

ANTIOCH BIBLE CLASS

LESSON TOPIC

THE FRUIT OF THE PROMISE

SCRIPTURE TEXT: ACTS 2:41-47

MEMORY VERSE. ACTS 2:41. Then they that gladly received his word were baptized; and the same day there were added unto them about three thousand souls.

INTRODUCTION

The final test of every principal and every life is what are its fruits or works? Jesus said: "By their fruits ye shall know them". Many times the scriptures state that "every man shall be judged according to his works". Don't "tell" of the great things you are or have done, demonstrate it by the fruit continually manifested by the way you live and conduct life.

Thus the great outpouring of the Holy Ghost and its genuine power and enduring affect on the lives of those who received it, will be the real proof that God has wrought a transforming work in them. If it was merely a demonstration for that moment and for only those of that day, then it would have passed off the scene of their lives and history as quickly as a ball game is over and then vanishes from memory.

However that is not what happened. These people were not mere vessels through whom God performed an amazing demonstration of his power. They are a people whose lives God has dramatically, instantaneously transformed from "wannabee" believers into lives that will bear the fruit of this experience in all they are and do. They are not people who have experienced a momentary "shock" of divine power; they are a people who have been resurrected from sin to walk in a new life.

This calls attention to a critical analysis of this great occurrence. The "initial" evidence that God had poured out the gift of the Holy Ghost on their lives was that they began to speak with other tongues as the Spirit gave them utterance. The long term, daily evidence that God had given them this gift, is found in the verses of this lesson as well as the fruit of their lives from that time forward. Those two distinctions, including their sequence, are essential in understanding this gift of God which they have just received.

Let us look into the verses of this lesson to get an idea of the "fruit of the Spirit" in a Christian life.

DAILY SCRIPTURES AND COMMENTS

MONDAY. ACTS 2:41. THE PEOPLE RESPOND.

SCRIPTURE.

V41. Then they that gladly received his word were baptized; and the same day there were added unto them about three thousand souls.

COMMENTS.

When the gospel is preached by the power of the Holy Ghost sent down from heaven, there is conveyed to the hearers of that message an awesome responsibility. God has spoken and people are accountable for what he says and what they do with it.

On this day the response was amazing. First they had gladly heard the message of God's salvation. What a tragedy that men hear the gospel and refuse it. On this occasion they had not only heard the word of God audibly, they had heard with their hearts and they had rejoiced over what they had heard.

Those who "gladly heard" were baptized. It is usually assumed that this means water baptism, which is no doubt true. But there is no reason to think that it was not also the baptism of the Holy Ghost. Maybe it was both. What is certainly true is that they were received into God's family that day.

It is said that "three thousand souls were added unto them that same day". Where were they baptized (as if it matters where)? How did they handle so many? These are irrelevant questions, arising purely from our curiosity. The statement of fact is all that is necessary. It is interesting to note that when the law was given three thousand were stricken (because of their idolatry, Ex. 32:28). When grace was given three thousand received a new life.

TUESDAY. ACTS 2:42-43. NEW BORN BABES IN CHRIST.

In I Pet. 2:2, scripture admonishes us: "as new born babes desire the sincere milk of the word, that ye may grow thereby". That is the natural inclination of a new baby, to desire to be fed. And so it was with the first (and all subsequent) real converts to Christ. They continued in what the apostles were teaching them about Jesus Christ. They needed to learn how to live this "life" they have just received. Two things are absolutes in this case: (1) anyone born into Christ must have Christian indoctrination; (2) anyone truly born into Christ will hunger for this indoctrination. No exceptions!

This new birth and apostolic indoctrination prompted fellowship. You don't leave a baby to find food for itself. A new baby absolutely needs the warmth, love and attention of the family, especially the mother. Neither can a Christian survive and grow without the fellowship of the body of believers.

"AND IN PRAYERS". The lifelessness of the law which they had previously followed (or the godless way of the Gentiles) did not produce "heavenly conversation". As new born babes they cry out to God and the Church. Praying is an essential part of becoming a Christian. This is not simplistic, selfish,

ritualistic, meaningless utterances. It is calling upon God for every instinctive need of the life. So many professing Christians go through their religious lives “mute and dumb” about God. That is a deformity that should not be.

The effect of this spiritual birth so far is doctrine, fellowship and prayers. There is more.

WEDNESDAY. ACTS 2:44. BONDED BY A COMMON PURPOSE.

SCRIPTURE.

V44. And all that believed were together, and had all things common.

COMMENTS.

Thousands of people, new-born in Christ, with a multitude of previous interests, temperaments and backgrounds, are bonded, inseparable, as one family, together with a common interest and desire. This was no less amazing than the baptism of the Holy Spirit, and was, in fact, a direct result of that baptism. They didn't just decide that they would “honor their diversities while also being tolerant of each other”. They aren't being tolerant, they are in love with their own “flesh and blood” spiritually. They have put off the old life and are putting on the new. They are CHRISTIANS now!

There are two very powerful dynamics causing this bonding together: (1) The power of the Holy Spirit; (2) the power of their mutual faith in Christ, which they all had in common. They were not interpreting scriptures as they saw them and then putting up with other opinions. They are now one in Christ Jesus.

THURSDAY. ACTS 2:45. WHAT ABOUT OUR POSSESSIONS?

SCRIPTURE.

V45. And they sold their possessions and goods, and parted them to all men, as every man had need.

COMMENTS.

Nothing has been said about money or possessions. In fact it is so early on in their new life, it would have been so far from the apostles minds at this point to be asking for money. The people were not the victims of TV “beggars”, pawning off on some claim about what God has shown them about sending money to their cause. I do not believe that this amazing act of charity was at all promoted by some plea from the apostles. I think it was an act as spontaneous as everything else they were doing (under the influence of the Holy Spirit). It came from hearts motivated by the work of God in their hearts and they could not be constrained.

They saw a need and the grace of a loving God shed abroad in their hearts by the Holy Spirit, moved them to take extraordinary measures to meet those needs. They were not just taking up a “love offering” or even pay their tithes; it was far more than that. They were freely, liberally dispossessing themselves of that which was rightfully theirs and using it to meet the needs of others, some of whom

they likely did not even know. But that is precisely the effect the baptism of the Holy Ghost will have on you. You are not your own, you have been bought with a price, and your only motive is to honor and glorify Christ.

FRIDAY. ACTS 2:46-47. THE DAILY ROUTINE.

SCRIPTURE.

V46. And they continuing daily with one accord in the temple, and breaking bread from house to house, did eat their meat with gladness and singleness of heart. 47. Praising God, and having favor with all the people, and the Lord added to the church daily such as should be saved.

COMMENTS.

These verses break down as follows:

- a. They continued daily = no let up in their on-going deliverance and life.
- b. With one accord = no divisions of faith or pettiness among them.
- c. In the temple = Jesus drove out the moneychangers and now he has filled it with a new way of worship.
- d. From house to house = they were in close relationship with each other.
- e. Gladness = The joy of an experience in the Lord overflowed their lives.
- f. Singleness of heart = They had one focus and motive of life.
- g. Praising God = Their praise was like a great artesian well for the wonder of God.
- h. Having favor with all the people = Not necessarily the priests and elders, but with the rank and file of people.

These were daily routines for these new Christians. This was their life. This was what issues forth from a life born of God. These are not drunken as ye might suppose, but this is that which God had promised from the ages past and now has fulfilled. It is marvelous to the people and also to the Lord.

SUMMARY

While there is no direct mention made in Acts chapter 2, about love, forgiveness, peace, longsuffering, forbearance, mercy, kindness, commitment, meekness, humility, holiness and many other godly characteristics, yet you instinctively know they were present in great abundance. You could not have the many amazing things which they demonstrated without their presence also. Their joy, unity, faith, charity and fellowship with each other could not have been present without these additional fruits of the Spirit as well.

The prophet had said there would be a fountain opened in Jerusalem for sin and uncleanness. That fountain is now gushing forth out of lives God has changed by the miracle working power of the Holy Spirit. And it is transforming all who come and drink of this life-giving flow.

This is that great and notable day of the Lord which the prophets foretold. This is the day when “the desert would blossom as a rose”. This is the day when men’s swords would be beaten into plowshares and their spears into pruning hooks, instruments of usefulness and peace instead of instruments of war. That is the spirit that fills these who have experienced this changing power. This is the day when “God would judge the world by that man Jesus Christ”. It is the day When God would come and save us. And in that day the waters of life would flow back to cover the saints of the old covenant and forward to cover the saints born under the new covenant. It will be one day with one Lord and his name one. This is that day wherein God would create a “new heaven and a new earth”, where righteousness and holiness reign. It is the day the Lord hath made and we should be glad and rejoice in it.

QUESTIONS

1. Was it from a list of rules or from a spontaneous reaction that spiritual fruit was produced?
2. Name at least 5 fruits exhibited in this lesson.
3. What value was the fruit of unity among believers?
4. Why was the fruit of joy and gladness so manifest?
5. Who was added to the church daily?
6. Explain the importance of the new converts continuing steadfast in the apostles doctrine.