

Is it in You?
Acts 2:1-4, Galatians 5:16-26

In 1965, an assistant coach for the football team at the University of Florida asked some of the university physicians to determine why so many of his players were being affected by heat and heat related illnesses.

The researchers soon discovered two key factors that were causing the Gator players to 'wilt': the fluids and electrolytes the players lost through sweat were not being replaced, and the large amounts of carbohydrates the players' bodies used for energy were not being replenished.

The researchers then went to their lab, and formulated a carbohydrate-electrolyte beverage that could replace those key components lost through sweating and exercise. They called their concoction 'Gatorade'.

Soon after the researchers introduced their Gatorade formula to the team, the Gators began winning... by outlasting their opponents in the heat, and finishing the season at 7-4.

The team's success improved even more during the 1966 season, with the Gators finishing at 9-2 and winning the Orange Bowl for the first time ever in the history of the school.

Word about Gatorade began to spread outside of the state of Florida. Soon other college football programs across the country began ordering the drink, as playing without Gatorade was like playing shorthanded.

Soon teams in the NFL began ordering Gatorade, and from there on many other professional sports leagues and organizations, like the NBA, PGA, and Professional Soccer, to name a few, began to endorse its use.

In 1985, the Gatorade Sports Science Institute was created to further study the areas of exercise science, hydration, and sport nutrition.

The result of their work can now be found in a variety of products and flavors, which as mentioned are used by all sorts

of professional sports organizations. Even NASCAR drivers are benefiting from their Gatorade-In-Car-drinking system.

And as an amateur athlete you can benefit as well, as all these products are available for the public, at your local convenience store.

Now I tell you this story because it's a great analogy to help you understand the importance of the work of the Holy Spirit in the life of a Christian. In fact there are some striking similarities which I want to show you.

Back somewhere around 33 AD, Jesus Christ noticed that his disciples were wilting in the oppressive heat of the Jewish political and religious climate.

Sure they were eager to get in the game, in fact Simon Peter is quoted as saying *"Even if I have to die with you, I will never disown you."* (Matt 26:35)

But it soon becomes obvious to Coach Christ that his players were more talk than action.

Remember when Jesus went to pray at the Mount of Olives and He asked the disciples to pray with him?

"Then he returned to his disciples and found them sleeping. "Could you men not keep watch with me for one hour?" he asked Peter. (Matt 26:40)

And who can forget their performance in the final quarter of that game. One of their own teammates throws the game – Judas betrays Jesus.

Then, when Jesus is arrested all their talk about being willing to die with Jesus and never disowning him goes out the window.

They all desert Jesus and flee. They wilted and folded under pressure, they couldn't finish it.

Truth be told – Jesus had always known they weren't up to the task. In fact that was precisely why the Owner of the franchise had sent Him to be the New Head Coach.

And what the disciples had gone through was one of those lessons a coach allows his players to experience so that they will never forget it, they would realize they needed what Jesus had told them about.

You see the disciples weren't suffering from a lack of carbs and electrolytes, they were simply sinful, fallen human beings who lacked the understanding and power needed to succeed as followers of Jesus Christ.

This is why earlier on in his time with them Jesus had told them he would send them the Holy Spirit, and it would be the Spirit who would give them what they needed to succeed.

From this point on it's simply a matter of comparing their stats before and after and its quite obvious that having the Spirit was what made it happen for the disciples.

Before

- No understanding – *"Then Jesus said to them, "Don't you **understand** this parable? How then will you **understand** any parable? (Mark 4:13)*
- Full of fear - *He replied, "You of little faith, why are you so **afraid**?" Then he got up and rebuked the winds and the waves, and it was completely calm (Matt 8:26)*
- All talk no action - *"Even if I have to die with you, I will never disown you." (Matt 26:35)*
- No Power – *A man in the crowd answered, "Teacher, I brought you my son, who is possessed by a spirit ... I asked your disciples to drive out the spirit, **but they could not.**" (Mark 9:17-18)*
- Number of believers - *In those days Peter stood up among the believers (**a group numbering about a hundred and twenty**) (Acts 1:15)*

After they received the Holy Spirit

- Able to teach - *"Fellow Jews and all of you who live in Jerusalem, let me explain this to you; listen carefully to what I say. (Acts 2:14)*
- Unafraid - *"Now, Lord, consider their (the religious leaders) threats and enable your servants to speak your word with **great boldness.**" (Acts 4:29)*
- Walk the Talk – *"They (the religious leaders) called the apostles in and had them whipped. Then they ordered them not to speak in the name of Jesus, and let them go." (Acts 5:40)*
- Full of Power – *"In the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, walk." Taking him by the right hand, he (Peter) helped him up, and instantly the man's feet and ankles became strong. He jumped to his feet and began to walk. (Acts 3: 6-8)*

- Number of believers - *But many who heard the message believed; so the number of men who believed grew to about five thousand. (Acts 4:4)*

You can see the difference is simply amazing!

And because the Holy Spirit made such a difference in their track record the **Association for Holy Spirit Living** – better known as the Church, was formed as a direct result.

And in only a few years, this Association had spread all across the known world and eventually became the official religion of the Roman Empire, and many other subsequent nations.

But... as with anything that experiences a great deal of success, it can grow beyond the initial motivation which caused it to grow.

As we heard the story of Gatorade this morning, it might seem a bit incredulous that this once fledgling concept of a sports

drink had to be pioneered and proven, when today it is a market-place giant.

In the same way, hearing the story of how a tiny group of disciples in Palestine spread the church in a relatively short time across the Roman Empire so that it eventually became the official religion of the Empire might also seem incredulous to us..

Especially as the era of Christianity being the official religion of Western countries is fast coming to an end. And ironically it is driven in part by the fact that the power and success of being the “official” religion caused us to lose sight of what originally motivated and started the church, or I should say **who** motivated and started the church... The Holy Spirit!

So today is Pentecost Sunday when we celebrate the outpouring of the Holy Spirit.

But is it really a day that reminds us of what originally drove the church and renews that motivation in each one of us?

Or has it become another church calendar day which we should recognize and celebrate because the Holy Spirit is theologically important, so He has his day once a year?

Well Friends I chose the passage in Galatians, about the fruit of the Spirit, because I want to bring us back to the essence of what the church is all about and remind us of what our motivation should be.

The Church is a group of people who are experiencing transformation from being controlled by their sinful nature to bearing the fruit of the Holy Spirit in their daily lives.

And we are **sharing** the experience of transformation with each other and encouraging each other in it – it’s supposed to be a community experience, something that we do together – like a team.

But friends, I have to be honest – if we were to continue with the sports analogy here - as an assistant Coach I see many

Christians “wilt” and “fold” in the game, in the heat of daily life and they bear little or no fruit at all.

Take Susie for example, Susie reads our passage this morning and one phrase sticks out to her

“The acts of the sinful nature are obvious!” and pretty shameful too she thinks! I hope these things aren’t too obvious in my life – how embarrassing would that be!

And as she reads down the list, a couple of them bring back some old college memories she’d rather forget about.

Unfortunately Susie falls into the trap that snares many Christians - as she reads this passage she’s thinking that the Fruit of the Spirit is there to cover up the acts of the sinful nature – much like lighting a fruity- scented candle to mask the things that stink up our homes.

So, if she can **act** Loving, Peaceful, Patient, and joyful... then it will cover up the acts of her sinful nature like pride, rage,

sexual immorality, envy, selfish ambition or whatever particular flaws she has...

So she wears a “Christian” mask, especially at church and around church people so that no one knows about her real issues, and the result is that everybody thinks she is really nice, a wonderful person.

But do you know the difference between real fruit and fake fruit?

Real fruit you can eat, it nourishes you, provides you with vitamins and nutrition and it helps you grow. It also contains seeds, ensuring that there is the possibility of reproducing.

But fake fruit just sits on the counter and looks good, it won’t reproduce and when a hungry person comes along looking for food they will be disappointed, and when the heat gets turned up – fake fruit just melts.

So our “spiritual act” falls apart and wilts just like the University of Florida football players did without their Gatorade.

Now a few years ago Gatorade had an advertising campaign with this slogan **“Is it in You?”**

And Friends, that’s the question we need to ask ourselves today. Is it in You?

We’re celebrating how the Holy Spirit was poured out on Pentecost but “Is it... Is He... in Us?” Well in one sense He is...

You see when a football team wins a big game, what happens? The players take the cooler of Gatorade that’s sitting on the sidelines and they dump it over the coach’s head to celebrate their victory.

I want to invite you to think of baptism in that way – as a pre-season victory celebration where instead of Gatorade, it’s the Holy Spirit that is poured out on you.

Now I say pre-season victory celebration because Baptism is a beginning – not an end. That’s why I’m asking you “Is HE in You?” or to use a more biblical phrase *“Are you being filled with the Holy Spirit?”*

Because the Father and Son have promised the Holy Spirit to us – to be in us and upon us... but whenever God promises us something it requires that we make a response as well.

The Gatorade doesn’t do the players much good just sitting there on the bench, they need to drink it.

And likewise the Holy Spirit doesn’t do us any good if we don’t pay much attention to Him, if He’s just “the 3rd person of the trinity...” if “he’s the impersonal power of God” or we just give a nod to Him once a year when Pentecost is celebrated...

He needs to be in us... and we need more and more of Him in us!

We need His power so that we don't wilt or fold in the heat of the game, when life gets tough, instead we can finish the game as victors!

But since the Holy Spirit is God - the third person of the Trinity - and we can't manipulate, or coerce Him into filling us with his power.

We can't just grab a drink of Holy Spirit like we grab a drink of Gatorade!

But we can ask him, and we can work to create an environment in ourselves which is conducive for the Holy Spirit to work in, we can grow in our relationship with the Holy Spirit.

So when we ask, we pray to Christ that He will give us more of the Holy Spirit which He promised to us. We ask for more because the Holy Spirit has already working in us, bringing us to faith in Christ but we want to experience more of what the

Spirit can do in our lives. We don't want to leave it at just believing in Christ – we want to be made like Him!

So in order to create an environment in our lives which is conducive to experiencing more of the Holy Spirit we need to Respect, Repent, and Relinquish

- Respect:

It's ironic isn't it that we had a movement which asked "What would Jesus do, but rarely do I hear anyone say "What would the Holy Spirit do?" Or "What does the Holy Spirit say we should do?"

We need to respect and honor the Holy Spirit and the best way to do that is acknowledge and highlight His work, and then discern what He is doing and be obedient to it...

*"Do not put out the **Spirit's** fire. Do not treat prophecies with contempt" (1 Thess 5: 19-20)*

- Repent:

It might seem obvious but we need to repent if we want **more** of the Holy Spirit. The word “repent” means to turn around and go in a different direction.

So – if we haven’t really given much attention to the Holy Spirit before then we need to “turn around” and deliberately give Him more attention...

Additionally our lives are so busy and hectic that is often very difficult to discern the Spirit’s presences and work. So we need to slow down, turn around from our hectic busy lives, and take a Sabbath – so that the Holy Spirit has time with us. No time, no relationship.

*“And do not grieve the **Holy Spirit** of God, with whom you were sealed for the day of redemption.” (Eph 4:30)*

- Relinquish:

Lastly we need to relinquish our attempts at trying to produce the fruit that the Spirit produces. Let Him produce it.

I know many Christians who complain it’s so hard to live a Christian life. They just can’t do it. But that is because **they** are trying to produce the love, joy, peace, etc... but that is the Fruit which comes from the Spirit, not from us..

*“For the **Holy Spirit** will teach you at that time what you should say.” (Luke 12:12)*

So friends – our job, our focus should be on asking Christ for more of the Spirit, and then focusing on Respecting the Holy Spirit, repenting and relinquishing to Him.

And then He will produce the results, the real fruit of the Spirit.

And you will benefit, in fact everyone around you will benefit because it is real fruit!

So friends, today we celebrate Pentecost - the out pouring of the Holy Spirit – it’s good to ask the question... Is He in You? Amen.