

## The power of the Holy Spirit

The disciples were in a state of disbelief and deep grief. How could He be gone? They had trouble coming to terms with His sudden death just a week after He rode triumphantly in to Jerusalem on the colt. The crowd just wanted to see him, to be near the "King".

Just days later, the eleven were fearful of the Sanhedrin, who engineered Jesus death on the cross, and even of the Roman soldiers. What was going through their minds? How were they dealing with their deep pain while coming to accept the new reality of no Teacher.

I experienced an event that helps me better understand what was happening with them at this time. Late in October in the year two thousand I was still asleep. It was a school day at LBCC where my daughter Laura had classes. Her mother made a practice of calling Laura to wake her up for school. I awoke to the ringing phone upstairs. Then Laura came running down the stairs shouting over and over, "David is dead, David is dead." I threw on some pants and ran to the phone on the kitchen wall. I tried to dial Carol's number but couldn't, even though I knew it by heart. So I drove about 5 blocks to her house, a tiny one bedroom house. Came in and there he was on his air mattress where he slept. She had come into the room to wake him for school but he didn't move. I touched him and felt a partial warmth from my 19 year old son.

It takes time for the mind to fully accept an extreme change as must have been the case for the disciples. I can remember when waking up in the morning, for weeks later, and realizing what had happened, my mind would think, "Go back to sleep and when you wake up again it will be better." In the following weeks I recalled things David told me. In particular, that when he came into my bedroom the night before and told me that he planned to become a nurse so he could pay his way through medical school. David had been deeply influenced through an after school Christian bible study. He took on Jesus' admonition to love and forgive others with near perfection. He held no grudges against others, even if mistreated by them. Another thought he shared was, "if God is putting his thoughts in your mind it is important to pay attention and follow them, or He will quit speaking there".

Most importantly, I believe that my new appreciation of David, following his death, led me to understand more fully how the disciples came to deeply revere Jesus' teachings. That, and the 12 being filled with the Holy Spirit. Barsabbas had replaced the deceased Judas.

The disciples were at a loss in knowing what to do. They spent most of their time together in an upstairs room fearful of being pursued by Jewish authorities. Then Jesus appeared in the room without going through the door. He wished them peace and breathed his holy spirit on them. Thomas was not there at this first appearance. When Thomas heard about what had taken place, he had trouble accepting it. At Jesus' second appearance Thomas saw and touched His wounds and then believed.

The Holy Spirit empowered the disciples spoken words to be understood by people who could only understand their native language. Yet they understood what the apostils were saying. Peter, in Jesus name, healed a lame man at the "beautiful gate" leading to the Temple. A crowd of amazed people witnessed the healing. The leader of the Temple guards and Sadducees were annoyed to hear Peter's message to the crowd about the healing power of the Holy Spirit. Peter and John were warned to stop preaching about Jesus or there would be consequences. The new believers in Jesus gave up their belongings to support the disciples.

In the aftermath of the crucifixion the disciples were in a state of confusion and fear. They did not know what would happen next. The Teacher they followed and had given their lives to was gone. Surely their doubts were growing, as on occasion ours have when things go wrong. We need Jesus' breath filling us with the Holy Spirit.

I had a powerful experience then things had gone terribly wrong for me. My brother Charlie and I had been arrested in Louisiana for possession of marijuana we had been growing. We were in jail in the town where we attended college. A young Lutheran pastor came to visit us there. He prayed with us and invited us to come to his church. After being released on bail, we attended Church there. Charlie quit going but I became a dedicated Christian. I believe the Holy Spirit has guided me in my life of faith every since.

My son David died in his sleep from a burst brain aneurism that been giving him powerful headaches and causing parts his body to loose strength for over a year as it gradually got worse. After his death I was filled a with great appreciation of the son I lost. Is this similar to what the disciples experienced? I pray that the Holy Spirit is or will become strong in your life.

Amen