

Pt 3 A Spiritual ATM...*The Price of Pentecost*

Acts 1:12-14; 2:41

For ten days they waited for the promised Spirit to come. We read in that last verse about the day of Pentecost...when the fire of God fell on those believers/the wind of God blew across their hearts/the Spirit of God came down and inhabited His new temple/3,000 heard the gospel and got saved...

Charismatics emphasize in Acts 2 that they spoke in tongues...and they did (*for a sign*)...but that's not the big deal of Acts 2/not a rushing mighty wind/not cloven tongues of fire on their heads...but rather that 3,000 got saved!

And we say, "If only that fire would fall on our church, if only a fresh wind of the Holy Spirit would sweep across our church!"

Here in the 21st century, we need to understand that there's a price to be paid for Pentecost! And Acts 2 would not happen w/out Acts 1.

We all love to hear the choir sing, for example, but we need to understand it doesn't just happen...Pastor Jeremy doesn't run out into the parking lot each Sunday AM and grab the first 25 people he can find, throw them into the loft and they make beautiful music...rather hours of hard work and preparation go into it, there's a price to be paid!
(*same w/ a baseball team!*)

In the same way, a growing, soul winning church making a difference, reaching many for Christ doesn't just happen...there is a price for Pentecost! And most churches are not willing to pay the price, and they flounder in the sea of mediocrity!

Ill.—church sent annual report to their headquarters for previous year: # of souls saved-0/baptized-0/transfer of letter-0/by statement-0...then at the bottom it said, please pray that we will remain faithful. (*faithful to what?!*)

Fact is, to have a church w/ God's power on it, there is a price for Pentecost!...and the conditions for it are laid out for us in ch. 1! (*not complicated, basic, easy to understand, but hardly followed!*)

Any church that makes the decision to become an empowered soul-saving station can indeed, if they just decide to pay the price!

4 Prices to Pay, only the 1st this morning:

A. The Price of Obedience v. 12

Why important?

- Because they went there in obedience to Christ (v. 4, v. 8)
- They could have gone to any other city, and not experienced the power of God.
- Jesus didn't tell them to wait at Bethlehem...they would have missed it...
- When the fire of God fell, they were there, right there waiting for it!
- Right where they were supposed to be!

We see this elsewhere in scripture, too...where God says, meet me at a certain place, and I will bless you:

Elijah (*brook Cherith, God fed him during famine by ravens*)

I believe he could have gone anywhere else, even a place not in famine, and yet would have starved to death!

Naaman (*leper, dip in Jordan*) Why in muddy Jordan?

But it wasn't a hard thing God was asking of him, he obeyed, and was made whole!

It's not difficult what God requires of us...just simple obedience to Him!

Wouldn't it be a wonderful thing if the Lord would always find members of FBC New Haven "there"...where God has told them to be!?

Where is there? In God's will!

God doesn't pour out His power on churches full of disobedient Christians.

- There is a price to be paid, and it is the price of obedience...
- From the pulpit to the pew, we'd all do well to realize our disobedience can affect the whole body, and keep His power out of here!

Three basic areas to start: (if we really want the power of God! If we really want to cash in on what God can do...)

1. Obedience in Attendance (*turn to Heb. 10:25*)

(Statements on Screen)

No church will ever be great where the membership is erratic in their attendance.

Show me a church whose people come sporadically, only when they feel like it, if there's nothing better to do, if it's convenient...and I'll show you a church that's just playing games/not doing much for Christ!

Why?

Because unfaithfulness in attendance says something about you...it reveals a lack of commitment, and a lack of love.

But let's not deal w/ this from the standpoint of a lack of commitment (*people don't commit these days...unless they really want to! We can do what we want...so let's allow God to change our wanters!*)

Think about the lack of love, instead...

Ill.—preacher visited in home/noticed they had little housedog/noticed they lavished love on the dog to an extreme/ “I can't get over how much you all love that dog! You'd make great parents...maybe you should have a child to show all that love to!”/woman started weeping and ran out/pastor knew he had said something wrong, apologized to husband/ “There's no way you could know, but we had a son, and God saw fit to take him to heaven at a very young age...but that dog was our son's dog...it may seem silly, but the reason we love on that dog in such a way, is that's our way of showing love for our son...preacher, we love that dog so much simply because our son loved it so much!”

(Statement on Screen)

If for no other reason, you ought to love the church because God's Son loves the church!

- Don't ever say, “I love Jesus, but I don't like to go to church so often”...that's a contradiction in terms...you cannot separate Jesus from the church any more than you can separate the head from the body, or a building from it's foundation!
- It's not “Jesus-or-the church”, it's “Jesus-and-the church!”
- So, aside from the lack of commitment, unfaithful attendance reveals a lack of love! We should love what HE loves!

With all our faults, and we have many/failures/flaws...

God's Son still loves the church as it says in...

Eph. 5:25-- Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it;

...therefore we should love the church and show it by being faithful in attendance!

So **when you faithfully attend church, you're saying,**

a. **“Jesus, I love you!”**—“I care about the things YOU care about!”

Something else you're saying, is

b. **“Pastor, I love you!”** You're saying:

- It matters to me that you study long and hard/pray over your messages/dig for Bible truth/plan and prepare/seek to minister from start to finish/use illustrations and strive to put the jelly on the bottom shelf/try to tell one new joke per year! It matters to me! [applies to those who plan music, etc. as well]

Joke—A guy went to prison/1st day/heard someone holler out from cell “43”/whole cell block laughed!/75/again!/56!/what’s this?/we’ve all been in for years, tellin’ same jokes over and over...so we’ve numbered each joke, someone hollers one out, we all think of that joke, we all laugh!/ “care if I try?”/go ahead/hollered out “12!”/nobody laughed (3 x’s) nobody laughed/looked at cellmate and asked, why is nobody laughing?/I guess some guys just can’t tell a joke!

Seriously, when you’re faithful in attendance, you not only say, Jesus I love you, but Pastor, I love you! I appreciate what you do and it matters to me what you do!

Ill.—a confession: I hurt my wife deeply one time...she had told me before leaving the house one day about the feast she was gonna have prepared when I got back that night/ I got into my day and got busy, and forgot, and then had a Big Late Lunch, then went home, and when I opened the door and took one breath, I knew I was dead!

There was nothing I could say other than sorry, and the only way I could’ve been more rude was to not show up at all...

Well, I can’t tell you how many times I’ve prepared a message, and while getting ready God laid someone on my heart, how much this message will help them...well, if it’s happened once, it’s happened 100 times, I’ll look around that day, and they’re not there! (not talking about being sick, vacation, working, etc., I’m talking about just taking any ole’ opportunity that comes along, or simple excuses Satan provides if you’ll miss!

When you’re faithful in attendance, you not only say, Jesus I love you, Pastor, I love you...but also:

c. **Members, I love you, too!**

Why? Because we’re a body, that’s intended to function TOGETHER!

- What if your hands had taken the day off today?
- You couldn't have put your clothes on!
- You ladies couldn't have put your makeup on!
--every morning I roll over and thank God for a woman...named Mary Kay!
- Good thing your legs are doing their job today...the whole body is intended to function as a unit!

We’ve had some really good crowds lately...so let’s take a survey: how many of you are more encouraged by a good crowd than when the crowd is down? It’s more exciting, it’s how God intended, singing is better, people get into it, and say amen! We’re more open to the Spirit and so we often have a more spiritual service...every single one matters, and each one who walks in the door is like a spiritual drop of Visine that helps “get the dead out!”

- Hey, determine in your heart that “I’m not gonna be the reason we’re down”/
- I care about my brothers and sisters in Christ/
- I’m not gonna come only when convenient/when I feel like it/
- I’m gonna be faithful and make the extra effort to make it work!

There’s a price to be paid if we want God to take us seriously...we’d better take Him seriously! And take His church seriously!

So, we need to be obedient in the basic area of attendance...that’s the “A” (*of ATM*)...also the “T”:

2. Obedience in the Tithe Malachi 3:10-11

- This point is not about building a bank acct. It’s about obedience and blessings!
 - The right motive is obedience! And for that you will be blessed!
 - Many of you are already in obedience here, I’m sure!
And God is blessing you for your obedience...hopefully enough others will get on board w/ you so He can continue to bless our church! (*teens, new converts, etc.*)
 - The word “tithe” literally means tenth...ten percent...it’s God’s perfect plan.
The wisdom of God planned for us a method of giving which is completely fair and equal to all who will obey, no matter what you make!
- It’s a definite portion
 - It’s to be brought to a designated place

There’s 2 plans:

90% and God as your partner

100% and you’re on your own...how’s your plan workin’?

Statements about Tithing...on Screen)

“If God really blesses me, I’ll tithe” (*cart before horse*)

“We can’t afford to add that to our bills” (*you can’t afford not to!*)

(*Won’t work on budget unless it’s first item!*)

“*But we’ve got a lot of debt*”

- You can talk about financial freedom all you want, but as a believer, you’ll never be free until you obey this...
- No Christian can skip over this step.
- When you tithe, there’s always a blessing,
- When you don’t, there’s always a curse!

Look @ v. 8-9

Definite portion/Designated Place...

c. It's for **a Divine Purpose** v. 10-- that there may be meat in mine house

Everyone's benefiting from a meaty program we've got going on now...even those who "eat free!"

III.—kids eat free at many restaurants, and when it comes to the church...
it's also the immature [spiritual kids] who seek something for nothing.

Some make another mistake, which is thinking they have an alternate method of blessing the church.

- They say, I can't afford to give money, but I'll give myself...I'll serve in the nursery or kids ministries or the kitchen.
- But the Bible says that "To obey is better than sacrifice!"
- God wants our obedience more than our service.
- Jesus said "Where your treasure is, there's your heart".
- Jesus says, money talks. That'll prove you love me and want to obey me.

3. Obedience in Ministry

That's using our gifts in the church....

**We're not Saved to Sit, Soak & Sour
We're Saved to Serve!**

We must willingly help in needed areas for the Lord's sake!

Area's of Need

1. Preschool Nursery Area....need workers to help during worship time on scheduled basis
2. Children's Ministry Area
 - We need some workers to help in all 3 BSF classes
 - We need couples/teams of folks for Worship Kidstyle
 - We need Someone to step up & serve as Team Leader for our Children's Ministry
3. Youth Ministry...can always use additional help on Wed. night youth group
4. Ushers Ministry....Myron seeking men to serve ...also parking lot
Security & Medical Team
5. Greeters Ministry...Bob & AmieLou need folks to greet folks at doors
6. Bread Ministry
7. BSF- need a couple to teach a new Younger couples class
8. Audio CD ministry...need editor
9. Prayer ministry...need folks that would be willing to pray for prayer needs sent by our calling system
10. Finance team...Jane needs some help ...counting Team....book keeping
11. New Annex Building....need someone to finish caulking....few pieces of drywall
Need someone to till ground and plant grass
12. Need someone with CDL to help Nate driving bus...someone to help clean vehicles
13. Hospitality Team...always use more help for meals & dinners
14. Need more folks to sing w/ Praise Team on a scheduled basis
15. Need folks willing to disciple new believers on a one on one basis

The bottom line:

God loves the church / God loves you / and we're at a crossroads as a church...there's a price to pay...are we willing to pay it!

Invitation:

Who would say, "God has put His finger on an area in which I need to be obedient, maybe one we've talked about today, or another one, and I'm pledging right now to do what's right!"? Who needs to be saved? We've talked about the price to pay...but ultimately, Jesus paid the price for you to be saved!