Let The Church Be The Church

Acts 1:1-5
1 The former treatise have I made, O Theophilus, of all that Jesus began both to do and teach,
2 Until the day in which he was taken up, after that he through the Holy Ghost had given commandments unto the apostles whom he had chosen:
3 To whom also he shewed himself alive after his passion by many infallible proofs, being seen of them forty days, and speaking of the things pertaining to the kingdom of God:
4 And, being assembled together with them, commanded them that they should not depart from Jerusalem, but wait for the promise of the Father, which, saith he, ye have heard of me.
5 For John truly baptized with water; but ye shall be baptized with the Holy Ghost not many days hence.

Intro: What does it mean to be Apostolic?

• From theological viewpoint it means that we believe
  o in the restoration of the original apostolic church
    ▪ as it lived and breathed in the first century.
• We believe that the church
  o as it is presented in the Book of Acts
    ▪ is the what the church is supposed to be.
• We don’t believe
  o that the church is subject
    ▪ to the culture
    • or the political atmosphere of the day.
• We believe that the church
  o that Jesus established
    ▪ when he said, UPON THIS ROCK, I WILL BUILD MY CHURCH,
      • is the church that he intended for us to be.
• What caused our forefathers
  o to begin to seek the outpouring of the Holy Ghost
    ▪ was a desire for the church
      • to become what the church was meant to be.
• Not an evolved church,
  o not a progressively better church,
    ▪ not church based on vain philosophies
      • and political reasoning.
• But, rather, a church patterned after the book of Acts.

• What does it mean to be Apostolic?
  o It means that we believe
that the church is suppose to have the power
  • and the anointing of the Holy Ghost
    o operating in it
      • and flowing through it.
  o This church has a heritage of Holy Ghost power.
    • This church has a history
      • of turning governments upside down
        o and of seeing entire regions break out in revival.
    • This church has a history
      • of seeing the Lord add to it daily.
  o This church has a history that is filled
    • with the power and demonstration
      • of the spirit of God!
• There came a point in history
  o where hungry men and women
    • got tired of business as usual.
  o Somebody said let the church be the church.
    • Let us get back to the things that make us the church.
  o That's how the restoration
    • of the Pentecostal experience
      • began to break out in the beginning of the 20th century.
  o Because men and women were sick and tired
    • of the status quo
      • and they desired something real.
• I believe that it is high time
  o that we joined our voice with theirs:
    • Let the church be the church!
• I believe it is high time we let a desperate world know
  o that the church of the living God is alive and well!

Wait For The Promise
• The disciples were hand picked by Jesus Christ.
  o They were personally taught,
    • trained and empowered by Jesus Christ.
• They were more than just spectators
  o to the glory and power of God.
• Luke 10 tells of a time when Jesus
  o selected 70 of his closest followers
    • and sent them out 2x2
      • as evangelists of the kingdom of God.
• He charged them to preach the good news
  o of the coming of the kingdom
    • and to heal the sick.
• They did that and more.
Luke 10:17  And the seventy returned again with joy, saying, Lord, even the devils are subject unto us through thy name.

- These were men who had already discovered
  - that there was power, in the name of Jesus,
    - to heal the sick
    - and to cast out demons.

- These were men who knew from experience
  - that the powers and principalities of hell
    - are subject to the name of Jesus.

- These are the men that Jesus chose to establish his church.
  - After his death and before his ascension into heaven,
    - He commissioned them to evangelize their world.
  - He instructed them to go
    - and preach the gospel of Jesus Christ,
      - making disciples of all nations,
        - and baptizing them in his name.

- But, on the last day that he was with them, just before He was caught up into heaven, he gave them one final instruction.
  - He told them to WAIT FOR THE PROMISE!

- He didn’t tell the to go immediately and change the world.
  - He didn’t tell them to start preaching straight away.

- No! He told them to wait.
  - He told them there was something more that they needed!

- The disciples, despite their years of walking with Jesus,
  - despite the miracles
    - that they have already been a part of,
  - despite the wonderful truth
    - that they have already received,

- were not qualified to go reach their world
  - with the gospel of Jesus Christ
    - until they were baptized with the power of the Holy Ghost!

- Listen, their names are engraved on the foundations of heaven.
  - But they did not have what it takes
    - to reach the world with the gospel of Jesus Christ
      - without being baptized in the Holy Ghost!

**Baptism means immersion.**

- To be baptized is to be totally immersed.
  - To be baptized is to be completely
    - under the influence of the water.
  - It is to be fully submerged,
To entirely lose yourself in the water.

- Baptism is the image
  - of total and absolute submission to God.
- Jesus told his disciples John baptized with water.
  - But you will be baptized with the Holy Ghost!

- There is no way to overstate the importance
  - of what happened in that upper room.
    - A spiritual transformation took place.
  - When they were baptized in the Holy Ghost,
    - they completely lost themselves
      - in the presence of God.
  - They were filled with the Spirit of God!
- It changed them.
  - They didn’t leave that upper room
    - the way they came in.
  - Every part of them
    - was completely and utterly submitted
      - to the influence of the divine power of God.
- God took over.
  - When you get baptized,
    - every part of you gets wet.
  - Every part of you is affected.

- Why do you think they stumbled about like they were drunk?
  - A drunk stumbles
    - because he has lost control of his facilities.
      - He is under the influence of something else!
- This is what it means to be baptized in the Holy Ghost.
  - It means to lose control of yourself.
    - To come under the influence of the Holy Ghost.
      - When you speak in tongues,
        - that is the Holy Ghost taking over.
  - When you lose yourself
    - and just get carried away
      - in the presence of God,
        - it impacts everything.
  - It touches every part of your life.
    - You can’t hold anything back when you are completely immersed!

- Just as sure as I’m standing here right now,
  - The Holy Ghost moved on me Wednesday afternoon
    - With a simple yet powerful directive.
• We need to go back to the beginning,
  o back to the upper room,
    ▪ and remember what it means to
      • be baptized in the Holy Ghost!
  o We need to lose control!
    ▪ We need to lose ourselves.
    ▪ We need to lose our limitations.
    ▪ We need to lose our memory of our past lives.
  o We need to be completely lost
    ▪ in the power of the Holy Ghost!
• It is time to lose control.
  o It is time to come under the influence of the Spirit of God.

• The problem we have is a control problem.
  o We want a little Holy Ghost power,
    ▪ but we don’t want to yield control.
  o You want to feel good
    ▪ and get them little dodads
      • to run up and down your spine.
  o But then you want to keep living like the world,
    ▪ dressing like the world,
    ▪ talking like the world,
      o acting like the world.
• We want a relationship with God that is all one-sided.
  o We want the parts that make us feel good
    ▪ without surrendering to the part that makes us change!

• When it comes to the Holy Ghost and power
  o we might as well trade our baptismal tank
    ▪ for a wading pool.
  o Because we’ve become all together too comfortable
    ▪ with just a little Holy Ghost,
      • just a little yielding to God,
        o just enough that we feel OK.
• Let me tell you something.
  o try all you want,
    ▪ but you can’t baptize a man
      • in ankle deep water!
  o The Holy Ghost is beckoning us,
    ▪ wade out a little deeper.
      • Get out here
        o where the water is deep.
      • Get out here
        o where the power of the Holy Ghost is real.
Let The Church Be The Church

• Get out here
  o where the spirit of God
    ▪ can put you under its influence!

Ezekiel’s Vision
• The prophet had a vision in Ezekiel 47
  o of waters flowing out of the house of God.
• In the vision, the angel of the Lord
  o kept taking him further and further
    ▪ out into the flow of that water.
• He started out in water that was ankle deep,
  o but that wasn’t where the Lord wanted him.
• He waded on out until it got a bit deeper, knee deep,
  o but that wasn’t deep enough.
• After a bit it got thigh deep
  o but still the angel beckoned him,
    ▪ come on out a little further.
• Finally the prophet said,
  o “It was a river I could not pass over … waters to swim in!”

• I feel like God is calling this church
  o to wade in a whole lot deeper.
    ▪ You’ve been in the kiddie pool long enough.
      • God can’t baptize you down here
        o on the shallow end of the pool!
  o You are never going to get lost
    ▪ under the influence of the Holy Ghost
      • as long as you aren’t willing
        o to surrender yourself to God
          ▪ and wade out a whole lot deeper!

• Medieval Baptism:
  o The soldier would hold his sword arm,
    ▪ with his sword,
      • out of the water when he was baptized.
  o It was a symbolic way of saying
    ▪ that I pledge to be a Christian
      • with everything except my sword.
  o It was a way of acknowledging
    ▪ that the warrior who may die in combat
      • needed to be saved
    ▪ but at the same time recognizing
      • that war is brutal
        o and that the things he would do with that sword
were not Christian.

- It was a vain attempt
  - to segregate part of his life and say I
    - ’m giving God everything
    - BUT THIS ONE THING.

• **That doesn’t work!**
  - Either he’s God of everything
    - or he is God of nothing.
      - He won’t share the throne of your life.
  - He won’t just be the God of the things
    - that you want him to be Lord over!
      - Either he is Lord of it all
        - Or He is not Lord AT ALL!

- The problem is that we want to hang on to
  - our humanity and carnality.
    - We want to maintain our selfishness
      - and self-centeredness.

- Our society and our world
  - have conditioned us to believe
    - that God should conform to us
      - instead of us conforming to God.
  - It is the spirit of the age!

- But I come to tell you that the power of the church
  - is not found in men’s abilities,
    - in talents or in education.
  - The power of the church is not found
    - in great music,
      - or good programs.

- The power of the church comes
  - from being baptized in the Holy Ghost!

- If we think we can serve God
  - and the things of this world at the same time
    - We are as ignorant
      - as the knight who thinks
        - he can be mostly baptized.

- That’s the problem, we want to be MOSTLY BAPTIZED.
  - MOSTLY SURRENDERED
    - MOSTLY YIELDED
      - MOSTLY DEVOTED

- Let me tell you what that makes us.
  - Mostly baptized
    - is completely useless to God.
Notes by Pastor Tony McCall

The Pentecostals of Lake City

Let the church be the church!

If they could not, then we cannot!

• If the disciples of Jesus Christ,
  o Those who walked with him
  o Talked with him
  o Operated in the absolute authority of his name.
  o Saw sickness healed.
  o Saw demons flee.
  o Not by their power but by the power of the name of Jesus.

• If those men and women needed
  o the baptism of the Holy Ghost
    ▪ before they were qualified to reach their world.

• What makes us think
  o that we can half way surrender to God
    ▪ and still expect to see
      • the same power and demonstration
        ▪ that they had?

• If they needed the baptism of the Holy Ghost
  o to empower them,
    ▪ to prepare them
      • to reach their world,

• What makes us think
  o that we can half way serve God
    ▪ and have the kind of revival that we talk about?

It is time for the church to be the church!

• You want a church with power
  o when your kid is sick.

• Everyone wants a church with power
  o when your loved one is lost?

• You want a church with power
  o when your life is on the line?

• We can’t have that kind of power
  o as long as we are wading around
    ▪ on the shallow end of the pool!

• That power comes from a baptism of the Holy Ghost!

• God is calling this church to lose every vestige of our identity.

• To surrender our selfish wants and needs.

Let The Church Be The Church
• We need a fresh anointing.
  
  o Fresh experience.
  o Fresh baptism of the Holy Ghost.

CLOSE: Nature Despises a Vacuum
• One of the laws of the natural sciences
  o is that nature despises a vacuum.
• A vacuum is an unnatural state
  o and any vacuum will be instantly filled
    ▪ by whatever is available to fill it.
• I am a firm believer that physical principles mirror spiritual realities.
  o And I believe that when the church fails
    ▪ to realize its God-given apostolic power
  o and fails to step up
    ▪ and assume the role of spiritual authority
      • that God has given it
  o then lesser spirits
    ▪ and lesser powers assume that place.

• When you hide a light under a bushel
  o then darkness immediately takes over.
    ▪ However, darkness is a lesser power than light
      • and when you lift the bushel,
        o darkness flees as the light breaks forth!

• I believe that there are some powers and principalities
  o that have taken advantage of the fact
    ▪ that the church has not assumed her given position
  o Because the church has failed
    ▪ to embrace the power that God has given us
  o We have left behind a vacuum
    ▪ that should have been filled
      • with the power of an apostolic church
  o Spiritual powers and principalities
    ▪ rush into that vacuum
      • to construct spiritual strongholds
        o in our cities,
        o our schools
        o and our governments.
    ▪ Its only the natural course of things,
      • where light is absent,
        o darkness will always prevail.
• It is time that we rise up
  o in the power and authority that God has given us.
• I believe its time
  o that we tore away the bushel
    ▪ and let the powerful glorious light of truth
    ▪ shine through our lives.
• I believe that it is high time that we served notice on hell
  o and rose up and asserted
    ▪ the spiritual power and authority
      ▪ that God has given us.
    ▪ This is our city!
      ▪ Our God is the god of this city!
• It is time that we surrendered to the power of God.
  o Darkness has reigned here for far too long.
    ▪ Spiritual deception has had a hold on this region for far too long.
  o False doctrines, and the bondage of human philosophies have ruled for far too long.
• It is high time for the church to be Baptized in the Holy Ghost
  o It is time to let the church be the church!

• This world needs a power filled church!
  o This world needs a genuine apostolic church!
    ▪ This world needs for you and me to allow the power of the Holy Ghost to work within us!
    ▪ Let us be that church!