

Good News of God's Spirit and Community

Thomas Robinson, *How the Gospel Works* 6, October 20, 2019

Acts 2:36-47 Translation TR A Community of Good News on Pentecost

³⁶ (Peter concluded) "The whole house of Israel must know this for certain: **God** has made him both **Lord** and **Anointed King** (*Christos*), this **Jesus**, the very one **you crucified**."

³⁷ Now when they heard it, the people were **cut to the heart**, and said to Peter and the rest of the apostles, "What should we do, brothers?"

³⁸ Peter told them, "**Change your ways of thinking and acting!** Then every one of you should be **plunged** in water claiming the identity of **Jesus as Anointed King**. Then you'll have **forgiveness** of your sins and receive the **Holy Spirit as a gift**. ³⁹ For this promise is for **you** and for **your children** and for **all who are far off**, all whom the LORD our God calls."

⁴⁰ And with many other words he **bore witness** and continued **encouraging** them, saying, "Let God **deliver** you from this twisted generation." ⁴¹ Those who welcomed his message were plunged in water, and about **three thousand** people were added to the community that day.

⁴² And they **devoted themselves** to the **teaching** from the apostles, to their **shared life**, to their **breaking of the bread**, and to their **prayers**. ⁴³ And a sense of **great awe** began to come into every life, and God was doing many marvelous deeds and signs through the apostles.

⁴⁴ All of those who believed were **together** and considered **all things as shared**. ⁴⁵ And they were even selling their property and belongings and distributing the proceeds to all, as any had need. ⁴⁶ And day by day, they continued to attend the temple courts as a **united whole**, while **breaking bread in their homes**, and they shared their food with hearts full of **joy** and **sincerity**, ⁴⁷ praising God and showing his **grace** toward **all the people**.

And day by day, the Lord was adding to their community those who were being delivered.

I Corinthians 12:4-6, 11-13 Translation TR The Spirit's Varied Work

⁴ There are varieties of gifts of grace, but the same Spirit; ⁵ and varieties of ministries, but the same Lord; ⁶ and varieties of works, but it's the same God who works all things in everyone.

¹¹ One and the same Spirit empowers all of these things, as he apportions to each individual just as he wills. ¹² For just as the body is one whole and has many parts, and all the body's parts, though many, are one body, so also is the Anointed King (*Christos*). ¹³ For in one Spirit we were all baptized into one body – whether Jews or Greeks, slaves or free – and all were granted to drink the one Spirit.

Romans 12:1-3, 6-13 Translation TR A Community shaped by Grace

¹ I'm appealing to you, brothers and sisters, as the result of God's mercies, to present your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and pleasing to God – your worship that fits God's message. ² Don't let yourselves be shaped by this age, but be transformed by renewing your mind, so that you can recognize what is God's intention – always for what is good and pleasing and mature....

⁶ We have gifts of grace that differ according to the grace granted to us: If it's prophecy, do it in proper relation to our faith. ⁷ If it's ministry, then serve. If you're one who teaches, focus on the teaching. ⁸ If you're an encourager, then encourage. Let the giver show sincere generosity. Let the leader show diligence. The one who shows mercy, let it be with gladness.

⁹ Let love be genuine! Abhor what's evil, hold fast to the good. ¹⁰ Learn to really like each other with mutual affection. Outdo each other in showing honor. ¹¹ Don't lag in zeal, but let the Spirit burn in you as you serve the Lord. ¹² Rejoice in your hope, be patient in suffering, persevere in prayer. ¹³ Share in meeting the needs of God's people while you extend hospitality to outsiders....

Ephesians 4:7, 11-16 Translation TR Jesus' Gifts for His Body's Growth

⁷ Grace was given to each of us as a gift of the Anointed King.... ¹¹ He himself gave us the apostles, the prophets, the evangelists, the shepherds, and teachers, ¹² to equip God's people for the work of ministry, for building up the body of the Anointed King. ¹³ The aim is that we all experience the oneness that flows from trusting and knowing the Son of God, so that we come to mature adulthood, to a measure of maturity marked by the fullness of the Anointed King.

¹⁴ It's important that we no longer be children, tossed about by the waves and blown by every wind of teaching ... and schemes that deceive. ¹⁵ Rather, by practicing the truth in love, we will grow up in every way toward one who is our true head, the Anointed King. ¹⁶ It's from him that this whole body – carefully joined and held together by every supporting ligament as each part works as it should – creates the body's growth for building itself up in love.

The Spirit Poured Out by a Crucified Messiah

The Gospel is the announcement of what happened in Jesus! But the event of Jesus goes on! The disciples were told to wait – this is God's work. God comes as the Spirit's poured out. The waiting Peter speaks: Scripture, Jesus with Cross, Resurrection, Enthronement, & Spirit. All are surprised, captured, even Disciples. But it's Good News even for the crucifiers. All are called to changed thinking and practice. Jesus is the Anointed One. Plunge in! God's Spirit is given to you as never before. People respond from everywhere. 3,000 baptized. The Spirit shapes a new community. Thousands of stories, lives to change. Devotion to several things: Teaching, learning, realizing the breadth & depth of what God has done. Shared life, a new community beginning to cross all boundaries. Breaking bread: Jesus death and life in shared meals. Prayers, a renewed relation with Abba, new hopes, needs. They realize a oneness and new reality that sees possessions in a new way, as resources to share. They flood the temple as a united group and share intimacy in scores of homes.

A Focused Unity and an Amazing Variety

As that Spirit Community spread, the Spirit broke down boundaries people hadn't envisioned. The common tendency of people is to divide over differences. Paul urges the Corinthians to celebrate variety brought together by One God known in Three. The unity is not sameness inside a boundary, but Jesus as center who unites divisions that divide the world. Even Greeks and slaves drink the Spirit of God that shared creation and inspired Prophets. The Spirit values even individual diversity as he empowers people. He wants a body of diverse parts working together to create a life that embodies the love of the Messiah Jesus.

Growing into the Maturity of Jesus

The community created by the Spirit has its distinct character because of its Center in the Good News of Jesus. The self-giving love of Jesus, the heart of God, shown in the Cross and Resurrection draws the community toward a challenging character that carries every member through growth toward Jesus. The start is simple but transformation goes on. Growing into life that embodies the Good News of Jesus is true worship. It's learned and practiced in Community. Jesus gives us a variety of helpers, but they're growing too as part of the whole. Learning & practice create a body that's changing, growing to match its head. A body building itself with muscles, ligaments, neurons of His Love.