"Where will you go?"*, I replied, *"I have a Father in heaven who takes care of me. If He takes me away from this farm, then He has another place for me. Therefore I am ready to bless you with this farm, because I have a Father in heaven who cares for me, and I am not worried about the future."*

Friends, that man *saw Jesus*; he witnessed *Jesus' response* for the first time. It touched the hearts of those men deeply. It certainly wasn't in my own strength or wisdom to respond in that way.

A few weeks later, I heard that the land commissioner who had led that group of men, was sick – he had suffered a stroke. The farmers hated this man because he had done cruel things to them. They wished that he had rather died. But when I heard that he had had a stroke, the Holy Spirit said to me, *"Go and pray for that man."* I immediately went to his office, knocked, and opened his door. There he sat. It was plain to see that this was a very ill man – his complexion was grey, he looked sick. I said to him, *"Sir, I heard that you are ill. I have come to pray that the Lord will heal you, if you will allow me to."* He replied, *"Yes, you may do so."* I entered his office, stood behind his chair, laid my hands on his shoulders and prayed, *"Lord, touch this man. Heal him from this illness. Show him that You are Lord God Almighty and that You love him. Amen."*

Friends, the fact that I prayed for that man, touched his life dramatically. What kind of person would pray for his enemy? However, I had to be *Jesus* to that man. The Lord did a miracle for that evil man and healed him completely.

If you are thirsty

When we are *saturated with the Holy Spirit*, it means that *Jesus flows out of our lives like living water*, by the power of the Holy Spirit. My prayer is that we would have a new mindset. Repentance is a new way of

thinking; a new mindset about life, a new mindset about our past, about the current events happening around us; it is a willingness to place Jesus first and, through *baptism*, to *die to our old life*. True repentance leads us to come the place where we ask, *"Holy Spirit, fill me so that I can be Jesus to the world around me, because I cannot do it in my own strength."*

Jesus told His disciples, *"But you shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you, and you shall be My witnesses ..."* (Acts 1:8) The power required to be those witnesses, to be *Jesus* to the world, is not our own power; it is not our own plan, our own ability. It is a power that only the Holy Spirit can give us, which far supersedes our own ability. We cannot do these things in our own power. Friends, we are not asked, nor expected, to do this in our own power. Jesus offers the gift of the Holy Spirit to you and to me. He says, *"If you are thirsty, if you really want it, and if you long for this; ask, seek, knock. I will give it to you."*

It is a gift to you. May you experience that hunger and thirst as the Psalm writer says,

"As the deer pants for the water brooks, so my soul pants for Thee, O God."

Are you hungry and thirsty for more of the Holy Spirit? May the Lord *fill* you, *drench* you, *saturate* you in these difficult times in which we live, so that *Jesus'* love and His whole being will flow in and through your innermost being. May you be *saturated with the Holy Spirit*.

Amen.