

Re. Podcast Pentecost – Pt 6

This is Pentecost – Pt 6, and it appears that next week – Part 7 – will conclude this Series on Pentecost. This coming Friday, May 29, will end the ‘Counting of the Omer’ or counting of 50 days from Passover to Pentecost.

Without question, the provision of Pentecost, not only births the Christian Church, but it endows that Church with Power to execute the Great Commission. We have looked, again, carefully at that Provision.

During the first 5 Podcasts I have repeatedly drawn a distinction between the carnal person and the renewed spiritual person (the Old man and the New man) almost to the point of tedium. But this is so important that it would be impossible to overstate it.

I presented podcasts about Revival (10 parts beginning Jan 29, 2017) and one very clear conclusion can be drawn.

Each significant Revival in the history of the Church began with the provision of Pentecost – i.e.. Someone received a direct revelation sent by Jesus and ministered to them by the Holy Spirit that began to spread like fire spreads. This is Pentecost

and the person/persons thus receiving can be called Pentecostals.

However, it was not too long before that fire began to decline – usually just a few years. Why? The answer parallels the words of Paul.

Gal 3:3 Are you so foolish? After beginning with the Spirit, are you now going to be made complete by the flesh?

Or, as the lyrics of this great hymn state it:

Stand up! stand up for Jesus!
Stand in His strength alone;
The arm of flesh will fail you;
Ye dare not trust your own.

Will we awaken to this ever-present danger before it is too late? We have entered the final days of the Church Age, and soon we will all stand to account for our stewardship. How will we answer to the question?

Did you keep your body under subjection to your renewed spirit?

Did you walk in the strength of your own flesh, or did you rely upon strength the Spirit provides to you?

The battleground is always in the mind. If we think well, we will walk well, but if we permit the preferences of our flesh to direct our thinking we will walk unsteadily and quench the Holy Spirit is so doing. In this podcast we will look squarely at this greatest of all enemies of Pentecost – our sense and reason apart from the Holy Spirit.

Act 13:1 In the church that was at Antioch there were prophets and teachers: Barnabas, Simeon who was called Niger, Lucius the Cyrenian, Manaen, a close friend of Herod the tetrarch, and Saul.

Act 13:2 As they were ministering to the Lord and fasting, the Holy Spirit said, "Set apart for Me Barnabas and Saul for the work I have called them to."

Act 13:3 Then after they had fasted, prayed, and laid hands on them, they sent them off.

Following Pentecost, Barnabas (son of Encouragement/Consolation) was one of the first to sell property and bring the profits to the Apostles at Jerusalem. Barnabas was a gifted prophet and apostle who came from Cypress and was a Levite by birth.

When Paul attempted to associate with the Jerusalem Church following his Damascus vision and conversion, it was Barnabas who persuaded the reluctant church to accept him. Barnabas

appears to be a stalwart man, especially gifted in exhortation and supporting the best results in others. Each person has their own personality, and that does not radically change at conversion. The unique 'you' is intended to find maximum fulfillment in the provision of Pentecost – you that Christ has made provision for. However, the one major consideration for each of us is the daily requirement that we willingly deny the 'old' self while taking up our unique cross and following Jesus. This is keeping the body under, and it will always require choice on our part.

We know a great deal about Paul, as the N.T. is, in great part, written by or about him. Paul's personality is quite different. He is called of God from birth to be a 'chosen instrument', and his capacity for extreme zeal was necessary in his unique purpose. When the Lord calls and commissions us, he never requires anything beyond our capacity. This is the idea of one Body with many unique members, each inter-dependent and contributing according to design.

1Co 9:27 Instead, I discipline my body and bring it under strict control, so that after preaching to others, I myself will not be disqualified.

The Holy Spirit had called Paul and Barnabas to work together – a very special apostolic missionary team to evangelize from

place to place. The elders of the church in Antioch ordained both according to the direction of the Holy Spirit, and thus began a powerful missionary journey.

Barnabas wanted to take with them his younger near relative, named John Mark, as an assistant. Paul agreed, but John Mark left them during what appears to be a challenging time and returned to his home in Jerusalem. When the time came to revisit the newly formed churches –

Act 15:36 After some time had passed, Paul said to Barnabas, "Let's go back and visit the brothers in every town where we have preached the message of the Lord and see how they're doing."

Act 15:37 Barnabas wanted to take along John Mark.

This provided an opportunity for a difference of opinion to surface – and surface it did. Considering natural relationships and one being an Encourager by personality and gifting, while the other is zealous for the work even in the face of the harshest conditions, this difference in opinion is understandable.

However, the Holy Spirit had called them and ordained them to work together. John Mark was added by their decision. Paul had triggered this, at that moment, by his decision to revisit the churches. The disagreement was so strongly held by both

Barnabas and Paul that they parted company over this. Barnabas took John Mark and sailed to Cyprus. Paul took Silas and commenced his 2nd missionary journey. The historian here, Luke, follows Paul and Silas, and Barnabas is seldom mentioned after this. However, we do know that Paul would later speak of both John Mark and Barnabas in ways that show mutual approval in the Lord's work.

Paul would also mention that it was necessary for him to correct Peter concerning prejudiced treatment of Gentile believers, even adding that Barnabas had been improperly influenced in this by Peter. Peter, of all men to be found blameworthy. He had been shown a vision and explicitly told not to call 'common or unclean' what God calls clean. Peter, prepared by this vision, journeyed to Cornelius's house and was shocked to see the Holy Spirit descend upon Gentiles as He had upon the Jews at Pentecost. How could Peter be influenced again by his heritage and ideas of the past – but he was and needed to be corrected again.

We should not be discouraged by remembering these inconsistencies. These were exceptions and not the rule. Can we better understand their inspired epistles that warn against relying on the flesh?

Truth matters. How comfortable was Paul in pointing out the error engaged in briefly by both Peter and Barnabas? If he was walking in his flesh he may have shied away from criticism of a fellow apostle. But if he were walking in the Spirit and would not shrink from declaring the whole counsel of God, he must point this out as essential to withholding nothing that would profit the churches. The willingness to decline John Mark required Paul to place the best interests of the work above all else – even above his special relationship with Barnabas.

Gal 2:19 I have been crucified with Christ

Gal 2:20 and I no longer live, but Christ lives in me. The life I now live in the body, I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself for me.

Today, Pentecost is a difficult subject with many, in part because the word Pentecost has become associated with groups who mix the outpouring of Pentecost with sensual experience. The result of this unholy mixture is a form that mimics old time Pentecostalism but lacks old time power.

Tragically, the world can pick out this contradiction, while the new version of Pentecostal is blind to it. The result of all this is a pseudo Pentecost that teaches flesh how to manifest spiritual false gifts disguised as genuine. The tree here is known by the fruit being produced, and the fruit shows these practitioners to be carnal, lustful, and sensual. The holiness of the old time

Pentecostals has been replaced by a worldly spirit, and repeated scandals are the inevitable result.

Pseudo Pentecostalism has been weighed and found wanting. This revisit to the subject of genuine Pentecost is focused on the genuine beginning and not the modern version.

Revival in The Hebrides

by Duncan Campbell

... Well that continued for some weeks--indeed, I believe almost a month and a half. Until one night; now this is what I am anxious for you to get a hold of - one night they were kneeling there in the barn, pleading this promise, "I will pour water on him that is thirsty, floods upon the dry ground" when one young man, a deacon in the church, got up and read Psalm 24. "Who shall ascend the hill of God? Who shall stand in His holy place? He that has clean hands and a pure heart who has not lifted up his soul unto vanity or sworn deceitfully. He shall receive the blessing (not a blessing, but the blessing) of the Lord." And then that young man closed his Bible. And looking down at the minister and the other office bearers, he said this-maybe crude words, but perhaps not so crude in our Gaelic language - he said, "It seems to me to be so much humbug to be praying as we are praying, to be waiting as we are waiting, if we ourselves are not rightly related to God." And then he lifted his two hands-and I'm

telling you just as the minister told me it happened-he lifted his two hands and prayed, "God, are my hands clean? Is my heart pure? " But he got no further. That young man fell to his knees and then fell into a trance. Now don't ask me to explain this because I can't. He fell into a trance and is now lying on the floor of the barn. And in the words of the minister, at that moment, he and his other office bearers were gripped by the conviction that a God-sent revival must ever be related to holiness, must ever be related to Godliness. Are my hands clean? Is my heart pure? The man that God will trust with revival-that was the conviction.

This is an example of surrendering the flesh to death, which is essential to the fullness of Pentecost. It begins with this requirement and continues while this surrender continues.

I'll close with these lyrics from 'Stand Up, Stand Up, For Jesus'.

Stand up! stand up for Jesus!
Stand in His strength alone;
The arm of flesh will fail you;
Ye dare not trust your own.