

ACTS

Part 30 – “One Lord, One Spirit, One Church”

Acts 10:44-48

We are unable, but God is able. We need the Spirit of God to work. Salvation, witnessing, and community with others does not happen without the movement of the Spirit in conjunction with the Word of God.

Introduction: The theme of the centurion (Matt. 8:10-12, Matt. 27:54, Acts 10)

One Spirit - Spirit and Word (v. 44)

- The Spirit who glorifies the Son (John 16:12-15) comes when forgiveness in the name of the Son is mentioned. The Word is preached and the Spirit “falls” here the same way He did in Acts 8:16.
 - The reality is this goes back again to the connection with the words of Jesus in Acts 1:8, “But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you, and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth.”
 - “The Trinity is quite active here. God takes the initiative. Jesus Christ is at the center of the plan. The Spirit confirms that all of this is God’s work.” (Darrell L. Bock, *Acts*, 401)
- There is a deep connection between the Spirit and the Word.
 - They are distinct, but there is unity.
 - *Illustration:* H2O and chocolate chip ice cream
 - Not only are they deeply entwined, it is spiritually deadly to remove one from the other.
 - If you pursue the Spirit without the Word, you will wind up with vague emotionalism or New Age philosophy at the center of your life.
 - If you pursue the Word without the Spirit, you will end up with binding, suffocating legalism or pointless academics as your reason for being.
 - Scripture demonstrates this as it links the Spirit and the Word together. (Gen. 1:1-3, 2 Sam. 23:2, Prov. 1:23, Is. 59:21, Is. 66:2, John 6:63, John 16:7-11, and Acts 4:31)
- *Application:* If you want to know the Spirit and keep in step with Him, you must know the Word. If you want to know the Word, ask for the Spirit to work a desire for and knowledge of the Word deep in you.
 - As John 16 says, asking these things will bring conviction because the Spirit works against our sinful proclivities.
 - PRAY.

One church - Jew and Gentile (v. 45)

- The Word establishes the community. The Spirit confirms that community.
- The Spirit is “poured out” on the Gentiles just as it was upon the Jews (Acts 2) and as the prophet Joel prophesied (2:28).
 - In Ezekiel 39:29, Ezekiel speaks of the “pouring out” of the Spirit pointing to the restoration of Israel. Now we see the “pouring out” of the Spirit upon the Gentiles who had not followed any of the Mosaic ceremonial laws (circumcision or the sacrificial and dietary laws) before receiving the gift of the Spirit. It’s the fulfillment of Joel 2:32 and Acts 2:21, “And it shall come to pass that everyone who calls on the name of the LORD shall be saved.” Here we see the establishment of the new Israel, the New Covenant people of God.
- We must have the Spirit and the Word to overcome our cultural, personal, and racial biases. We need the very power of God to overwhelm our social awkwardness and proclivity to run from people who we think are different than us. This is why Scripture makes it so clear that our identity must be in Christ alone. (Col. 3:11, Gal. 3:27-29, Eph. 2:11-22, Eph. 4:4-6)
 - There is no modifier for a Christian. You’re not a “Jewish” Christian or a “Gentile” Christian. You’re not a “white” Christian or a “black” Christian. You’re not a “gay” Christian or a “straight” Christian. Your identity is in Christ. By the power of His Spirit and the strength of His Word, He makes you who you are. The qualifiers take away from the truth of gospel. We

are all sinners in need of a Savior. There are no “awkward” Christians or “cool” Christians. There are no “Democrat” Christians or “Republican” Christians. There is no “junior Jesus” for young Christians, just as there wasn’t a barbarian savior for barbarians and a Scythian savior for Scythians. There isn’t a male savior for men and a female savior for women. As Paul says, “For as many of you as were baptized into Christ have put on Christ. There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is no male and female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus. And if you are Christ's, then you are Abraham’s offspring, heirs according to promise.” (Galatians 3:27-29)

- The need for salvation is the same between Jews and Gentiles. We are all responsible to our Creator. We need to know that there is one Savior and one Lord!
- *Application:* “Is there anyone at all whom we have dismissed as beyond the reach of God’s amazing grace?” (Dennis Johnson, *Let’s Study Acts*, 137)
 - We must have the Spirit and the Word to identify the sinful patterns of racism and prejudice in our hearts and repent of them so that the gospel can go forth.
 - PRAY.

One Spirit confirms one church – tongues (v. 46)

- “The Gentile Pentecost”
- “The grace of God is so rich. He was so kind to bring in the Gentiles and so kind to give the Jews a sign.” (Angie Davis)
- “Extolling” or “magnifying” or “making God great”
 - The tongues were previously unlearned languages. Presumably Hebrew or Aramaic were among them because Peter and the other Jews knew what they were saying.
 - The Spirit brings conviction of sin (John 16:8) and that conviction leads to praise when the gospel is accepted.
 - Purpose of tongues was to extoll/magnify God, not to verify their baptism.
 - Tongues show the beauty of God bringing unity in the body. They demonstrate that the same Spirit that was in Israel is now in the Gentiles.
- *Application:* We must magnify the Lord together to make us into a true community of believers in Christ. Our focus must be on our one Lord and the work of His Spirit by His Word so that we will become one church.
 - PRAY.

One baptism – the sign of the Spirit and the mark of the church (v. 47-48)

- “Since it’s obvious that these folks are not unclean, then we should baptize them!”
 - The great Apostle Peter is simply a witness to this event. He does not bring about their conversions. In fact, he’s surprised.
 - God does the work by His Word and His Spirit.
 - These are covenant people so the covenant sign is applied to both Jew and Gentile.
- Baptism by water is a pointing toward the baptism of the Spirit. It is a sign that we see, not the reality itself.
- *Application:* PRAY that we would be witnesses to many conversions.

One church – in practice (v. 48)

- For all of Peter’s struggles with the separation between Jews and Gentiles, he gets it right here. He stays with them – that means eating with them too!
- It’s always a hurdle if you feel unlike everyone else. It’s hard to enter into that community when you feel different (and we can all find reasons to feel different).
 - It’s also easy to for a group of people to separate themselves from the one who seems different than them.
- *Application:* PRAY that we would put into practice the unifying work of the Spirit.