Jesus the Baptizer       Sunday, September 14, 2014

Intro:

Let’s turn to the Word of God today and to Luke 3:22-23 where we will find our launching off verses for today's message.

Today we find ourselves in week 3 of our series on the fourfold gospel and let’s review them - Jesus Saves, Jesus Heals, Jesus Baptizes in the Holy Spirit and the Jesus is the Soon Coming King.


In recent months, I have been spending an enormous amount of time looking at the subject of “Traditioning” Christian and Pentecostal Spirituality from one generation to the next. One of the authors that I am reading is a fellow by the name of Simon Chan, (Not Francis) and he suggests something that I think is important to us. He states, “Hazy theology is the bearer of dead tradition.”

So simply put, if we are not very clear about the things the bible teaches us, if we are not passionate about the things we say we believe in, we can easily slip into a dead tradition mode and become a church that has a form of godliness without power, a church like Ephesus, described in Revelation 2, without passion.

*But I have this against you, that you have abandoned the love you had at first.* ⁵*Remember therefore from where you have fallen; repent, and do the works you did at first. If not, I will come to you and remove your lampstand from its place, unless you repent.* (Revelation 2:4-5)

Now don’t get me wrong, we are far from dead; there is a lot of life here, and as a matter of fact, someone once called us “dead” in a prophecy and I got so mad, I just got more motivated to do the best job I can for you and for the Lord.

But the whole subject of traditioning is one we have to get our minds around. As a church leadership team and as a church, each family has to honestly look at their own lives and ask the questions, “What is this generation of worshippers traditioning to the next generation, what am I traditioning to my kids?” and “Am I traditioning anything at all?”

I was listening to a podcast a couple of weeks ago on Calvin’s Geneva, Geneva 100 years after the reformation, and the parish pastors were responsible to visit each home once per year and ask two questions of each family:

1. **How is your married life? (Not focused here)**

2. **Are you teaching the catechism to your children?**

And church attendance was mandatory! Oh, the good old days!

Many of you have been in this church a long, long time and others for four years now or so and some of you have seen what healthy Christian Spirituality and healthy Pentecostal Spirituality looks like. But for others new to the faith and new to a church with Pentecostal on its sign, you need to have a little more information.
I. What a healthy Pentecostal Spirituality looks like

In order to effectively tradition Pentecostal spirituality, it will be really important that we understand what a healthy Pentecostal spirituality looks like in order that it be traditioned at all. For a few moments, we are going “back to the future” so to speak.

1. The Baptism in the Holy Spirit

According to historians William and Robert Menzies, there were several distinguishing features of early Pentecostalism. The first and foremost characteristic was that the “baptism in the Holy Spirit”, which was often experienced as a “cluster” of other Spirit-baptized believers, gathered around a seeker in prayerful support until the blessing was received.

It might be helpful to think of the word *baptism* for a moment. In the original Greek we just get the simple notion of pickling! And we need to note that this was a subsequent experience from the salvation filling experience. And that blessing would be recognized/identified by speaking in tongues.

2. A commissioning empowerment experience

We learn predominantly from Luke’s writings, and the early Pentecostals understood clearly that the outpouring of the Holy Spirit was a commissioning/empowerment to help us witness, and although everyone involved valued and enjoyed a sense of the glory of God among them, the lost of the world were in clear focus.

It is probably important now to make the distinction where we believe differently than our brothers and sisters in other evangelical and main line churches.

Evangelicals tend to have a very strong preoccupation with Paul or Pauline theology, and in some extreme cases, believe that he was the only legitimate apostle to the church. But in most cases, evangelicals do look to Paul for theology and to Luke for narrative or the history and behaviour of the early church. As they read Paul and read him correctly, most of his Holy Spirit emphasis is focused on salvation doctrine and the order of things in which we are saved. Paul himself was baptized by the Holy Spirit at salvation, and the evangelicals have concluded by reading Paul without Luke’s influence, that the Baptism in the Holy Spirit occurs at conversion and is a conversion/initiation experience rather than the commissioning/empowerment one of which I have already spoken.

We all certainly believe in the infilling of the Holy Spirit at conversion and the sufficiency of this experience to save us. Evangelicals then, find it very difficult to accept anything of theology from Luke, and especially if they perceive a doctrinal contradiction between Paul and Luke. As Pentecostal learners, we believe in the inspiration of scriptures and believe all of the books to be just as inspired as the next. We wouldn’t necessarily venerate Paul at the expense of Luke, or demote Luke to historian only status. Luke was very much a theologian.

Here is how I want you to approach things for awhile. You know I love, honour and respect Paul’s letters. I have taught them to you verse by verse and I am fully comfortable with all aspects of Pauline teaching. But I am equally comfortable with Lucan theology, as well. I want you, for a couple of months, to just let Luke talk to you. Read Luke and Acts and perhaps pretend that Paul does not exist for awhile until you hear Luke’s voice and theology loud and clear, and then go back and let the two bible writers talk to each other.
3. **Faith, sacrifice and prayer**

Faith, sacrifice and prayer also played an important role, and the early Pentecostals expected and experienced the intervention of the Holy Spirit in everyday life and in practical circumstances. It is generally understood, as we look at any movement historically, that the first wave participants of a spiritual movement needed to sacrifice and exercise great faith in order that the needs of the ministry were met. It was common that intense vigils, a “praying through”, resulted in answers to prayer.

In my missionary travels I have seen ordinary, everyday Christians gathering daily for prayer and in some cases, every Friday night and all night. In one church in Dushanbe, Tajikistan, I witnessed 24 hour a day prayer every day.

4. **An end times and missionary focus**

The early Pentecostals were an eschatological and missional community believing in a “premillennial, literal and physical return” of the Lord Jesus, and although they clearly understood the magnitude of the judgment to come, endeavoured to “rescue the perishing” in the short time remaining. Having experienced the glory of God, joy was the hallmark characteristic of the early Pentecostal.

The message to the outside world was clear for the early Pentecostals; Jesus would save, heal, baptize in the Holy Ghost, and He would come again. In contrast to a weakening North American Protestantism, the cry went out from the Pentecostals, “Come to the church where Jesus is real!”

5. **Worship**

Worship was characterized by the raising of hands, loudness and joy as believers poured their hearts out to the Lord. It was not uncommon and without notice for someone to take off dancing in the aisles! Falling under the power was not uncommon and it was in this manifestation that people dubbed the Pentecostals, the “Holy Rollers.”

So, if I could just provoke a little bit - you who tell me that you are committed Pentecostals - you might be playing it a little too safe when it comes to worship. It may not hurt some of you to roll in the aisles a little bit as the spirit moves.

That is my little history lesson on your spiritual ancestors! Let’s now have a closer look at the bible truths, the theology that needs to be well understood and traditioned.

II. **Jesus was Baptized in the Holy Spirit**

No one is going to argue with you if you tell them that Jesus was baptized in the Holy Spirit.

“*And Jesus, full of the Holy Spirit, returned from the Jordan and was led by the Spirit in the wilderness for forty days, being tempted by the devil.*” (Luke 4:1-2)
1. Jesus was baptized in (filled) with the Holy Spirit

2. Jesus was led by the Holy Spirit

Clearly we see after Jesus had been filled with the Holy Spirit, He was led into ministry by that same Holy Spirit.

3. Jesus was anointed by the Holy Spirit

*The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he has anointed me to proclaim good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim liberty to the captives and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty those who are oppressed,* 19 to proclaim the year of the Lord’s favor. (Luke 4:18-19)

III. Jesus now baptizes others with the Holy Spirit

Let’s turn our attention now to some familiar passages of scripture and you will need your bibles open and to move quickly:

1. The promise of the Holy Spirit

*And while staying with them he ordered them not to depart from Jerusalem, but to wait for the promise of the Father, which, he said, “you heard from me; 5 for John baptized with water, but you will be baptized with the Holy Spirit not many days from now.”* (Acts 1:4-5)

So when they had come together, they asked him, “Lord, will you at this time restore the kingdom to Israel?” 7 He said to them, “It is not for you to know times or seasons that the Father has fixed by his own authority. 8 But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you, and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth.” (Acts 1:6-8)

2. The outpouring of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost

*Being therefore exalted at the right hand of God, and having received from the Father the promise of the Holy Spirit, he has poured out this that you yourselves are seeing and hearing.* (Acts 2:33)

And here is the actual outpouring of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost:

*When the day of Pentecost arrived, they were all together in one place. 2 And suddenly there came from heaven a sound like a mighty rushing wind, and it filled the entire house where they were sitting. 3 And divided tongues as of fire appeared to them and rested on each one of them. 4 And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other tongues as the Spirit gave them utterance.* (Acts 2:1-4)
3. Subsequent outpourings of the Holy Spirit

Now when the apostles at Jerusalem heard that Samaria had received the word of God, they sent to them Peter and John, who came down and prayed for them that they might receive the Holy Spirit, for he had not yet fallen on any of them, but they had only been baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus. Then they laid their hands on them and they received the Holy Spirit. Now when Simon saw that the Spirit was given through the laying on of the apostles’ hands, he offered them money... (Acts 8:14-18)

While Peter was still saying these things, the Holy Spirit fell on all who heard the word. And the believers from among the circumcised who had come with Peter were amazed, because the gift of the Holy Spirit was poured out even on the Gentiles. (Acts 10:44-45)

And it happened that while Apollos was at Corinth, Paul passed through the inland country and came to Ephesus. There he found some disciples. And he said to them, “Did you receive the Holy Spirit when you believed?” And they said, “No, we have not even heard that there is a Holy Spirit.” And he said, “Into what then were you baptized?” They said, “Into John’s baptism.” And Paul said, “John baptized with the baptism of repentance, telling the people to believe in the one who was to come after him, that is, Jesus.” On hearing this, they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus. And when Paul had laid his hands on them, the Holy Spirit came on them, and they began speaking in tongues and prophesying. There were about twelve men in all.” (Acts 19:1-7)

If you are really sharp you would have picked up the fact that Jews were baptized in Acts 2, the Samaritans in Acts 8, and then the Gentiles in Acts 10 and 19. You are starting to get a sense of the scope of all this. So, if we are isolating Luke, and Luke is no less inspired than Paul’s letters, what conclusions are you starting to form?

IV. The point of the whole thing

Let’s go back now to Acts 2 and find out what this Baptism in the Spirit is all about. Now remember, let’s let Luke interpret Luke today.

1. The fulfillment of the promise

And in the last days it shall be, God declares, that I will pour out my Spirit on all flesh, and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, and your young men shall see visions, and your old men shall dream dreams; even on my male servants and female servants in those days I will pour out my Spirit, and they shall prophesy. And I will show wonders in the heavens above and signs on the earth below, blood, and fire, and vapor of smoke; the sun shall be turned to darkness and the moon to blood, before the day of the Lord comes, the great and magnificent day. And it shall come to pass that everyone who calls upon the name of the Lord shall be saved.’ (Acts 2:17-21)
This is the clear message of the establishment of the prophethood of all believers, and the right of women to preach and occupy any office in the PAOC, and the necessity that we acknowledge that our kids and youth are not the church of tomorrow, but rather the prophets of today.

2. **Empowerment of inspired speech**

I trust you have come to the conclusion now that the Baptism is not about speaking in tongues; it is about speaking with inspired speech. The Baptism in the Holy Spirit is about giving you additional power to preach God's word.

**Conclusion:**

As we seek to tradition a healthy Christian and Pentecostal Spirituality, our theology cannot be hazy. I hope in some way this clarifies things for you.

1. We live in the last days where the souls of people are in the balance and we are part of God's plan to talk to them.

2. We must let the whole scripture speak for itself and not just Paul as a specialized apostle to the Gentiles. Nine times Luke speaks of the “filling” of the Holy Spirit, and three other times he mentions the “Baptism in the Holy Spirit.”

3. We must continue to seek the Baptism in the Holy Ghost.

4. It is Jesus who does the baptizing.

5. Our families must re-engage in the traditioning effort.