

The Fragments that Remain

Text: Acts 18:23-Acts 19:7

John 6:12: "When they were filled, he said unto his disciples, Gather up the fragments that remain, that nothing be lost."

I am using the story of the five loaves and two small fishes to segue into our message today. Thousands had just been fed in this famous miracle of Jesus. And when these who had received the benefit of the miracle had eaten until they were filled, there were twelve baskets left over. We do not know for certain what Jesus did with the remaining baskets, or who were going to be the recipients of the leftovers. Some have suggested the disciples were the beneficiaries. I lean toward the idea that Jesus sent the leftovers home with the boy who gave his lunch. The point I want to make today is that we have moved past the fulfillment of John the Baptist's prophesy who said in Matthew 3:11, "I indeed baptize you with water unto repentance: but he that cometh after me is mightier than I, whose shoes I am not worthy to bear: he shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost, and with fire." One of Jesus' last words to His disciples was, "And, behold, I send the promise of my Father upon you: but tarry ye in the city of Jerusalem, until ye be endued with power from on high" (Luke 24:49). We find in Acts 1:8, our Lord said, "But ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you: and ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judaea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth." Acts 2:1, 2 shows us the initial fulfillment: "And when the day of Pentecost was fully come, they were all with one accord in one place. And suddenly there came a sound from heaven as of a rushing mighty wind, and it filled all the house where they were sitting." Then we observe in Acts 11:15, 16 how the Holy Spirit in-filled the Gentiles the same way He did the Jews on the Day of Pentecost: "And as I began to speak, the Holy Ghost fell on them, as on us at the beginning. Then remembered I the word of the Lord, how that he said, John indeed baptized with water; but ye shall be baptized with the Holy Ghost."

Now Apollos enters the picture along with a group of other disciples that are in the dark about the Holy Spirit and His ministry in the church. Apollos and these disciples knew of the preaching of John the Baptist and the promise of the Messiah and were familiar with the basic teaching of the Gospel, i.e., the death, burial and resurrection. Hebrews 6:1 says, "Therefore leaving the principles of the doctrine of Christ, let us go on unto perfection; not laying again the foundation of repentance from dead works, and of faith toward God." Apollos and these disciples missed the Day of Pentecost and the subsequent outpouring of the Holy Spirit in Acts 11.

Our text has been debated for centuries and will probably continue to be debated. The question under debate is, were these men unsaved or were they saved and simply lacking the infilling of the Holy Spirit? Let's talk about it.

I. THE REMARKABLE MAN

Acts 18:24-26

A. Apollos was an educated man.

The largest library in the world at this time was the library at Alexandria, the city named after Alexander the Great. We know that Apollos was highly educated because of the command he had over the language. The Bible says he was eloquent.

B. Apollos was a man of the Word.

One of the greatest compliments a preacher can receive is to be called a man, “mighty in the Scriptures.” No matter where Apollos was spiritually at this point, we have this assurance found in Isaiah 55:11: “So shall my word be that goeth forth out of my mouth: it shall not return unto me void, but it shall accomplish that which I please, and it shall prosper in the thing whereto I sent it.”

C. Apollos was zealous for the Lord.

Apollos knew the details of Christ’s mission on the Earth. He is fervent in his spirit, but not filled with the Spirit, having openly experienced the baptism of John, not the baptism of the Holy Spirit. Much like Thomas who missed the resurrected Lord (John20:24), Apollos had missed Pentecost.

D. Apollos was a teachable man.

When Aquila and Priscilla heard the bold message of Apollos, they took him aside and taught him the way of the Lord, “...more perfectly.” Not only did Apollos have a fervent spirit, he had a humble, teachable spirit.

II. THE SPIRIT-FILLED MAN

Acts 18: 27, 28

Apollos no doubt after being instructed of the coming of the Holy Spirit from Aquila and Priscilla and the way of God more perfectly, received the fullness of the Spirit. Luke 11:13:

“If ye then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children: how much more shall your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to them that ask him?” Acts 18:28: “For he mightily convinced the Jews, and that publicly, shewing by the scriptures that Jesus was Christ.” Now, not only was Apollos mighty in the Scripture, but he himself became mighty through the Spirit. Zechariah 4:6b: “...Not by might, nor by power, but by My Spirit, saith the Lord of hosts.” There are preachers that can inform people, but only the Spirit-filled man can move people.

III. DISCIPLES IN THE HINTERLANDS

Acts 19:1,2

How sad! These disciples, like Apollos, were operating in their Christian life without the Spirit’s fulness. Paul is now in the third missionary journey and there is work to be done. God, in His mercy never leaves the Christian who longs for all that God has in a state of struggle. Isaiah 55:1: “Ho, every one that thirsteth, come ye to the waters, and he that hath no money; come ye, buy, and eat; yea, come, buy wine and milk without money and without price.”

IV. BAPTISM IN THE WATER AND BAPTIZED IN THE HOLY SPIRIT

Acts 19:4-7

This is the only place in the New Testament where people previously baptized submitted to immersion again. This is one of the texts that our Baptist forefathers would use to take only “like faith and order,” baptism. Let me explain.

Sprinkled or being poured upon is in violation of baptism by immersion, showing the death, burial and resurrection of Jesus Christ and therefore is not legitimate. If someone came for membership who came from a church that believes in baptismal regeneration, i.e., believing water baptism is a requirement for salvation, we would not receive that as valid baptism. First, we would find out if they are truly saved and if so, then ask them to submit to Scriptural, believer's baptism. It appears that these disciples realized that the teachings of their group of disciples was so far off base from the teaching of the greater Body of Christ, they seemed to be very happy to be "...baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus" (Acts 19:5b). This is an interesting use of wording. When we are commanded to pray in Jesus' name (John 14:13, 14), we are invoking the authority of Jesus. So, these disciples are saying, in essence, we need to be baptized in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit (whose ministry we were unaware of).

After they were baptized, Paul laid hands on them, and they were filled with the Holy Spirit. And the result was just like the two other times when the Holy Spirit came on Pentecost and then to the Gentiles in Acts 11. They were able to speak in other languages and prophesy.

Conclusion:

"Gather up the fragments that remain!" The Lord wants all of His disciples to have the power of God through the Holy Spirit. Acts 2:39: "For the promise is unto you, and to your children, and to all that are afar off, even as many as the Lord our God shall call."

-Pastor Pope-