

Serving up the Good News

Today is Pentecost Sunday. Try to imagine that you were in the upper room when the Holy Spirit came. Then imagine yourself going out into the streets and telling people of the Good News of Jesus Christ. I'm sure, with most of you, the first part is much easier to imagine. After all, we all want to be 'empowered' by the Holy Spirit! But note, the first act that this *empowerment* produced was "**preaching the good news**" to all those present (in the very languages they understood),

Are you serving up the Good News! The apostle Paul said, "***I have fathered you through the gospel [evangelion].***" In other words he had in some way participated in the spiritual birth of the people he was addressing. Not only did he see himself as having a father's responsibility for their overall well-being, but he acknowledged that they would not have been birthed without his direct and intentional involvement. Can you see something? Spiritual birthing, as with physical birthing, requires the participation and co-operation of two parties.

When planning to birth spiritual offspring, God the Father restricted Himself to the "preaching of the gospel" of Jesus Christ. However, this birthing could only take place with the deliberate involvement of two parties. One party – equipped, willing and able to deliver the "good news," the other party – possessing the divine power necessary to impart new life. Well, we know the Holy Spirit is willing and able to bring new life to all of mankind. Therefore, the only question is whether the first party (that's one of you) is willing and able to bring the good news! You and God's Spirit can act as "father" to others. Note, there can be many 'hearers' because the hearers (the potential offspring) are restricted merely by their ability to hear. However, only two entities can ever be involved in the spiritual birthing process.

Over the past century, if the physical birth rate had been as low as the spiritual birth rate, the human race would now be almost extinct. In the book of Genesis everything that "had life" brought forth its own kind. Likewise, in regeneration (where the **new birth** represents "new life"), every believer should be bringing others to Christ – birthing of their own kind. So why has the family of God become so impotent? Quite simply, it doesn't have enough **fathers**! Fathers carry the power to create. And the reason there are not enough fathers is because people do not feel ready to father! Turn with me to **2 Corinthians 3** and let's read **verses 1 to 6...**

"Do we begin again to commend ourselves? Or do we need, as some others, epistles of commendation to you or letters of commendation from you? You are our epistle written in our hearts, known and read by all men; clearly you are an epistle of Christ, ministered by us, written not with ink but by the Spirit of the living God, not on tablets of stone but on tablets of flesh, that is, of the heart. And we have such trust through Christ toward God. Not that we are sufficient of ourselves to think of anything as being from ourselves, but our sufficiency is from God, who also made us sufficient as ministers of the new covenant, not of the letter but of the Spirit; for the letter kills, but the Spirit gives life."

There are two main points brought out here. The first is that we are all "living epistles" (**verses 1-3**), and

secondly, that we are all "able ministers." So let's examine the second statement first. **"...Not that we are sufficient (competent) of ourselves to think of anything as being from ourselves, but our sufficiency (ability) is from God, who also made us sufficient (competent) as ministers (servers) of the new covenant, not of the letter but of the Spirit; for the letter kills, but the Spirit (quicken) gives life."**

The word, which the apostle Paul repeats three times is the word "sufficient", therefore, we can assume it is an important word, and that we should fully understand its significance in this particular setting. This Greek word can also be translated "to be competent, to render fit, or to make fully able." So, let's read this scripture with these words inserted...

"Not that we are ourselves 'rendered fit' to think anything as being from ourselves, but our 'ability' is from God, who also made us 'competent, fit and able' as servers of the (fresh) new covenant." Notice that God has made us "competent, fit and able" to serve both Him and others.

You are "fully sufficient, fully equipped, fully competent - fit and able", to serve up the gospel! To minister new life. Why? **Verse 8** ...Because this awesome ministry is of the Spirit, who gives glorious life! As God's chosen instrument, you have been fully equipped, and are fit and able, to minister the same **new life** that you have received - to others. And, you should never wonder if this is at all possible, since "your sufficiency (ability) is from God."

It is vital that you see yourself as being "fully qualified" to perform such an essentially important task, because you have been "fully equipped" by God to do so. *"Not that we are sufficient (rendered fit) of ourselves but our sufficiency (ability) is of God."* You and I are presently the instruments through which God's 'living Word' is manifest on this earth, and by which others may be birthed into the family of God.

This leads me on to the first statement mentioned, *"We are all living epistles of Christ."* The Greek word translated "epistle" is derived from the word "epistelo" which means, "to send to". This is why it can also be translated "message". We are in fact individual 'living' **messages**, sent from the Author of Life. And, in a qualified sense, we are 'one' with the Author Himself. Furthermore, as we continue to abide in Him, we are just as permanent, as enduring, and as eternally fixed in God as He is.

Therefore, it is true to say, *"we have the same message of love written on our hearts"* - inscribed permanently by the power of the Holy Spirit. And this love-letter simply reads, **"For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believes in Him will not perish but have eternal life."** Do you know? You carry a divine message, which can affect people for eternity! That is the **good news** that pierces the heart and helps give birth to spiritual sons and daughters.

The divine-nature is now abiding in you, and it is continually at work, composing and then delivering heavenly love-letters to all those in need. Yes, the Holy Spirit is busy in you right now! Writing living messages – made up of living sentences, living paragraphs and living chapters. And each individual epistle in Christ is filled with **divine life**, therefore, our church should be continually growing – enlarging itself and reproducing of it self every day! Remember, you have been called upon to communicate to those without the

Good News - writing a positive message on the heart of each and every person who chooses to be receptive. You are a living **love-letter** – the infinite revelation of God's grace. Consequently, you have been given the grace to transfer the divine life that you have received to others.

By grace, you have been given the divine ability to partner in the process of giving birth to God's offspring - that of fathering spiritual children. The Holy Spirit "quickens" the new life, however, you must first be prepared, willing and able to deliver that glorious message – a living word (in season). A message that's been written on your heart first. A message of life that brings forth life to anyone who is prepared to listen!

Make up your mind today, as the disciples did on the Day of Pentecost, that you will serve up the Good News wherever you go. You will be truly amazed how often the Holy Spirit will manifest Himself through your obedience to this mission. Why? Because it is completely in line with His mission here on earth. So remember, *"your ability is from God, who also made you 'competent, fit and able' as a server of the (fresh) new covenant."*