



Revivals And Church History :: George R. Brunk Tent Revival Sermon, 1952

George R. Brunk Tent Revival Sermon, 1952 - posted by sermonindex (), on: 2004/2/14 16:36

Introduction by James C. Juhnke

Note: The photos in this article come from Katie Florence Shank, Revival Fires (Broadway, Va.: Shank, 1952).

Fifty years ago, in September 1952, George R. Brunk II, Mennonite minister and teacher of theology, preached a sermon, "God's Supreme Position of Power," in a tent revival campaign in Harrisonburg, Virginia. Here we publish that sermon both in audio and typed form. The original audio tape is in the Archives of the Mennonite Church in Goshen, Indiana. The transcription notes with ellipses the places where the words are inaudible.

George Brunk died on April 25, 2002, at ninety years of age. He had taught theology at Eastern Mennonite Seminary and Eastern Mennonite College from 1949 to 1978. He was seminary dean from 1967 to 1976. In later years he crusaded against theological and cultural tendencies that he deplored. He served as executive director of the Fellowship of Concerned Mennonites, and as editor of *Sword and Trumpet*.

The Brunk Brothers revival campaigns burst upon the Mennonite scene in June 1951, with a spectacular series of tent meetings in Lancaster, Pennsylvania. Lawrence Brunk, who had given profits from his successful chicken-growing business to begin the effort, served as song leader. The crowds grew to a total of 15,000 on the final night, July 15. The campaign reported two hundred conversions and eighteen hundred commitments to spiritual renewal. John Ruth, in his history of Lancaster Conference, *The Earth is the Lord's* (2001), wrote that the fruits of the revival included fervent confessions of sin in local congregations, changes in ethical behavior (a dozen farmers reportedly quit growing tobacco), a return by some to more plain dress, and a remarkable burst of energy in the founding of new home missions. It was a powerful event of spiritual renewal and community revitalization. In Ruth's judgement, the long-run effect of the revivals was to depart from traditional Mennonitism. The revivals prompted a good deal of criticism in the church, as documented by Dale F. Dickey, in "Responses of North American Mennonites to the Tent Revivals, 1951 to 1962," *Pennsylvania Mennonite Heritage*, January 1996.

The Brunk brothers' 1951 Lancaster revival came just two years after Billy Graham's nationally publicized campaign in Los Angeles. As the following sermon makes clear, George Brunk saw the Mennonite revivals in a broader national context, evidence that "the American public has a new appetite for the gospel of Jesus Christ." He saw himself in a succession of the great revivalists Charles Wesley, Charles Finney, Dwight Moody, and Reuben Torrey. As the Brunk campaigns grew and extended to additional communities, other Mennonite evangelists also began tent revival series—Myron Augsburger, Don Augsburger, and Howard Hammer.

The juxtaposition of written and spoken text demonstrates dramatically the difference between the experience of reading and of listening to revival sermons. The spoken word reveals Brunk's mastery of changes of volume, pace, and emotional affect. He engaged the audience intensely, sometimes prompting affirming responses ("I wish every one of you would say 'Amen.'") and at other times accusing people of opposing him: ("And if I as a Mennonite preacher would start to make, to preach about being baptized with the Holy Ghost, some of you would want to throw me out. But you couldn't do it. You'd get scared. What are you scared of? What are you scared of?")

From a twenty-first century perspective of glitzy televised revivalism, the tent revivals of the 1950s may appear primitive and rustic. On this tape we occasionally hear babies crying loudly in the background. In 1952, however, the Brunk revival seemed a marvel of sophisticated technology. An article in the Mennonite Church paper, *The Gospel Herald*, reported that "the very fact that the equipment and the complete setup is attractive and modern makes the people come, and come again and again." The canvas tent provided "an atmosphere of vastness." The electric flood lights were "as brilliant as the lights of an illuminated athletic ground." The powerful microphones ensured that "the Gospel can be heard clearly over the entire tent and outside, if need be." (C. F. Yake, "The Brunk Meetings," June 19, 1952, 565.)

A careful and thorough scholarly evaluation of the style, content, and effects of Mennonite revivalism of the 1950s remains to be made. This rendition of audio and text of a 1952 sermon can serve as a reminder of a religious renewal that was acclaimed by its supporters in the beginning triumphant campaigns: "(W)e have every reason to believe that this movement is of God and that the mighty results are the working of the Holy Spirit through human instruments, and the dedicatio

n of material things for this purpose. To God be the honor and glory." (Yake, 1952, 565.)

[Image: <https://www.sermonindex.net/images/forum2/tentmeeting.jpg>]

"When the first campaign began in Lancaster, Pa., on June 3, 1951, tents were set up on East Chestnut Street. Large crowds gathered each night for about a month. Then to avoid congestion the tents were moved outside the city limits. On the final night of the seven weeks' campaign over 2,200 cars crowded the parking area."

Re: George R. Brunk Tent Revival Sermon, 1952 - posted by sermonindex (), on: 2004/2/14 16:43

Listen to the audio version of this transcript here:

(<https://www.sermonindex.net/modules/mydownloads/visit.php?lid3729>) God's Supreme Position of Power

It is thrilling to witness the sea of faces like this. It is challenging. It makes one tremble when it comes to the responsibility of preaching the word of God. So many people. You come here for something I trust, and I am going to assume you are here for a sincere motive. You're here because you love God. You want the truth from God's word. I want each of you here who acknowledge Jesus Christ to pray for the progress of this service. This is God's work and not the work of man. Our policy and our declared position is that God shall have the glory for every victory won. These campaigns have let no human thing touch it, because God shall be praised for every blessing that comes to it. And let's look to God tonight and expect from him the blessing that we need.

I like to have that ready and, well, and clear response from you as I ask you a few questions. I want you to come back at me with a clear and ready response. With a yes or no, either one, I'd like for everybody to respond. Yes or No. Do you believe that the devil is against this revival?

Audience: "Yes."

All right. Do you believe that God is for it, not only this revival, but for the cause of revival? Yes or no.

Audience: "Yes."

Thank you. Are you looking in simple faith to God tonight for the blessing that we need? Yes or no.

Audience: "Yes."

Now the vital question comes last, and I want you to give me the answer, yes or no. Will you be obedient to the Spirit of God as he speaks to you tonight Now come on.

Audience: "Yes."

Thank you.

I wish that we might be in prayer not only for this meeting but for others, for other evangelists around the country and around the world who are preaching the gospel of Jesus Christ. We believe that God is making a visitation to the nation and to the world today, that there is something unique about it. It is remarkable. Something is happening. The Spirit of God is moving across the countryside. We ought to pray for those men, for those workers, missionaries, men and women, who are out there testifying for God. Right now there are men preaching in pulpits and in churches and in tents and in other places, giving the gospel of Jesus Christ. Let's pray for them, that God may give them souls tonight for their (hire?). Let's pray for the other phases of the church's program. We do not want to leave the impression we think revival meetings or evangelistic campaigns make up the total program of the church. We want to pray for the educational program of the church. We want to pray for the publishing program of the church. And for the mission program of the church. And for the total program of the churches that the impact of the gospel upon the world might be felt marvelously in these last days.

My subject tonight is "God's Supreme Condition of Power." God has made provision for his people of all time, that they shall possess the blessing of his own presence and the power of the Holy Ghost. I would like tonight, by the grace that God only can give, to proceed in this manner. To show first that God in the Word has shown us what a New Testament Church is to be like. I should like then to show that that church was possessed with members and leaders, all of whom were filled with the Holy Ghost. I should like to move from that to say that the provision that God made for the church in that day is the same provision for the church in this day. And that being the case, all Christians today and all leaders should

be filled with the Holy Ghost. That's my story tonight.

We come back to the first point. And we find much in the Word of God. We go back to the Book of Acts. We like to speak of it as God's blueprint for the Christian church. A photograph of what God wants the church to be, in the main-the major outlines of it, I would say. We don't want to quarrel and quibble about it in minor detail. No. But in the major points and outlines of the Book of Acts, we believe that we have here a blueprint of what God wants the church to be like in all time.

A week ago, last Tuesday night I believe it was, we spoke on the pageantry of God's power. We pointed out that night that in tracing through the Book of Acts we find a great demonstration of power and progress in the church. Virtually this is what it was. On the day of Pentecost, as we have it in Acts 2: 41, there were 3,000 added to the church in one day. And there were additions every day thereafter. That's what it says in 2:47. They were "praising God, and having favor with all the people. And the Lord added to the church daily such as should be saved." Or such as were being saved. The Lord added to the church daily. You wouldn't let me off by reading it any other way. I tried to get you to let me read it, "The Lord added to the church annually." You wouldn't accept it. I tried to get you to let me read it, "The Lord added to the church monthly those that were being saved." You wouldn't let me do it. And then I tried to read it, "The Lord added to the church weekly those that were being saved." And you wouldn't let me do it. And then I asked you, why weren't you satisfied with that kind of a program? Why wouldn't you let me read it that way? Well, you wouldn't let me. So we read it in the word of God, "The Lord added to the church . . . how often?"

Audience. "Daily"

Those who were being saved. Now we go on to the fourth chapter and the fourth verse of the book of Acts. And we find here that there are 5,000. "Howbeit many of them which heard the word believed; and the number of men was about 5,000." In 5:14 we are told that there were multitudes men and women. "And believers were added to the Lord, multitudes both of men and women." And then in 6:7: "And the Word of God increased; and the number of the disciples in Jerusalem multiplied greatly; and a great company of the priests were obedient to the faith." Then up in Samaria there was joy in that great city when they preached Christ. You have Philip and the eunuch, a man of great authority, in 8:38. You have the churches being multiplied over there in 9:31. "Then had churches rest throughout all Judea, and Galilee and Samaria, and were edified; and walking in the fear of the Lord, and in the comfort of the Holy Ghost, were multiplied." In 9:35 you have another passage. Going over to 9:42: "And it was made known throughout all Joppa; and many believed in the Lord." In the tenth chapter the Gentiles were converted to the Lord. Then in the eleventh chapter you have the great Antioch revival. The hand of the Lord was with them and a great number believed and turned unto the Lord. And then Barnabas came and much people were added. We read in 11:24: "For he was a good man, and full of the Holy Ghost and of faith; and much people was added unto the Lord." The Word of God grew and multiplied, in 12:24. In 14:1 great multitudes believed. That's the pattern right straight down through the great book of Acts. You have a church here that is striking right and left. And there are converts for Jesus Christ in a growing program of evangelism in the early church that challenges my heart tonight, when I read it, and when I think of it, and when I review it.

The early church knew multiplication. And it knew addition. The church today knows more about division than it does about all of the above. And there's a world of difference, a world of difference. The early church knew multiplication, and knew addition. And scarcely anything, if anything at all, about division. Today we know not very much about multiplication, a little bit about addition, a whole lot about division. I say God help us indeed.

Going back, we have here one of the most moving and marvelous representations and portraits of divine power that we have anywhere in the Word of God. It was back there at the beginning, early in the period of the Christian Church, and the blessing of God was poured out upon it. And there are few things that bring pains to the heart of a preacher like the comparison between the church of today and the church of that day. I will say again tonight what I said earlier in this campaign. I don't want you to misunderstand me when I speak about the churches today. I don't want to use derogatory terms. I don't want to minimize the church. I believe in the church as a great institution of God. The greatest institution of the world perhaps, blessed of God. One of his choice institutions. But, I think there is a sense in which we may exercise wholesome dissatisfaction with the church. And that's my point of view. To look at it squarely, to face its weaknesses, and make rectification and improvement wherever that is possible to be made.

I spoke earlier in this campaign about what one bishop brother told me when he came very much troubled with a heavy heart about conditions in his own conference district. He said, Brother Brunk, he brought me a sheet of paper and he had some figures on it. He said, I have figured this out. The increase in our conference, the number of accessions to the church. And I have broken it down according to the membership of our conference, and the number of Sunday School teach-

hers and the number of preachers in the conference. And he said, this is what I have. And he showed it to me. And it was a very, well, a very discouraging report. He was deeply moved about it and so was I. This is what he brought. He said, that according to the progress that our conference has made, it has required in order to win one soul to Jesus Christ, this is what it took. It took this many people in our conference one whole year to win one soul. I want you to get this now. This is important. He said it took this many people a whole year to win one soul in our conference. This is it. It took a preacher and a half. It took three and a fifth Sunday School teachers. And it took thirty members of the church. Get this now. A preacher and a half. Three and one fifth Sunday School teachers, and thirty members a whole year from January 1, 1951 to January 1, 1952, to win one soul! I said, it is shocking. I wonder how much better we are here brothers. I suspect the pattern runs just about the same. The conference from which the brother comes is a live conference. Not a big conference. Not any more dead than the rest of the conferences across the country. But that was the picture. And when I put that beside the record in the divine Word of God, I tell you my dear people, there's something wrong!

Voices: "Amen."

I wish every one of you would say Amen.

Voices: "Amen."

[Image: <https://www.sermonindex.net/images/forum2/tentmeeting2.jpg>]

"The two tents to the right were purchased before the first campaign began and were used at Lancaster. During the campaign at Souderton in August, 1951, the large tent to the left was purchased and also set up. This tent can seat 6,000 people."

Re: - posted by sermonindex (), on: 2004/2/14 16:45

Some of us will come to this conclusion, that we are living in the last times. The Bible says, "Will there be faith upon the earth?" . . . there will be perilous times. Many will depart from the faith. This and that and the other thing, and that is exactly true. The Word of God says that. But my dear hearers tonight, I warn you against taking refuge behind those scriptures that justify the weakness and the failure of the church. We are living in a day when the gospel is still good. There are still men and women who will believe it. And there are still thousands of people who will receive it, if it is presented to them under the power of the Holy Ghost. There are still throngs and masses of people.

Do you know one thing that is moving across our nation in higher class circles of society? Our magazines are beginning to recognize that something has happened. Religion had come to be a joke, and still is in some quarters. But today those who turned up and curled their lips at the fires of revival that were beginning to burn, today are recognizing that the American public has a new appetite for the gospel of Jesus Christ. And there is something remarkable, and not to be explained by man. It isn't because they are better men. Not because they are better educated men. Not because they are more evil men. No. It is because God's Spirit is moving, I tell you.

Now the thing that makes us think of the heart, is when we look into the book of God and we see a moving, a growing, a prospering program under God. And then we look in the judge today and we see a light that is flickering, and seemingly almost going out. And so many Christian people just hold on until the Lord comes. I'll be so glad I can hold on until the Lord comes, and then go into glory at last if I can't take anybody along with me. I'll just hold back and hold on when I'm there.

Bless the Lord, I believe that he intends for you to take somebody along with you. I believe with the church at this present day, now listen, I believe that the church at this present day can move under the dynamic of the Spirit of God as it did in the days of the apostles. If not, I'd like to know why. Why would God bless the church in one era of her history, and not bless it in another. Unless the conditions are not met upon our part. I'm not able to understand why God would pour out his blessing upon the church in one era, and then strangle it and starve it in another. No, my dear people, the facts of the weakness and the powerlessness in the church today ride not with God, but with man. We can, and we shall, move forward today under the banner of God and the anointing of the blessed Holy Ghost.

Now brothers, don't hide behind those negative scriptures. Don't hide behind Noah's ark. Seeing his sons and wives going in. They didn't live in the dispensation of the Holy Ghost. Don't hide behind the fact that Jesus himself, while he was here upon the earth, well, he didn't sweep the country. The masses, when they found out what his message was turned away from him. And the . . . , don't hide behind that either. For Jesus said himself, "The works that I do shall you do also. Greater works than these shall you do, because I go to my Father, and because the Holy Ghost comes." That's God's double barreled provision for progress in the church. Jesus sits at the Father's right hand, and the Holy Ghost

upon us as the great agent of God. That's his provision. And that's why we say that, yes, the church in this period is so enclosed. It must have a greater following than Jesus Christ had when he was here. Because Jesus himself said so, that's why. Why I'm clear to say it, because Jesus said it. I don't think he meant that we raise more dead people, and heal more sick. . . . But I do believe Jesus Christ meant, and he said, that under a preaching and presentation of the gospel, there will be thousands who receive it, and be gloriously saved and blessed.

Now we go back to the book of Acts. I want you to use your Bibles. Try to give the Word of God a large place in the campaign. I want it to be that way. I want you to open your Bibles to the book of Acts. I might tell you to let God bless your soul tonight, neighbor. They didn't steal your soul, tonight, from the Word of God.

We began with this major premise. The book of Acts, a sample, a blueprint, a photograph of what God wants the church to be like, in general terms. Here it is. . . . power, blessing, in a marvelous way. Now, let's see. Let's see just what is the plain condition of power that we are talking about. That's my subject, our plain condition of power in church. Let's see what it is. In the book of Acts there is something there very outstanding, and that is the relationship that the early church had to the first person of the Godhead.

You know, if I could take you this evening to the nearest railroad yards, I don't know where they are, perhaps Richmond. Take you down there and show you a steam locomotive on the side track. There it is, all the brass pots polished, all the bearings well greased, lubricated. The boiler full of water. A man at the controls, and the fireman there, shoveling in the coal. There she is, ready to go. Everything organized. Everything prepared. On every quarter. But there's one thing wrong with it. You know what it is? No fire in the box. Brother, I tell you until you got steam in there, you'll never move a thing. And I say to you my dear people, that much of our church life today reminds me of a steam locomotive that's got water in the boiler, the bearings are lubricated, and everything is ready. There's just one thing that's gotta happen, and that is fire in the box. The anointing of the Holy Ghost. We've got machinery to no end. We're moving in that direction and organization. I'm not opposed to it. A good organization is in place. Machinery is necessary for the church. But you know, my observation is this, that the more the fire goes out, the more, the more outstanding and complex the machinery becomes. And the colder the church gets, the higher the steeple goes, and the better the furniture, What is it? Compensation for the absence of the Spirit of God. That's why.

You go back here to the book of God, and see what was the relationship of the Holy Spirit. You to back beyond the book of Acts. You go back to John the Baptist. We are told that John the Baptist was filled with the Holy Ghost from his mother's womb. We are told that Zachariah was filled with the Holy Ghost. We are told that Elizabeth was filled with the Holy Ghost. We are told that Jesus Christ was born, nay, was conceived, by the Holy Ghost. And that he went around doing miracles by the Holy Ghost. And he was raised from the dead, at the Father's right hand. You come on down. The last thing, now listen to me, this is important, the last thing that was upon the heart of our Lord Jesus Christ before he ascended into glory, was this thing that I am talking about, the supreme condition of power in the church. Do you know, usually, people talk in their last moments before they depart about those things that are of particular value to them. Those things that lie close to the heart. You know what Jesus talked about before he ascended? It was the Holy Ghost and the baptism that he would give. That's what it was. You go back to the first chapter of Acts. Do you have your Bibles open? Verse four of this first chapter, "Being assembled together with them, commanded them that they should not depart from Jerusalem, but wait for the promise of the Father, which, saith he, ye have heard of me. For John baptized with water, but ye shall be baptized with the Holy Ghost not many days hence." He is here referring to the Pentecost.

Now Jesus is here saying to his followers-he said it over at the twenty fourth chapter of Luke too, I don't want you to go out and teach. I don't want you to go out and preach. I don't want you to go out and . . . the program of evangelism until something happens to you. That's what Jesus said. I believe that if Jesus would come into this tent tonight and speak to use in a visible form and an audible voice, he would say, Sunday School teachers, don't teach that class next Sunday unless you have been filled with the Holy Ghost. He'd say, Sunday School superintendent, you might as well resign that job, or seek God to fill you with the Holy Ghost before you go on with that work. He'd come on this platform, I believe, and say to the preachers, don't try to preach the Word of God unless and until you've been filled with the Holy Ghost. Until you've been endued with power from on high. That's the way he puts it. "Wait for the promise of the Father, which, saith he, ye have heard of me."

Let's get this straight. We're not asking for Pentecost to take place again. Pentecost is a historical incident. It took place, is past. Pentecost is past. But the benefits from it continue until the present, just like the cross of Jesus Christ. We're not asking for Christ to be crucified again. He was crucified once. He paid the price of my redemption. But it becomes real, and it becomes effective in your life and mine, when we accept it by faith. I tell you tonight, listen to me, this is vital, I believe that Pentecost becomes . . . and effective in your life and mine when you accept it by faith.

And if you want a Scripture for it, Romans and Galatians. 3:14 It says we "receive the promise of the Spirit through faith." Through faith. There are conditions for being filled with the Holy Ghost. I want to talk about those at another time. But hear Jesus. He says, wait, stay at home. To put it in modern speech, he says stay in Harrisonburg If you live in Rockingham County. Stay at Harrisonburg. Don't go across the street. Don't go to another state. Don't go to a mission station. Don't go over the mountains, to preach the gospel to men until you have been endued with power from on high. If I understand the language of our Lord Christ, that is it.

I think I should give you my personal testimony at this point. I have . . . to do it. I know it is a risk for a preacher to refer to himself. Will you pardon me if I do? I want to give you my testimony. I tell you, the time came in my ministry, God laid it upon my heart, I said, Lord, you know I'm not saving souls. You know my ministry is a miserable failure. More than one time I went home on a Sunday morning, went back in a closet on the back side of the house, and wept and cried and asked God to forgive me. And my whole digestive tract would lock up. Nervous tension. Oh, Sunday was an awful day. I'd hear people talk about this day of rest. God help me, it was anything but that for me. It was a miserable day, filled with duty. And try to preach and get up there and stumble and stammer and . . . and the time came when I told God, I said, Lord, I'm through. I know there is something better than this. I said, Lord, if I can't see it, and if I can't tap the root of divine power and the force of divine good, I want you to let me die, and throw me twelve feet under the ground and raise up another man that can preach. That's what I did. I got that desperate. And I told God, I said that I intend to hand in my resignation to the Virginia Conference of the Mennonites, and ask them to ordain somebody else. I can't preach.

I want to tell you, God did something to me. I'm going to say it humbly. Do I sound like I'm boasting to you? God have mercy. There's no boasting in it. Glory be to God, I want to tell you brothers tonight from the platform to the back end of this tent that God has something for his children. You can turn over the sod, and get going, and let God's Spirit bless you with his own glory. I came to this point. I said, Lord, you blessed the people back there in the Bible. You blessed the preachers back there. You blessed John Wesley with souls by the thousands when he'd stand out in an open field when the churches were closed to him and preach to ten thousand people without any amplification system. And he won souls by the thousands. I know you did it for Charles Finney. He was perhaps the greatest American evangelist who ever lived, is rated so by some at least. . . . I read about D. L. Moody. I thought, God, did you just do it back there in order that we would just look back and see the way it used to be. Or will you do it yet? And I'd come up to the times of R. A. Torrey, that great Presbyterian fireball for God. And I'd say, God help us. Is it all history? Is it all over? I said I'm going to find out. And I began to search. I began to search the book of Acts first. And I began to search Wesley. And I began to search Finney. Then I began to search Moody. They I began to search Torrey. And I found that all of these together shared a common conviction that the people of God ought to be filled with the Holy Ghost. They had fighters to fight them for it Charles Wesley told the people, he said if any of you are filled with the Holy Ghost, somebody's gonna fight ya and say you're crazy, and maybe That's what he told them.

"At Orrville, Ohio, 6,000 people filled the tent on most of the nights of the campaign. It was estimated that about half of the people came a distance of 25 miles or more to attend the meetings. One result of this campaign was the launching of a similar movement by laymen in Ohio churches."

I want to tell you, my dear people, I've come to this conclusion. I'll challenge you to do it. You go back and begin in the book of Acts, and come up to 1900, and show me a man or a church or a movement that shook and rocked a generation for God, that didn't believe in the fullness of the Holy Ghost in the church. Now in the book of Acts, here it is. Let's look at it. There might be some difficulty to get through it. In the eighth verse of the first chapter, he says, "But ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you. And ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem and all Judea and in Samaria and to the uttermost parts of the earth." I'd like to underscore that word "upon." That's a unique word in the book of Acts. The Holy Spirit upon you. In an anointing, at least primarily for service. It isn't a question of whether a Christian has the Holy Spirit or not. Every Christian, if he is one, has the Holy Spirit. That's no argumentation at all. But, when Paul writes to the Ephesian church, he says, "Be not drunk with wine, wherein is excess. But be filled with the Spirit." Was he writing to a bunch of rebels, unregenerates? He certainly was not. He was writing to people who had the Spirit. They were Christians, Ephesian believers, and he said, "Don't be drunk with wine, wherein is excess, but be filled with the Spirit." The Holy Spirit upon you and an anointing for service. Jesus had that. The Holy Spirit came upon him. Do you think he had the Spirit before that? Was he an unregenerate before this? No! The Holy Ghost came upon him when he was baptized with water. And we have this word in Acts 1:8: "Ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come . . . how? . . . upon you."

Now I remind you again. That proposition is characteristic of the book of Acts. Let's go now to the second chapter of

Acts, and the fourth verse. "They were all filled with the Holy Ghost and began to speak with other tongues as the Spirit gave them utterance." The thing I want in that passage is this. "They were all filled with the Holy Ghost." The book of Acts. "They were all filled with the Holy Ghost." And now we go over to chapter four. And we see here in the eighth verse. "Then Peter, filled with the Holy Ghost, said unto them, ye rulers and elders of the people of Israel," and so forth . . . And then down in verse forty-one, that's chapter four of Acts. Look at these words. "When they had prayed, the place was shaken where they were assembled together. They were all filled with the Holy Ghost and they spake the word of God with boldness. . . . The multitude of them that believed were of one heart and of one soul, neither said any of them that the things that he possessed was his own, but they had all things common. And with great power gave the apostles witness of the resurrection of the Lord Jesus and great grace was upon them all."

We go over to chapter six. . . . In the sixth chapter we read here, "In those days when the number of disciples was multiplied, there arose a murmuring of the Greeks against the Hebrews, because their widows were neglected in the daily ministration. Then the twelve called the multitude of disciples unto them, and said, It is not reason that we should leave the word of God, and serve tables. Wherefore, brethren, look ye out among you seven men of honest report," Now notice. "Full of the Holy Ghost." Here they want some men to handle money. They don't even think a man is safe to handle money unless he has been sealed with the Holy Ghost. I don't think so either, much less to preach the Word of God. Preachers are supposed to be filled with the Holy Ghost too, aren't they? Yes they are. "Look ye out among you seven men of honest report, full of the Holy Ghost." We talk a lot about the "honest report." We get ready to ordain a deacon and we say, Now boys, I want you to have a good reputation. I want you to have a good record in the community. Don't want to have somebody come around and say, "You swindled me out of some money." You should have a good report, a good reputation among the brothers. But I must say to you. I never have heard an ordination sermon declare clearly and forcefully that a man should be filled with the Holy Ghost to be a deacon. It is in the word of God, though. "Seven men, full of the Holy Ghost, to be a deacon." This is one of the requirements. Now we make a lot of others. We probe into a lot of different areas. Will you do this? And will you do that? And will you do the other thing? . . . But do we ever say anything about the Holy Ghost?

Now, Stephen was a man filled with the Holy Ghost, we see in verse five. "The saying pleased the whole multitude: and they chose Stephen, a man full of faith and of the Holy Ghost." And then in verse six and seven, the word of God increased and multiplied in Jerusalem greatly; and a great company of the priests were obedient to the faith. And Stephen, full of faith and power, did great wonders and miracles among the people." And now going over the chapter seven, verse 55, let's notice something else. We read there again, with reference to Stephen, "But he, being full of the Holy Ghost, looked up steadfastly into heaven and saw the glory of God, and Jesus standing on the right hand of God." And now over in 8:15, the next chapter, you have here Philip's experience with Samaritans who believed. He preached Christ to them as we read in verse five. "And the people with one accord gave heed unto those things which Philip spake, hearing and seeing the miracles which he did. For unclean spirits crying with a loud voice, came out of many that were possessed with them: and many taken with palsies, and that were lame, were healed. And there was great joy in that city." Well, they heard about what happened down there. In verse 13: "Then Simon himself believed also: and when he was baptized, he continued with Philip," and so forth. Verse 14: "Now when the apostles which were at Jerusalem heard that Samaria had received the word of God, they sent unto them Peter and John: Who, when they were come down, prayed for them, that they might receive the Holy Ghost. (For as yet he was fallen upon none of them: only they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus.) Then laid they their hands on them, and they received the Holy Ghost."

My dear people, the primary concern of the leaders of the early church was that the people would be filled with the Holy Ghost. I want to turn this way and say it. That was their major concern. Filled with the Holy Ghost. We're scared of it. Some of you are scared right now. You're turning in your seats, saying, "Where's that preacher going to wind up now?" Talk about being filled with the Holy Ghost. See what kind of camp meeting I've been in? I haven't been in one, but I'd like to turn this into one. Where the convicting power of the Holy Ghost falls upon the people and makes them cry out because of their sins. That's right. You know I'd like to see the Spirit of God do right under this canvas? We'd see some people who are not right with God and make them scream and wail while I'm preaching. That's what I'd like to see happen. Make you cry out to God, stand up where you are, lift your hands up and ask God to forgive you. That's what I'd like to see happen. . . . The book of God is full of it. Why should we be afraid of it?

You go back here to these leaders, brother. You don't find them asking people, "Are you saved? Did you jive and shake? What church do you belong to?" Have you been filled with the Holy Ghost? That's the question. Now I ask you tonight. You might say, "I reckon I have. I understand everybody that's saved is filled with the Holy Ghost." You do? Who told you that? You know what I tell a man who tells me he doesn't know if he is filled with the Holy Ghost. I say, brother, I don't think you are. If you have been, you'd know it.

I'm not through. So rest yourself. Relax. You've got some questions in your mind, haven't you? Just relax. Everything I say is gonna be in this book. I want to use the language that's in this book. Faithful to God. Let us not be restless about it. We go on down here, and we see these people were blessed of God. They did receive the Holy Ghost. And they were blessed marvelously. Let's go into the ninth chapter and see here about the apostle Paul himself. Paul was filled with the Holy Ghost. You have in this chapter a record of what happened to him going down on the Damascus road. And in verse seventeen we read these words: "And Ananias went his way, and entered into the house; and putting his hands on him said, Brother Saul, the Lord, even Jesus, that appeared unto thee in the way as thou camest, hath sent me, that thou mightest receive thy sight, and be filled with the Holy Ghost." There it is.

Some of you go back and say, Oh, Paul, the man of God, that shook cities, that shook the continent for God. But, well, I guess it's a thing of the past. We'll never see it any more. Paul was filled with the Holy Ghost. And Peter was too. And Stephen was. And all the leaders of the church were. I don't know of any leader in the early church, deacon or preacher, that was not filled with the Holy Ghost. I tell you brethren from this pulpit, we'd have a different program in the church if all the ministers in the Mennonite Church were filled with the Holy Ghost. We'd have a different operation. Praise God, we would. Things would turn upside down. And I tell you when it did, the right side would be up.

Yes sir, Paul himself was filled with the Holy Ghost. Now in 10:38 Jesus of Nazareth, "How God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Ghost and with power: who went about doing good, and healing all that were oppressed of the devil; for God was with him." That's wonderful. I love that. "God was with him." Oh, my dear people, if there's anything my heart bleeds for, is that God may be with us. What can we do with our poor, feeble, puny efforts for God unless God is with us? What can we ever do in a tent campaign, unless God is with us? What can we ever do in a test, whatever test it be, unless God be with us? In his fullness, and in his blessing.

Now here also in the tenth chapter you have the experience of Cornelius and his house. It is a very interesting story. Peter went down to preach, and the Lord broke it up. Wonderful. I'd loved to have been there when Peter started to preach, and the Lord broke it up and sent the Holy Ghost down upon that crowd of people, and they were filled with the Holy Ghost even before they were baptized with water. I notice here in the book of Acts there seems to be a relationship between water baptism and the movement of the Holy Ghost. And it looks like God intends for people to receive the blessing of the Holy Ghost in their initial, related, or adjacent to, in some sense, to their conversion experience.

How does that rest on us? You've been wondering? There's a pattern in the word of God. When Jesus was baptized with water, the Holy Ghost came upon him in the form of a dove. That's how. And set how? Upon him. In the eighth chapter of Acts, they were baptized, the Holy Ghost upon them. Here in Acts ten, the Holy Ghost fell upon them and then they were baptized. This is the only instance in the word of God which we know of, that anybody ever was filled with the Holy Ghost, or the Holy Ghost fell upon them, if you please, or they received the Holy Ghost before they were baptized with water. And there is a reason for it here evidently, because of the Jewish unwillingness to admit Gentiles into the church. And so God has them baptized with the Holy Ghost. Why? So they would be willing to baptize them with water. Peter finally said, "Well, the Lord baptized them. I guess we better do it too." I reckon too you have.

I wonder what it would take to convince some of us that God has the blessing of the Holy Ghost for us today. That's what it took to shake Peter out of his tracks, the rest of the church too. God had to break through the barriers. He had to break over the ecclesiastical forms. And listen to me. God may have to do that again. We have a way of setting up our modes. And say, Lord, you can bless us this way. We want to be blessed. And if you want to bless us any other way-we don't know. I want to tell you I'm going to ask God anything he's got for us. Any time, any form, and any fashion. That is let the door wide open, and let the spirit of God have liberty.

[Image: <https://www.sermonindex.net/images/forum2/tentmeeting3.jpg>]

Re: - posted by sermonindex (), on: 2004/2/14 16:47

Is that all right now? Now looking at the tenth chapter here, with your Bible open please. It says in verse 44, "While Peter yet spake these words, the Holy Ghost fell on all them which heard the word." That's a good condition for being filled with the Holy Ghost. "And they of the circumcision which believed were astonished, as many as came with Peter, because that on the Gentiles also was poured out the gift of the Holy Ghost." I want you to notice these expressions, I'm coming back to them. The Holy Ghost fell on them. And now in verse 44 the Holy Ghost poured out on them. And now in verse 47, "Can any man forbid water, that these should not be baptized, which have received the Holy Ghost as well as we?"

There are three expressions. I want you to see how Peter expresses them in chapter eleven. In the fifteenth verse Peter

goes back and he has to give an account to the executive committee of the conference. He gets called on the carpet. And he has to explain what took place and how the Holy Ghost was poured out on them. This is how he explains it: "Then remembered I the word of the Lord, how that he said, John indeed baptized with water; but ye shall be baptized with the Holy Ghost. Forasmuch then as God gave them the like gift as he did unto us who believed on the Lord Jesus Christ; what was I, that I could withstand God?" Now Peter sums it all up and says they were baptized with the Holy Ghost. And if I as a Mennonite preacher would start to make, to preach about being baptized with the Holy Ghost, some of you would want to throw me out. But you couldn't do it. You'd get scared. What are you scared of? What are you scared of? The Christians in the book of Acts were baptized with the Holy Ghost? Yes or No?

Audience: Yes.

That's why I tried to pin your sight on that first proposition that the book of Acts is God's blueprint for the church. And they were all filled with the Holy Ghost. They were baptized with the Holy Ghost, if you please. Now you can take your choice and believe in God's word, or some distorted and warped opinion or judgement you've got. Take your choice. I'm going to take the word of God, for my part.

Peter sums it all up. The Holy Ghost fell on them. The Holy Ghost was poured out on them. And they received the Holy Ghost. And he says they were baptized with the Holy Ghost. Those must be the same thing.

Now let's go on some more. Over into the thirteenth chapter, second verse: "As they ministered to the Lord, and fasted, the Holy Ghost said, Separate me Barnabas and Saul for the work whereunto I have called them." Yes, this is God's plan. I skipped one chapter. In the eleventh chapter I wanted a passage. Here it is. They had a revival, a sweeping revival in Antioch. And it was a lay revival, incidentally. Apparently it was a lay revival. You understand what I mean, not a "lay down" revival but a "get up" revival on the part of the laity. You have it here in verse nineteen, "Now they which were scattered abroad upon the persecution that arose about Stephen travelled as far as Phenice, and Cyprus, and Antioch, preaching the word to none but unto the Jews only." And they were really turning things over. I think sometimes that if we would sit back and let the laity go ahead, they might beat us at it. Is that right?

I'll tell you one thing. And I don't say it to be discouraging to these brothers here on the platform, God bless every one of them and fill them with the Holy Ghost if they haven't been. Use them as a blessed presence and power. But I want to tell you this. I have observed and felt the pulse of the people across the United States in these months and years. And there is a deep burden for a revival on the part of the laity. And if we are as men of God called to preach and seize upon that situation I believe is going to be blessed of God.

Here was a lay revival. The preachers came down to see what was going on. They didn't squelch it either. The hand of the Lord was with them, it says in verse twenty-one of the eleventh chapter of Acts: "The hand of the Lord was with them: and a great number believed, and turned unto the Lord." Oh, that thrills me. The hand of the Lord was with them. Say, that's what we need today. Bless us in our services for him.

Now he speaks of Barnabas in verse twenty-two. Verse twenty-four tells us what kind of man he was. Here we have another leader. . . . It tells us that Barnabas was a man, well, let's see, "He was a good man and full of the Holy Ghost and of faith: and much people was added unto the Lord." I think there is a relationship between his being full of the Holy Ghost and people being added to the Lord. Now, brethren, we talk about a good reputation. I said a while ago about the deacons. We make a big case for a good reputation, good record, and all that, conform on a hundred different points. God have mercy, where have we emphasized that a man be full of the Holy Ghost? I think we better turn over another leaf, and start emphasizing the fulness of the Holy Ghost, and when we do that some other things are going to take care of themselves.

That's it. Here's another leader. Now how many have we got? Peter was full of the Holy Ghost. Stephen was full of the Holy Ghost. Paul was full of the Holy Ghost. And now Barnabas, full of the Holy Ghost. My, it looks like a precedent here. Certainly there is. Now let's look at the thirteenth chapter, the ninth verse: It says here again of Paul that he was filled of the Holy Ghost, and he said something that wasn't very nice either. If any man would use language like this today, I wonder . . . Here's what he said to the man. This is it. It's rough language. It's rough, and it's rugged. Some people think a preacher ought to be like a jellyfish, no backbone, no talk back, nothing, just give soothing words and say nice things and come out the benediction and give a bunch of pious platitudes and then go home and say "God bless you, you're all right, and all of you are gonna go to glory and I'll meet you there.

No! Paul, "filled with the Holy Ghost, set his eyes on a man and said, O full of all subtilty and all mischief, thou child of th

e devil, thou enemy of righteousness, wilt thou not cease to pervert the right ways of the Lord?" And he was full of the Holy Ghost when he said it.

Now you go over to the fifty-second verse of the same chapter, and you read this, "And the disciples were filled with joy, and the Holy Ghost." There it is. First time it says they were all filled. Now over in chapter nineteen, and that will conclude our study in Acts, but will not conclude the message.

In the nineteenth chapter, you have Paul coming down to Ephesus, and the thing uppermost in his mind is the Holy Ghost. I don't know what denomination Paul would fit in today. What do you think he would fit in today? I'm afraid we couldn't handle him. I really am. I'm afraid we couldn't handle him. I wonder about John the Baptist sometimes. If he would appear in our time, with his leather girdle and his coat of camel hair and . . . Say, if he would wander into your church on a Sunday morning. I wonder if there wouldn't be a walkout. Heh! We don't have any time for that kind of stuff. We're cultured around here. . . . I wonder whether John the Baptist could get into a modern Mennonite church. I really do. I wonder whether we could handle Paul. I really do. Because if he came into our church and started asking questions, "You people been filled with the Holy Ghost?" We'd say, "Paul, there's the door. We don't use that language around here. We don't use that language. Being filled with the Holy Ghost. There's the door." All right? Amen?

Audience: Amen

Say it then. Paul come down there, he didn't ask them, "Are you saved? Did you join the church? What church do you belong to?" No! "Have you received the Holy Ghost since you believed?" One version gives it, "when you believed." Take your choice. Makes no difference to me. I don't quibble about time. I think the devil gets us crossed up when we argue about certain things that are incidental and not in the foreground of the scripture. Take your choice. The Revised Version says, "Did you receive the Holy Ghost when you believed." Take your choice. The Greek says, "Having believed" (It's a participle.) "did you receive the Holy Ghost?" Okay . . . it doesn't make any difference to me. The question in my mind is this. That New Testament believers are confronted with a question. Have you been filled with the Holy Ghost or did you receive the Holy Ghost since you believed? Or when you believed? Take your choice. Take your choice. And they answered. They knew the answer.

Now listen to me. Why would Paul ask a question that had no answer? If Paul didn't expect New Testament believers to know whether they had received the Holy Ghost then why would he have asked them? Now I want to ask you, every one of you in this audience tonight, every last one of you from this front tier to the last one in every line: Have you received the Holy Ghost? Don't answer me now? You answer it in your heart. And you tell me you don't know, I'll make a safe, I'll make a safe guess that you haven't. Because when you have, you know it. And they said, "No." They hadn't been instructed and that's the same reason some of you haven't, because you don't know. That's the reason I hadn't. Because I didn't know. Unless I stand on my feet and said God's word, and asked him to purge out of me all prejudice and pride about the Holy Ghost and help me to believe the word of God.

You come back here, and Paul puts the question right straight to them. It's the vital question. It's the vital question, I tell you. That's there in the eighth chapter of Acts. That's the question. In the nineteenth chapter of Acts. That was the question. And now in September of 1952, I am coming back to the question. And it's a vital one. It is the precondition of power in the church. I ask you tonight, if you're a teacher would you like to know what the fullness of the Holy Ghost is like. Have you had trouble when your pupils . . . and you had the sense in your heart when you led class that you hadn't accomplished anything, or very little? Have you been performing a service in the church that leaves your heart heavy and cold? Nearly everywhere we go, there's some man of God whose been called to preach who comes around and says, "My ministry's a misery to me. Preaching is not a joy. I question whether God called me. I admit it. I was called by the church, hands laid on me. I was ordained. But I am miserable I want to tell you such a man is one of the most miserable creatures in the world. I'll tell you, if I didn't believe God called me to preach, and if I didn't believe he anointed me to preach, I'd hand my resignation in tonight. Be done with it. And I say furthermore, if I didn't enjoy it more than any other thing in the world, I'd still hand it in.

The Holy Ghost, my dear people, is the supreme condition, the full witness of the Holy Ghost is the supreme condition for power in your life, and in the church. Now who is this for? Somebody said, well, Pentecost. Early church, it was for them, surely, I'd go along with you so far. They were filled with the Holy Ghost. They were baptized with the Holy Ghost. They had the power of God. Sure. But today it's different. Oh? Who says so? Who said it was different today? Who said that God would give the church power in one era, and not give it in another? Who said so? I declare before God and men, that the same provision obtains today that it ever did in the Christian Church. The Spirit of God is here, this is the dispensation of the Holy Ghost. This is a dispensation of the Holy Ghost. And where have we left him? Generally in the backgr

ound. The Holy Ghost has been in the back seat, maybe in the trunk of our ecclesiastical vehicle. And I tell you, when the Holy Ghost is put under the wheel and at the controls, she'll roll. And there'll be prosperity, and there'll be power, there'll be progress, there'll be converts, there'll be accessions to the church.

[Image: <https://www.sermonindex.net/images/forum2/tentmeeting4.jpg>]

"George and Lawrence stand before two of the trailer trucks which haul the equipment from one campaign to another."

My dear people, when the Holy Ghost is given his rightful place in the church today. The question is this. I'm asking you. I'm not arguing about time. And I make this proposition. If you haven't been filled with the Holy Ghost yet, you can be now. I'm not saying that the normal thing is for a period of time to elapse. I'm not saying you must wait ten, fifteen, twenty years. No. I believe, my dear people, that whenever the conditions are being filled for the Holy Ghost are met, then is when one is filled. And that's what decides it. You want it at the time of conversion? All right, have it. Whenever the conditions are met, that is when it becomes real in the life of an individual. Now, you understand the Holy Ghost isn't a force, isn't a liquid. He's a person. He's a person. And failure to recognize that leads into every kind of . . .

What's Jesus saying tonight? Turn from sin. And man has said no. No, and will listen to the voice of the devil who will damn him in hell forever. I want to tell you my friends, tonight, if you don't listen to the message of grace now when you can be saved, you will hear it somewhere else. If you don't believe it tonight when you can accept it and be delivered forever, you will hear it somewhere else, and then you'll believe. You will find yourself in the regions of the damned where it has been preached and you'll be cursed. I believe this. You'll be cursed like a doomed spirit in hell. . . .

Tonight the gospel saves. Tonight grace is still good. Tonight men and women can believe it and be saved forever, and find out about the rest of it in the presence of his glory what we fail to make plain here. What we cannot understand here will be understood over there by those who have accepted it. Tonight we cast the gospel net. Again as fishers of men, I ask you to be obedient to the spirit of God. Tonight don't turn him away. I pray that not a single mother, son or daughter will die and go to hell that is in the audience tonight, that you won't have to remember in hell what you heard. But you can review it in glory.

The invitation therefore is extended to all men and women, boys and girls everywhere to the age of accountability. The invitation goes out tonight that whosoever will, may come. Whosoever will, regardless where you are from. If you have no church at all, you haven't accepted the Saviour, I invite you do it quickly tonight. If you are here and you don't have peace with God, I plead with you to settle it tonight. If you don't have assurance of salvation, you need spiritual help. I plead with you to settle it tonight and without any delay. We give this invitation with the audience standing, please. Let's bow our heads and close our eyes. I want those of you tonight to make a decision in your heart right now for God.

If the spirit of God is speaking to you, it makes no difference now who you are, what church you come from. Now listen, don't keep yourself away from God. Don't tell me I'm preaching to Mennonites. I'm preaching to everybody. Don't tell me you are a church member. I didn't ask you that. I asked you to get right with God. If you have peace in your heart, and you are ready to meet him, that's what I'm asking. I'm not asking if you are a church member. I'm saying if you need spiritual help tonight, or whatever it is, maybe you need to accept Jesus.

You may be a church member who never was regenerated and born again. That's . . . tonight. If that's the case in your life, if you joined the church and never did join anything else, I plead with you tonight to make your peace with God. I ask you to be obedient and do it now. In your heart you'll say, "Yes, tonight, I'll do it, Lord." Will you? Make up your mind in your own heart. Say yes to God and no to the devil. Will you do it? Right now, in your heart? "This is my life, yes, Lord, I yielded to you tonight." Will you? I ask those of you who have done it to slip up that hand long enough that I can see it. God bless you. Those of you there, God help you.

Some of you didn't understand my invitation I've asked you. To those of you whom God's spirit spoke to tonight and you need spiritual help, I ask you to put that hand up. Make that decision in your heart now. Tonight you need help and you made the decision in your heart. I want you to put your hand up. God bless you. Who else? Back there, way back. Who else? Slip it up quickly if you made that decision tonight. Some of you didn't understand me. You made it before. You settled it with Jesus, but I'm talking to those who haven't had it settled those who have made up their minds tonight in this meeting. I'll settle it tonight.

I'm asking for you to lift that hand up along with those others. Will you do it quickly? "I'm going to settle it tonight at all costs?" My friend back there. Who else? Down here. God bless you. Now you can put 'em down. Now for those who have accepted the Lord, and glad you did, and you have peace with God, bow your heads now. This is not for public gain. I want you to put your hand straight up, then we'll sing an invitation. Sing it right out. I'd like to see a landslide for God here tonight . . . The gospel of Jesus to save you from sin.

I'm asking of you who will, to come on down here. We want to pray with you in the prayer room. Not going to hurt you. Not going to do a thing you don't want to do. If you haven't peace with God, let us help you to get it tonight. That's all we want to do, put you in touch with Jesus Christ and get your sin solved. That's what we want to do for you. We promise we won't do a thing you don't want to do tonight. We just want you to settle it with God. I ask you to slip right out there and come on down here with the rest of them that are going to come while we sing. Sing it out. You need to come quickly. Do n't wait. Sing it, "I was sinking deep in sin"