

Twelve Days of Christmas: teaching #4

Epiphany of the Spirit

Introductory thoughts

Brian Harm's Epiphany Story – Part #2

12 days of Christmas – 2 of the 12 days concern the Holy Spirit

1. A Partridge in a Pear tree – Jesus on the Cross.
2. Two Turtle Doves – Old and New Testaments
3. Three French Hens - The three theological virtues; faith, hope & love.
4. Four Calling Birds – Four Gospels
5. Five Golden Rings – 1st five books of the O.T. (Geneses – Deuteronomy)
6. Six Geese a-laying – The six days of creation that confesses God as creator.
7. Seven swans a-swimming – The seven gifts of the Holy Spirit.
8. Eight Maids a-milking – The eight beatitudes in Matthew. 5.
9. Nine ladies Dancing – The nine fruits of the Holy Spirit.
10. Ten Lords a-leaping – The 10 Commandments.
11. Eleven Pipers Piping – The 11 faithful Apostles.
12. Twelve Drummers Drumming – The 12 points of Christian doctrine in the Apostle's Creed.

We need the Holy Spirit in this new year of 2005 more than ever.

- A conversation with God – How can I make a difference at a time like this?

A world full of continued violence and war.

- 9/11 – beginning of the war against terrorism
- Iraq & Afghanistan
- The genocide in the Sudan - 2 million deaths

An unmistakable increase of natural disaster & weather changes

- Indonesia disaster – now 150,000 deaths in the midst of tragedy came a testimony of miracles on CNN – The man who prayed for the wave to stop and saved 28 orphans in Sri Lanka.

[Dayalan Sanders 50 – orphanage director in Sri Lanka – 30' wall of water – More than 30 \(28 children\) people in a small boat – Quotes Isaiah "When the enemy comes in like](#)

[a flood, the spirit of the Lord shall raise up a standard against it.” He commanded the water in the name of Jesus to stop at the critical moment and it did.](#)

- Florida hurricanes- worst in U.S. record
- Signs of the last days - Matthew 24 & Luke 21 – Abnormal natural disaster & increase in world violence. “Earthquakes” and “roaring and tossing of the sea” – the warning is to not be overcome with despair and depression but stand firm in your faith.
- We are challenged with not falling into despair but at the same time not becoming complacent.
- More than ever we need to hear the Lord in both Word & Spirit. We need to be sensitive to his still small voice and obedient to serve with the gifting and years we have.
- It is time to examine our hearts. What you have faith in is what will drive your life. What do you believe? Where is it that you will get your security? What message is your message of passion?

2 Timothy 3 - Godlessness in the Last Days

¹But mark this: There will be terrible times in the last days. ²People will be lovers of themselves, lovers of money, boastful, proud, abusive, disobedient to their parents, ungrateful, unholy, ³without love, unforgiving, slanderous, without selfcontrol, brutal, not lovers of the good, ⁴treacherous, rash, conceited, lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God— ⁵having a form of godliness but denying its power. Have nothing to do with them.

- Presently it is the Charismatic (Those who believe in the charismata) side of Christianity that is leading in church growth & revival world wide.
 - **India** – 80% (800 million) Hinduism – 6% Christian (60 million) growing at a rate of double the overall population growth.
 - **Nepal** – in 1960 25 believers – today 1 million – many have been martyrs.
 - **Asia**
 1. China – Largest population in the world – Mao Zedong died in 1976 & communism began to unravel. 1.5 million Christians in 1970 – 90 million today. China is experiencing the fastest growing economy in the world and with its world influence.
 2. Singapore - Highly modernized – world leaders in technology – 500,000 believers and growing in a part of the world that is primarily Muslim.

3. South Korea – 18 million Christians (39%) in what once was primarily Buddhist
- **Africa**
 - **South America**
 - **Russia** – 84 million – 57% now proclaim Christianity.
 - **America** – CNN – major trend away from traditional mainline church to Charismatic / Spirit-filled movements.

Elijah / Elisha

An Old Testament foreshadow of the Holy Spirit descending giving a double portion for ministry. We can't do anything without the presence and power of the Holy Spirit.

2 Kings 2 - Elijah Taken Up to Heaven

¹ When the LORD was about to take Elijah up to heaven in a whirlwind, Elijah and Elisha were on their way from Gilgal. ² Elijah said to Elisha, "Stay here; the LORD has sent me to Bethel." But Elisha said, "As surely as the LORD lives and as you live, I will not leave you." So they went down to Bethel. ³ The company of the prophets at Bethel came out to Elisha and asked, "Do you know that the LORD is going to take your master from you today?" "Yes, I know," Elisha replied, "but do not speak of it." ⁴ Then Elijah said to him, "Stay here, Elisha; the LORD has sent me to Jericho." And he replied, "As surely as the LORD lives and as you live, I will not leave you." So they went to Jericho. ⁵ The company of the prophets at Jericho went up to Elisha and asked him, "Do you know that the LORD is going to take your master from you today?" "Yes, I know," he replied, "but do not speak of it." ⁶ Then Elijah said to him, "Stay here; the LORD has sent me to the Jordan." And he replied, "As surely as the LORD lives and as you live, I will not leave you." So the two of them walked on. ⁷ Fifty men of the company of the prophets went and stood at a distance, facing the place where Elijah and Elisha had stopped at the Jordan. ⁸ Elijah took his cloak, rolled it up and struck the water with it. The water divided to the right and to the left, and the two of them crossed over on dry ground. ⁹ When they had crossed, Elijah said to Elisha, "Tell me, what can I do for you before I am taken from you?" "Let me inherit a double portion of your spirit," Elisha replied. ¹⁰ "You have asked a difficult thing," Elijah said, "yet if you see me when I am taken from you, it will be yours-otherwise not." ¹¹ As they were walking along and talking together, suddenly a chariot of fire and horses of fire appeared and separated the two of them, and Elijah went up to heaven in a whirlwind. ¹² Elisha saw this and cried out, "My father! My father! The chariots and horsemen of Israel!" And Elisha saw him no more. Then he took hold of his own clothes and tore them apart. ¹³ He picked up the cloak that had fallen from Elijah and went back and stood on the bank of the Jordan. ¹⁴ Then he took the cloak that had fallen from him and struck the water with it. "Where now is the LORD, the God of Elijah?" he asked. When he struck the water, it divided to the right and to the left, and he crossed over.

¹⁵ *The company of the prophets from Jericho, who were watching, said, "The spirit of Elijah is resting on Elisha." And they went to meet him and bowed to the ground before him. ¹⁶ "Look," they said, "we your servants have fifty able men. Let them go and look for your master. Perhaps the Spirit of the LORD has picked him up and set him down on some mountain or in some valley." "No," Elisha replied, "do not send them." ¹⁷ But they persisted until he was too ashamed to refuse. So he said, "Send them." And they sent fifty men, who searched for three days (Disciples questioned Jesus as Messiah - Jesus in the grave) but did not find him. ¹⁸ When they returned to Elisha, who was staying in Jericho, he said to them, "Didn't I tell you not to go?"*

Healing of the water – Ministry of mercy and help

¹⁹ *The men of the city said to Elisha, "Look, our lord, this town is well situated, as you can see, but the water is bad and the land is unproductive." ²⁰ "Bring me a new bowl," he said, "and put salt in it." So they brought it to him. ²¹ Then he went out to the spring and threw the salt into it, saying, "This is what the LORD says: 'I have healed this water. Never again will it cause death or make the land unproductive.'" ²² And the water has remained wholesome to this day, according to the word Elisha had spoken.*

Elisha is jeered - Ministry that professed judgment against blasphemy to unbelievers.

²³ *From there Elisha went up to Bethel. (Jeroboam's unbelieving Cult City) As he was walking along the road, some youths came out of the town and jeered at him. "Go on up, you baldhead!" they said. "Go on up, you baldhead!" ²⁴ He turned around, looked at them and called down a curse on them in the name of the LORD. Then two bears came out of the woods and mauled forty-two of the youths. ²⁵ And he went on to Mount Carmel and from there returned to Samaria.*

- Jesus said that we would see "greater things". There is nothing greater than getting people to heaven? How we do it will require every advantage he gives us.

John 14

¹² *I tell you the truth, anyone who has faith in me will do what I have been doing. He will do even greater things than these, because I am going to the Father. ¹³ And I will do whatever you ask in my name, so that the Son may bring glory to the Father.*

- Overlay Acts 2 – for the purpose of evangelism and church expansion.
- God gave us the church because alone we are very limited. We are called to commit to a community of believers.

The Great Challenge – Building authentic, mature, Spirit filled, reproducible, discipling churches. – Churches of Maturity & Ministry

- Balance of the Spirit – Fruits and Gifts –
- The challenge of leadership
 - The danger of excessiveness and immaturity.

- Character and a track record of dependability & stability is everything.
- If I too seem cautious it is because the fallout has been too great. I am the last man standing of those I was raised up with in the 80's.
- To give me sensitivity concerning my personal condition.
- Give me sensitivity to the world around me.
- Empower me inwardly for maturity and empower me outwardly for service.
- Deal with our hearts & motives so that we might serve effectively.

1 Thessalonians 4

³It is God's will that you should be sanctified:

⁷For God did not call us to be impure, but to live a holy life. ⁸Therefore, he who rejects this instruction does not reject man but God, who gives you his Holy Spirit.

Galatians 5

²²But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, ²³gentleness and selfcontrol. Against such things there is no law. ²⁴Those who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified the sinful nature with its passions and desires. ²⁵Since we live by the Spirit, let us keep in step with the Spirit. ²⁶Let us not become conceited, provoking and envying each other.

- Love
- Joy
- Peace
- Patience
- Kindness
- Goodness
- Faithfulness
- Gentleness
- Selfcontrol

1 Corinthians 12

¹Now about spiritual gifts, brothers, I do not want you to be ignorant. ²You know that when you were pagans, somehow or other you were influenced and led astray to mute idols. ³Therefore I tell you that no one who is speaking by the Spirit of God says, "Jesus be cursed," and no one can say, "Jesus is Lord," except by the Holy Spirit. ⁴There are different kinds of gifts, but the same Spirit. ⁵There are different kinds of service, but the same Lord. ⁶There are different kinds of working, but the same God works all of them in all men.

⁷Now to each one the manifestation of the Spirit is given for the common good. ⁸To one there is given through the Spirit the message of wisdom, to another the message of knowledge by means of the same Spirit, ⁹to another faith by the same Spirit, to another gifts of healing by that one Spirit, ¹⁰to another miraculous powers, to another prophecy, to another distinguishing between spirits, to another speaking in different kinds of tongues, and to still another the

interpretation of tongues. ¹¹*All these are the work of one and the same Spirit, and he gives them to each one, just as he determines.*

Seven gifts of sensitivity and awareness of God's presence and intention:

- Message of wisdom
- Message of knowledge
- Faith
- Healing
- Miracles
- Prophecy
- Distinguishing of spirits
- Tongues
- Interpretation of tongues

Being Spirit-filled to me is

- Not merely having a theology that says God is omni-present and omni-potent, but knowing he is here and present and able to change things.
- Knowing that when we pray he hears and can and will orchestrate positive change turning bad situations to good. Even heal the sick.
- That there is a mysterious side to God (knowing that there might be things I can't understand) and being able to live in the mystery.
- It means that I believe in a spirit realm, knowing that there are demonic forces present and working and that as a believer I have authority to pray for protection and deliverance from evil.
- It means that prayer isn't a one way form of communication, but that I can hear God and experience his presence when I seek him. I can experience his love, receive his instruction for a specific need. (He will give me knowledge, wisdom, discernment when it comes to good or evil and prophetic understanding for direction for my life and as I lead.
- I believe that it is the Holy Spirit that gives me insight into the word so that I can teach and communicate truth more effectively.
- It is not being satisfied with knowing about God, but really knowing him.

¹²*The body is a unit, though it is made up of many parts; and though all its parts are many, they form one body. So it is with Christ.*

- The importance of the commitment to and the operation as a Body. Alone we are weak, but together we can change things. The church is the triple braided cord.
- Pentecost was about the church
- We need to fall in love with the Church that Jesus died for.