*DAILY DEVOTIONAL*

September 4 - 9

“Drunk or Spirit-filled?”

**Monday, September 4 Acts 2:14-21**

*“Some of you are saying these people are drunk”*

A careless, scoffing comment prompted the first Christian sermon. Some of the people who heard the praise of the believers wondered what it meant. But not all. Others mocked, accusing them of being drunk. That got Peter on his feet! He explained the absurdity of that criticism by pointing out that it was only the third hour (about 9:00am), way too early to be drinking wine let alone drinking enough to get drunk. Probably not the best opening topic for an evangelistic sermon about Jesus, but the people continued to listen to what he had to say.

Once Peter started, he was caught up by the Spirit’s power. Peter explained that the gift of the Holy Spirit had produced the prophetic praise the crowds had observed. It was exactly what the prophet Joel had predicted based on what the Lord had told him: “In those days I will pour out my Spirit; and they will prophesy (preach, proclaim).” Having established the biblical basis for what was happening, Peter went on to use the very gift that was being given. He had bigger things to do than defend the sobriety of Jesus’ followers.

*Some may ridicule, Lord, but I will continue to proclaim your name. Amen.*

**Tuesday, September 5 Acts 3:1-16**

*“The name of Jesus has healed this man”*

Peter and John are on the way to the temple for afternoon prayers when they meet a man lame from birth. When he sees Peter and John approach him, the man’s attention is attracted to them immediately. And what is about to happen will be a fulfillment of Jesus’ declaration that his followers would produce much fruit, in this case the healing of a crippled man whose paralysis is symbolic of the humanity Christ had come to liberate.

The man asks Peter and John for alms. They stop and look at him intently. The Greek used here means that they stopped, looked at the man, and really thought about him and what he was asking. The Spirit-filled disciples sensed a stirring within them. What would Jesus have done in that situation? Healed the man! Could they? Dare they try? Faith that it would happen surged in them. They bade him rise and walk, and he was healed. What happened to the lame man drew the attention of the worshippers at the temple, and gave Peter the opportunity to speak of the power of the name of Jesus.

*Give me faith, Lord, to continue your ministry in the lives of others. Amen.*

**Wednesday, September 6 Acts 17:22-31**

*“Men of Athens, I notice that you are very religious”*

In Athens, the center of culture, religion, and philosophy, Paul discovered the difficulties of confronting the intellectual community with the Gospel, and in particular, the resurrection. Two philosophical schools dominated the city’s thought. The Epicureans asserted that happiness and pleasure were the two principal aims of a tranquil life. The Stoics could not have been more opposite. For them, all of life was determined by the gods. It had to be lived according to the laws of nature completely free of emotional involvement.

Paul began where the philosophers were. Taking the altar of the Unknown God as his metaphor and his authority, he proceeded to tell the intellectuals who this God really is: He is the Creator and source of all life – the one who guides all history and on whom all life depends. By grace God is not the object of humanity’s search but the one in search of his people. In Jesus Christ the living God has been revealed, and through him the world will be judged. His authority has been validated in having been raised from the dead.

*By your Spirit, Lord, give me the words to speak your Good News. Amen.*

*DAILY DEVOTIONAL*

September 4 - 9

“Drunk or Spirit-filled?”

**Thursday, September 7 Joel 2:28-32**

*“I will pour out my Spirit”*

God is not silent, in spite of the claims of some in our contemporary culture who consider him dead. Through the ages, God’s people have experienced divine revelation. While not a daily experience, at least it has not been completely foreign. According to the biblical text, the medium of revelation for Israel varied. At times, God speaks directly to his people, whether leader or laity. At other times, a specific revelatory medium is mentioned. These are often dreams or visions.

What gets our attention in this Joel passage, therefore, is not the means of revelation but its recipients. The beneficiaries of the Spirit-gift and its accompanying revelation will not only be a special class, the prophets, or even some select and privileged folk. Rather, this bestowal will be universal, blessing young and old, male and female, slave and free; it will affect all humanity. God desires his Word to be widely known, and it is by his Spirit that modern believers can share the *living* Word of God who is certainly not dead!

*I praise you, Lord, for your Spirit has been poured into my life. Amen.*

**Friday, September 8 Numbers 11:24-30**

*“I wish that the Lord would put his Spirit upon them all”*

A prophet is one who has special access to God through the Spirit, which enables and authorizes him to relay God’s message to others. The “forthtelling” of such a spokesman can include “foretelling,” but it is not limited to predictions of the future. The point of prophesying on this occasion by seventy elders chosen by Moses is not the content of their utterances but the fact that the Lord authorizes them to be under his control through the Holy Spirit and to be accountable to him as his representatives. The fact that Eldad and Medad prophesy “outside the box” of human expectation buttresses the point that it is God who is in control.

With a council of prophets in the Israelite camp, Moses will no longer be alone in bearing responsibility for representing God’s will to the people. Even if the Israelites do not like what they are hearing, confirmation of Moses’ message by a divinely authorized delegation from among the people will (hopefully) prevent them from singling Moses out as the sole “lightning rod” for their displeasure.

*Your Spirit within me, Lord, authorizes me to speak your word to others. Amen.*

**Saturday, September 9 1 Corinthians 1:18-25**

*“We preach Christ crucified”*

In this brief passage, the Apostle reminds the church for all times that while its gospel does not measure up to worldly standards, it is the only word of salvation to those who believe. The church in every century has had to resist, sometimes not too successfully, the temptation to try to augment the gospel. For the first-century Jew, dying on a cross signified that one was under God’s curse. Now Paul comes along and proclaims that the cross is not a curse but God’s special revelation of his love and grace. Quite naturally the Jews stumbled over this.

On the other hand, people with a Greek background reacted differently to the cross. They were reared in a world of thought and reason, without any hint of faith in God at work in their history. The Greeks were thinkers who loved to speculate on ideas and who needed rational evidence is order to believe. It is this philosophy that gave birth to so much of the thought and scientific methodology that characterizes our contemporary culture and causes the Gospel to be thought foolish by many.

*The Gospel, Lord, is the power of God to us who are being saved. Amen.*