

PENTECOST SUNDAY, "YOU'VE GOT THE POWER"

Ezekiel 36:16-28; John 14:23-27; Acts 2:14-21.

My family took a trip several years ago and routinely stayed at a familiar Hotel which was packed with other travelers. As we returned to our hotel that evening after visits with family, I was amazed at the crowd filling the meeting area and the hallways. I always like to engage strangers we chance to run into as we travel, so I began to take particular notice of them. I began to realize that the large groups filling the halls were all wearing green tee-shirts! It seemed like a sea of green was everywhere! As I caught sight of their shirts, I noticed the inscription on the mass of green which said this simple message.....
"YOU'VE GOT THE POWER!"

I was intrigued! Naturally, as my family accuses me of talking too much to everybody, everywhere, I caught one of these excited participants and asked for some background! "What does it mean?!" I asked. As they explained, it was a banking convention, and they were launching a new customer campaign offering far more services than before. The key was that the customer now would be given the knowledge, skills, and assistance to choose and initiate their own style of banking, investments, and level of service!

Sounded interesting to me, and I begged for a sticker or brochure or something to help me understand it better. In the spirit of the whole process, several of the participants, who liked my interest as much as they liked their new slogan and program, insisted that I wait a minute while one rushed into her room, changed her outfit and returned with the gift of her shirt for me to keep as a souvenir! Now that's customer service! And that drove home the point of their program. The power was invested in me now to

carry on the message! That little incident highlighted for me the meaning of the experience of Pentecost!

Pentecost was the birth of the church! And the signal event that started what we have today, the Body of Christ, God's sending and ministering agent in the world, was the gift of God's very Presence within this fellowship and within each believer. God was present in the Gift of His Holy Spirit.

God's Presence is power.....

- +Power to take control,
- +power to set direction,
- +power to teach and lead in TRUTH,
- +power to make things happen! Good things, True things!

When this presence was gifted into the fellowship of believers, something very rare and unusual happened. The Christians, who gathered in the city with thousands of worshippers from all nations for the Holy Day of Passover, became God's greatest surprise since the Resurrection. They became God's proclaimers, God's message center, God's Hope for the world! They were surprisingly and suddenly given a gift of many different languages to tell the news. That proclamation is still the church's mission today! Isn't it strange how we often bring the church into our little mold, declaw it, and make her our little support group. All the while God has given His church the power to change the world!

In a real stretch of my experience of the motel experience that night, the new program of LIFE was being launched at Pentecost, and Christ took off His identifying clothing, His robes of ministry and righteousness, His prophetic mantle and placed them squarely on our little church body and on our shoulders! Now!.....Jesus might have said.....You've Got The Power!

1. The points are simple truths still important for us to know today

* God is Present in His world.....

* His Presence is available to all people of all nations.....

* Our Possibilities are endless now.....

* The Power resides within US, (no longer confined to the Temple Holy of Holies, approachable only annually to the priestly class, but to each disciple, the power of communication of a life-giving message of the Gospel of the Love of God.)

2. It is the story of empowerment.....

* God's Spirit of Power is in YOU,

* God's Spirit of Power is in The Church, Also.....

* God's Spirit of Power is in ordinary individuals, like Fathers!

This is the extraordinary power to make a difference, eternally!

3. How often this gift is misunderstood.

* Seen as a sign that God accepts one and not another

* Thought to be a possession to keep rather than a gift to share

Treated like an tip for insider training. This is God's economy.

This is God's stock exchange and we are all shareholders. The

church is a Shareholders' Meeting where we decide what we will

do with the power of God.

B. In the message of Jesus I shared from the 14th chapter of John, we hear Him saying, "You've Got the Power!" - What Power?

* (v. 26) He teaches you all TRUTH

* (V. 27) He gives you PEACE

Let me tell you how I believe this relates to our church at this time. In our Celebration of The History of the church 2 weeks ago, I caught a glimpse of the THEOLOGY of our church. (Every church has a theology, a foundational structure and belief that drives all that it attempts to do and to be.) It was alluded to by Elizabeth Burrell that morning after working tirelessly on displaying the church story in pictures. What Elizabeth said was

that all these pictures told a simple story about how we love one another! What I saw was a life of constant and ongoing commitment to that verse of scripture which says....

“Love one another as I have loved you.” And what a good time we all had celebrating what we had shared all through the years. Tryon First Baptist has been unwavering on that one subject! We just reveled in the life of this one pledge to keep that verse, that call of Jesus Christ. And here is where the lessons of Pentecost point the way beyond the celebration of our past towards the certain future God has prepared.

Living within the Spirit’s Power we are given the power to take this bread of life, which a new generation is starving for, to every corner of this town, this county, and every corner of the globe. “You’ve Got The Power!” I can hear Jesus saying joyfully, as He gifts us with His Holy Spirit that can enable us to do far more than we imagined or ever thought of! We must now see our gifts which God has given as something that must be shared, not kept for ourselves!

But look again at Pentecost. For the miracle to occur that God was planning, they had to bridle their excitement, they had to seize their opportunity, conquer their fears and proclaim good news of God’s Love to the people who packed the streets, coming from every corner of the globe right to their very doorstep! They had to care enough for those people to put their own self concerns aside and share their joy and their spiritual provisions. Today the world has come to our doorstep, and we have a magnificent message. Do we have the magnificent obsession to get the good news out, to share what has been shared with us? I hope so, because that is the mission and the joy of the church. If you don’t believe me, go spend an hour in front of all the picture stories of this church still hanging in the Activity Building through the month of June. Tell me what you see! We are a gifted people,

and those gifts will stay fresh as long as we catch the excitement to share with others what has been shared with us.

III. In conclusion, let me share a word of wisdom spoken by one of our founding fathers. He said, "There are only 3 kinds of people, those who are moveable, those who are immovable, and those who move!" What a simple thought for us to ponder. Which category do you think God wants us to be in? What does the experience of Pentecost say to those of us who belong to God and share of His own Spirit gifted within us? I think it says, "You've Got The Power!" Go forth and be one who moves. Don't wait for someone to move you, and certainly don't fall into the age-old death of being immoveable!

This empowerment of God is saying to each of us, "If it is meant to be, It's up to me!" What will we do with this gift of power? Let's not let it go to waste on us!