



Thought For The Week

June 15, 2014

Scriptures: Acts 2:1-11 • 1 Corinthians 12:3b-7, 12,13 • John 20:19-23, Doctrine & Covenants 156 – 163.

I am fairly certain that with a bit of prompting most Christians can describe for you their instinctual sense about the fundamentals of God the Trinity, at least God the Father and Jesus Christ, Son of God. Regarding the Holy Spirit, however, there might be some hesitation.

Most instructors when teaching fundamental theology, approach the discussion regarding the Holy Spirit by asking the students to give their sense about spirit in the ordinary way we speak about that. Of course, they would readily cite school spirit, team spirit, spirit of military men and women, citizen spirit, dedication to purpose, etc. However, if asked to define spirit, they would invariably be unable to do that. Their answer would usually be something like this: "You can't define it; you just sort of know when it's there, when it happens."

At the same time, when asked for examples of spirit, they had no problem describing the noise, the banners, cheer leading at a basketball, football, & soccer games; or a concert by a famous singer, etc. Perhaps young scholars are correct in saying that spirit does not need a definition; you will simply know when it is happening; it has something to do with enthusiasm, conviction, fervor and passion. In other words, spirit is usually present when some important issue or event is happening.

Let's begin speaking of the Holy Spirit, the Spirit of the Trinity in the context of human life and conversation. We have a ready example of that in the scriptures that describes Pentecost: It took place on the fiftieth day after the Jewish feast of Passover. The setting is a gathering of the disciples in hiding after Jesus' death and resurrection. They are obviously disheartened: the great hopes for a kingdom had disappeared.

It was in those very depressing moments, therefore, that something completely unheard of happened to them: they could not define it but they tried to describe it as being overwhelmed by wind and fire. In the midst of this wind & fire experience they knew that something had happened to them; they also knew that their next task was to continue the work of Jesus, which is exactly what they did; we are witnesses of it even today; it's called Christian in the Church.

The question for us in our time, therefore, is to ask whether there have been any similar "Pentecost" happenings in our own time. The events that readily come to mind are the prophetic teachings in Sections 156 - 163 of our Doctrine and Covenants. These messages among other things were intended to solve an immense problem of ecclesial stagnation.

All of us who look back on the events that took place after these prophetic messages were made are convinced that this was clearly an example of the work of the Holy Spirit. There was neither wind nor fire but Community of Christ Members will point to evidence in our church today that will support our claim for the Spirit's work. Our worship is now celebrated in an ever growing fashion throughout our church culture, the sacraments have been enlightened, women are now serving in our Priesthood, and our membership has a definite zeal for the global nature of our worldwide church.

Finally, let us insist that the Spirit works in less spectacular ways in our Church and in our Christian lives each time we Christians find unique ways to continue Christ's work just as the first disciples did. You will not hear any wind or feel any fire but I can predict that something is happening that will change your notion of being Christian. Try it sometime.

Prayer Thought For The Week

We praise you, God, for this day and its blessings. We thank you for the gift of Jesus Christ whose teachings of peace we strive to follow.

We sense the power of your mercy and grace and long to be free from that which separates us from your loving presence. As you have forgiven us, heal our brokenness, and make us one with you and with one another.

We uphold for your blessing of peace the country and people of Algeria. Guide the leaders of all nations in promoting policies and practices, which benefit all persons, not just those in positions of power or privilege. Help us work together in promoting just and peaceable communities for the people of all nations.

By your grace, teach us to turn our backs on pride and overcome our need for power; by your embracing heart, erase our fear of those who are different; by your love, still all our unloving ways; by your shalom, reverse all our impulses for hostility.

Hear our prayers for peace, O Lord, and grant us courage and compassion as we seek to be your loving presence in the world. In Jesus' name we pray, Amen.

Stewardship Thought For The Week

Mankind's folly is that we continually make our plans for God's creation without adequately consulting the master planner; the owner of the household. God's plan includes putting His work first. Having a plan for regularly increasing our proportional giving until we achieve tithing is good medicine for what ails our personal finances.

Time is a precious commodity, perhaps our most precious. We were created to do Christ's work in our allotted time on earth and must be faithful in the way in which we use our time.

The ministry of Community of Christ members includes bearing witness to Christ wherever you may be. And the duty of all members also includes weekly worship. Church attendance would seem to contradict those duties. This reflection encourages you to be true to your Baptismal Covenant during the summer.

While the First Amendment to the Constitution prevents government from creating a religion, it is our responsibility to ensure that we have Godly government carrying out God's plan for his creation.