

SERMON DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

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I Will Pour Out My Spirit “Infilling of the Holy Spirit”

Acts 2:1-4

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In January of this year, it was reported that Tesla's latest Full Self-Driving software now lets you decide what kind of driver you want to be on the road. The Full Self-Driving (FSD) beta lets you choose from three driving “profiles” that dictate how the car will react to certain situations on the road. The profiles are called: “Chill,” “Average,” and “Assertive.” As the names imply, they vary in terms of aggressiveness (and potentially safety). For example with the “Assertive” option, Tesla notes the vehicle will “have a smaller follow distance” and “perform more frequent speed lane changes.” The vehicle will also “not exit passing lanes” and “may perform rolling stops” at stop signs. In “Chill” mode, the vehicle will “have a larger follow distance and perform fewer speed lane changes,” while “Average” mode means the car “will have a medium follow distance and may perform rolling stops.” It's hard to tell just how much these FSD profiles change the way the vehicle drives, and if they push the limits of safety, especially when traveling in the rain or snow. I can't imagine letting go of the wheel and letting software drive the car for me. When God fills us with His presence through the Holy Spirit, God comes into our lives and purifies us, transforms our lives as we turn over control to God, and then God uses us and guides and directs us according to His great will. We just have to turn over control to God. This is what God did for the disciples on the day of Pentecost when the Holy Spirit filled all the people in the upper room, and God is doing the same thing today in the lives of all followers of Jesus as we are filled with the Holy Spirit.

Acts 2:1-4

On the day of Pentecost all the believers were meeting together in one place. Suddenly, there was a sound from heaven like the roaring of a mighty windstorm, and it filled the house where they were sitting. Then, what looked like flames or tongues of fire appeared and settled on each of them. And everyone present was filled with the Holy Spirit and began speaking in other languages, as the Holy Spirit gave them this ability.

The Holy Spirit Purifies Us: As we have learned from Acts 1-2, 120 of Jesus' disciples were in the upper room waiting for about 10 days for the gift that Jesus said that God would send them. Suddenly as they were waiting and praying, the disciples heard a rushing, mighty, stormy wind fill the room as the Holy Spirit was poured out by God, and at the same time they heard each other praising God and proclaiming all the wonderful deeds of God in languages they did not know. As if this wasn't enough, the people in the room then noticed that out of nowhere it looked as if flames of fire came down from the ceiling and settled on top of every person in the room. The Holy Spirit

made a grand entrance as God poured the Spirit out on Jesus' followers. Why were there tongues of fire? Interestingly, John the Baptist said Matthew 3:11, about the coming of Jesus and the Holy Spirit, "I baptize with water those who repent of their sins and turn to God. But someone is coming soon who is greater than I am—so much greater that I'm not worthy even to be his slave and carry his sandals. He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and with fire." John used waters of baptism pointing to God cleansing us, Jesus will not only do that, but Jesus will also purify and cleanse us through the fires of the Holy Spirit.

Listen to how God is described in Hebrews 12:28-29, "²⁸ Since we are receiving a Kingdom that is unshakable, let us be thankful and please God by worshiping him with holy fear and awe. ²⁹ For our God is a devouring fire." That is a very thought-provoking and a potentially frightening description of God as being a devouring or as another version says, an all-consuming fire. When we think of an all-consuming fire we may imagine a scene like this picture of a wildfire out of control in the Bitterroot National Forest in Montana, on August 6, 2000. If fire is out of control, it can cause horrific destruction and yet in the 1st century fire was essential to their everyday life. It was obviously used in cooking, making of tools, I'm sure it had to be used in purifying their water, and it was essential for making various potteries and tools, and was used to purify various metals where they melt down silver or gold and then skim away the impurities in the metals. Today, fire is still an essential part of our lives whether we realize it or not.

For example, we know if fire is used properly in our woodlands in controlled burns it cleans the forest floor as it removes low-growing underbrush and debris, opens the floor of the forest to sunlight that then nourishes the soil. This enables new grasses, herbs and shrubs to grow and provide wildlife with necessary food and habitat. In addition, fire kills diseases and insects that are destructive to the trees that provide valuable nutrients that enrich the soil. The California Department of Forestry & Fire Protection says that fire is actually needed in certain areas anywhere from every 3 to 25 years in order for life to thrive.

When God pours out His Holy Spirit into our lives, God is not some wildfire that violently destroys indiscriminately. God carefully uses the fire of the Holy Spirit to rid our lives of hatred, anger, resentment, bitterness, unforgiveness, pride, selfishness, envy, racism, judgmental and critical spirits, destructive backbiting and gossip, and all that sin does to choke out God's life in us. Titus 3:3-6 describes so beautifully the work of the Holy Spirit in us, "³ Once we, too, were foolish and disobedient. We were misled and became slaves to many lusts and pleasures. Our lives were full of evil and envy, and we hated each other. ⁴ But—When God our Savior revealed his kindness and love, ⁵ he saved us, not because of the righteous things we had done, but because of his mercy. He washed away our sins, giving us a new birth and new life through the Holy Spirit. ⁶ He generously poured out the Spirit upon us through Jesus Christ our Savior."

The Holy Spirit Transforms Us: I love the language of Acts 2 that says when God poured out His Holy Spirit into that room, the Holy Spirit not only filled the room but

also filled each person in that room. The Holy Spirit cleansed them and then filled them with His presence. It was as if they were all pieces of precious pottery or precious metal chalices, cups, or bowls that the Holy Spirit has made, molded, cleansed and now fills with His presence. As 1 Corinthians 3:16 says, “¹⁶ Don’t you realize that all of you together are the temple of God and that the Spirit of God lives in you?” Do we realize that God now lives with us and will never leave us because the Holy Spirit is here to stay in our lives? Because of the infilling of the Holy Spirit, God is always with us as Jesus said in John 14:16, “And I will ask the Father, and he will give you another Advocate, who will never leave you.” God is with us now every moment of our lives through all that we face in life. God promises to never leave us alone but always be with us.

Not only will God never leave us, but while God is with us, God is continually shaping and molding our lives to be more like Jesus from the inside out through the power of the Holy Spirit. 2 Corinthians 3:17-18, “¹⁷ For the Lord is the Spirit, and wherever the Spirit of the Lord is, there is freedom. ¹⁸ So all of us who have had that veil removed can see and reflect the glory of the Lord.” And the Lord—who is the Spirit—makes us more and more like him as we are changed into his glorious image.” God is slowly but surely shaping, molding, transforming our lives every moment through the Holy Spirit to be more and more like Jesus.

Have you ever watched, or have you ever made pottery? I have always found it fascinating and thought it would be fun to just use the potter’s wheel and the clay to just shape a simple bowl. There is a pottery store that Missy I love to visit whenever we are in Gatlinburg, Tennessee, called, Alewine Pottery. We have some of their bowls and mugs and have given them as well to family for Christmas presents. They are very special. If you are there at the right time you can watch them making pottery. If you go on their website, they have this graphic of the steps it takes for them to make all kinds of pottery. You first throw the clay on the wheel and with your hands and water you slowly but surely mold it into the shape you want, then you dry it to get out all of the moisture until it is like leather, then carve and decorate it, cover it with glaze, and then finally put it in the kiln where the temperatures can reach 2,400 degrees. If all goes well, after two weeks you have a beautiful, functional vessel. That is so much like the work of the Holy Spirit in our lives. Isaiah 64:8 says, “And yet, O Lord, you are our Father. We are the clay, and you are the potter. We all are formed by your hand.” Not only has God made us worthy vessels to be filled with His presence, but now God is also continually molding and shaping our lives to look and be more like Jesus. This is a long, arduous process that the Holy Spirit graciously does in us.

Our role in this work of the Holy Spirit is to yield our lives to the control of the Holy Spirit, realizing that we are the clay and God is in control as the potter. As Ephesians 5:18 calls us to do, “Don’t be drunk with wine, because that will ruin your life. Instead, be filled with the Holy Spirit.” We are to turn our lives over to the influence of the Holy Spirit. Who have we given permission to influence our lives? Alcohol, pundits, politicians, social media, teachers, friends, the news, movies, music, teachers, or what? We all have many influences in our lives and those that we allow to influence us will

lead our lives in a certain direction. The Holy Spirit not only wants to cleanse us from all the destructive power of sin in our lives but also wants to lead our lives into the new life that Jesus has for us. The Holy Spirit's role is to convict and cleanse us of sin, and mold, shape, and lead our lives to be more like Jesus. Are we willing for our lives to be influenced by the Potter's hands to make us the holy vessels that God would have us to be? If we are, we will then experience another great blessing of being filled with the Holy Spirit.

When we are filled with the Holy Spirit, **The Holy Spirit Uses Us**. As the Holy Spirit cleanses, and molds our lives, the Holy Spirit then equips us and uses us to be servants of God. The fire of the Holy Spirit refines our lives and makes us ready to be used by God for His honorable work. 2 Timothy 2:20-21 says, "²⁰ In a wealthy home some utensils are made of gold and silver, and some are made of wood and clay. The expensive utensils are used for special occasions, and the cheap ones are for everyday use. ²¹ If you keep yourself pure, you will be a special utensil for honorable use. Your life will be clean, and you will be ready for the Master to use you for every good work." The Spirit purifies and shapes our lives not just for our benefit, but so that we might be instruments for noble purposes, useful to the Master and prepared to do any good work. The Holy Spirit wants to make us vessels that the Spirit can use, an instrument for God's purposes. God has good works for us to do.

The beauty of this is that we are just to make ourselves available to the Holy Spirit and when we do the Holy Spirit is the One doing the work in and through us to make us vessels of honorable use. Jesus said in John 7:37-39, "³⁷ On the last day, the climax of the festival, Jesus stood and shouted to the crowds, 'Anyone who is thirsty may come to me! ³⁸ Anyone who believes in me may come and drink! For the Scriptures declare, 'Rivers of living water will flow from his heart.'" [or anyone who believes in me] ³⁹ (When he said "living water," he was speaking of the Spirit, who would be given to everyone believing in him. But the Spirit had not yet been given, because Jesus had not yet entered into his glory.)" When the Holy Spirit cleanses and molds us, the Spirit then continually fills us. The Holy Spirit within us acts like an artesian well.

An artesian well is different from a regular well in that the water rises to the surface by internal pressure, so you don't need a bucket or a pump to draw the water out. The water in an artesian well is trapped between layers of rock and consequently is under pressure so that when a hole is drilled in the upper layer of rock the water trapped underneath rises to the surface. Artesian well water is a lot safer to drink than typical river water, because it had been filtered over centuries. Water from a flowing artesian well, therefore, is deep and ancient and pure and continues to bubble up from the ground. The pure, refreshing waters of the Holy Spirit continually fills us to the point that we now naturally overflow to all God's love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control, just like Jesus did. As William Temple wisely said, "Nobody can be indwelt by the Spirit of God and keep that Spirit to himself. Where the Spirit is, he flows forth. And where there is no flowing forth, he is not there."

Is the Holy Spirit flowing forth in our lives? Have we submitted ourselves to the work of the Holy Spirit in us to purify and cleanse us, mold and shape us to being more like Jesus, to then be used by God as vessels of honorable us? This can all happen by the grace of God in and through us as the Holy Spirit fills us.

Icebreaker I – Would you be very excited or very uncomfortable to try a self-driving car?

Icebreaker II – Do you have any experience with making pottery? What was that experience like for you?

1. How would you describe your relationship with the Holy Spirit in your life using one of the following descriptions: chill, average, or assertive?
2. Look again at Titus 3:3-6. How has the Holy Spirit done purifying work in your own life purified?
3. How might you need God to do a “control burn” and promote new growth in your life, your family, or our church?
4. Wherever the Spirit of the Lord, there is freedom. How have you experienced God’s freedom in your life?
5. How is the Holy Spirit using you in ministry right now? What are you doing to show the love of Jesus among others?
6. Why do you think so many Christian people live as though they are devoid of the Holy Spirit’s power?
7. How might God be calling you in a new way to be poured out like a vessel of the Holy Spirit?
8. How is it with your soul?
9. What are your struggles and successes?
10. How might the Holy Spirit and Scriptures be speaking in your life?
11. How can this group pray for you this week?