

Holy Spirit and the Crisis of Pentecost - Part 7

by T. Austin-Sparks

The Holy Spirit's business is to reproduce the man Jesus and bring many sons to glory, changing people from being earthly to heavenly and making them citizens of heaven.

Duration: 56:18

Scripture: Acts 1:4, Acts 2:32-33

Topics: "Pentecost"

Description

In this sermon, the speaker focuses on the significance of the Holy Spirit in the new creation. They mention that the movements of progress in the new creation mirror those in the material creation. The central feature discussed is the reproducing of Christ in mankind, bringing many sons to glory. The speaker emphasizes the transformative power of the Holy Spirit, highlighting the tremendous change that took place in the early believers after the Holy Spirit came upon them.

Transcript

In our occupation with the crisis of Pentecost, the significance of the Holy Spirit, we have been following the movements of progress in the new creation, seeing that those movements follow in a spiritual way the movements in the material creation. We are not going to even make the briefest survey of the ground cover. We are going to focus upon one feature this evening, the central feature in it all.

I want to read two or three fragments of scripture, leaving the Old Testament passage about the creation of man. We just turn to the New Testament and have these fragments. And as we are so much in the book of the Acts, we look at two passages there.

In chapter two, verses thirty-two and thirty-three, this Jesus, this Jesus, did God raise up, whereof, or of whom we are witnesses, being therefore at the right hand of God exalted, and having received of the Father the promise of the Holy Spirit, he hath put forth this, which ye see and hear, being at the right hand of God exalted, he hath put forth this. In chapter seven and verse fifty-five, that he, Stephen that is, being full of the Holy Spirit, looked up steadfastly into heaven, and saw the glory of God, and Jesus standing on the right hand of God, and said, Behold, I see the heavens open, and the Son of Man standing on the right hand of God. In the letter to the Hebrews, chapter two, and verse five, for not unto angels did he subject the world to come, whereof we speak.

But one hath somewhere testified, saying, What is man, that thou art mindful of him? Or the Son of Man, that thou visitest him? Thou madest him a little lower than the angels. Thou crownest him with glory and honor, and didst set him over the works of thy hands. Thou didst put all things in subjection under his feet.

We see not yet all things subjected to him, but we behold him who hath been made a little lower than the angels, Jesus, because of the suffering of death, crowned with glory and honor, that by the grace of God he should taste death for every man. For it became him for whom are all things, and through whom are all things, in bringing many sons unto glory, to make the offer of their salvation perfect through suffering. For both he that sanctifies and they that are sanctified are all of one, for which cause he is not ashamed to call them brethren.

Finally, in the first letter to the Corinthians, chapter 15, 1 Corinthians 15, verse 45, the first man, Adam, became a living soul. The last Adam, a life-giving spirit. In the earthly creation, the crown, the center of all, was the creation and the instating of man.

We might say that he was the occasion of everything. That is, everything that had gone before led up to him, and everything that followed afterwards came from him. He is the king.

The same is true, transcendentally true, in the new creation. Man presented, and the man instated. Everything before leading to him, and everything after moving from him, coming from him.

Man is the key to both creations. Man is a special thought of God. But there is this that we have to be very clear about, that in the first creation, man, we have never had God's full thought about man.

Only God's intention as to man, not its realization. God's beginning with man, in the new creation. It's otherwise.

We have, in the last Adam, the full thought of God about man. Perfected. Completed.

Nothing more to be added, as to himself, as the personal expression and embodiment of God's full thought concerning man. And having perfected him, he was made perfect through suffering. Having completed him, having finalized him, he could glorify him, and instate him to be the first of a whole race like him.

The great movement of God in China, large company of dear believers, who, whether in the full apprehension of this or not, I don't know. But they took for their name, the Jesus family. Well, that may only relate to a part of the family, so far as they're concerned.

But, that's what it is. That's what it is. This whole new creation is the Jesus family.

Wherefore, it is not a shame to call them brothers. Saying, I am the children whom God hath given me. Only in a spiritual family, that your child is your brother.

We know what that means. Timothy was Paul's child in the faith. Timothy was Paul's brother in the work.

That by the way. But there are two things with which we must be content this evening, and they are quite enough. We must be very clear about this.

On the one side, Jesus. We're using the name now just by itself as it's used here in these passages. Jesus is God's perfected representation of what he intends where man is concerned.

And he is instated at God's right hand as the model, the pattern for man. And to which man is foreordained to be conformed. To which image man is foreordained, says Paul, to be conformed.

That is, come to his image. Not as God, but as the Son, as man. That's the one thing that you and I must be very clear about.

On the other side, the Holy Spirit's business in this dispensation. His real business for which he has come, to which he is committed, and which explains all his dealings with us. His business is to reproduce that man, in the family if you like, in the race, in the children of God.

That is the business of the Holy Spirit. Unto that, he may do many things. He may inspire unto evangelization.

So will he. He may lead to various forms of activity. But none of these must be taken as things in themselves.

If they are, they will surely fall short of the purpose of God in them. Tragedy is that that is done. Every Holy Spirit-inspired activity and concern, whether it be in evangelization or the salvation of the unsaved, or right through all other means and ways, to building up and instructing, every Holy Spirit activity has but one object in view.

Bringing many sons to glory. That is the reproducing of the Son in sons. Reproducing Christ in a mankind called, chosen, elected by God.

Let's be very clear about this. It will perhaps correct some of our preponderances, and our mistakes, and our deficiencies. See exactly what it is the Holy Spirit is doing.

It will explain a great deal. It is the only explanation of many things. For some of the greatest evangelists have had their evangelization ministries cut short.

They themselves have been shut up and confined for years, unable to do any of it. It looks on the surface as though there is a breakdown somewhere. Where is the Holy Spirit? Where is the sovereignty of God? So on.

The answer is, God is more concerned for the increase of his Son in those concerned than he is for all their activities. We come to that as we go on. But these are the things that we must see.

Christ installed as the full embodiment of this original thought of God about man. Perfected. The Holy Spirit come to make Christ in what he is real, and increasingly full in men and women, to bring them to be one great corporate man in Christ.

Now you are so familiar with statements like this. We can't get anywhere until we get the whole thing set. You notice that it was with the setting of that that everything commenced and proceeded in the New Testament.

It was not until the man perfected, glorified, and instated that the right hand of God was in his place, his right place, that anything could go on at all. There is a deeper, deeper meaning in the forbidding of the Lord Jesus to go and preach and begin the work until the Holy Spirit was come. When he gave commandment, Luke said, after he had given commandment by the Holy Ghost, and his commandment was tarry in Jerusalem until he be endued with power.

The deeper meaning of this commandment was not only that they should receive the Holy Spirit, and in so doing receive power, but he linked with that, ye shall be witnesses unto me, unto whom and what were they to witness. Well, listen to Peter. He starts it.

He starts this witnessing in Jerusalem, and it spreads. And what is the great note of the witness? Being at the right hand of God exalted. Everything links up with that.

Tarry ye, not only until the Spirit comes and you receive power, but tarry ye, because when the Spirit comes, it will be because Jesus is glorified. Well, the last Adam. The last Adam.

Don't misquote scripture and call him the second Adam. He's not. He's the second man, but he's the last Adam.

No need for any more. No place for any more. Finality is reached in him.

The last Adam is installed, is stated, because perfected and glorified. And being at the right hand of God exalted, he hath poured forthness. The Spirit of Jesus glorified.

The Spirit of Jesus. The Holy Spirit is called that. That's one of his titles.

The Spirit of Jesus. The Spirit of the perfected, glorified, and instated Jesus as the breath of the new creation. Coming into the new creation man-corporately.

That's what happened on the day of Pentecost. It was the fulfillment of that word in which the Lord Jesus reserved these men unto that day. And he breathed on them and said, receive ye the Holy Spirit.

They did not receive the Holy Spirit then. It was a symbolic act. And it was an act by which he, so to speak, put them in reserve for it, said, I put you apart for that.

The actual receiving of the breath, corresponding to God breathing into the first Adam, took place on the day of Pentecost. And the church's lungs were filled. The whole mechanism of this new spiritual body started up in action when the breath came in.

It doesn't need much argument to see that they were pretty helpless before that happened. It all started then. The breath of the new creation entered in.

Remember that it's not just history. We're not just looking back into the New Testament. The Holy Spirit, dear friends, is the very breath of a new creation.

In us, by that in-breathing of Christ, we become organic parts of Christ. The body of Christ, members of Christ, the one new man. Now what we need to do as quickly as possible is to look at this man being reproduced.

And it's a far bigger study than we can handle this evening. But it is perfectly clear, and on these things we must be perfectly clear indeed, perfectly clear that when the Holy Spirit came into them, a tremendous change took place as to an order of mankind. To say that they became different creatures is hardly enough.

I would like you to study closely and fully what happened to them and the change that did take place. I'll indicate quickly a few of the things. You know from reading the Gospels, I think this is one of the values of

the Gospels being bound before the Acts, although they were not written before it.

You know in reading the Gospels how earthbound these men were. Their horizon was no further than the earth, and that they could see with their natural eyes. Their idea, for instance, of the Kingdom of God was an earthbound thing, horizoned by what was temporal and earthly.

Their ambitions, their expectations and their hopes and their interests and activities were all within that so small compass. They were little men because they had such a little horizon. You live all your days in a little village, you'll be a little person.

Begin to move over the world and you get wonderfully enlarged. These people saw nothing beyond Israel, nothing beyond Israel, little beyond their own native land, their own city. That was the compass.

They were earthbound men. Look again. Jesus, Jesus is in heaven.

He belongs to heaven. I don't know where heaven is, but I know that it's a mighty big place, capable of tremendously enlarging your conceptions of space, distance, range. Jesus is in heaven.

The Holy Spirit comes down from heaven and enters into these people, and immediately they are changed, or they begin to be changed, radically changed, from being earthly people to heavenly people. For them, the center of everything is in heaven, at the right hand of God. They become, in their very constitution, nature, and consciousness, heavenly people.

From that time onward, though right up to the last minute, it would seem, before the Holy Spirit came, they were saying, wilt thou at this time restore the kingdom to Israel? But up to the last minute, that was their horizon. It's gone when the Holy Spirit comes. The horizon is being pressed back further and further, yes, through crises, and sometimes embarrassing and painful crises.

Nevertheless, it's extending, it's expanding. Heaven has become their range, their heavenly people. I could, of course, spend hours on that in the word itself.

You know how much these people of the Book of Acts spoke later about this very matter? I dare not even touch it. Look at this man Paul. Of all men, his horizon was Israel, and Jerusalem, and afterwards, and hath made us to sit in the heavenlies in Christ Jesus.

He's talking about the heavenlies all the time. And I do think that he had a big place in the writing of that letter to the Hebrews, whether he did it or not. He's there somehow all the time insinuated.

It's all about this, isn't it? Heavenly side of things. Wherefore, holy brethren, partners in a heavenly calling. The fact is, that whether they were born in Jerusalem, or in Galilee, or anywhere on this earth, when the Holy Spirit came, they were born in heaven or from heaven.

Born from above. Have an argument with me if you like. Don't mind.

I hold to it that these men were not born again until the day of Pentecost. They were disciples, they were followers, they were given deputed powers and authorities, but they were not born again until the day of Pentecost. But then they were.

And by their birth they were born from above, as Jesus had said, every man must be. Must be. The heavenly kingdom demands heavenly people.

They were not only born from above, but they were enfranchised above. Citizens, ye are come unto the heavenly Jerusalem. The Jerusalem that is above is the mother of us all.

The apostles, after they came back from one of those deputations, under authority, were full exuberance and started to talk to the Lord Jesus about what had happened. And they said, even the demons are subject unto us. Jesus said, steady, steady, careful, if you begin to gloat over the devil, you're on dangerous ground.

You're on dangerous ground. You'll meet something. Rejoice not in this.

Rejoice that your names are enrolled in heaven. That's a safe place for you. To be citizens above, to be enrolled in heaven, to have the franchise of the heavenly city, that's your safety.

It's not safe to glory in anything that you're able to do against the powers of darkness. Your only safety and glory is that you have a heavenly citizenship and your names are enrolled in heaven. You know that that is a New Testament idea, isn't it? In the book of the Revelation, it's just that, whose names are in the Lamb's book of life, enrolled in heaven.

Born there, citizens of heaven. The apostle states it, our citizenship is in heaven from whence we look for a savior. Not only born, not only enfranchised, but supported from heaven.

This book of Acts is a wonderful record of heaven's support of its own citizens and countrymen, isn't it? Yes, heaven looked after them, provided for them, sustained them, carried them through, came to their help, put it how you will. Heaven was true to its own people. Heaven was their resource and had all their resources.

And when those of our field, everything here, ceased to provide them with any hope, with any strength, they went to heaven in prayer and got their resources renewed. There is that, I find, dear friends, at least. I don't know whether you find it.

I don't find all my prayers answered. I ask the Lord for a lot of things that he doesn't give. But I do find this invariably, if I go and have a time of prayer, I am refreshed.

I feel better for it. It's not imagination. You don't just change in a few minutes from utter jadedness, weariness, strain, where it's impossible to go any further.

You come back rested, refreshed, renewed, ten minutes in the presence of the Lord, drawing on heavenly resources. I do find that at any rate, and that's something in this world. Try it.

Their resources were in heaven in every way heavenly. But then, note, the beginning and the development of heavenly character. That is an amazing thing.

Change in the character of these men. It was not just psychological. It was radical.

It was constitutional. Change in the character of these men. It was not just psychological.

It was radical. It was constitutional. We could, of course, take that up.

Look at it for a long time. But there's one point in this which I think we might just lift out, because I feel that where I'm concerned, and no doubt many of you are concerned, this is a point that needs attention. Here

is the most prominent man of this whole group, of the whole 120 gathered there in that upper room on the day of Pentecost.

The most prominent is Peter. Now, just glance back. He's been called the big fisherman.

I don't know what stature Peter had physically. I know he was a great talker. I know that he was always pushing in, aggressive.

You don't have to be a very little person physically to be a coward. And there's no doubt about it that Peter was a terrible coward. And when it came to the real test, he only wanted a serving maid in the hall downstairs, point a finger at him, saying, you're one of them, to draw out of Peter with vehemence.

A denial of that. Well, I'm not making light of what was involved for Peter, if he confessed. But there's no doubt about it that moral courage was really not one of Peter's strong points, was it? And the Lord Jesus challenged him after his resurrection, you know, very thoroughly about this.

I will follow thee even unto death, though all men forsake thee, yet will I not forsake thee. Simon, do you love me more than all men? More than these? Do you? He's being taxed on this very thing, where he has so ignominiously broken down in testimony to the Lord Jesus. Public testimony to the Lord Jesus.

It's a real test, you know, the presence of people who have it in their power to do something with you. Not perhaps to crucify you, not to decry you of advancement in your job, or other things. That's it.

Now look at Peter, when the Holy Spirit has come. Jesus bore a good confession before Pontius Pilate, we are told. He stood up to it.

It was not Jesus who cringed before his judges, it was the judges who cringed before him. The moral courage of Jesus astounded Pilate and vexed the others. The Spirit of Jesus came into Peter on their Pentecost, and look, he's changed in this respect.

Many others, but in this. When they beheld the boldness of Peter and John. When they beheld the boldness, and you can hear him speaking, we ought to obey God rather than man.

I submit it to you. Are we right? Ought we to obey man rather than God? You judge. He's arguing this thing out.

Having no nonsense. It's tremendous, this stand up of Peter after the Holy Spirit came on him. Jesus knew what would happen.

And he said, when the Holy Spirit has come, you'll be witnesses. Not before. It will require the Holy Spirit to make such as you, Peter, a witness.

Now friends, it's a simple matter, but I do feel that you and I need the Holy Spirit over this matter. We are not the witnesses to man that we ought to be. When it really comes to it, we shirk it.

We don't do it. We'll produce any kind of argument to get out of it. Now I'm not suggesting that you rush out from this meeting, get hold of everybody, and begin to talk to them.

But you know a lot of people say, you'll only make a lot of trouble, unnecessary trouble, if you begin to do that sort of thing. You quite sure that you're not making that a cover? What do those with whom you do

business know about Jesus by your consent? Whom you have transacted your business affairs, what do those who live around you know about Jesus by your consent? You see here, everybody knew, and they couldn't help knowing, when the Holy Spirit came into these men. In ever-widening sum, people knew.

And I believe that the real value in all this is not that we know that people know. It's that they know, even when we don't know that they're knowing. But there it is.

The Holy Spirit is like that. Now I could, and I wish that I could, take up in far greater fullness this whole matter of the change in these people, change in these people, after the Holy Spirit came, in their character. Yes, the Spirit of Jesus, and they are already beginning to be conformed to His image, His moral courage, His spiritual virtue, much more, and it goes on.

There are crises in this. That doesn't matter. The thing is, they're on the way, on the way.

And I like to read those letters of Peter, written so many years afterward, and see what grace has done in that man. The measure of Christ to be met in him. That's the Holy Spirit's work.

May I put my finger upon one other thing here? You notice the change corporately, not only individually and personally, but the change corporately. Well, it's a simple statement. I believe it signifies quite a lot, and Peter standing up with the eleven.

There are 120 of them gathered in that upper room. It must have been a fairly large upper room. 120 of them gathered into it, men and women.

In the synagogue they would have been segregated. Men would have had to sit on one side and the women on the other. I don't believe that was true in the upper room.

They were all mixed up together. Beautiful representation that in Christ Jesus there is neither male nor female. It's one new man.

Don't misunderstand that statement. I know a lot of sisters who like that. I'm not going to stop to explain what I mean.

But in Christ Jesus, it's one new man. And here's the beginning. They're together.

They're together. And from that moment of the Spirit's coming you find a togetherness. Moving and working and development.

And they had all things common and not any of them said that the things that he possessed were his own. You wouldn't have got that in the old days. They said, look here, what's mine is my own.

Hands off. Every man for himself. It's true.

Even of disciples it was true. Horrible suggestion, but there it is. They were all for their own position and place in the kingdom and quarreling.

Quarreling as they went along with the Master and the Master sensed it and discerned it. But they were discussing who should be greatest in the rivalries and jealousies and ambitions. All personal, self-centered.

It's gone from the day of Pentecost. It's gone. They are welded into a corporate one.

It has begun at least in a very wonderful way. That is what the Holy Spirit does when he really does get hold. Don't we need that? Do we not need the Holy Spirit in greater fullness of power? Oh, the immensity of this propaganda and machinery.

The whole thing would go out of the window if the Holy Spirit came in. All ceases. Unnecessary vain nonsense.

But the Holy Spirit got his place. You'd have all the unity that ever heaven requires. And that's the only unity worth having, isn't it? I must close reluctantly on two other touches.

One is you notice that these people were always gravitating heavenward. Always gravitating heavenward. Heaven was not only the place of their origin from which they had come.

Heaven was not only their support in a foreign and alien country, but heaven was their objective and their goal. One thing that governed them was this ultimate, this ultimate of being with him in glory. Heaven.

Their spirits were gravitating. They had lost the magnetism of this world. It was broken and nullified.

No longer pulled. They were moving further and further away from this earth to see them. See it happening.

Temple was an earthly thing and you can see quietly and steadily how they're gravitating away from the temple of Jerusalem. Ceases to hold them. You can never put your finger upon the actual day and point at which they broke with that system and that center, but it happened.

Find them. Eventually they're out of it. The whole thing.

Moving away from every earthly tie. It's a wonderful thing. It's a law of the Holy Spirit that happens.

You and I are Holy Spirit governed men and women. We are spoiled for this world. This world is losing.

It hasn't already completely lost any kind of interest. This is not our life. This is not our place.

We've got to be here. We've just got to be here until the Lord says otherwise. We don't like it.

Our spirits don't like it. No. So far as any kind of liking this world is concerned, it's the other way.

We are becoming more and more to feel how out of it all we are. Not a part of it. It hurts them to us.

It is true. Go to your business. But oh how much more you would like to remain in the fellowship of the heavenly people.

You've got to go. The Lord called you there. They were like that.

Like that. Always gravitating toward heaven and moving inwardly. Inwardly moving away.

One other thing, and I close for the present. You notice the wonderful enlargement that began to take place on the day of Pentecost. In this further sense, what we have so often called the universality of Christ.

The universality of Christ. You cannot, you cannot fasten Christ, Jesus down to anything that relates to this earth and to this world. You cannot fix him into any nationality.

He fits into all of them. And he's a part of none of them. You cannot fix him into one language.

He can be understood in every language. And he understands every language. So we can go on.

This marvelous universality. Look here. Here's the day of Pentecost.

And what have we? This. And they were all amazed and marveled, saying, Behold, are not all these which speak Galileans? And how here we, every man in his own language wherein we were born. Parthians and Medes and Elamites and dwellers in Mesopotamia, in Judea and Cappadocia, in Pontus and Asia, in Phrygia and Pamphylia, in Egypt and in the parts of Libya and Cyrene, sojourners from Rome, Jews and proselytes, Cretans and Arabians.

Perfect Noah's Ark. Something of every kind. The universality of Christ.

The strategy of the Holy Spirit to make Christ meet the need of every kind of creature in every nation and language, fitting in. I don't know how many of the three thousand were represented in all those departments of humanity after Pentecost. But I think that alone is a marvelous exhibition.

The universality of Christ. The Holy Spirit making it known how great Christ is. Oh, dear friends, the Holy Spirit does that sort of thing.

He breaks down the barriers of what is merely national and temperamental. He constitutes this new man on the heavenly universal principle. The old wine skins of a mere restricted nationalism are burst when the new wine comes in.

And it flows out, spills over into all the nations. Paul pleaded with the Corinthians, be ye enlarged. Our hearts are enlarged.

Be ye also enlarged. How? The only effective way of extricating us from our littlenesses, our pettinesses, our exclusivenesses, enlarging us to the dimensions of the heavenly man, is a mighty filling with the Holy Spirit. That is what he does.

That will be an effect. If you have any experience, any real experience of the Holy Spirit, you have had a crisis in your life at a point where, before it, you were in those strictnesses and limitations and bondages of the old natural life. And afterward, afterward, this crisis where the Spirit of God came into your life, you know this quite well, that the church ceased to be something sectarian, comprised of so many sects and departments, I'll not use the other word.

It ceased to be like that. And your horizon ceased to be something local. It came enlarged to the great dimensions of Christ and this church which is his body, in which there is neither Jew nor Greek.

Neither. Not both. Neither.

But there is only one new man, people taken out of every nation for his name, to be called by his name. The Jesus family. We're not going to adopt that name, but that's what it means.

Now you see how we are launched into tremendous wrath. The Lord take hold of some of this and really challenge us with it. It's not a statement of truth only.

It is a challenge. Am I like that? Really? Has the Spirit of God done something of that in me? Is he doing it? Is he going on with it? That's the challenge. The Lord make it true.

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