

Spirit Filled Believers Bring in the Harvest

1 Corinthians 12:13

May 19, 2024

Rev Joe Sanders

First Baptist Church Coshocton, Ohio

The Day of Pentecost was the first day of a week long festival. Jews from all around the world came to Jerusalem. It was called the festival of weeks because it was fifty days after the Passover festival. Pentecost means fifty. This festival is one three that the Jews would gather to celebrate God's blessings. Jerusalem was filled Jews that spoke the languages of their hometowns. They were different but the same. They worshiped the God of Moses, but they came from different places.

On the day of Pentecost God sent His Holy Spirit in a dramatic and powerful fashion upon the followers of Jesus. The drama of tongues of fire descending upon the followers of Jesus was for all to see. The power of speaking in different languages was for all to hear. A new era of faith in the God who creates, judges, and saves had begun. Now those who worship the Lord, God Almighty through faith in Jesus were united, empowered, and filled with God's Holy Spirit. The world was about to be transformed by the transforming power of God's Holy Spirit.

1 Corinthians 12:13 (NIV) For we were all baptized by one Spirit into one body—whether Jews or Greeks, slave or free—and we were all given the one Spirit to drink.

Every believer has the Holy Spirit, therefore we are connected to one another. I'm too independent for my own good. There are times I think the world should revolve around me. But of course it doesn't. My independence creates barriers, that's not the right image. The word I'm looking for is isolation. Being independent isolates me from other believers.

Those are strong words, right? So, I'm confessing to this body of Christ and to Jesus that I am too quick to isolate myself. I'm not perfect in and of myself. Jesus is still transforming by the power of His Holy Spirit, my actions, my words, and my thoughts. Jesus is still working in each one of us to bring our thoughts, words, and actions into alignment with Him. To trust Jesus to forgive your sins, is to trust Jesus to take away your sins, which requires Jesus through His Holy Spirit to change our thinking, our words, and our actions.

I don't think I need to illustrate all of my faults. First, we don't have the time. Second, they're the same as yours, but not in the same order. All of our sins are the same, yours arranged differently than mine. I don't need a list of your sins, and you don't need a list of mine. Each one of us wears our sins on sleeves. Some of our sins we try to hide. Thank you Jesus that they are forgiven.

But, I need to finish this thought, our independence from one is detrimental. The more independent we are from one another the less we can support one another. As we grow more independent from one another the less have on our community. Our growing independence makes it more difficult to complete our mission. Our mission is to share Jesus.

Jesus wants us to be connected to one another. Everyone of us needs the encouragement that can only come from another Christian. People who aren't Christians don't understand what a Christian needs.

People who don't know Jesus don't possess the wisdom that Christians need to hear. Jesus wants us to be connected to one another. His Holy Spirit is our connection. Through the Holy Spirit we are able to understand what other Christians need. Through the Holy Spirit we are able to share what other believers need.

Jesus wants us to be connected to one another. Our connection empowers us to carry out His mission. Christians working together, united by the Holy Spirit, are more capable than any independent operating Christian.

One apple from the tree isn't much fruit. That single apple, although, as delicious as any other apple, is still just one apple. One apple can't feed a community. One apple has only so many seeds. One apple doesn't have the same impact as twenty-five apples.

Acts 2:44–45 (CSB) Now all the believers were together and held all things in common. They sold their possessions and property and distributed the proceeds to all, as any had need.

We can't do as much separately, but we can do more together. One person is no match to overcome the evils in our community. I have at times been a one person crusader. I carry a banner, but too often it says, do it Pastor Joe's way. You see the problem. The banner can only say, do it the Jesus way. Under this banner Christians empowered by the Holy Spirit think, say, and do what Jesus thought, said, and did. As a result the Holy Spirit starts speaking into the hearts of sinners. As a result sinners see and hear their sins. Some sinners call out for salvation.

When Christians carry the banner of Jesus, empowered by the Holy Spirit, they start looking for ways to meet the needs of saints and sinners. There are lots of needs in our community. More needs than any one Christian can meet. But when we look at the various needs of our community we might be tempted to jump in with both feet. We try as individuals to meet all the needs all at once. Or we try by ourselves to meet just one need.

Soon we become overwhelmed. We get physically and emotionally worn out. Our spirit begins to ask what's the use? Sometimes we look around us and see the problems, the hurting people, the pain they are suffering. We know we can't do anything to help. We recognize how small we are in relation to the problem. That's when we walk away, or throw our hands in the air, or hang our heads.

Even a small group of like minded individuals working together can have an impact. The problem with individual thinking and the one person crusader is leaving out other believers. We were never meant to be one person crusaders.

Jesus never planned for us to be discouraged by the size of the problem. Jesus gives us the power to overcome the obstacles. He poured out His Holy Spirit upon us. Jesus gives us the wisdom to find the solutions. He poured out His Holy Spirit upon us. Jesus inspires us to take on the challenges. He poured out His Holy Spirit upon us. Jesus motivates us to keep going in the face of the frustrations. He poured out His Holy Spirit upon us. I need to trust the Holy Spirit.

We are no longer individuals fighting battles that are too big for us. We have been filled with the Holy Spirit. We are no longer alone facing the overwhelming odds. We have been filled with the Holy Spirit. We're no longer held captive to what can't be done. We have been filled with the Holy Spirit.

1 Corinthians 3:5–8 (ESV) What then is Apollos? What is Paul? Servants through whom you believed, as the Lord assigned to each. I planted, Apollos watered, but God gave the growth.

So neither he who plants nor he who waters is anything, but only God who gives the growth. He who plants and he who waters are one, and each will receive his wages according to his labor.

Christians united by the Spirit, each one working uniquely, work so that Jesus will be the one to save sinners. The Church in Corinth was divided. Pick an issue and they were divided. The apostle Paul told them to forget their differences and work together. Each believer could do their unique ministry, equip by the Holy Spirit, and God would take care of all the other things.

I don't think First Baptist Church is divided. As I see this congregation we are born again believers. We are seeking to live like Jesus. We want to reveal His grace. Our challenge might be that we're going in different directions. Or some of us might be in a holding pattern. Or we might even be wondering how we can contribute.

Jesus is the one who saves sinners. He has saved me. He has saved you. We are made new because of Jesus. His life, death, and resurrection have overcome the power of sin and death. Jesus has given us His Holy Spirit. The same Spirit that empowered Him. This is the same Spirit that raised Him from the dead. This is the same Spirit that filled the first disciples on the first Pentecost. This is the same Spirit that has filled every believer.

The Holy Spirit is transforming us from sinners into saints because of Jesus. When you put your faith in Jesus to save you, you are filled with His Holy Spirit. Now, you and I are empowered to do our unique part in helping people find their Savior, Jesus Christ. In all of our individuality, we need to be centered on how we will introduce sinners to their savior.

A few weeks ago I felt led to encourage us to pray about how we can meet a need in our community. There is a piece of paper in your bulletin this morning. I urge you to be in prayer about the ways we can introduce people to Jesus. If God has put the finished product on your heart, put it on that page. Then leave it in an offering plate as you leave.

But, God doesn't always give me the finished product. Jesus knows I can't handle all the details all at once. But through His Holy Spirit He reveals a part of what He wants. He sometimes gives me the first step. Sometimes the Holy Spirit gives a picture of the final step. So, if this is how Jesus is revealing to you His plans for our church, then put it on that page. Then leave it in an offering plate as you leave.

This summer, beginning in June, we will be meeting twice a month on Thursday evenings. I call this prayer on the porch. But the prayer has been at times in a living room, in the driveway, or under the carport. Here's what's going to happen this summer. We are going to discuss and pray over the ideas the Holy Spirit has given to you. What you put on that page, we will pray over. The Holy Spirit will move us forward.

Matthew 9:37–38 (NIV84) Jesus said to his disciples, “The harvest is plentiful but the workers are few. Ask the Lord of the harvest, therefore, to send out workers into his harvest field.”

As people united by the Spirit let's seek how we can bring in the harvest. We are still breathing and moving, so Jesus isn't done with us yet.

I'm ending my career as a teacher. Two whole years may not be a career. It was a blessing in more ways than I can count. I encountered students who don't care about anything but themselves. I meet

young people who were walking around uncertain about themselves. I walked with students who needed guidance and were ready to except it. I'm ending that part of my career because Jesus wants my focus to be here, with this congregation, and with this church. I'm still breathing and He isn't done with me.

I was struggling in November and December of 2023. I knew that the Holy Spirit was speaking to me. Lonie recognized that I was not right. She knew that something was off kilter with me. My wife is such a precious and powerful person to me.

I began praying and the Holy Spirit began nudging. I kept praying like I hadn't heard, and the Holy Spirit kept pushing. Then just before Christmas break the Holy Spirit gave me a nightmare. I woke up in the middle of the night in a cold sweat. I knew exactly what the Holy Spirit was telling me. Step away from the school and focus His church. Every time I thought I could do something next year at the school, the Holy Spirit sent me a kick in my pants. Something happened at the school which made it clear that I needed to return to His church.

Our community is filled with people who need Jesus. We are still breathing, right? We may look in the mirror and wonder if we can make it one more day. That's in Jesus' hands. As long as we are breathing it's because Jesus wants us here. As long as we are breathing there is a need in our community.

We have been blessed to be able to fix some badly needed parts of this building. That cannot be an accident. That is not a coincidence. They don't exist. There are only the plans of God.

I cannot help but believe that Jesus has a way that He wants to work through us and this building so people will turn to Him as their Savior and Lord. I cannot help but believe that the Holy Spirit will reveal to us a ministry for the participation of every one of us.

I'm ready for Jesus to keep working through me. I'm still breathing. I am willing to let the Holy Spirit work through me. Come, Lord Jesus, come. Come, Holy Spirit empower us.