

You Can Have a Personal Pentecost During This Quarantine

I'm an impatient guy. When the COVID-19 crisis shut down everything in March, I wanted things to get back to normal fast. I don't like quarantines. I'm an extrovert, so I hate being isolated. I miss my gym. I miss eating out. And I miss church meetings!

But pandemics don't comply with our hurried schedules. Health experts say the virus hasn't run its course. Some states aren't relaxing restrictions until the end of May. And some pastors say they may not host public meetings until Sunday, May 31—which happens to be Pentecost.

Could this be a divine setup? I don't believe God sent the coronavirus. Sickness is from the devil. But could it be that the Lord wants to use this COVID-19 situation to quarantine us with Him?

Before Jesus ascended to heaven, He told His disciples to stay in spiritual lockdown. He said in Luke 24:49 (NASB): "And behold, I am sending forth the promise of My Father upon you; but you are to stay in the city until you are clothed with power from on high."

They didn't know what they were waiting for. They had no idea what "clothed with power" meant. Jesus didn't give them a church bulletin with specific times, and He didn't warn them that they might experience wind, fire or strange languages. All He told them was: "Stay put."

I imagine some of the more impetuous disciples were eager to venture out and tell others about Jesus, since they had seen Him after His resurrection. But they obeyed the Lord. They

went to the upper room in Jerusalem, and there they were “continually devoting themselves to prayer” (Acts 1:14a).

And the waiting paid off. Several days later, the promised power arrived. Suddenly, the heavens opened. Just as Elijah left his mantle for Elisha, the glorious mantle of Jesus came upon His followers. Every person in the upper room was filled with the Holy Spirit, and they were transformed into blazing spiritual torches. Before the day ended, 3,000 people believed in Jesus and were baptized.

This is the message of Pentecost. Prayer comes first, then power.

Our tendency is to run ahead of God. We like shortcuts. Or we arrogantly assume we can do a better job with our money, education and technological savvy. Yet the truth is that many American churches are just spinning their expensive religious wheels. We are very busy, but we are ineffective.

British missionary C.T. Studd, who lived from 1860-1931, saw this tendency years ago. He wrote: “How little chance the Holy Ghost has nowadays. The churches and missionary societies have so bound Him in red tape that they practically ask Him to sit in a corner while they do the work themselves.”

I intend to pursue a personal Pentecost during the month of May, and I invite you to join me. I will soak in the book of Acts during those days, and I will squeeze every drop of revelation possible out of those 28 chapters. I’ll read the first chapter on May 1, the second chapter on May 2, and so on.

I will also pray for a rekindling of the Holy Spirit’s flame in my life and in the global church. We are in desperate need of fresh fire today. The church is sick with hidden sin and weak with moral compromise. We have left our first love. Could it be that God is giving us this special “time out” to prepare us for the coming harvest?

Do you have the fire of Pentecost? The apostle Paul tells us that all Christians should have a spiritual temperature that reaches the boiling point. In Romans 12:11 he commands us to be “fervent in spirit.” The Greek word for “fervent” is *zeo*, which means “to boil like hot liquid or to glow like hot metal.” I challenge you to use this extra time to examine your heart in these areas:

–Am I fully surrendered to God in all areas? Is Jesus truly my Lord?

–Have I allowed the things of the world to steal my passion for Jesus?

–Do I need to repent of any hidden sins or unhealthy habits?

–Is spending time with the Lord a priority, or have other things become more important?

–Am I using my spiritual gifts to serve others?

–Am I bold enough to share Jesus with others? Or am I ashamed of my faith?

If you are willing to take this risky journey, please join me as we pursue a fresh Pentecost. You can say this prayer as you begin:

“Lord, please set my heart ablaze. Send a fresh wave of the Holy Spirit to my church, my city and my nation. We need another earth-shaking revival like the great awakenings of past generations. Do it again, Lord. Let the book of Acts be repeated in my lifetime. Unleash the full force of Pentecost, and let me be a part of it. I don’t want to be a spectator in this movement. I want to be in the very middle of it! Let me heart burn with the anointing of the Holy Spirit, and let me carry that fire everywhere You send me.”