

"Why do we need the Holy Spirit?"

In Christianity, Christmas and Easter are the well-known special days, in general. However, there is a hardly known day that compares to these two days, in importance. That is Pentecost, and today is Pentecost Sunday. Let me say how important this day is; without this day, today's Christianity wouldn't exist. It's has that much importance.

The word Pentecost is combination of Greek language number 5 "penta" and number 10 "cost", it means 50. Let me explain to you what this 50 means. Pentecost is the 50th day after Passover, a memorial of Moses rescuing the Israelites from Egypt, and the day of Pentecost is to be thankful for the harvest of grains. At the same time, that day was the 50th day from the day Jesus Christ was resurrected. Therefore, this day is called Pentecost. Well, what happened on that Pentecost? The Bible records the things that happened to Jesus' disciples in Jerusalem.

When the day of Pentecost came, they were all together in one place.² Suddenly a sound like the blowing of a violent wind came from heaven and filled the whole house where they were sitting.³ They saw what seemed to be tongues of fire that separated and came to rest on each of them.⁴ All of them were filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other tongues as the Spirit enabled them. (Acts 2: 1-4)

When this happened, Jesus Christ was already crucified, and then resurrected, and then he was in heaven. The disciples, without Jesus, remained in Jerusalem. The Holy Spirit was upon them, and they were filled with the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit is definitely a ghost of God so that we can't see him with our eyes, but he is within us and gives us the power that we can't have. The people who received the Holy Spirit came to testify Jesus Christ powerfully, and ever since, churches have been built all over the world, beyond Israel. This event didn't happen accidentally, at that time. Jesus repeatedly told his disciples that "Soon this thing will happen, so look forward to this day."

The Bible says that Jesus was crucified, died and buried, and on the third day he was resurrected. And then, The Book of Acts chapter 1 says that resurrected Jesus ascended to heaven. The Chapter 1 verse 9 says

⁹ After he said this, he was taken up before their very eyes, and a cloud hid him from their sight. (Acts 1:9)

After that, Jesus didn't appear in front of his disciples in a visible form again. Jesus left two promises to his disciples before he went to heaven, and then he rose to heaven. That is, in Acts chapter 1 Verse 5, Jesus said that

“Do not leave Jerusalem, but wait for the gift my Father promised, which you have heard me speak about. ⁵ For John baptized with water, but in a few days you will be baptized with the Holy Spirit.” (Acts 1:4-5)

And then, in verse 8, he said

But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth.” (Acts 1:8)

In these verses, Jesus used the word “will”. That is, it wasn't happening at that time, but Jesus said that it would definitely happen in the future. Moreover, Jesus said the word “will”, not only when the book of Acts recorded that Jesus used the word “will” in his messages to his disciples, but also the book of John recorded that Jesus was telling his disciples over and over that the Holy Spirit will come on them before he was crucified.

¹⁶ And I will ask the Father, and he will give you another advocate to help you and be with you forever—¹⁷ the Spirit of truth. The world cannot accept him, because it neither sees him nor knows him. (John 14:16-17)

²⁶ “When the Advocate comes, whom I will send to you from the Father—the Spirit of truth who goes out from the Father—he will testify about me. (John 15:26)

⁷ But very truly I tell you, it is for your good that I am going away. Unless I go away, the Advocate will not come to you; but if I go, I will send him to you. ⁸ When he comes, he will prove the world to be in the wrong about sin and righteousness and judgment: (John 16:7-8)

¹³ But when he, the Spirit of truth, comes, he will guide you into all the truth. He will not speak on his own; he will speak only what he hears, and he will tell you what is yet to come. ¹⁴ He will glorify me because it is from me that he will receive what he will make known to you. (John 16:13-14)

Jesus told his disciples over and over that “Soon, the holy spirit, called advocate, will come to you.” It had not happened at the time Jesus told them, but Jesus stated that the day will definitely come, so look forward to the Holy Spirit. The accomplishment of Jesus' words was the story I talked about in the beginning.

According to Acts chapter 1 verse 3, Jesus appeared in front of his disciples frequently, for 40 days after his resurrection. We think that the disciples must have had a strong determination to tell others of their extraordinary experiences about Jesus, because they spent time with someone who was resurrected. Yes, what they experienced, was a vivid and shocking experience.

However, Jesus prohibited them from going into the world only with the experience, and told them to look forward to the arrival of the Holy Spirit, the Advocate of the heaven. And then, finally, the promised Holy Spirit from came upon the disciples.

Why do we need the Holy Spirit, whom Jesus promised to his disciples and told them the necessity of it, over and over. Today, I would like to talk to you about three things in order to understand why we need the Holy Spirit.

1. The Holy Spirit, in order for us to become Christ's witness
2. The Holy Spirit, who distinguishes the truth
3. The Holy Spirit, our advocate and comforter.

1. **The Holy Spirit, for us to become Christ's witness**

Acts 1:8 records Jesus' promise as

⁸ But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth. (Act 1:8)

Jesus told his disciples that **"But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth."**

The disciples encountered the resurrected Jesus. Jesus spent 450 days with his disciples. Their strengths and courage must have increased, more than 100 times, compared to right after Jesus was crucified.

However, Jesus knew the limits of human's passion. Jesus used to tell his disciples that "The spirit is willing, but the flesh is weak." (Matthew 26:41) That's right, the special experiences give us passion, but soon it will diminish. Jesus said his disciples will receive the power and become his witness **"But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you"**

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Only when the Holy Spirit comes on you, will you receive the true power, and then become Christ's witness, and continue being his witness. Not by your passion or decision.

It has been 21 years since I became a pastor. I have experienced so many things over the years. Surely, life experiences are treasures. Because of these experiences and based on it, I was able to deal with different situations at the time. However, I have learned that there is a limit in what you can do from your own experiences.

A pastor's job is to point at someone invisible to us and keep preaching that we have the life here that we gather and stand for. It's not like displaying and selling products in front of you, and tell you to take a look at the product in your hand and then sell the product to you. If you believe in Jesus Christ through the words of the Bible in the pastor's sermon, and you accept the words and actions of Jesus from 2000 years ago as they relate to yourself, that is not the work of humans; The Holy Spirit is working on you.

There was no guarantee that people would believe in Jesus Christ, even if Jesus' disciples powerfully and enthusiastically said "I surely met resurrected Jesus so you must believe in Jesus Christ, too." It was even doubtful that these disciples' passion would remain in 20, 30 years, from that time. There's no way that after 500, 100 years, from the time, and today 2000 years after the influence of resurrected Jesus remains the same. That's why Jesus told his disciples over and over to receive the Holy Spirit. They received the Holy Spirit and truly became Christ's witnesses and today people become believers by the work of the Holy Spirit.

As I read to you in the beginning, when the Holy Spirit came on the disciples, the symbolic thing happened. That is "**Suddenly a sound like the blowing of a violent wind came from heaven and filled the whole house where they were sitting.** It describes the Holy Spirit, as like the wind. We can't see the wind. We don't know where it is coming from and where it is going, but we can see the trace of the wind after it is gone. Falling leaves are moved to different locations by wind. That is the trace of the wind. We also can't see the Holy Spirit, but surely he is with us, and when the Holy Spirit is present, there's God's involvement. And God wants us to rely on the Holy Spirit when we feel powerless and have reached our limits, the Holy Spirit's work has come upon us.

2. The Holy Spirit, who distinguishes the truth

John 16:13-15 says about this Holy Spirit as when he, the Spirit of truth, comes, he will guide you into all the truth. (John 16:13)

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Our world goes on rapidly. In the 1980's, I was living in the US. It was a big deal to make an international phone call from the US to Japan. I saved up quarter coins for about 6 months in order to make an international phone call from a payphone. Piling up those coins on the payphone, I made a bullet points list of what I wanted to talk about in order to save time and money, and called home for just a few minutes. But, nowadays we can talk to our family in Japan for many hours, for free. We can even look at each other's face by video chat.

Much information goes by us at high speed. In terms of collecting information, it really doesn't matter where you are, geographically. For example, when I, who lives in San Diego, told my friend, who lives in Aomori(Northern Japan) "There was an earthquake in Kyushu (Southern Japan)." , the friend said "Oh, I didn't know about it."

Like this situation, living in the world filled with unlimited information means we have more choices to choose from, then all things will be relativizing. That is "That is good. This is good, too. As long as the person is fine with it, everything is good."

This is the era, the decisions of what is right and wrong, is depends on each individual. And, "As long as the person is happy with it, it is good." We call it "freedom".

In such current times, the word "truth" is dying out. Especially in Japan, a cult group who use the word "truth" in their name did an infamous terrorist attack (in the mid1990's). Ever since, the word "truth" is a shady word to Japanese people.

However, the Bible still tells that the Holy Spirit makes it clear what the truth is.

The truth doesn't exist. We each have our own truth. It's convenient and attractive to say that, what you think is right is the truth. But, is that so? Is what you think is right really right? What would happen to the world if we all started doing what we each think is right? If what each of us think is right was right, this world would have been turned into a better place a long time ago. However, in reality, each other's truth crushes everywhere. In this world, there are many people who claim that they follow their truth, while they drop bombs on innocent people. The behavior of such people already described in the Old Testament. Do you remember what kind of time the time of Judges was, one of the worst time periods in the history of the Bible? Yes, the Bible says "**In those days Israel had no king; everyone did as they saw fit.**" (Judges 17:6)

In this world, surrounded by unlimited information, the Holy Spirit points us "that

is wrong." "that is right. That's ok." The Holy Spirit will tell you that you should proceed to a different direction even if many people agree with something else. Brothers and sisters in Christ, what an essential thing for us to live is that let the Holy Spirit open our eyes and let him teach us the truth.

3. The Holy Spirit, our advocate and comforter.

And, John 16:7-8 says that the Holy Spirit is the advocate. ⁷ **But very truly I tell you, it is for your good that I am going away. Unless I go away, the Advocate will not come to you; but if I go, I will send him to you.** ⁸ **When he comes, he will prove the world to be in the wrong about sin and righteousness and judgment: (John 16:7-8)**

Jesus prayed at Gethsemane right before he was crucified. Jesus pore blood like dripping sweat when he was praying and he said³⁴ **"My soul is overwhelmed with sorrow to the point of death," (Mark 14:34)** This was suffering beyond our imagination. What encouraged Jesus at that moment was the Holy Spirit. We can't see the holy Spirit, but he stays with us, helps us, and comforts us. Jesus told his disciples that **"Do not leave Jerusalem, but wait for the gift my Father promised, which you have heard me speak about"**

Jesus became invisible to his disciples after that. They lost the teacher who walked along with them all this time. However, instead of Jesus, the Holy Spirit will comfort you like a mother comforts her child, the Holy Spirit will comfort you.

One philosopher said that "humans are loners. We are all alone." Surely, he may be right. In reality, we are alone. Our family and friends can't be with us 24/7, but the Holy Spirit is always with us, helps us, comforts us, and encourages us.

Romans *:26 also says that²⁶ **In the same way, the Spirit helps us in our weakness. We do not know what we ought to pray for, but the Spirit himself intercedes for us through wordless groans. (Romans 8:26)**

In the Greek language, Paracleteis is used to describe this Holy Spirit; It means advocate. The Holy Spirit himself becomes our advocate, **the Spirit helps us in our weakness. We do not know what we ought to pray for, but the Spirit himself intercedes for us through wordless groans.** He is the advocate when we pray. The Holy Spirit will be with us even if we feel alone and feel anxious.

Jesus iss gone and no longer visible to his disciples. However, the Holy Spirit is

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always with us and becomes our advocate, and comforts us. We can pursue our lives with this Holy Spirit.

This year’s Easter was April 16th. Thus, the 50th from that day is today, the day of Pentecost. Now, you know how important this day is. I think you understand why Jesus told his disciples to remain in Jerusalem, and wait for the Holy Spirit. We also need this Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit makes us become Christ’s witness and makes it possible for us to distinguish the truth, and help us. Jesus told his disciples about the Holy Spirit over and over because he knew how wonderful the Holy Spirit is. Jesus told them to receive the Holy Spirit. Therefore, we shall receive the Holy Spirit as well.

Paul said to the people who forgot the power of ministry, which was started by this Holy Spirit, and began to rely on their own strength. **After beginning by means of the Spirit, are you now trying to finish by means of the flesh? (Galatians 3:3)** Brothers and sisters in Christ, when you remember that day, that time you came to believe Jesus Christ, it was caused by the power of the Holy Spirit. Just like the Bible says **no one can say, “Jesus is Lord,” except by the Holy Spirit. (1 Corinthians 12:3)**

We all are using our full strength in order to face our current situations. But, what do you think? Don’t we sometimes forget about the existence of the Holy Spirit? Jesus did not rely on his disciples’ passion, that is, their flesh’s strength, for the progress of the ministry. That’s right, Jesus strongly hoped for his disciples to wait to receive the Holy Spirit, and to walk strongly with the power of the Holy Spirit over and over. Therefore, we shall live our daily lives with the Holy Spirit, and lead by the Holy Spirit.

Let us Pray.

Translated by the Scarlett Family