

Fresh from the Hummocks

I. Preamble & Prayer

A. The Day of Fury

- May 18, 1980—some call it, The Day of Fury... Geologist, refer to it as a VEI 5 event
- At 8:32 A.M. two geologists were flying over Mount St. Helens
- Directly beneath them a 5.1 magnitude earthquake shook the unstable north flank of the mountain
- Instantly the earthquake caused avalanching from the north wall of the crater
- For the next few seconds the north flank seemed to ripple, appearing to almost liquefy
- Then most of the north flank suddenly broke loose and began sliding downhill as a massive avalanche
- Ash-rich eruption plumes rose rapidly from mid-slope and from the summit crater
- These plumes accelerated to speeds of around 600 miles per hour
- The plumes grew into a lateral cloud that easily overtook the avalanche
- The blast traveled as a hot, churning mass of gas, rock, ash and ice—channeled in several directions
- From their bird’s-eye view, the geologists returned to their home base—here’s what followed
 - a. One tongue of the avalanche slammed into Spirit Lake to the northeast—causing the water level to rise nearly 200 feet, avalanche debris came to rest in the lake’s bottom; the water surged 400 feet up ridges surrounding the lake
 - b. Another tongue of the avalanche traveled 1,200 feet up and over a ridge directly north and down into South Coldwater Creek
 - c. The bulk of the avalanche was deflected westward down the North Fork Toutle River; leaving behind hummocky deposits of more than 600 feet deep in some places—crunching downstream at speeds in excess of 80 miles per hour
- In minutes the avalanche had filled 14 miles of the North Fork Toutle river channel to an average depth of 150 feet
- The avalanche produced a hummocky, chaotic deposit of steaming hot rocks, debris, and blocks of ice

B. Now, fresh from the hummocks

- Now, some nearly 38 years later, my son, Roger and I hiked the 3 mile trail on the hummocks along the North Fork Toutle River
- We experienced mountain landscape that nearly 38 years before was part of Mt. St. Helen’s north face
- Large grassy mounds with occasional rocks the size of the grand piano here lying out in the open
- The trees there now are all under 38 years of age—so such a habitat limits the size of bird of prey who will live there and the land animals as well

- Remarkably, everything we were looking at was not there just a little less than 38 years ago

C. The hummocks from the 1st Pentecost

- Although the debris avalanche from Mt. St. Helen's was one of the largest ever recorded
- The avalanche that flowed from the 1st Pentecost following Jesus' death and resurrection
- Created a ground swell across our planet which is still being felt 2000 years plus later
- Why don't we explore the phenomena that occurred in the aftermath of that fiery day—just 50 days removed from the most cataclysmic event to ever occur on our planet
- That of Jesus' death, burial and resurrection

D. Prayer – Almighty God! Giver of life, Sustainer of life, become in us each the Spirit of life that brings inside us the true gift of Your perfect life and Your saving death on our behalf. We look to You, Lord to teach us what Spirit Baptism and Fellowship Groups are really meant to produce in Your church. We ask this in Jesus' name, AMEN!

II. Message

A. First 40 Days

- Have you ever considered what Jesus did after His resurrection and His initial appearance to His disciples
- How did Jesus spend His time after appearing initially to His disciples?
- Let's read what Luke tells us—
- TEXT: Acts 1:3 READ

“During the forty days after he suffered and died, he appeared to the apostles from time to time, and he proved to them in many ways that he was actually alive. And he talked to them about the kingdom of God.”

- What Jesus does is—
 - 1) He spent a lot of time with His disciples
 - 2) He prove to them in many ways He was actually alive
 - 3) He had many conversations with His disciples about His Kingdom
- Actually, Jesus continues with His small group—that of His disciples
- He can't get enough of being with these guys—that my friends is a small group
- In today's lesson of the 40 Days we are learning in the fifth and final section about Spirit Baptism and Fellowship
- And today's reading is about Spirit Baptism and Fellowship Groups
- We started on Thursday, Day 33 with this section—

- And here's what Pastor Dennis wrote in his book, page 103 in the English copy

“To become Spirit-filled, and remain somewhat isolated and independent of other Spirit-filled Christians, will not only hinder our spiritual growth but may lead to the loss of this fullness or the Spirit's presence in our life.”

- The reason I have entitled this message—Fresh from the Hummocks
- It's this—when you share common interest with those in your life, you want to share special times with them
- Thus, this week, I traveled for a day and a half to be with our son, Roger
- And we chose to hike the hummocks along the North Fork Toutle River, beneath the north slopes of Mt. St. Helens
- Jesus modeled for us the importance of fellowship groups in the Spirit
- In the first 40 days following His resurrection and prior to His ascension He wanted to be with His disciples
- This is what you and I will do, if we too are focused on the Baptism of the Holy Spirit, as Jesus and the disciples were—
- Notice where the disciples went and what they did after Jesus' ascension...
- TEXT: Acts 1:12, 13 NLT READ
- They walked a half-mile and returned to the upstairs room where they were *staying*

B. Staying ability – capacidad de permanencia

- There is such a thing that Jesus stipulated to the disciples then, and something He wants us to get here today when it comes to Spirit Baptism and Fellowship Groups—*staying ability*
- When the avalanche-landslide occurred at Mt. St. Helen's, 1,300 feet of the summit vanished
- Countless numbers of wild animals were killed
- The Tree Frog that is indigenous to the Mt. St. Helen's eco-system was one of the few creatures to survive
- Those little fellas dug in and demonstrated staying ability
- It's why they survived
- God, the Son knew when He rose from the grave and had been received as the First Fruit before the Father
- That He needed to demonstrate the need for Fellowship Groups and returned to earth
- And for 40 Days, time and time again He spent hours and parts of days with His fellowship group, the Eleven Apostles

C. Why Fellowship Groups?

- There are many who question the need for Fellowship Groups
- Claiming that—

- a. Salvation is an individual matter
- b. Believing in Jesus' death, burial and resurrection is a personal decision
- So, why are fellowship groups even necessary?
- Well, let's understand the why question this way

D. Story of the human hand—

- What would you think, if you walked into a friend's house and sat down for a visit...
- When you looked on the coffee table in the middle of their great room and there on the table is a human hand
- It would startle you, wouldn't it? It would me!
- Why? Because a human hand should be where?
- Attached to a human body, right?
- This is only natural—life connected to life
- Thus, the need for those of us that part of the Body of Christ to be connected
- What would you think, if you woke up one morning, and there were no longer any fears, any doubts, any temptations having their way in your mind?
- Just a deepening peace, a calm assurance as your mind instinctively turns to the Lord Jesus
- And you begin your day with only Jesus and His will and plan for you on your mind?
- Would you like that? Would you desire this in your life?
- This is supernatural living—our life linked, joined and filled with the Holy Spirit
- There's not one of us who wouldn't desire this experience, if we're honest with ourselves
- But listen friend, God never intended from the beginning of time here on earth for this to happen only individually

E. How life was meant to be lived

- From the very first human relationship between Adam and Eve
- God intended that two become one
- From the very first human and God relationship
- God came in the cool of the evening looking for Adam and Eve
- Asking: "Where are you?"
- Life was meant to be lived in relationship
- This was how God meant for life to be lived
- Thus it says this about the early Church

F. Early Church and Fellowship Groups

- TEXT: Acts 2:42 NLT

“All the believers devoted themselves to the apostles’ teaching, and to fellowship, and to sharing in meals (including the Lord’s Supper) and to prayer.”

- All four of these things—apostles’ teaching, fellowship, sharing in meals, and prayer involve connecting with someone other than just you and God
- I have been amazed at how fellowship groups are integral part of what we do here at Valley
- There are—
 - a. Weekly potluck fellowships
 - b. Weekly praise team fellowships
 - c. Bi-weekly Adventurer & Pathfinder fellowships
 - d. Weekly gym night fellowships
 - e. Home Bible Study fellowships
- This is just touching the surface—*devoting ourselves* the text says is how the early Christians carried out these fellowships
- The life of the church depended on the people doing these things together
- Why?
- Here’s the application of this message today...

III. Application

A. Reasons for Spirit Baptism and Fellowship Groups

1st – The Godhead fellowship together—so should we

- Because we were made in the likeness of God, so that we too should be like God
- God the Father, God the Son and God the Holy Spirit are in relationship with each other
- So then ought we to be as well
- The Godhead were together at the three most pivotal times in this earth’s history—
 - a. At Creation—let us make mankind in our image
 - b. As Jesus began His ministry—Holy Spirit descended like a dove upon Him and the Father said, “This is my Son in whom I am well pleased.”
 - c. At the Ascension of Jesus—“I will pray to the Father and He will send you another Comforter. So remain in Jerusalem until you receive the gift from the Father.”
- Sabbath School and Church along with a monthly potluck are not enough fellowship time for us
- Fellowship Groups are where you cross the foyer of the church, cross the sanctuary, cross the fellowship hall and ultimately walk right into the living room of a friend and soon-to-be friends in order to fellowship

- The body parts need the whole body—the whole body needs each body part— AMEN!

2nd – God’s Creation are linked together –so should we

- You know what? Secretly I wanted to climb with my son, Roger, and summit Mt. St. Helens itself
- And that is something that is on our shared bucket list
- But guess what, God had us on the summit of the mountain this week, right there in the hummocks
- That ash, rock, and debris we tread upon with our feet was the mountain’s summit, only relocated
- Here’s what we learned as we walked the old summit’s surface—about fellowship groups
- First, the largest anthills, ant colonies; where 1000’s upon 1000’s of ants were together, working and living shoulder to shoulder
- Second, the trees I spoke of earlier—none older than the nearly 38 years that have passed—they stand together, making a new forest
- Third, was a pair of Barrow’s goldeneye sea ducks—a male and his female partner—they had this pond in the midst of the hummocks as their home. And they were together, paddling peacefully along; perhaps when we weren’t looking doing their synchronized flirting...forging a relationship

IV. Prayer – Lord Jesus, you’ve urged us to hold tightly to the eternal life to which You have called us. Why? Why would we hold onto this calling *alone*, all by ourselves? Bring us Holy Spirit more together into fellowship, where we have You first as the commonality between us. Lord, Father, Holy Spirit, makes us more like You, communing with each other, relating to each other. AMEN