

The Holy Spirit

Pastor Ken

July 6, 2025

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You get out the vehicle and swipe the card, put the gas nozzle into your tank and head into the store for important convenience store business.

A hot dog? No, contents aren't healthy. A Slurpee, oh yes! You chat with a friend you see in the store. Then you head back to the car, thinking the tank must be full. You grab the nozzle, place it back in position. You decide to wash the windows before you head off. Nothing better than clean glass. And you drive off.

As you are going down the highway, you are thinking how good it feels to have a full tank of gas, you look down and are shocked!

It is still on empty!

What? You make a quick return trip to get gas. Now, you have 5 miles left of gas. As you are turning around, you wonder. Did the gas nozzle turn off prematurely? You are playing repeatedly in your mind about what happened and then you suddenly realize: **You forgot to squeeze the lever.**

You did everything except the one thing that matters. Forget to get gas. Does that happen in your life? You forget to receive the Holy Spirit's infilling? Busy. Burned out. Bloodied by life's burdens. You forgot to receive power from the Holy Spirit.

The Holy Spirit will give you power for daily living.

The Holy Spirit will give you strength for the journey.

The Holy Spirit will carry burdens you were never intended to carry.

God does not want His children to be stressed out, worn down, done-in children **as they** represent His purposes in the world.

If we have learned anything from the book of Acts, the Holy Spirit comes with power.

- **Power to** defeat the evil one.
- **Power to** silence the inner voices of fear, anxiety, anger, and depression.
- **Power to** get out of bed, get out of the way of yourself, get busy about God's mission, get on with life.
- **Power to** face the **unexpected**. Death of a loved one.
- **Power to** face the **unexplained**. Potholes of problems.
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What does your Holy Spirit gas tank read? 10 miles until you are sitting on the side of the road? Or do you have a full tank of Holy Spirit power? At the beginning of each day, during your 15 minutes in a chair, you can invite the Holy Spirit to fill you afresh. Empower you anew. Overshadow you with his love.

⁸ But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth. (Acts 1:8-NIV)

Your Bible makes more than 100 references to the Holy Spirit. Jesus talks more about the Holy Spirit than the church, finances, and future.

The Holy Spirit is the presence of God in your life, carrying on the works of Jesus.

Your best life is lived in the daily infilling power of the Holy Spirit.

Two translations of Ephesians 5:18, make it blindingly clear, to daily -keep being filled with the Holy Spirit.

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We come to Acts 6 on our journey through the book of Acts. In this chapter we are reminded and learn another truth about the New Testament church.

At Bethel we model the ministry based on an Acts 2 church.

So, God empowers you with His Holy Spirit and organizes His church for service.

In chapter 5, we see the word “**church**” for the first time, and in chapter 6, we see the word “**disciple**” for the first time. Question. What is a disciple devoted to? The advancement and activity of the church in the power of the Holy Spirit.

At the end of Acts 2, we discover that the church is the Bride of Christ. Her life activity is spelled out with the acronym-W.I.F.E.

Worship. Instruction. Fellowship. Evangelism.

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*⁴⁷ **praising God** and enjoying the favor of all the people. And the Lord added to their number daily **those who were being saved**. (Acts 2-NIV)*

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Look with me for a moment at the word **devoted**,” in verse 42. *^{42a} They devoted themselves... (Acts 2-NIV)* Devoted. You say what is so important about that word?

Gang without supernatural levels of devotion, a church is powerless, a church is helpless, and a church is hopeless.

Without supernatural levels of devotion to God a church is dead in the water.

Its vision is a pipe dream.

Its potential is precisely 0.

But, when all the members of the church are filled with the Holy Spirit and they have supernatural levels of devotion to Christ and his church.

When a church is filled with believers that are **fully devoted**,
...the church is **unstoppable**,

...the churches potential is **unlimited**,

.... The churches vision is **achievable**,

...and the churches future is **bright**.

Disciples sell property. Give generously. Speak for Christ boldly.

Share their faith regularly. Pray for the sick. Heal the afflicted.

Defeat persecution with Jesus' death and resurrection.

They tell the truth always.

And today, we see them serve the body when a need arises.

As we have seen from beginning of life in the new church, this group of Christ followers looked out for one another. They sacrificed by selling property and they kept good records as to who needed assistance.

In Acts 6, the needs of the widows were going unmet. At this time in Acts the church is made up of primarily Jewish believers in Jesus Christ. As we saw in our text, the Jewish community of believers was known as Hellenistic Jews and Hebraic Jews.

In those days when the number of disciples was increasing, the Hellenistic Jews among them complained against the Hebraic Jews because their widows were being overlooked in the daily distribution of food. (Acts 6:1-NIV)

Hellenistic Jews

The word Hellenism is a word that describes Greek culture. The Hellenistic Jews were no less Jewish than the Hebraic Jews. Jewish birth and bloodline. While Jewish by birth, they had adopted some of the customs from their Gentile-Greek neighbors and participated in Greek practices in many ways.

While the Greek Jews rejected the Greeks pagan religion and practices, they worshipped the one true God, went to the temple regularly and practiced Jewish festivals and followed the law of Moses. They also accepted the reality that they were living under Roman government in a Roman world. The most noted quality of the Hellenistic Jews was they spoke Greek as their 1st language. Many spoken Greek and Hebrew. The New Testament is written in Greek.

Hebraic Jews

Hebraic Jews on the other hand, were more traditionally Jewish in life, practice, and faith. They neither dressed like Greeks, associated with Greeks and they were much more committed to the law of Moses.

Their teachers were the Pharisees, and they followed every aspect of Jewish life such as dress, ceremonial cleansing, dietary practices and notably, they were cautious who they did business with.

Hebraic Jews were more nationalistic, and they spoke Hebrew or Aramaic the language of Jesus and they spoke Greek only when necessary.

Whereas Hellenistic Jews were a part of Greek culture without abandoning faith and practice, the Hebraic Jew insulated themselves from anything Greek and Gentile.

Both groups made up the early Pentecostal church.

- They ate together because of Jesus.
- Studied God's word together because of Jesus.
- They served together by selling possessions and giving to the poor because of Jesus.
- They sat by each other as they listened to the preaching of the apostles because of Jesus.
- They met in houses of one another; they took communion together because of Jesus.
- Their families were friends, because of Jesus.
- In some cases, their kids married one another, because of Jesus.
- They did business with each other, because of Jesus.

The most noted feature was that both Hellenistic and Hebraic Jews were filled with the Holy Spirit. Both groups did the ministry of preaching, healing, deliverance and serving.

Because Jesus was their leader, Hellenistic and Hebraic Jews were empowered by the Holy Spirit, they did the miraculous in the power of the Holy Spirit, evangelized in the power of the Spirit, both groups had a powerful bond. A personal bond. A precious bond.

Bethel enjoys similar powerful bonds that are not Gentile vs Jewish but are connected by other ties.

Everyone **at** Bethel comes from a broken background of hurts, hang-ups, and habits.

Nobody is excluded, and if you say otherwise, you are too full of pride and prejudice to admit it, or you still have not learned God's lesson about lying.

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In the early days of Jesus death and resurrection his life appealed to the masses and many in that group were poor. Abandoned. Neglected. Widows. Endangered. Orphans. And many, many slaves.

Some destitute people were neglected, ill-treated, and cast aside and so they made their way to this new church filled with power to heal, people who would give generously and a place where unconditional love flourished in unlimited amounts.

The unconditional love of Jesus was seen, experienced and so this became a magnet for massive numbers to choose Christianity. For thousands of years, according to the Law of Moses, the needs of the poor, widow and outsider were to be provided for.

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God mandated that his people care for these people. You could be ostracized from life in the temple if you neglected such activity. God was serious about people who were less fortunate. Many years later from the lips of Jesus half-brother James we read:

Religion that God our Father accepts as pure and faultless is this: to look after orphans and widows in their distress and to keep oneself from being polluted by the world. (James 1:27-NIV)

Nobody needed more help than the widow. They could not bear children, often owned no property or assets and many had no family. If they entered this new Pentecostal church they could be rejected and turned away from their community or family.

Now, widows fared much better in the Hebraic community, because of Moses teaching about how God wants his people to care for them. So, what arose was some class warfare. Maybe even some cultural prejudice. At the minimum just some outright neglect.

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Those in the Greek speaking Jewish community, complained that their Hellenistic widows in the fast-growing multicultural church had been overlooked in the distribution of food. Apparently, the food program was broken.

In ancient history, this idea of organizational problems is no stranger to Moses, Joshua, Nehemiah and now the apostles.

God's work in the earth requires leaders to create strategies to meet the needs of God's people:

- Moses was doing too much so he appointed judges. (*Exodus 18*)
- Joshua designated cities of refuge. (*Joshua 20*)
- Nehemiah involved everyone in rebuilding the walls. (*Nehemiah 3*)
- In Acts 6, the apostles used their church leadership skills. (*Acts 6*)

This problem got the attention of the apostles, and they went right to work resolving this food distribution problem.

² So the Twelve gathered all the disciples together and said, "It would not be right for us to neglect the ministry of the word of God in order to wait on tables." (Acts 6-NIV)

Peter calls for a business meeting and pulls all the disciples from this growing church together, Hellenistic-Greek Jews and Hebraic-Moses Jews and make this announcement:

What we are doing is not working.

People are coming to us all the time with problems they are facing about our meals on wheels food program. And in our efforts to solve this problem, we are creating another problem.

There is just enough time in a day or week for us as apostles to run the church and run the feeding program. If the church were to represent Christ, who cares deeply for all these neglected groups, the leadership must come up with a solution.

As the early church grew rapidly, it required new strategies to establish an effective witness in Jerusalem.

More important if their testimony about Christ was to stay intact, they must solve this problem fast. In fact, they did just that, if you fast forward to Acts 6:7, you can see what I mean.

The word of God continued to spread, [preaching problem solved]

...and the number of disciples increased greatly, [testimony increased for Christ]

...and a large group of priests became obedient to the faith [priests who handle practical temple ministry saw the outcome of the decision and were impressed.]

To accommodate the growth and keep their focus on bible teaching, leadership and prayer, the apostles charged the disciples with selecting 7 men to oversee the food distribution program as a whole and especially keep their attention on the widows.

³ Brothers and sisters, choose seven men from among you who are known to be full of the Spirit and wisdom. We will turn this responsibility over to them ⁴ and will give our attention to prayer and the ministry of the word.” (Acts 6-NIV)

Why 7? Perfect number? Some connections to Old Testament temple life. Seven was the number that qualified, they need to get on with the job, time was of the essence.

These servants would function to filter the practical needs and preserve the unity of the new church, so the apostles could continue in the mission, teaching, prayer, evangelism, signs, and wonders.

The church is the only spiritual organization in the world.

The word for selection of these individuals was our word for minister, servant and one who waits on tables.

Jesus Christ reminds us of the premium he places on this role of servanthood when he says in *Mark 10:45*, *Jesus Christ did not come to be served, but to serve and give his life a ransom for many*. Our Savior was first and foremost a servant.

Churches that fail to resolve church issues can easily disintegrate into chaos, gossip, and general dissatisfaction with the life of the body. Years later Paul called out the Corinthians and told them to clean up their organizational act.

God’s activity in His church is to function with order. (*1 Corinthians 14:40*)

As we mentioned earlier, all of this started because of church growth. As the number of disciples was increasing, the **Hellenistic Jews** among them complained against the **Hebraic Jews** because their widows were being overlooked in the daily distribution of food.

In the food distribution there seemed to be a problem of favoritism.

So how was the favoritism solved? You might not see this in the text unless you look between the lines.

The apostles check list of servants to lead the meals on wheels, was men of good reputation and full of the Holy Spirit. This was such an important ministry it had to be filled with these new believers that got saved and then were filled with the Holy Spirit.

The apostles wanted like minded Christ followers, those they could trust who had the same quality of faith.

Look a little closer and we will see that, it was the disciples and not the apostles that made the selection. Wow! Genius. No way to pin it on the apostles that they were somehow showing favoritism. The disciples made the selection; look at who they selected. All Greek disciples - the group who felt neglected.

⁵ This proposal pleased the whole group. They chose Stephen, a man full of faith and of the Holy Spirit; also Philip, Procorus, Nicanor, Timon, Parmenas, and Nicolas from Antioch, a convert to Judaism. ⁶ They presented these men to the apostles, who prayed and laid their hands on them. (Acts 6-NIV)

The problem was solved by those closest to those in need. Only two of the servants, disciples or deacons are ever heard from again. We will meet Stephen in our next chapter.

New Testament churches experienced persecution, flagrant sin, and frustration by God's people.

The apostles have been in prison, preaching and healing, defending Jesus works to the government and had to do some church discipline. That is a lot of physical and emotional work. More than ever the ministry structure must change.

In order for the leaders to lead, preach and pray, they required team members to handle the ministry amongst the people.

The Acts 6 problem of serving widows was solved through shared ministry.

And the best churches that solve problems that arise from seasons of growth build a ministry based on spiritual gifts.

Effective churches discover/develop the spiritual gifts of its members.

The book of Acts is about the arrival of the Holy Spirit and the SUPERNATURAL transformations that go along with His unlimited power as we operate in the gifts of the Holy Spirit.

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Why 7? Perfect number? Some connections to Old Testament temple life. Seven was the number that qualified, they need to get on with the job, time was of the essence.

These servants would function to filter the practical needs and preserve the unity of the new church, so the apostles could continue in the mission, teaching, prayer, evangelism, signs, and wonders.

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Churches that fail to resolve church issues can easily disintegrate into chaos, gossip, and general dissatisfaction with the life of the body. Years later Paul called out the Corinthians and told them to clean up their organizational act.

God’s activity in His church is to function with order. (*1 Corinthians 14:40*)

As we mentioned earlier, all of this started because of church growth. As the number of disciples was increasing, the **Hellenistic Jews** among them complained against the **Hebraic Jews** because their widows were being overlooked in the daily distribution of food.

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The book of Acts is about the arrival of the Holy Spirit and the SUPERNATURAL transformations that go along with His unlimited power as we operate in the gifts of the Holy Spirit.

The Holy Spirit

Pastor Ken

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You get out the vehicle and swipe the card, put the gas nozzle into your tank and head into the store for important convenience store business.

A hot dog? No, contents aren't healthy. A Slurpee, oh yes! You chat with a friend you see in the store. Then you head back to the car, thinking the tank must be full. You grab the nozzle, place it back in position. You decide to wash the windows before you head off. Nothing better than clean glass. And you drive off.

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You did everything except the one thing that matters. Forget to get gas. Does that happen in your life? You forget to receive the Holy Spirit's infilling? Busy. Burned out. Bloodied by life's burdens. You forgot to receive power from the Holy Spirit.

The Holy Spirit will give you power for daily living.

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At the end of Acts 2, we discover that the church is the Bride of Christ. Her life activity is spelled out with the acronym-W.I.F.E.

Worship. Instruction. Fellowship. Evangelism.

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Gang without supernatural levels of devotion, a church is powerless, a church is helpless, and a church is hopeless.

Without supernatural levels of devotion to God a church is dead in the water.

Its vision is a pipe dream.

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But, when all the members of the church are filled with the Holy Spirit and they have supernatural levels of devotion to Christ and his church.

When a church is filled with believers that are **fully devoted**,
...the church is **unstoppable**,

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...and the churches future is **bright**.

Disciples sell property. Give generously. Speak for Christ boldly.

Share their faith regularly. Pray for the sick. Heal the afflicted.

Defeat persecution with Jesus' death and resurrection.

They tell the truth always.

And today, we see them serve the body when a need arises.

As we have seen from beginning of life in the new church, this group of Christ followers looked out for one another. They sacrificed by selling property and they kept good records as to who needed assistance.

In Acts 6, the needs of the widows were going unmet. At this time in Acts the church is made up of primarily Jewish believers in Jesus Christ. As we saw in our text, the Jewish community of believers was known as Hellenistic Jews and Hebraic Jews.

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Hellenistic Jews

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While the Greek Jews rejected the Greeks pagan religion and practices, they worshipped the one true God, went to the temple regularly and practiced Jewish festivals and followed the law of Moses. They also accepted the reality that they were living under Roman government in a Roman world. The most noted quality of the Hellenistic Jews was they spoke Greek as their 1st language. Many spoken Greek and Hebrew. The New Testament is written in Greek.

Hebraic Jews

Hebraic Jews on the other hand, were more traditionally Jewish in life, practice, and faith. They neither dressed like Greeks, associated with Greeks and they were much more committed to the law of Moses.

Their teachers were the Pharisees, and they followed every aspect of Jewish life such as dress, ceremonial cleansing, dietary practices and notably, they were cautious who they did business with.

Hebraic Jews were more nationalistic, and they spoke Hebrew or Aramaic the language of Jesus and they spoke Greek only when necessary.

Whereas Hellenistic Jews were a part of Greek culture without abandoning faith and practice, the Hebraic Jew insulated themselves from anything Greek and Gentile.

Both groups made up the early Pentecostal church.

- They ate together because of Jesus.
- Studied God's word together because of Jesus.
- They served together by selling possessions and giving to the poor because of Jesus.
- They sat by each other as they listened to the preaching of the apostles because of Jesus.
- They met in houses of one another; they took communion together because of Jesus.
- Their families were friends, because of Jesus.
- In some cases, their kids married one another, because of Jesus.
- They did business with each other, because of Jesus.

The most noted feature was that both Hellenistic and Hebraic Jews were filled with the Holy Spirit. Both groups did the ministry of preaching, healing, deliverance and serving.

Because Jesus was their leader, Hellenistic and Hebraic Jews were empowered by the Holy Spirit, they did the miraculous in the power of the Holy Spirit, evangelized in the power of the Spirit, both groups had a powerful bond. A personal bond. A precious bond.

Bethel enjoys similar powerful bonds that are not Gentile vs Jewish but are connected by other ties.

Everyone **at** Bethel comes from a broken background of hurts, hang-ups, and habits.

Nobody is excluded, and if you say otherwise, you are too full of pride and prejudice to admit it, or you still have not learned God's lesson about lying.

What is God's lesson about truth telling?

God always only ever tells the truth.

Bethel Life Center has many people who are growing profoundly in Christ from broken backgrounds of **hurts**, some hurt from divorce and others hurt from depression.

Bethel Life Center has many people who are growing profoundly in Christ from broken backgrounds of **hangups**, some hangups are prejudice and others have hangups about painkillers.

Bethel Life Center has many people who are growing profoundly in Christ from broken backgrounds of **habits**, some habits are addictions to alcohol and others are addicted to Amphetamines.

In the early days of Jesus death and resurrection his life appealed to the masses and many in that group were poor. Abandoned. Neglected. Widows. Endangered. Orphans. And many, many slaves.

Some destitute people were neglected, ill-treated, and cast aside and so they made their way to this new church filled with power to heal, people who would give generously and a place where unconditional love flourished in unlimited amounts.

The unconditional love of Jesus was seen, experienced and so this became a magnet for massive numbers to choose Christianity. For thousands of years, according to the Law of Moses, the needs of the poor, widow and outsider were to be provided for.

¹⁸ He defends the cause of the fatherless and the widow, and loves the foreigner residing among you, giving them food and clothing. (Deuteronomy 10:18-NIV)

God mandated that his people care for these people. You could be ostracized from life in the temple if you neglected such activity. God was serious about people who were less fortunate. Many years later from the lips of Jesus half-brother James we read:

Religion that God our Father accepts as pure and faultless is this: to look after orphans and widows in their distress and to keep oneself from being polluted by the world. (James 1:27-NIV)

Nobody needed more help than the widow. They could not bear children, often owned no property or assets and many had no family. If they entered this new Pentecostal church they could be rejected and turned away from their community or family.

Now, widows fared much better in the Hebraic community, because of Moses teaching about how God wants his people to care for them. So, what arose was some class warfare. Maybe even some cultural prejudice. At the minimum just some outright neglect.

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Those in the Greek speaking Jewish community, complained that their Hellenistic widows in the fast-growing multicultural church had been overlooked in the distribution of food. Apparently, the food program was broken.

In ancient history, this idea of organizational problems is no stranger to Moses, Joshua, Nehemiah and now the apostles.

God's work in the earth requires leaders to create strategies to meet the needs of God's people:

- Moses was doing too much so he appointed judges. (*Exodus 18*)
- Joshua designated cities of refuge. (*Joshua 20*)
- Nehemiah involved everyone in rebuilding the walls. (*Nehemiah 3*)
- In Acts 6, the apostles used their church leadership skills. (*Acts 6*)

This problem got the attention of the apostles, and they went right to work resolving this food distribution problem.

² So the Twelve gathered all the disciples together and said, "It would not be right for us to neglect the ministry of the word of God in order to wait on tables." (Acts 6-NIV)

Peter calls for a business meeting and pulls all the disciples from this growing church together, Hellenistic-Greek Jews and Hebraic-Moses Jews and make this announcement:

What we are doing is not working.

People are coming to us all the time with problems they are facing about our meals on wheels food program. And in our efforts to solve this problem, we are creating another problem.

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Because Jesus was their leader, Hellenistic and Hebraic Jews were empowered by the Holy Spirit, they did the miraculous in the power of the Holy Spirit, evangelized in the power of the Spirit, both groups had a powerful bond. A personal bond. A precious bond.

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In the early days of Jesus death and resurrection his life appealed to the masses and many in that group were poor. Abandoned. Neglected. Widows. Endangered. Orphans. And many, many slaves.

Some destitute people were neglected, ill-treated, and cast aside and so they made their way to this new church filled with power to heal, people who would give generously and a place where unconditional love flourished in unlimited amounts.

The unconditional love of Jesus was seen, experienced and so this became a magnet for massive numbers to choose Christianity. For thousands of years, according to the Law of Moses, the needs of the poor, widow and outsider were to be provided for.

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Nobody needed more help than the widow. They could not bear children, often owned no property or assets and many had no family. If they entered this new Pentecostal church they could be rejected and turned away from their community or family.

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The Holy Spirit

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You get out the vehicle and swipe the card, put the gas nozzle into your tank and head into the store for important convenience store business.

A hot dog? No, contents aren't healthy. A Slurpee, oh yes! You chat with a friend you see in the store. Then you head back to the car, thinking the tank must be full. You grab the nozzle, place it back in position. You decide to wash the windows before you head off. Nothing better than clean glass. And you drive off.

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You did everything except the one thing that matters. Forget to get gas. Does that happen in your life? You forget to receive the Holy Spirit's infilling? Busy. Burned out. Bloodied by life's burdens. You forgot to receive power from the Holy Spirit.

The Holy Spirit will give you power for daily living.

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In chapter 5, we see the word “**church**” for the first time, and in chapter 6, we see the word “**disciple**” for the first time. Question. What is a disciple devoted to? The advancement and activity of the church in the power of the Holy Spirit.

At the end of Acts 2, we discover that the church is the Bride of Christ. Her life activity is spelled out with the acronym-W.I.F.E.

Worship. Instruction. Fellowship. Evangelism.

*⁴² They devoted themselves to the **apostles’ teaching** and to **fellowship**, to the breaking of bread and to prayer.*

⁴³ Everyone was filled with awe at the many wonders and signs performed by the apostles.⁴⁴ All the believers were together and had everything in common. ⁴⁵ They sold property and possessions to give to anyone who had need. ⁴⁶ Every day they continued to meet together in the temple courts. They broke bread in their homes and ate together with glad and sincere hearts,

*⁴⁷ **praising God** and enjoying the favor of all the people. And the Lord added to their number daily **those who were being saved**. (Acts 2-NIV)*

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Evangelism- *And the Lord added to their number daily **those who were being saved**.*

Look with me for a moment at the word **devoted**,” in verse 42. *^{42a} They devoted themselves... (Acts 2-NIV)* Devoted. You say what is so important about that word?

Gang without supernatural levels of devotion, a church is powerless, a church is helpless, and a church is hopeless.

Without supernatural levels of devotion to God a church is dead in the water.

Its vision is a pipe dream.

Its potential is precisely 0.

But, when all the members of the church are filled with the Holy Spirit and they have supernatural levels of devotion to Christ and his church.

When a church is filled with believers that are **fully devoted**,
...the church is **unstoppable**,

...the churches potential is **unlimited**,

.... The churches vision is **achievable**,

...and the churches future is **bright**.

Disciples sell property. Give generously. Speak for Christ boldly.

Share their faith regularly. Pray for the sick. Heal the afflicted.

Defeat persecution with Jesus' death and resurrection.

They tell the truth always.

And today, we see them serve the body when a need arises.

As we have seen from beginning of life in the new church, this group of Christ followers looked out for one another. They sacrificed by selling property and they kept good records as to who needed assistance.

In Acts 6, the needs of the widows were going unmet. At this time in Acts the church is made up of primarily Jewish believers in Jesus Christ. As we saw in our text, the Jewish community of believers was known as Hellenistic Jews and Hebraic Jews.

In those days when the number of disciples was increasing, the Hellenistic Jews among them complained against the Hebraic Jews because their widows were being overlooked in the daily distribution of food. (Acts 6:1-NIV)

Hellenistic Jews

The word Hellenism is a word that describes Greek culture. The Hellenistic Jews were no less Jewish than the Hebraic Jews. Jewish birth and bloodline. While Jewish by birth, they had adopted some of the customs from their Gentile-Greek neighbors and participated in Greek practices in many ways.

While the Greek Jews rejected the Greeks pagan religion and practices, they worshipped the one true God, went to the temple regularly and practiced Jewish festivals and followed the law of Moses. They also accepted the reality that they were living under Roman government in a Roman world. The most noted quality of the Hellenistic Jews was they spoke Greek as their 1st language. Many spoken Greek and Hebrew. The New Testament is written in Greek.

Hebraic Jews

Hebraic Jews on the other hand, were more traditionally Jewish in life, practice, and faith. They neither dressed like Greeks, associated with Greeks and they were much more committed to the law of Moses.

Their teachers were the Pharisees, and they followed every aspect of Jewish life such as dress, ceremonial cleansing, dietary practices and notably, they were cautious who they did business with.

Hebraic Jews were more nationalistic, and they spoke Hebrew or Aramaic the language of Jesus and they spoke Greek only when necessary.

Whereas Hellenistic Jews were a part of Greek culture without abandoning faith and practice, the Hebraic Jew insulated themselves from anything Greek and Gentile.

Both groups made up the early Pentecostal church.

- They ate together because of Jesus.
- Studied God's word together because of Jesus.
- They served together by selling possessions and giving to the poor because of Jesus.
- They sat by each other as they listened to the preaching of the apostles because of Jesus.
- They met in houses of one another; they took communion together because of Jesus.
- Their families were friends, because of Jesus.
- In some cases, their kids married one another, because of Jesus.
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The most noted feature was that both Hellenistic and Hebraic Jews were filled with the Holy Spirit. Both groups did the ministry of preaching, healing, deliverance and serving.

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Disciples sell property. Give generously. Speak for Christ boldly.

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As we have seen from beginning of life in the new church, this group of Christ followers looked out for one another. They sacrificed by selling property and they kept good records as to who needed assistance.

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The most noted feature was that both Hellenistic and Hebraic Jews were filled with the Holy Spirit. Both groups did the ministry of preaching, healing, deliverance and serving.

Because Jesus was their leader, Hellenistic and Hebraic Jews were empowered by the Holy Spirit, they did the miraculous in the power of the Holy Spirit, evangelized in the power of the Spirit, both groups had a powerful bond. A personal bond. A precious bond.

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Why 7? Perfect number? Some connections to Old Testament temple life. Seven was the number that qualified, they need to get on with the job, time was of the essence.

These servants would function to filter the practical needs and preserve the unity of the new church, so the apostles could continue in the mission, teaching, prayer, evangelism, signs, and wonders.

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God’s activity in His church is to function with order. (*1 Corinthians 14:40*)

As we mentioned earlier, all of this started because of church growth. As the number of disciples was increasing, the **Hellenistic Jews** among them complained against the **Hebraic Jews** because their widows were being overlooked in the daily distribution of food.

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New Testament churches experienced persecution, flagrant sin, and frustration by God's people.

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You are driving home from work, and you notice the gas tank is low. Your fuel gage tells you that in 10 miles you will be stranded on the side of the road. Because your tank is low, you can't make it to your favorite gas station and get cheap gas. Ouch! You make a quick decision about where to buy gas and pull off at a nearby convenience store. As you pull in, you let out a sound of relief because you made it.

You get out the vehicle and swipe the card, put the gas nozzle into your tank and head into the store for important convenience store business.

A hot dog? No, contents aren't healthy. A Slurpee, oh yes! You chat with a friend you see in the store. Then you head back to the car, thinking the tank must be full. You grab the nozzle, place it back in position. You decide to wash the windows before you head off. Nothing better than clean glass. And you drive off.

As you are going down the highway, you are thinking how good it feels to have a full tank of gas, you look down and are shocked!

It is still on empty!

What? You make a quick return trip to get gas. Now, you have 5 miles left of gas. As you are turning around, you wonder. Did the gas nozzle turn off prematurely? You are playing repeatedly in your mind about what happened and then you suddenly realize: **You forgot to squeeze the lever.**

You did everything except the one thing that matters. Forget to get gas. Does that happen in your life? You forget to receive the Holy Spirit's infilling? Busy. Burned out. Bloodied by life's burdens. You forgot to receive power from the Holy Spirit.

The Holy Spirit will give you power for daily living.

The Holy Spirit will give you strength for the journey.

The Holy Spirit will carry burdens you were never intended to carry.

God does not want His children to be stressed out, worn down, done-in children **as they** represent His purposes in the world.

If we have learned anything from the book of Acts, the Holy Spirit comes with power.

- **Power to** defeat the evil one.
- **Power to** silence the inner voices of fear, anxiety, anger, and depression.
- **Power to** get out of bed, get out of the way of yourself, get busy about God's mission, get on with life.
- **Power to** face the **unexpected**. Death of a loved one.
- **Power to** face the **unexplained**. Potholes of problems.
- **Power to** face the **unwanted**. Sore backs. Late bill notices. Complaints your dog barks late into the night. Lack of strength to work that screwdriver.

What does your Holy Spirit gas tank read? 10 miles until you are sitting on the side of the road? Or do you have a full tank of Holy Spirit power? At the beginning of each day, during your 15 minutes in a chair, you can invite the Holy Spirit to fill you afresh. Empower you anew. Overshadow you with his love.

⁸ But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth. (Acts 1:8-NIV)

Your Bible makes more than 100 references to the Holy Spirit. Jesus talks more about the Holy Spirit than the church, finances, and future.

The Holy Spirit is the presence of God in your life, carrying on the works of Jesus.

Your best life is lived in the daily infilling power of the Holy Spirit.

Two translations of Ephesians 5:18, make it blindingly clear, to daily -keep being filled with the Holy Spirit.

*Don't get drunk with wine, because it makes you lose control. Instead, **keep on being filled** with the Spirit — (Ephesians 5:18-CJB)*

*Stop getting drunk with wine, which leads to wild living, but **keep on being filled** with the Spirit. (Ephesians 5:18-ISV)*

We come to Acts 6 on our journey through the book of Acts. In this chapter we are reminded and learn another truth about the New Testament church.

At Bethel we model the ministry based on an Acts 2 church.

So, God empowers you with His Holy Spirit and organizes His church for service.

In chapter 5, we see the word “**church**” for the first time, and in chapter 6, we see the word “**disciple**” for the first time. Question. What is a disciple devoted to? The advancement and activity of the church in the power of the Holy Spirit.

At the end of Acts 2, we discover that the church is the Bride of Christ. Her life activity is spelled out with the acronym-W.I.F.E.

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At the end of Acts 2, we discover that the church is the Bride of Christ. Her life activity is spelled out with the acronym-W.I.F.E.

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Share their faith regularly. Pray for the sick. Heal the afflicted.

Defeat persecution with Jesus' death and resurrection.

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As we have seen from beginning of life in the new church, this group of Christ followers looked out for one another. They sacrificed by selling property and they kept good records as to who needed assistance.

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Some destitute people were neglected, ill-treated, and cast aside and so they made their way to this new church filled with power to heal, people who would give generously and a place where unconditional love flourished in unlimited amounts.

The unconditional love of Jesus was seen, experienced and so this became a magnet for massive numbers to choose Christianity. For thousands of years, according to the Law of Moses, the needs of the poor, widow and outsider were to be provided for.

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Peter calls for a business meeting and pulls all the disciples from this growing church together, Hellenistic-Greek Jews and Hebraic-Moses Jews and make this announcement:

What we are doing is not working.

People are coming to us all the time with problems they are facing about our meals on wheels food program. And in our efforts to solve this problem, we are creating another problem.

There is just enough time in a day or week for us as apostles to run the church and run the feeding program. If the church were to represent Christ, who cares deeply for all these neglected groups, the leadership must come up with a solution.

As the early church grew rapidly, it required new strategies to establish an effective witness in Jerusalem.

More important if their testimony about Christ was to stay intact, they must solve this problem fast. In fact, they did just that, if you fast forward to Acts 6:7, you can see what I mean.

The word of God continued to spread, [preaching problem solved]

...and the number of disciples increased greatly, [testimony increased for Christ]

...and a large group of priests became obedient to the faith [priests who handle practical temple ministry saw the outcome of the decision and were impressed.]

To accommodate the growth and keep their focus on bible teaching, leadership and prayer, the apostles charged the disciples with selecting 7 men to oversee the food distribution program as a whole and especially keep their attention on the widows.

³ Brothers and sisters, choose seven men from among you who are known to be full of the Spirit and wisdom. We will turn this responsibility over to them ⁴ and will give our attention to prayer and the ministry of the word.” (Acts 6-NIV)

Why 7? Perfect number? Some connections to Old Testament temple life. Seven was the number that qualified, they need to get on with the job, time was of the essence.

These servants would function to filter the practical needs and preserve the unity of the new church, so the apostles could continue in the mission, teaching, prayer, evangelism, signs, and wonders.

The church is the only spiritual organization in the world.

The word for selection of these individuals was our word for minister, servant and one who waits on tables.

Jesus Christ reminds us of the premium he places on this role of servanthood when he says in *Mark 10:45*, *Jesus Christ did not come to be served, but to serve and give his life a ransom for many*. Our Savior was first and foremost a servant.

Churches that fail to resolve church issues can easily disintegrate into chaos, gossip, and general dissatisfaction with the life of the body. Years later Paul called out the Corinthians and told them to clean up their organizational act.

God’s activity in His church is to function with order. (*1 Corinthians 14:40*)

As we mentioned earlier, all of this started because of church growth. As the number of disciples was increasing, the **Hellenistic Jews** among them complained against the **Hebraic Jews** because their widows were being overlooked in the daily distribution of food.

In the food distribution there seemed to be a problem of favoritism.

So how was the favoritism solved? You might not see this in the text unless you look between the lines.

The apostles check list of servants to lead the meals on wheels, was men of good reputation and full of the Holy Spirit. This was such an important ministry it had to be filled with these new believers that got saved and then were filled with the Holy Spirit.

The apostles wanted like minded Christ followers, those they could trust who had the same quality of faith.

Look a little closer and we will see that, it was the disciples and not the apostles that made the selection. Wow! Genius. No way to pin it on the apostles that they were somehow showing favoritism. The disciples made the selection; look at who they selected. All Greek disciples - the group who felt neglected.

⁵ This proposal pleased the whole group. They chose Stephen, a man full of faith and of the Holy Spirit; also Philip, Procorus, Nicanor, Timon, Parmenas, and Nicolas from Antioch, a convert to Judaism. ⁶ They presented these men to the apostles, who prayed and laid their hands on them. (Acts 6-NIV)

The problem was solved by those closest to those in need. Only two of the servants, disciples or deacons are ever heard from again. We will meet Stephen in our next chapter.

New Testament churches experienced persecution, flagrant sin, and frustration by God's people.

The apostles have been in prison, preaching and healing, defending Jesus works to the government and had to do some church discipline. That is a lot of physical and emotional work. More than ever the ministry structure must change.

In order for the leaders to lead, preach and pray, they required team members to handle the ministry amongst the people.

The Acts 6 problem of serving widows was solved through shared ministry.

And the best churches that solve problems that arise from seasons of growth build a ministry based on spiritual gifts.

Effective churches discover/develop the spiritual gifts of its members.

The book of Acts is about the arrival of the Holy Spirit and the SUPERNATURAL transformations that go along with His unlimited power as we operate in the gifts of the Holy Spirit.

The Holy Spirit

Pastor Ken

July 6, 2025

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There is just enough time in a day or week for us as apostles to run the church and run the feeding program. If the church were to represent Christ, who cares deeply for all these neglected groups, the leadership must come up with a solution.

As the early church grew rapidly, it required new strategies to establish an effective witness in Jerusalem.

More important if their testimony about Christ was to stay intact, they must solve this problem fast. In fact, they did just that, if you fast forward to Acts 6:7, you can see what I mean.

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To accommodate the growth and keep their focus on bible teaching, leadership and prayer, the apostles charged the disciples with selecting 7 men to oversee the food distribution program as a whole and especially keep their attention on the widows.

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Why 7? Perfect number? Some connections to Old Testament temple life. Seven was the number that qualified, they need to get on with the job, time was of the essence.

These servants would function to filter the practical needs and preserve the unity of the new church, so the apostles could continue in the mission, teaching, prayer, evangelism, signs, and wonders.

The church is the only spiritual organization in the world.

The word for selection of these individuals was our word for minister, servant and one who waits on tables.

Jesus Christ reminds us of the premium he places on this role of servanthood when he says in *Mark 10:45*, *Jesus Christ did not come to be served, but to serve and give his life a ransom for many*. Our Savior was first and foremost a servant.

Churches that fail to resolve church issues can easily disintegrate into chaos, gossip, and general dissatisfaction with the life of the body. Years later Paul called out the Corinthians and told them to clean up their organizational act.

God’s activity in His church is to function with order. (*1 Corinthians 14:40*)

As we mentioned earlier, all of this started because of church growth. As the number of disciples was increasing, the **Hellenistic Jews** among them complained against the **Hebraic Jews** because their widows were being overlooked in the daily distribution of food.

In the food distribution there seemed to be a problem of favoritism.

So how was the favoritism solved? You might not see this in the text unless you look between the lines.

The apostles check list of servants to lead the meals on wheels, was men of good reputation and full of the Holy Spirit. This was such an important ministry it had to be filled with these new believers that got saved and then were filled with the Holy Spirit.

The apostles wanted like minded Christ followers, those they could trust who had the same quality of faith.

Look a little closer and we will see that, it was the disciples and not the apostles that made the selection. Wow! Genius. No way to pin it on the apostles that they were somehow showing favoritism. The disciples made the selection; look at who they selected. All Greek disciples - the group who felt neglected.

⁵ This proposal pleased the whole group. They chose Stephen, a man full of faith and of the Holy Spirit; also Philip, Procorus, Nicanor, Timon, Parmenas, and Nicolas from Antioch, a convert to Judaism. ⁶ They presented these men to the apostles, who prayed and laid their hands on them. (Acts 6-NIV)

The problem was solved by those closest to those in need. Only two of the servants, disciples or deacons are ever heard from again. We will meet Stephen in our next chapter.

New Testament churches experienced persecution, flagrant sin, and frustration by God's people.

The apostles have been in prison, preaching and healing, defending Jesus works to the government and had to do some church discipline. That is a lot of physical and emotional work. More than ever the ministry structure must change.

In order for the leaders to lead, preach and pray, they required team members to handle the ministry amongst the people.

The Acts 6 problem of serving widows was solved through shared ministry.

And the best churches that solve problems that arise from seasons of growth build a ministry based on spiritual gifts.

Effective churches discover/develop the spiritual gifts of its members.

The book of Acts is about the arrival of the Holy Spirit and the SUPERNATURAL transformations that go along with His unlimited power as we operate in the gifts of the Holy Spirit.

The Holy Spirit

Pastor Ken

July 6, 2025

¹ In those days when the number of disciples was increasing, the Hellenistic Jews among them complained against the Hebraic Jews because their widows were being overlooked in the daily distribution of food. ² So the Twelve gathered all the disciples together and said, "It would not be right for us to neglect the ministry of the word of God in order to wait on tables.

³ Brothers and sisters, choose seven men from among you who are known to be full of the Spirit and wisdom. We will turn this responsibility over to them ⁴ and will give our attention to prayer and the ministry of the word." (Acts 6-NIV)

You are driving home from work, and you notice the gas tank is low. Your fuel gage tells you that in 10 miles you will be stranded on the side of the road. Because your tank is low, you can't make it to your favorite gas station and get cheap gas. Ouch! You make a quick decision about where to buy gas and pull off at a nearby convenience store. As you pull in, you let out a sound of relief because you made it.

You get out the vehicle and swipe the card, put the gas nozzle into your tank and head into the store for important convenience store business.

A hot dog? No, contents aren't healthy. A Slurpee, oh yes! You chat with a friend you see in the store. Then you head back to the car, thinking the tank must be full. You grab the nozzle, place it back in position. You decide to wash the windows before you head off. Nothing better than clean glass. And you drive off.

As you are going down the highway, you are thinking how good it feels to have a full tank of gas, you look down and are shocked!

It is still on empty!

What? You make a quick return trip to get gas. Now, you have 5 miles left of gas. As you are turning around, you wonder. Did the gas nozzle turn off prematurely? You are playing repeatedly in your mind about what happened and then you suddenly realize: **You forgot to squeeze the lever.**

You did everything except the one thing that matters. Forget to get gas. Does that happen in your life? You forget to receive the Holy Spirit's infilling? Busy. Burned out. Bloodied by life's burdens. You forgot to receive power from the Holy Spirit.

The Holy Spirit will give you power for daily living.

The Holy Spirit will give you strength for the journey.

The Holy Spirit will carry burdens you were never intended to carry.

God does not want His children to be stressed out, worn down, done-in children **as they** represent His purposes in the world.

If we have learned anything from the book of Acts, the Holy Spirit comes with power.

- **Power to** defeat the evil one.
- **Power to** silence the inner voices of fear, anxiety, anger, and depression.
- **Power to** get out of bed, get out of the way of yourself, get busy about God's mission, get on with life.
- **Power to** face the **unexpected**. Death of a loved one.
- **Power to** face the **unexplained**. Potholes of problems.
- **Power to** face the **unwanted**. Sore backs. Late bill notices. Complaints your dog barks late into the night. Lack of strength to work that screwdriver.

What does your Holy Spirit gas tank read? 10 miles until you are sitting on the side of the road? Or do you have a full tank of Holy Spirit power? At the beginning of each day, during your 15 minutes in a chair, you can invite the Holy Spirit to fill you afresh. Empower you anew. Overshadow you with his love.

⁸ But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth. (Acts 1:8-NIV)

Your Bible makes more than 100 references to the Holy Spirit. Jesus talks more about the Holy Spirit than the church, finances, and future.

The Holy Spirit is the presence of God in your life, carrying on the works of Jesus.

Your best life is lived in the daily infilling power of the Holy Spirit.

Two translations of Ephesians 5:18, make it blindingly clear, to daily -keep being filled with the Holy Spirit.

*Don't get drunk with wine, because it makes you lose control. Instead, **keep on being filled** with the Spirit — (Ephesians 5:18-CJB)*

*Stop getting drunk with wine, which leads to wild living, but **keep on being filled** with the Spirit. (Ephesians 5:18-ISV)*

We come to Acts 6 on our journey through the book of Acts. In this chapter we are reminded and learn another truth about the New Testament church.

At Bethel we model the ministry based on an Acts 2 church.

So, God empowers you with His Holy Spirit and organizes His church for service.

In chapter 5, we see the word “**church**” for the first time, and in chapter 6, we see the word “**disciple**” for the first time. Question. What is a disciple devoted to? The advancement and activity of the church in the power of the Holy Spirit.

At the end of Acts 2, we discover that the church is the Bride of Christ. Her life activity is spelled out with the acronym-W.I.F.E.

Worship. Instruction. Fellowship. Evangelism.

*⁴² They devoted themselves to the **apostles’ teaching** and to **fellowship**, to the breaking of bread and to prayer.*

⁴³ Everyone was filled with awe at the many wonders and signs performed by the apostles.⁴⁴ All the believers were together and had everything in common. ⁴⁵ They sold property and possessions to give to anyone who had need. ⁴⁶ Every day they continued to meet together in the temple courts. They broke bread in their homes and ate together with glad and sincere hearts,

*⁴⁷ **praising God** and enjoying the favor of all the people. And the Lord added to their number daily **those who were being saved**. (Acts 2-NIV)*

Worship- *⁴⁷ **praising God** and enjoying the favor of all the people.*

Instruction- *⁴² They **devoted** themselves to the **apostles’ teaching** and to **fellowship**, to the breaking of bread and to prayer. ⁴³ Everyone was filled with awe at the many wonders and signs performed by the apostles.*

Fellowship- *⁴⁶ Every day they continued to meet together in the temple courts. They broke bread in their homes and ate together with glad and sincere hearts,*

Evangelism- *And the Lord added to their number daily **those who were being saved**.*

Look with me for a moment at the word **devoted**,” in verse 42. *^{42a} They devoted themselves... (Acts 2-NIV)* Devoted. You say what is so important about that word?

Gang without supernatural levels of devotion, a church is powerless, a church is helpless, and a church is hopeless.

Without supernatural levels of devotion to God a church is dead in the water.

Its vision is a pipe dream.

Its potential is precisely 0.

But, when all the members of the church are filled with the Holy Spirit and they have supernatural levels of devotion to Christ and his church.

When a church is filled with believers that are **fully devoted**,
...the church is **unstoppable**,

...the churches potential is **unlimited**,

.... The churches vision is **achievable**,

...and the churches future is **bright**.

Disciples sell property. Give generously. Speak for Christ boldly.

Share their faith regularly. Pray for the sick. Heal the afflicted.

Defeat persecution with Jesus' death and resurrection.

They tell the truth always.

And today, we see them serve the body when a need arises.

As we have seen from beginning of life in the new church, this group of Christ followers looked out for one another. They sacrificed by selling property and they kept good records as to who needed assistance.

In Acts 6, the needs of the widows were going unmet. At this time in Acts the church is made up of primarily Jewish believers in Jesus Christ. As we saw in our text, the Jewish community of believers was known as Hellenistic Jews and Hebraic Jews.

In those days when the number of disciples was increasing, the Hellenistic Jews among them complained against the Hebraic Jews because their widows were being overlooked in the daily distribution of food. (Acts 6:1-NIV)

Hellenistic Jews

The word Hellenism is a word that describes Greek culture. The Hellenistic Jews were no less Jewish than the Hebraic Jews. Jewish birth and bloodline. While Jewish by birth, they had adopted some of the customs from their Gentile-Greek neighbors and participated in Greek practices in many ways.

While the Greek Jews rejected the Greeks pagan religion and practices, they worshipped the one true God, went to the temple regularly and practiced Jewish festivals and followed the law of Moses. They also accepted the reality that they were living under Roman government in a Roman world. The most noted quality of the Hellenistic Jews was they spoke Greek as their 1st language. Many spoken Greek and Hebrew. The New Testament is written in Greek.

Hebraic Jews

Hebraic Jews on the other hand, were more traditionally Jewish in life, practice, and faith. They neither dressed like Greeks, associated with Greeks and they were much more committed to the law of Moses.

Their teachers were the Pharisees, and they followed every aspect of Jewish life such as dress, ceremonial cleansing, dietary practices and notably, they were cautious who they did business with.

Hebraic Jews were more nationalistic, and they spoke Hebrew or Aramaic the language of Jesus and they spoke Greek only when necessary.

Whereas Hellenistic Jews were a part of Greek culture without abandoning faith and practice, the Hebraic Jew insulated themselves from anything Greek and Gentile.

Both groups made up the early Pentecostal church.

- They ate together because of Jesus.
- Studied God's word together because of Jesus.
- They served together by selling possessions and giving to the poor because of Jesus.
- They sat by each other as they listened to the preaching of the apostles because of Jesus.
- They met in houses of one another; they took communion together because of Jesus.
- Their families were friends, because of Jesus.
- In some cases, their kids married one another, because of Jesus.
- They did business with each other, because of Jesus.

The most noted feature was that both Hellenistic and Hebraic Jews were filled with the Holy Spirit. Both groups did the ministry of preaching, healing, deliverance and serving.

Because Jesus was their leader, Hellenistic and Hebraic Jews were empowered by the Holy Spirit, they did the miraculous in the power of the Holy Spirit, evangelized in the power of the Spirit, both groups had a powerful bond. A personal bond. A precious bond.

Bethel enjoys similar powerful bonds that are not Gentile vs Jewish but are connected by other ties.

Everyone **at** Bethel comes from a broken background of hurts, hang-ups, and habits.

Nobody is excluded, and if you say otherwise, you are too full of pride and prejudice to admit it, or you still have not learned God's lesson about lying.

What is God's lesson about truth telling?

God always only ever tells the truth.

Bethel Life Center has many people who are growing profoundly in Christ from broken backgrounds of **hurts**, some hurt from divorce and others hurt from depression.

Bethel Life Center has many people who are growing profoundly in Christ from broken backgrounds of **hangups**, some hangups are prejudice and others have hangups about painkillers.

Bethel Life Center has many people who are growing profoundly in Christ from broken backgrounds of **habits**, some habits are addictions to alcohol and others are addicted to Amphetamines.

In the early days of Jesus death and resurrection his life appealed to the masses and many in that group were poor. Abandoned. Neglected. Widows. Endangered. Orphans. And many, many slaves.

Some destitute people were neglected, ill-treated, and cast aside and so they made their way to this new church filled with power to heal, people who would give generously and a place where unconditional love flourished in unlimited amounts.

The unconditional love of Jesus was seen, experienced and so this became a magnet for massive numbers to choose Christianity. For thousands of years, according to the Law of Moses, the needs of the poor, widow and outsider were to be provided for.

¹⁸ He defends the cause of the fatherless and the widow, and loves the foreigner residing among you, giving them food and clothing. (Deuteronomy 10:18-NIV)

God mandated that his people care for these people. You could be ostracized from life in the temple if you neglected such activity. God was serious about people who were less fortunate. Many years later from the lips of Jesus half-brother James we read:

Religion that God our Father accepts as pure and faultless is this: to look after orphans and widows in their distress and to keep oneself from being polluted by the world. (James 1:27-NIV)

Nobody needed more help than the widow. They could not bear children, often owned no property or assets and many had no family. If they entered this new Pentecostal church they could be rejected and turned away from their community or family.

Now, widows fared much better in the Hebraic community, because of Moses teaching about how God wants his people to care for them. So, what arose was some class warfare. Maybe even some cultural prejudice. At the minimum just some outright neglect.

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Those in the Greek speaking Jewish community, complained that their Hellenistic widows in the fast-growing multicultural church had been overlooked in the distribution of food. Apparently, the food program was broken.

In ancient history, this idea of organizational problems is no stranger to Moses, Joshua, Nehemiah and now the apostles.

God's work in the earth requires leaders to create strategies to meet the needs of God's people:

- Moses was doing too much so he appointed judges. (*Exodus 18*)
- Joshua designated cities of refuge. (*Joshua 20*)
- Nehemiah involved everyone in rebuilding the walls. (*Nehemiah 3*)
- In Acts 6, the apostles used their church leadership skills. (*Acts 6*)

This problem got the attention of the apostles, and they went right to work resolving this food distribution problem.

² So the Twelve gathered all the disciples together and said, "It would not be right for us to neglect the ministry of the word of God in order to wait on tables." (Acts 6-NIV)

Peter calls for a business meeting and pulls all the disciples from this growing church together, Hellenistic-Greek Jews and Hebraic-Moses Jews and make this announcement:

What we are doing is not working.

People are coming to us all the time with problems they are facing about our meals on wheels food program. And in our efforts to solve this problem, we are creating another problem.

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