**YOUR YOUNG MEN WILL SEE VISIONS**

Acts 2:14-21 Key Verse: 17

***“In the last days, God says, I will pour out my Spirit on all people. Your sons and daughters will prophesy, your young men will see visions, your old men will dream dreams.”***

Thank God for Jesus who fulfilled his promise and sent the Holy Spirit to the faithful disciples at the feast of Pentecost. May we too be ready through constant prayer to receive the Holy Spirit on our lives.

In this week’s message, the Apostle Peter stands up in front of the crowd to explain this amazing work of God. Let us learn today how Peter sees the Spirit’s coming and the signs and wonders that accompanied it, as the fulfillment of the Prophet Joel’s words. Let us too see the Spirit working in our lives and how important it is to have God’s vision for our lives. Let us see the Holy Spirit working and the gospel going out through this Christian ministry to the ends of the earth.

**Part I – “Listen carefully to what I say.” (14-16)**

In the previous chapter the Spirit had come upon the faithful and praying disciples. Verse 3 says they saw what looked like tongues of fire resting on each of them. All the disciples were able to speak in the foreign tongues of those gathered from all the nations for the feast of weeks or Pentecost.

This was a marvelous work of God and the people were amazed to hear the wonders of God in their own tongues spoken by these Galilean fisherman. Others however, failing to grasp the display of God’s wonderful power, ridiculed, laughed and said that the disciples had had too much wine.

In the past Peter had shied away from direct challenges. In Luke 22:59-60, when Peter was confronted about being a disciples of Jesus, he quickly proclaimed, *“Man, I don’t know what you are talking about!”* But how did Peter react in this situation? Look at verse 14, **“Then Peter stood up with the Eleven, raised his voice and addressed the crowd: “Fellow Jews and all of you who live in Jerusalem, let me explain this to you; listen carefully to what I say.**” Peter’s reaction was now completely different from before—what had changed for this disciple?

Some people are deathly afraid of public speaking, but with a little practice and some coaching can overcome this fear. Is this what happened to Peter? Not quite, look at Acts 1:8, **“But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth.”** And also Acts 2:4 says, **“All of them were filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other tongues as the Spirit enabled them.”** Peter was empowered by the Holy Spirit. The power from God gave him the ability to stand up to the crowd and boldly explain the truth and the work of God going on in these men. Not by their own will power or skill were they able to do this but when they depended on the Holy Spirit, God enabled them to speak for his glory.

Now that Peter had their attention, what did he explain to them? Peter could have used this time to talk about himself or to complain about the Roman occupation of Israel. But he didn’t. Peter recognized the power of the Spirit as coming from God. Peter recognized the purpose of being able to speak in tongues was for bringing gospel. Look at what he spoke in verse 15 and 16, **“These men are not drunk, as you suppose. It’s only nine in the morning! No, this is what was spoken by the prophet Joel.”**

Peter stood up and explained to those who did not understand. What a silly excuse not to listen—that these men were drunk! Unfortunately I have seen some drunk people in my life, and none of them I know gained the ability to speak clearly in other foreign languages—they could barely manage a few words in English! Peter stated that this was a fulfillment of the words of the prophet Joel straight out of the Old Testament. Peter mentions to the crowd that this event of the coming of the Holy Spirit is important because it fulfills scripture. Peter, empowered by the Holy Spirit, could explain this event from the Bible’s point of view. Therefore since this event is foretold in the scripture let us listen to what the Apostle Peter and the Prophet Joel are saying.

**Part II- Your young men will see visions (17-21)**

Look at verses 17-18, **"'In the last days, God says, I will pour out my Spirit on all people. Your sons and daughters will prophesy, your young men will see visions, your old men will dream dreams. Even on my servants, both men and women, I will pour out my Spirit in those days, and they will prophesy.”** The book of Joel had been written nearly 500-800 years prior to Pentecost. Who was Joel and what did he write about? We don’t actually know much about Joel, who he was or where he lived. We are not sure of the timeframe. But the prophet Joel is widely quoted throughout the Old and New Testaments so his word was held in high regard. The prophet Joel wrote about a great plague that came on Israel and the need for the nation to repent and return to God. In this national repentance there would be great blessing—such as the pouring out of the Holy Spirit on all people.

**First – “I will pour out my Spirit on all people…”** In this prophecy Joel spoke how in the last days, God would pour his Spirit out onto all people, men and women: young and old. It is a really a tremendous blessing and the great grace of God that he pours out his Spirit. God doesn’t have to give his Spirit to anyone. But yet he says to those who believe he will pour out his Spirit.

The word pour gives you a sense of not something small but of something big and flowing--generous. When you pour a guest a drink of water, you don’t just give them a few drops, you fill their glass up. In the same way God did not just make a small effect to the believers--but a powerful coming of the Holy Spirit and fulfillment of his prophecy. God powerfully poured his Spirit out that day and is continually pouring out his Spirit. Look around this room and you see the work of the Spirit on all people of all kinds even to this day.

In 1891, a man named Billy Sunday, who had played right field for the White Sox, received the pouring of the Holy Spirit. Though he was an uneducated baseball player, he received the call to ministry and left the game of baseball to work for the YMCA, at that time a Christian organization. From that day forward until 1935, it is estimated that Billy Sunday preached to over 100,000,000 people across the United States through the pouring of the Spirit.

Look at verse 17a again, **"'In the last days, God says, I will pour out my Spirit on all people.”** The term last days can be a bit confusing and distracting from them main message. We conjure up images of apocalyptic movies with tidal waves and earthquakes when we hear that term. But the term “last days,” is actually now. After Jesus’ crucifixion, resurrection, and ascension into heaven we have entered into the last days. From that day all the way until the Judgment day are considered the last days. Why? Jesus said in John 19:30, *“It is finished…”* indicating that all of God’s salvation plan and work were finished at the cross. Now we are living in the last days before the return of Jesus. Now we see the Spirit poured out and working in all kinds and types of people all over the world.

**Second - When the Holy Spirit comes on young men** Look at verse 17b, **“Your sons and daughters will prophesy, your young men will see visions, and your old men will dream dreams.” Even on my servants, both men and women, I will pour out my Spirit in those days, and they will prophesy.”** What happens when the Spirit comes on believers? The prophet Joel says, *“Son and daughters will prophesy. Young men will see visions.”*

In a general sense usually young people have dreams (to get a job, be an astronaut, get married, etc, etc) and in this case a dream is a loose plan that may or may not happen. Usually old men have a vision (a concrete plan how something should work. For instance society, business, politics, etc, etc) A vision is something that is accomplishable and realistic.

But in Joel’s prophecy things are flipped. Young men have a vision and old men dream dreams. Why are they reversed? Young men have a vision—a vision of bringing the gospel to the ends of the earth. This is not a dream, but empowered by the Holy Spirit, it becomes a vision to guide their lives. Without direction your life will stagnate and you won’t have any idea what you should do. But with vision from God you can do something great for God. Sometimes it is hard to see where we should be going and what we should do for God, but that is where his grace poured out through the Holy Spirit, spoken of by the prophet Joel comes into our lives.

Charles Thomas Studd, Montagu Harry Proctor Beauchamp, Stanley P. Smith, Arthur T. Polhill-Turner, Dixon Edward Hoste, Cecil H. Polhill-Turner, William Wharton Cassels; do these names sound familiar? Perhaps not but you are related to them; they are known as the Cambridge Seven.

They were seven students who were at Cambridge University in 1881 who gave their lives to Christ. Though some of them were famous athletes at the time – they were all empowered by the Spirit and gave their live to gospel work and worked powerfully all over England and the world, especially in China. How could they do this? They had a vision for their life that came from God through the Holy Spirit. These young men had vision and their lives and others were powerfully changed. There gospel work helped inspire the American Student Volunteer movement—which in turn helped inspire the foundation of this very ministry as well. We all have dreams but do you young people have a vision for your life? Do you have a vision of God pouring his Spirit on to your life and using it for his work?

Not to be left out, the Spirit will come on old people as well. For all the old people here—someone once said that age is just a number—so long as you have a vision for your life you will stay young. Look at verse 17c, **“and your old men will dream dreams.”**This passage tells us that they will dream dreams. Perhaps they will dream of the gospel faith being passed on to the next generation. They may dream of going to the kingdom to be with Jesus. Their spirit will be renewed to see the possibilities of the work of God going on in the world.

**Third- I will shows wonders in heaven above and signs on the earth below**, Look at verse 19, **“I will show wonders in the heaven above and signs on the earth below, blood and fire and billows of smoke. The sun will be turned to darkness and the moon to blood before the coming of the great and glorious day of the Lord.*”***

This passage makes it clear that there will be obvious and unique occurrences—disruptive events signaling the end of the age. Jesus quoted the same description in Matthew 24 and Mark 13. These signs can terrify us and cause us to lose all hope for the future. But God gave us a promise. Look at verse 21, ***‘*And everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved.’** Verse 21 is a direct quote of Joel 2:32,“And everyone who calls on the name of the LORD will be saved; for on Mount Zion and in Jerusalem there will be deliverance, as the LORD has said, among the survivors whom the LORD calls.” The point of the signs and wonders from God ultimately point us to the return of the Lord. And those who call on his name will be saved. Will you call on the name of the Lord?

Serving the work of God, it is critical to have a vision for the work of God in your life. Having a vision gives purpose to all the things that are happening in life. When I was a young man I had what I thought was a vision to be great – like an athlete or a rock star. What I thought were visions were actually dreams.

Through studying the Bible in college I came face to face with my sins and my need for the Savior Jesus Christ. The word of God redeemed me from a man who was a wandering dreamer and set me free. Where I was once a curse to others I could become a blessing through the pouring of the Holy Spirit. Where I had once selfishly served myself during my time at COD, now I had a desire to give back to COD. Kind of like Paul, God called to me to be his instrument at College of Dupage. That was the vision I held through going to school and getting a job, choosing to work close by to better serve the ministry at COD. This is the vision that gave me direction and motivation from the Lord Jesus Christ. I could not have this vision on my own. My heart and mind are too weak to care even for one person, but by the pouring of the Holy Spirit I could have a vision to used for the Gospel work here at COD.

But that vision slipped as I made some mistakes and took on too much work. But now I realize all that I wanted to accomplish in life, won’t really last—everything fades away and crumbles. But the gospel, brining life changing power to those who are perishing—is most important—seeing the grace of God poured out. Lord, help me to be empowered by the Holy Spirit and drop all non-necessary things so that I may focus on the vision you have given me as a young man for gospel work at COD. Please grant me continually the grace to carry out your vision for COD and gospel work beyond.