

Spirit Gives Life

Acts 10:34-48, 11:1-14

Each day, it's important to take your bearings. Where are you today? In the Easter season, in the scriptures, in your daily life, in your very self? Spend a few minutes getting your bearings for the day.

Let's briefly examine where we are in the Book of Acts and then begin our day with a prayer for deliverance—for ourselves, our fraternity brothers, and all Exodus Men.

You are about to be sent. The apostles have received the gift of the Holy Spirit. With them, we need to prepare for our mission.

Pray that the Lord grants deliverance to you, your family, and your fraternity.

Pray for freedom for all men in Exodus, just as they are praying for you.

In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

Come, Holy Spirit, fill the hearts of your faithful and kindle in them the fire of your love. Send forth your Spirit and they shall be created. And you shall renew the face of the earth. O God, who by the light of the Holy Spirit, did instruct the hearts of the faithful, grant that by the same Holy Spirit we may be truly wise and ever enjoy his consolations. Through the same Christ Our Lord. Amen.

A Reading from the Book of Acts

And Peter opened his mouth and said: "Truly I perceive that God shows no partiality, but in every nation any one who fears him and does what is right is acceptable to him. You know the word which he sent to the sons of Israel, preaching good news of peace by Jesus Christ (he is Lord of all), the word which was proclaimed throughout all Judea, beginning from Galilee after the baptism which John preached: how God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Spirit and with power; how he went about doing good and healing all that were oppressed by the devil, for God was with him. And we are witnesses to all that he did both in the country of the Jews and in Jerusalem. They put him to death by hanging him on a tree; but God raised him on the third day and made him manifest; not to all the people but to us who were chosen by God as witnesses, who ate and drank with him after he rose from the dead. And he commanded us to preach to the people, and to testify that he is the one ordained by God to be judge of the living and the dead. To him all the prophets bear witness that every one who believes in him receives forgiveness of sins through his name."

While Peter was still saying this, the Holy Spirit fell on all who heard the word. And the believers from among the circumcised who came with Peter were amazed, because the gift of the Holy Spirit had been poured out even on the Gentiles. For they heard them speaking in tongues and extolling God. Then Peter declared, "Can any one forbid water for baptizing these people who have received the Holy Spirit just as we have?" And he commanded them

to be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ. Then they asked him to remain for some days.

Now the apostles and the brethren who were in Judea heard that the Gentiles also had received the word of God. 2 So when Peter went up to Jerusalem, the circumcision party criticized him, saying, "Why did you go to uncircumcised men and eat with them?" But Peter began and explained to them in order: "I was in the city of Joppa praying; and in a trance I saw a vision, something descending, like a great sheet, let down from heaven by four corners; and it came down to me. Looking at it closely I observed animals and beasts of prey and reptiles and birds of the air. And I heard a voice saying to me, 'Rise, Peter; kill and eat.' But I said, 'No, Lord; for nothing common or unclean has ever entered my mouth.' But the voice answered a second time from heaven, 'What God has cleansed you must not call common.' This happened three times, and all was drawn up again into heaven. At that very moment three men arrived at the house in which we were, sent to me from Caesarea. And the Spirit told me to go with them, making no distinction. These six brethren also accompanied me, and we entered the man's house. And he told us how he had seen the angel standing in his house and saying, 'Send to Joppa and bring Simon called Peter; he will declare to you a message by which you will be saved, you and all your household.'

As I began to speak, the Holy Spirit fell on them just as on us at the beginning. And I remembered the word of the Lord, how he said, 'John baptized with water, but you shall be baptized with the Holy Spirit.' If then God gave the same gift to them as he gave to us when we believed in the Lord Jesus Christ, who was I that I could withstand God?" When they heard this they were silenced. And they glorified God, saying, "Then to the Gentiles also God has granted repentance unto life."

Reflection

The apostles received the Holy Spirit at Pentecost. By now, it should be clear that this was a gift meant to be shared. Peter and John went to Samaria and laid their hands on those who had been baptized there, and they, too, received the Spirit. Today, we see the first group of Gentiles receiving this divine gift as well.

The Spirit is the life of the Church. Without the Spirit, we cannot enter into the life of Jesus and receive the fruits of his salvific work. Jesus's mission culminated in the sending of the Spirit because this helper teaches us all things and draws us into the life of the Holy Trinity. We become tabernacles of this Spirit, making God present to those around us.

Jesus's work began with his own disciples. From there, we see a ripple begin to move out into the world. They spread the Word throughout Jerusalem, then Samaria, and now it has reached the Gentiles. We will see the Spirit continue to spread the Word and the grace of God throughout the Mediterranean world as Acts unfolds.

There is a great chain of witnesses that stretches from the apostles to the

Church today. We, too, are witnesses. Our families and friends who are members of the Body of Christ are also witnesses, for we have all received the Word from the Church. It is now up to us to continue to pass what we have received onto others. We need to keep the chain going, keeping the fire of the Spirit burning in our hearts through our prayer, sacrifice, and community.

Pray today that you can be a witness to the gifts that God has given you.

Week 3 Action Items

Witness to your faith.

Host a game night to build community.

Reflect on your current plan.