

July 6, 2008

“Called To Be Holy”

Heb 13:20-21 AMP

Now may the God of peace [Who is the Author and the Giver of peace], Who brought again from among the dead our Lord Jesus, that great Shepherd of the sheep, by the blood [that sealed, ratified] the everlasting agreement, 21 Strengthen (complete, perfect) and make you what you ought to be and equip you with everything good that you may carry out His will; [while He Himself] works in you and accomplishes that which is pleasing in His sight, through Jesus Christ (the Messiah); to Whom be the glory forever and ever (to the ages of the ages). Amen (so be it).

A few days ago, the 4th of July, we celebrated not just our nation's birthday, but our church's birthday. We celebrate a century of ministry to Patchogue and the surrounding areas. Let me give you a brief history:

Our Centennial:

In 1898 a Holiness Camp Meeting was held at Round Pond Camp Ground in Sag Harbor, NY, under the direction of C.A. Reney, a local Sag Harbor pastor, who later became a pastor of our church (1914- 1921). Assisting him in those services were William Howard Hoople and H. F. Reynolds (well known in the Church of the Nazarene). From this camp meeting a Holiness Mission was eventually started in Patchogue in 1906. The first meeting was held in the home of a Mrs. Miller, and later moved to a rented hall.

Meanwhile, at a meeting in Chicago in 1907 the Church of the Nazarene (a single church from California) brought other holiness groups along into an association with each other. At a second General Assembly the following year, on October 13, 1908 our denomination was officially founded as the Pentecostal Church of the Nazarene. (In 1919 the name was officially changed to The Church of the Nazarene because of new meanings that had become associated with the term “Pentecostal.” Our denomination will be celebrating their Centennial this year too).

After operating as a mission for two years, The Patchogue Church of the Nazarene was organized on July 4, 1908 by District Superintendent W.H. Hoople, while Rev. A.C. Goldberg was pastor (a Hebrew Christian). The congregation worshipped in a portion of the old River Avenue school building until a church building was completed and dedicated November 8, 1910 at 11 River Ave (today there is a Hispanic Church in that building. Praise God this building is still set a part for His work). A parsonage was bought on Prospect Avenue in May, 1925.

In 1960, under pastor Rev. Robert A. Rapalje, the church voted to relocate and bought this lot on the corner of Annanias Ave. and Franklin St. (I believe it was purchased from a Mr. Henry Church – ironically enough - for \$1). The church broke ground in August of that year. A year later, in August of 1961 the congregation moved into the basement of this building, and although only half of the heating was installed and floors unfinished, the annual Christmas Service was held in the Sanctuary that year. After months of labor

by volunteer help alone the present build was completed and dedicated to the Lord on Sunday, September 29, 1963.

Our denomination, The Church of the Nazarene, has its roots in Methodism, drawn from the teachings of John Wesley (1703-1791). The driving force in the lives of these early Nazarenes, and of Nazarenes today is a sense of mission to spread scriptural holiness.

Our Creed:

What does that mean? It means that we believe that God calls us and empowers us to live holy lives. We believe that not only does Jesus forgive us for the sins we committed, but that by His death and resurrection He delivers us from the power and dominion of sin.

There are Christians who have put their faith in Christ, and are trusting in Him for their salvation, yet continue to struggle with sin.

Did Jesus save you for only a partial deliverance? Did Jesus forgive your sin, but still intend for you to struggle, be defeated, and discouraged? Didn't Paul write that we are more than conquerors through Jesus Christ? Or as the NLT puts it (Rom 8:37), "overwhelming victory is ours through Christ, who loved us."

Paul also wrote, 2 Cor 2:14 (from New International Version): "But thanks be to God, who always leads us in triumphal procession in Christ and through us spreads everywhere the fragrance of the knowledge of him."

1 John 3:8b-9a NLT

...the Son of God came to destroy these works of the Devil. Those who have been born into God's family do not sin, because God's life is in them.

Matt 5:44 -45a, 48 NLT

But I say, love your enemies! Pray for those who persecute you! In that way, you will be acting as true children of your Father in heaven...you are to be perfect, even as your Father in heaven is perfect.

1 Cor 1:2(from New International Version)

To the church of God in Corinth, to those sanctified in Christ Jesus and called to be holy

Heb 13:20-21 AMP

Now may the God of peace [Who is the Author and the Giver of peace], Who brought again from among the dead our Lord Jesus, that great Shepherd of the sheep, by the blood [that sealed, ratified] the everlasting agreement

21 Strengthen (complete, perfect) and make you what you ought to be and equip you with everything good that you may carry out His will; [while He Himself] works in you and accomplishes that which is pleasing in His sight, through Jesus Christ (the Messiah); to Whom be the glory forever and ever (to the ages of the ages). Amen (so be it).

May God give you all you need, all the spiritual equipment you need for the full, unhindered performance of the will of God. A pure heart by the infilling of the Holy Spirit; a full and complete divine action...God Himself works in you...to produce in you, make, strengthen (complete, perfect) and make you what you ought to be and equip you with everything good that you may carry out His will.

The Greek word: *katartizo* here translated “Strengthen” is the...

Same word used when apostles as fisherman were *mending* their nets. (Matt 4:21)

Same word used to describe God’s actions when He *made or formed* the universe (Heb 11:3)

Same word use by Paul when he writes to the church to *restore* gently someone caught in sin. (Gal 6:1)

Same word used when Paul speaks of perfecting or filling up what is lacking in your faith (1 Thess 3:10)

The idea of the word then, is to be made complete, by mending, repairing, forming, restoring, filling up what is lacking that you might carry out the will of God. This is what God can and wants to do for us. He wants to do it because He is the God of peace. He can do it because He brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus. He does do it through the power of Jesus Christ as He Himself works in us.

Our Call:

You have received the Holy Spirit when you received Christ. However, has Christ received all of you? What is lacking? You must be baptized with the Holy Spirit. If you are willing to submit yourself completely to Christ; if you would surrender your will to God, He will mend, restore, fill up what is missing, and produce in you the power to do what is pleasing to God. That is He will form you into the image of Christ.

Col 3:3-4(from New International Version)

For you died, and your life is now hidden with Christ in God.

Gal 2:19-21 NLT

I myself no longer live, but Christ lives in me. So I live my life in this earthly body by trusting in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me.

Phil 2:13 NLT

For God is working in you, giving you the desire to obey him and the power to do what pleases him.

Do you have this power? Not only a desire to obey God, but the power to do what pleases Him? You can have this power if you want it. You must surrender yourself and your will to God’s will for you, and by faith receive this baptism of the Holy Spirit. When you are willing to let the Holy Spirit have full influence over your life, He will give you not only the desire, but the power to do God’s will. Then all you need to do is one thing and want one thing only, and that is, to obey God moment by moment.

You say, “I’ve accepted Christ. I asked Jesus to forgive me.” Yes, but have you been baptized with the Holy Spirit, saturated with the Holy Spirit?

Acts 2:4 NLT

And everyone present was filled with the Holy Spirit

How rich would be the blessings of this day if all of us were filled with the Holy Spirit. The result of that would be impossible to overestimate. Life, comfort, light, purity, power, peace; and many other precious blessings would result if you had the fullness of the Spirit's presence. He anoints us and sets us apart, and gives us grace to live for God.

He cleanses us from the power of sin and sanctifies us to live in holiness, and righteousness, working in us to will and to do of the Lord's good pleasure.

The Holy Spirit reveals the Lord Jesus to us and in us, and guides us in the way of righteousness that we might no more live in darkness but in the light of the Lord and His Word.

He purifies us and cleanses us, and empowers us to live boldly for God, as a living sacrifice to God.

O that God would pour out His Spirit upon us this very moment! The Comforter would give us peace, dispelling doubts and fears; The Helper would give us power, and bear witness that we are consecrated to God, and set a part to do His will. By that Spirit we would cry out, “Abba, Father,” as He breathes life, spiritual life in us. Oh, that we might experience God’s presence in a new way this day and every day.

God is ready today to give you all of Himself, if you are ready today to give Him all of yourself.