

UNIFORM Sunday School Lesson

The Rev. Cecil M. Perry
Pastor,
Ridgecrest Baptist Church
POWER FOR A
WORLD MISSION

Memory verse: "Ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Spirit is come upon you, and ye shall become witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth." 1:8.

Our lessons this quarter deal with the growth of the early Christian group and the struggles against its natural and expected enemies. The first test is for a free and unhindered Gospel. The people who accepted and followed Jesus were also Jews, and deeply rooted in their religious prejudices, traditions, customs, and beliefs. And while they were converted genuinely, they were slow to let go their former beliefs and

practices. The nthere was open opposition, by the same group who had crucified Jesus. But most of all was the unfinished business that Jesus had begun, the redemption of a lost world by the proper relating of the human soul to its divine Creator. How could so small, so weak, so unlearned, so poor a group carry on such an unbelievable undertaking?

I. They were promised the power with which to carry on.

(1) They had followed, accepted and believed Jesus in His earthly mission, and they stayed with Him all the way through the Ascension. They saw His ascend bodily into heaven, as clearly as you and I see our loved ones depart from the airport. Once they are gone, they are gone. "Now, what shall we do?" "How shall we do it?" "Who shall lead in the undertaking?"

(2) As everywhere else in His teaching He had left no word unsaid here either . . . "but tarry

ye in the upper room, in Jerusalem, until you are clothed with power from on high." As a warrior put on his armour so the Christian was to be clothed with superhuman power of God to fight God's battles on earth.

(3) He asked them to carry out a world mission, and at the same time offered the power necessary thereto. a. First, He drew their attention away from purely national, racial, political interests, from "times" and "seasons". He said these concerns are God's, not yours, and as such they should be left there by all Christians. Jesus REFUSED to answer their question thereby labeling it as not essential to what He had commanded them to do. b. Then He focused their attention on the things that would prepare them to receive the power that was necessary to doing God's command, which is their chief concern and main business. c. The business of the Christian is to bear witness from the Gospel of Jesus Christ as God's redemption, not to speculate on when He is coming back to see how well each has served.

II. Preparing to Receive the power.

(1) From the ascension they went back to study (read the Old Testament) to meditate, to pray in absolute obedience to His last words.

(2) They were TOGETHER. Our separateness is the sin of all churches, denominations, even individuals, and thereby our utter weakness.

(3) They were ALL, with ONE ACCORD, in ONE PLACE! This is the tragedy of every church in America! We are NEVER in any one of these three conditions, to say nothing of all of them. Yet they are the REQUIRED essentials to the first thing in Christianity.

(4) This does not mean "The Twelve", but the entire Christian group, men and women, many of whom were called by name. Incidentally this is the last time "Mary, the Mother of Jesus" is mentioned in the New Testament. But the story of the Church is filled with these same names to the end of the New Testament.

III. The Promise of power fulfilled in power: The coming of the Holy Spirit, Acts 2:1-4.

(1) This event, known generally as the Day of Pentecost, ranks along with the birth of Christ, the Resurrection, and Atonement, as pivotal in the events of history.

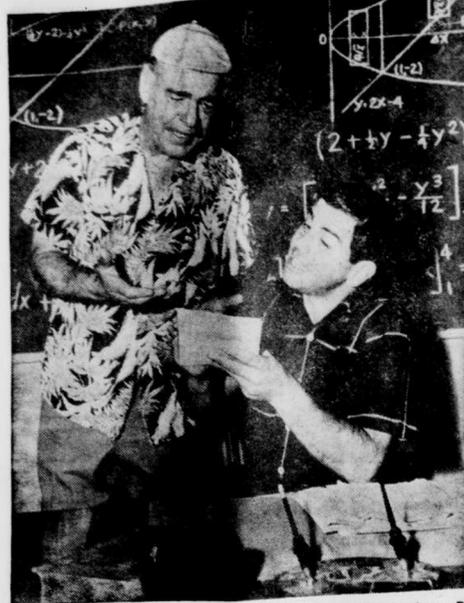
(2) As Jesus entered history through birth, when The Word became flesh, so He entered humanity in the Holy Spirit, to carry on His Kingdom's work.

(3) Jesus fixed this event as the PERMANENT BASIS on which ALL Christians in all ages of the world are to do His work.

(4) ONLY spirit-led, Spirit-powered people can do His work. If any other kind of person could, then we would not have needed Him in the first place.

(5) "They were ALL filled". This is the secret of the Church's life, work, unity, and witness. God does not intend that part of the congregation be Spirit-led and part not. But, those who are not present can not be participants, for they were NOT there, so do not know. So they become agitators and exterminators seeking to defeat what the ones who do KNOW what God wants to do.

(6) Let us remember that this "speaking with tongues" was given one one occasion only, by



Lon Chaney gets a lesson in the Armenian dialect from Ross Bagdasarian, composer of "C'mon A My House," for his role as Jules Samerian in "The Golden Junkman." In this dramatization of a real-life story by John Nesbitt, to be seen on Telephone Time over the CBS television network, Sunday, April 8, at 7:00 p.m., Chaney goes to college in middle age to win back the respect of his twin sons.

BROAD RIVER HD CLUB GUEST AT BLUE MIST

The Broad River Home Demonstration Club met Friday afternoon, March 23, at "Blue Mist", the home of Mrs. Dick Tarbert, with Mrs. E. M. Kirstein and Mrs. Ray Kirstein serving as hostesses. Mrs. Katie Kirstein presided during the meeting. Mrs. Bea Moore opened the meeting with a devotional period. Mrs. Mamie Sue Evans gave a most informative program on "The Importance of Freezing Vegetables". Refreshments carrying out the Easter motif were served. Those present were Mrs. Katie Kirstein, Mrs. Bea Marlow, Mrs. Charles Lytle, Mrs. E. M. Kirstein, Mrs. Roy Kirstein, Mrs. Leslie Marlow, Mrs. Hestella Wheelon, Mrs. Charles Fortune, Mrs. Evans, and Mrs. Tarbert. Two small guests were present, Sandra and Janice Marlow.

Gentry Finishes Special School

Marine MSgt. Robert F. Gentry, Jr., son of Mrs. Mildred Buchanan of Black Mountain, was graduated Feb. 10 from the 2nd Marine Division's Non-Commissioned Officer Leadership school, Camp Lejeune, N. C.

The four-week course covered military tactics, military bearing, leadership and the use of infantry weapons.

endar), Spring Beauty (pink and white), Bloodroot (white).

Early blooming trees and shrubs attract attention. Among these are the Hobble-bush, found on the Parkway from Dome Gap to Balsam Gap; the Shadblow; the flowering Dogwood; and the treasured Silver Bell tree which is in abundance near Mount Mitchell. Another flowering tree is the Fraser Magnolia, with its large creamy wax like flowers, found near Mount Mitchell and on the Wagon Road Gap section of the Parkway.

During the first two weeks of May, the flame Azalea will start a colorful display at the lower elevations. The Mountain Laurel will start to bloom during this period, and there is a large display on the Parkway from Oteen to Craven Gap. All indications point to an outstanding season for all the wild flowers this year.

The Pink Azalea found on the Wagon Road Gap section should be at its best during the first part of May.

June is the month of the rhododendron in the Western North Carolina mountains, and the hillsides become covered with a carpet of pink and purple rhododendron. At Craggy especially, east of Asheville, this fabulous flower blooms forth in a vast array of color which brings thousands of visitors to view the great natural gardens.

With the first warm breezes of spring blowing gently over the hills, that famous verse written about Western North Carolina comes to mind:

"Twill not be long before I hear the bullbat on the hill,
And in the valley through the dusk, the pastoral whippoorwill.
A few more friendly suns will call the blueets through the loam,
And star the lanes with buttercups, away down home."

The second week in April will see the wild flower season get under way in earnest in Western North Carolina. The many attractive spring-blooming ground flowers will make a showy spread on the forest floor during this period. Some of the well known are: Wild Geranium (purple), Fire Pink (red), Columbine (red), Bellwort (yellow), Merybells (yellow), Dutchman's Breeches (white and yellow), Blueets (blue), Larkspur (purple), Showy Trillium (white), Fringed Toothwort (lav-

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The Holy Spirit, and then for a definite purpose. SIXTEEN NATIONALITIES WERE PRESENT AND THEY NEEDED A UNIFYING SPIRIT.

(7) Incidentally this Pentecost experience is a bit hard on the segregationists, as Christianity began formerly on a HUMANITY basis, not racial.

IV. The First use of this power.

(1) It made them "one blood in Christ". HIS blood. "where there is neither Greek nor Jew, circumcision, uncircumcision, Syctian, slave, nor free, but where CHRIST IS ALL, and IN ALL".

(2) It could be that this Pentecost occasion is PROPHECIC as well as historic. For today there are very few dialects, and no languages, in which the Bible in some portion at least, can not be read. So NOW we can all hear in our own language wherein we were born "The wondrous words of God".

(3) This Power is here first used to WITNESS, a weak, scared, faltering, even denying disciple, Simon Clay becomes Peter Stone, and face to face with those who crucified Jesus he accused, proved and condemned them UNAFRAID.

(4) Then he turned and preached forgiveness and repentance to them, his own, as well as God's through Christ v 29 following.

(5) The points of his sermon were: a. Jesus of Nazareth is the Messiah. b. You crucified Him, but God raised Him up. c. His miracles and teachings were demonstrated in your presence. d. And now He is at the Right Hand of God seeking forgiveness for all who ask it. e. Why do you not repent?

(6) The promised power was not only manifest in Peter's preaching but in its effect on the hearers, for he drove home to their hearts their own guilt in all that had happened, and they owned it as true.

(7) The result of this power is seen in the conversion to Christ of "about 3,000 souls". And this is what Jesus had told them to do in the first place, and that it would work out this way.

V. Application Today.

The power needed by the Missionary witnessing to a heathen on the other side of the world, is no different from the power I need with my neighbor next door.

Our ignorance of the power of the Holy Spirit is due to the fact that we never undertake anything beyond human power, therefore never have occasion to experience divine power as promised.

This offer of the Holy Spirit's power is to EVERY Christian, not to those few whom we sometimes designate as in "special Christian service".

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(March 28)

The calendar announces Spring, but there continues to be a chill in the atmosphere with occasional snow flurries. Saturday we had rain, sleet and snow.

Bob Hunter of Riceville and Miss Janice Bishop were on their way to church Sunday morning when a car pulled out of a side road, and to avoid a collision, Bob hit a bank. He and Miss Bishop received cuts and bruises which required some stitches.

Congratulations to Mr. and Mrs. Jim Fuller of Singing Water. They are the parents of a daughter, born Sunday, March 25. They have two other children.

After a cruise to Cuba, Wilbur G. Cressman is spending a seven-day leave at home with his parents, Mr. and Mrs. G. R. Cressman.

Mr. and Mrs. Zeb Nichols and Wayne were guests of Mr. and Mrs. Harold Nichols and mother, Mrs. Mary Nichols at dinner Sunday.

Visitors in the Troy Gragg home recently included Mr. and Mrs. Clyde Hyatt of Asheville, Mrs. Rosa Gaddy, Evelyn, Junior, Eddie, Daniel and family, Mrs. Louise Phillips and daughter, all of Flat Creek, and Fred Wyatt of Lake View terrace.

Born to Mr. and Mrs. R. H. Jackson of Riceville road, a son.

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