



Life Group Study Notes

"Filled for the Fulness of Time"

Ps. Jim Laffoon - October 30, 2016

Warm Up (10-15 minutes)

Choose a question below to answer, or ask another. No right or wrong answers.

- Have you ever run out of gas while driving? If so, why did it happen? Did it end well?
- Have you ever run out of food at home? If so, what did you do?
- What fills you with joy? When is the last time you experienced overflowing joy?

Word (10-15 minutes)

Sermons can be heard online at www.bethelworld.org

God desires to visit Bethel in a powerful way beginning with filling his people afresh with his Spirit.

Filling & Fulness

Galatians 4:4-5 NIV *But when the set time had fully come, God sent his Son, born of a woman, born under the law, to redeem those under the law, that we might receive adoption to sonship.*

The fulness of time for God's people, which results in God intervening with mighty acts, typically involves problems of great magnitude. It is precisely because of these problems that God intervenes. He allows the trials to occur so that we might seek him and that he might reveal himself to us and to the world.

Mark 14:13-15 NIV *So he sent two of his disciples, telling them, "Go into the city, and a man carrying a jar of water will meet you. Follow him. Say to the owner of the house he enters, 'The Teacher asks: Where is my guest room, where I may eat the Passover with my disciples?' He will show you a large room upstairs, furnished and ready. Make preparations for us there."*

The disciples were to prepare a large room, bigger than seemingly necessary for their perceived needs. Yet in God's providence this would be the room he would fill with his presence and power on the day of Pentecost. Pastor Laffoon prophetically believes God has led Bethel to build a new, large sanctuary because of his intention to do a great work of his Spirit there.

Luke 24:46-49 NIV *He told them, "This is what is written: The Messiah will suffer and rise from the dead on the third day, and repentance for the forgiveness of sins will be preached in his name to all nations, beginning at Jerusalem. You are witnesses of these things. I am going to send you what my Father has promised; but stay in the city until you have been clothed with power from on high."*

God intended to fill his people with his Spirit, and through them to bring his message of redemption and transformation to this world. The large room in which they met had value because it allowed them to be together and so be able to experience a great outpouring of God's Spirit. So also Bethel's new sanctuary will have great value if we are hungry for God and are ready to be filled afresh with his Spirit. We must be filled if we are to see God's kingdom advance in this world through us.

Acts 2:38-39 NIV *Peter replied, "Repent and be baptized, every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins. And you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. The promise is for you and your children and for all who are far off—for all whom the Lord our God will call."*

Through Peter God promised all who would come to him through Christ that he would bless them with the gift of his Holy Spirit. This promise is just as valid today as it was on the day Peter spoke in Jerusalem. It is still God's intention to fill each of us with his Spirit. His purpose in doing so is not just for our own benefit. He wants to bring reconciliation, redemption, and transformation to this world through us.

Visitation

What would it be like if God visited Bethel? How could we tell? What would be the distinguishing marks?

1. Transformed Lives

Those who truly encounter God, grow in grace, and walk with him experience personal transformation. Sins are overcome, hearts are changed, attitudes adjust, values are rearranged, and more. Without godly transformation, the Spirit's work is frustrated. He is the one who leads us to repent.

2. Tongues & Supernatural Power

The Gospel of Luke and Acts both reveal that the Spirit manifests himself to and through people in supernatural ways. These manifestations include healing, miracles, prophecy, and more. Acts teaches us that people often, perhaps always, spoke in tongues when they were first filled with God's Spirit.

3. Boldness & Evangelism

When the Spirit comes upon people, he sheds God's love abroad in their hearts. This love moves us to love not only God and one another, but also those who are separated from God. The influence of the Spirit moves us to love even our enemies. His love compels us to bring God's good news of redemption to them in spite of their disregard of or opposition to him or us.

4. "Tribal" unity

The Holy Spirit brings about reconciliation with others, especially among ethnicities. God is seeking to manifest his image through his people. God himself is a tri-unity, a social being. God wants us to love one another even as the Father, Son, and Spirit love one another.

Renewable

John 7:37-39 NIV *On the last and greatest day of the festival, Jesus stood and said in a loud voice, "Let anyone who is thirsty come to me and drink. Whoever believes in me, as Scripture has said, rivers of living water will flow from within them." By this he meant the Spirit, whom those who believed in him were later to receive. Up to that time the Spirit had not been given, since Jesus had not yet been glorified.*

The presence and power of the Holy Spirit are made available to God's people on a permanent basis because of what Christ has done through his sinless life, atoning death, resurrection, and ascension.

Discussion (10-15 minutes)

Choose an item below to discuss, or introduce another related point for discussion.

- How would you describe your present state of hunger for God's Spirit in your life?
- When was the last time you had a significant encounter with the Holy Spirit?
- How can we better position ourselves to receive fresh in-fillings of God's Spirit?

Prayer (10-15 minutes)

Pray for any of the following, as well as any other requests you may have

- Express to God your need and hunger for his Spirit's presence, wisdom, and power.
- Ask God to fill us afresh with his Spirit that we might be his effective witnesses.
- Implore God to visit Bethel with a mighty outpouring of his Spirit in 2017.