

June 8th, 2003 Spruce Grove CCCC J. M. Terrett
Pentecost: The Powerful Purposes of G-d

Introduction:

In our community, we have just celebrated the Festival of Pentecost (Shavuot – weeks). It is the last of the Spring Festivals, and the second of the three Pilgrimage Festivals when all the Jews were to gather together and bring their tithes before the L-rd. It is mentioned in the New Testament in conjunction with two events – the giving of the Holy Spirit in the Upper Room, and the arrest of Paul while he was worshipping in the temple.

In traditional Judaism, it is a celebration of the giving of the Law, because the Bible indicates that it was on this date that Moses came down the Mountain with the Ten Commandments. In Numbers 11, we discover that it was also on this date, that the L-rd took of the Spirit which was on Moses, and anointed seventy elders to help Moses share in the spiritual leadership of the people. The Word and the Spirit have always worked together.

From this passage, Numbers 11, we learn three important lessons that I want to use to speak to you this morning about the powerful Pentecost purposes of G-d in your lives and in the life of your community. First of all we learn that at some point in his walk with the L-rd G-d, the Holy Spirit of G-d came down upon Moses and empowered him to speak G-d's word to the people and to teach them how to walk with G-d.

Second of all, sometimes, when we are in the will of G-d, doing a good job, circumstances can gang up on us and we can become so overwhelmed that we want to quit. Lastly, the purposes of G-d in our life and in our world, are not hard to understand, and they do not change, *changing is our job*, to the Jew first and also to the Gentile.

Moses was a very unique individual, whose own story of deliverance and elevation was similar to what G-d would use him for in the life of Israel. But this story was not complete, was not enough, until he encountered G-d and was empowered by G-d to do the greater task. At Pentecost, Moses swept down the mountain and gave the people the will of G-d for His people, the conditions of spirituality which they had to follow, if they wanted to walk with Him and become His people. These will never change.

They were and are non-negotiable principles, which still describe the kind of life G-d wishes us to lead. They define true spirituality, what we have to do, in order to walk with the G-d who delivered us from bondage and who wants to bring us into the Promised Land. When the House of Jacob left Egypt with power and might, they were a motley crew who knew what they wanted from G-d, but as of yet, had no idea what G-d wanted from them – sound familiar? Do you know what G-d wants from you?

Moses had an anointing from G-d, in order to teach the people what G-d wanted from them, in order to be able to receive the Word and be used of G-d to teach people how to apply it in their daily lives. The Holy Spirit is the teacher of G-d's Word, and brings us to the place where we are able to take His Word and apply it into our lives.

There is no tension between the Spirit and the Word, and it is G-d's will for us to reach a point where the two, the Spirit and the Word are working together in our lives. Moses received an anointing from G-d and this same anointing came down on the Upper Room. But this anointing was to enable Moses and the elders to teach people how to apply the Law of G-d, the will of G-d in their daily lives. So was the one in the Upper Room.

It wasn't just a wild time full of emotion and noise, to draw a crowd. It was an enabling to have the author of the Word, the Holy Spirit show us how to put His Word into action in every area of our lives. Do you want to Spirit of G-d to be more active in your church? Well He only has one agenda: His Word and one purpose: to show you how to apply it to your lives. There is no conflict between the New and the Old Testaments, where the Holy Spirit sets you free from the Law, and teaches you how to do your own thing.

The ritual and sacrificial obligations of the Law are fulfilled in the reality of what Jesus did on the cross, but the principles of spirituality which the Ten Commandments teach have not changed, because the same Spirit who fell on Moses, so he could receive the Ten and teach them, is the same Spirit who fell on believers in the Upper Room, and who falls on believers in Spruce Grove. And His purposes have not changed.

Well what about getting so discouraged that you want to quit, that you want to die? Doing G-d's will and walking with Him are no guarantee that you will not encounter opposition that will break your heart. Last September, my leadership got together behind my back and tried to fire me, and refused to tell me why. I appealed it through our denomination, and when I won the appeal and they were told to re-instate me, they just left the denomination. How can believers act this way?

Don't get me wrong, I love the people of G-d, but sometimes, they can drive you crazy and you want to die. Israel never encountered an enemy capable of defeating her – neither has the church, we just seem to self destruct in every generation, and sometimes I want to quit, and even die. It is not wrong to feel that way, it is only wrong when we do not take it to G-d, because he has a plan to help us deal with it.

You see, in ministry, praise G-d, things will get worse – right after the Spirit fell on the elders and they shared the burden, the people rebelled and refused to go into the land, and there were at least three more rebellions in quick succession. Opposition is a natural part of what it means to walk with G-d and learning to handle it is an important survival lesson for us to learn. Because through it all, He still wants us to do His will – the Ten.

I have a new congregation, much smaller and I am going to have to get a part-time job to feed my family. G-d has not let me down, people have and I'm still working on my feelings. Sometimes, I am still overwhelmed, and sometimes I want to quit and get a decent job where people treat you nicely.

Which brings me to my last point: G-d's unchanging purposes in our lives. Ministry is not G-d's will for my life – walking with Him is, and this will never change. The Ten Commandments are the principles by which believers are called to live, and to express

their faith through. G-d anointed a team around Moses, so that His will for the people could be fulfilled. The people still rebelled, again and again, but they finally understood G-d's will, and after a generation of wandering, they came back to the place they started at and understood something very simple and very profound.

G-d's will for us does not change, and we have to learn to walk with Him and to apply His Word into our lives. His Word tells us what He wants, and His Spirit shows us how to apply it in our lives. Nothing more, nothing less, but this can get incredibly complicated sometimes. How should we respond? How should I respond and how should you respond? BY keeping on walking with Him according to His Word.

I John 5:3 is an interesting verse: The love of G-d consists of keeping His commandments, and His commandments are not grievous. The fourth Commandment may trouble Sunday worshippers, if they misunderstand that rest is holy and that you really can't rest properly, unless you stop everything and spend a whole day catching your breath.

I am not through the woods and sometimes I trip over roots and branches, but G-d's will has not changed for me, or for you. Walk with Him according to His Word, when things are going good and when you want to quit. I could quit ministry, but I could never quit the Commandments, which are His will for you and for me, and the reason why He sent His Son to die on the cross for you, and why He filled Moses with His Spirit, the same one that fell on the Upper Room. We are called to walk with Him.

Three points. Three lessons. Moses had an anointing which showed him how to receive the Word and teach it. **Let G-d's Spirit teach you His Word.** This is the whole duty of man and His perfect will for your life. Don't stop walking with G-d when you are overwhelmed. **Kvetch to G-d and let Him show you what He is going to do, to help you keep on doing His will** (listening to the Spirit teach you how to apply the Ten to your life – forgive your enemies, nothing makes them madder and murder is wrong, so is character assassination, and if you are mad at G-d cause He is letting them get away with it – oh foolish one, eternity is long, **mind your own business and let G-d mind His** – if you will only do His will when things are going your way, you're a brat, ready to sneak back to Egypt, not a believer, ready to live and die in His service – a little freebie for someone out there).

Last lesson. Walk with G-d. Learn to apply His Word in the good times and the in the bad. This will always be His will. It will never change. We have to change by challenging everything which rises up against G-d's word and His kingdom and by bringing our thoughts and actions into captivity and obedience (II Cor. 10:3-5). We do this in the midst of songs of victory and Harvest, we also do this hiding in a cave and hanging on a cross.

Don't let circumstances or people take you away from G-d's will. Matt. 6:33 is glorious. So is Matt. 6:34. If life sucks in the L-rd, remember it is life that sucks, not the L-rd. His Spirit and His Word want to teach you obedience on your pilgrimage home to everlasting joy, even though you walk through the valley of the shadow that sucks. We are homeward bound Heb. 13:5 and John 16:33.

Let's pray.