

The Prayer Class

Purpose: *To encourage greater participation and joy in prayer*

The Prayer Class meets in God's Throne Room 24/7

In him and through faith in him we may approach God with freedom and confidence Ephesians 3:12.

Teacher: Abe Funk

Date: April 18, 2024

Lesson: *Ten Days of Waiting*

Welcome to The Prayer Class:

Loving Father, you have provided forgiveness and eternal life through Jesus, and you have given us the Holy Spirit to live in us, to bless us and make us a blessing and share the Good News. Thank you! Amen.

Bible Reading: Acts 2:1-13

When the day of Pentecost came, they were all together in one place. Suddenly a sound like the blowing of a violent wind came from heaven and filled the whole house where they were sitting. They saw what seemed to be tongues of fire that separated and came to rest on each of them. All of them were filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other tongues as the Spirit enabled them. Now there were staying in Jerusalem God-fearing Jews from every nation under heaven. When they heard this sound, a crowd came together in bewilderment, because each one heard them speaking in his own language. Utterly amazed, they asked: "Are not all these men who are speaking Galileans? Then how is it that each of us hears them in his own native language? Parthians, Medes and Elamites; residents of Mesopotamia, Judea and Cappadocia, Pontus and Asia, Phrygia and Pamphylia, Egypt and the parts of Libya near Cyrene; visitors from Rome (both Jews and converts to Judaism); Cretans and Arabs--we hear them declaring the wonders of God in our own tongues!" Amazed and perplexed, they asked one another, "What does this mean?" Some, however, made fun of them and said, "They have had too much wine."

Key Verse: *Amazed and perplexed, they asked one another, "What does this mean?" 2:12*

Background and Lesson:

Whenever God did a big new thing, he accompanied the event with unusual wonders and signs. That was true when God called Moses to rescue his people from slavery in Egypt. John the Baptist's life was miraculous and accompanied by miracles. Jesus substantiated his life and teachings with the most amazing miracles ever witnessed, including raising the dead to life. His own death was accompanied by an earthquake, and the sacred veil in the Temple was ripped open. His resurrection was accompanied by an earthquake, the arrival of angels to announce his resurrection recognized by unbelieving Roman soldiers—and what about the missing body of Jesus and the empty tomb?

The arrival of the Holy Spirit promised by Jesus was similarly accompanied by numerous miracles witnessed by believers and unbelievers alike. God made sure that all these events were acknowledged forever as foundational to his work in the world. The mysterious wind from heaven, flames of fire, and the change in the disciples are convincing evidence that God was doing something important. Fearful disciples were suddenly proclaiming the message of the risen Jesus, and many come to faith.

Pentecost is a word meaning fifty in Greek, was one of the festivals God gave Israel. It was called The Feast of Weeks and followed fifty days after the Passover Deuteronomy 16:9-12. The Feast of Weeks was a joyful celebration, giving thanks for a bountiful harvest when they brought fresh grain and other sacrifices to the tabernacle—and everyone was invited to participate. The list is as specific as it is unusual of any other feast—you, your sons and daughters, your menservants and maidservants, the Levites in your towns, and the aliens, the fatherless and the widows living among you. Remember that you were slaves in Egypt, and follow carefully these decrees Deut. 16:11-12. The Holy Spirit arrived fifty days after Passover, the crucifixion of Christ—after ten days of waiting—but right on schedule Acts 2:1.

A new day had dawned for all people of the world. The Holy Spirit's arrival, as promised by Jesus, gave birth to the Church that would be comprised of all people of the world, every color, every tribe, and every nation. Paul put it this way. *Here there is no Greek or Jew, circumcised or uncircumcised, barbarian, Scythian, slave or free, but Christ is all, and is in all* Col 3:11. Interesting as well that the Feast of Weeks had brought people together from 16 nations to Jerusalem to observe this amazing phenomenon—the arrival of the promised Holy Spirit, and the birth of the Church of Jesus Christ.

Millard Erickson lists six implications of the Holy Spirit's arrival. 1) The gifts we have are given to us by the Holy Spirit and are given to glorify and serve God. 2) The Holy Spirit empowers believers in their Christian life and service. Personal inadequacies should therefore not deter us. 3) The Holy Spirit gives gifts to the church wisely and sovereignly. They are not rewards or a reason for pride. 4) No one gift is for everyone, and no one person has every gift. They function properly within the body of believers. 5) We may rely on the Holy Spirit to teach us and guide us. 6) It is appropriate to direct prayer to the Holy Spirit, just as to the Father and to the Son, our Triune God. —from *Christian Theology*

Prayer comes alive with the Holy Spirit. ...*the Spirit helps us in our weakness. We do not know what we ought to pray for, but the Spirit himself intercedes for us with groans that words cannot express* Romans 8:26. In the Old Covenant era the Holy Spirit helped a select few for special tasks; today the Holy Spirit indwells all believers. He is our teacher, our guide, our Counsellor, our power, our friend, and constant companion. The Holy Spirit lives in you and is eager and willing to help and guide you, but remember that the unusual and exceptional events are not necessarily our normal experience.

Quote: *God is never in a hurry—but he is never late—always right on time, his time*

Think About This:

Take some time to evaluate your relationship with the Holy Spirit. Invite him to fill you and use you.

A Prayer for You:

Thank you, O my Father for sending us your Son, and Leaving your Spirit till the work on earth is done. Amen

My Notes and what To Pray for:

Add your prayer requests here: yourself, family, church family, missionaries, & leaders in government

Note: All Scriptures are from the NIV Bible unless otherwise indicated

Devote yourselves to prayer, being watchful and thankful Colossians 4:2

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