

“The Holy Ghost Is for You”
By General Pastor Peter F. Paine
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It's great to be with you. I love you. I appreciate you. Let's get a little stink out of the air: Who's here rooting for the Broncos today? Would you stand? Who's here rooting for the Panthers today? Would you stand? Stay sanding Broncos. Stay standing Panthers. Who doesn't care who wins today? I'm happy for you if your team's in the Superbowl. I really am. I don't have a dog in the hunt. I don't care who wins, because the Steelers aren't in the game, so... So, that's just a little humor, and, for those of you who might not understand the game, it's fine to have your team, and it's fine to root for your team; I think it's great to have—I'm a Steelers fan because I grew up in Pittsburgh, and I don't really even watch it all that much, to be honest. I'm not a die-hard fan. Would I like to see the Steelers win? Sure, because I'm from Pittsburgh. Does that make sense? How many Bears fans do we have here? Well, we're in Chicago, sure. And that's good.

And it's fine to have your team, but I want to ask you today, “How are you doing on rooting for Jesus?” What I want to ask you today is, “Are you a fair-weather fan?” And this is all leading up to the message today. Are you a fair-weather fan for Jesus? You know, our son, Adam, is a Forty-niners fan. I'm not sure how or when that started. Debbie just said that he was two, and perhaps that is, that far back. And the thing about Adam as a Forty-niners fan—and for those of you who don't follow it at all, that's just a football team out of San Francisco, the Forty-niners—but he roots for the Forty-niners, win or lose, and he's not a fair-weather fan. And I, really seriously, as I lead into the message today, I'm asking you, “Are you a fair-weather fan of Jesus?” Are you a fan of Jesus when everything is going good? Are you a fan of Jesus when it seems like your prayers are being answered? Are you a fan of Jesus when it looks like He's answering your prayers, and meeting your needs, and ministering to you? It's good to be with the Lord. Amen? Or are you a full-time fan of Jesus? And I know there's a book out, and a whole course that goes with it, “Not a Fan,” and it says you don't really want to be a fan of Jesus, you want to be a follower of Christ. It makes a distinction between a fan and a follower, and I get that, but, for the purpose of my question today, “Do you root for Jesus all the time?” And I ask you that, because we're speaking this month about, “Receive Ye the Holy Ghost.” And, some of you might have got stuck somewhere on your journey. And I hope I can bring you something today that will help you.

Have you heard the story about the boy who went to first grade, and his parents celebrated his first report card, which came six weeks after he started the first grade, and he got all A's? And so, Abby, you're a principal of an elementary school, right? You can imagine the joy of the parents. The first report period ends, and, this student gets all A's in the first grade, and everybody's thrilled and happy, Mom and Dad. So, what they decide is, “We're going to pull him out of school, and wait until next year, and then we're going to do it again.” And again he gets A's. I mean, the first grade report comes, and everybody's happy, and so proud of him, and they decide, “This is such a great experience, we should do this again.” So, they pull him out of school and the next year comes, and, of course, he hasn't graduated first grade, and so, he starts gain in first grade, and the first grading period comes, and I won't do this too many more times, but I want to make sure you're following this silly, silly story that I'm trying to lay out before you. So, now he's eighteen years old, and his parents are proud of him, because the first grading period is done, and he, among all his first grade peers, has got all A's again, and now, he's never made a mistake in his life. Every single time he takes a test, he aces it. He is the best first-grader in the world. And, so, you know, if you can take this story, and say, “The first time he did it, it makes sense that his parents are proud of him.” But, at some point he should go to second grade. Are you listening?

And we're talking this month about receiving the Holy Ghost. And I started with that story because I wanted you to think about what it's like to just stay in first grade, spiritually. What it's like to just, you know, "He, I got baptized in Jesus' name; I came out of the water. I was buried with Him in baptism, as we read in Romans, raised to walk in newness of life. Man, that was great! I'm going to celebrate that again." And then, next week, "I'm going to celebrate that again." And then, next week, "I'm going to celebrate that again." But not grow. Not say, "Lord, what would You have me to do with this experience? What would You have me to do with this life that I'm living for You?" Amen?

Some of us get frustrated when trials come, and I started out by asking you, "Are you a fair-weather fan?" Or, when there's trials, and when there's tribulations, and when there's tough times, when you have fears or doubts, where you slip and you fall and you've embarrassed your own testimony and embarrassed your family, do you still stand up and face forward, and say, "I know there's a God in heaven who loves me, and I know that I can embrace the promise of Romans 8:28, that all things work together to them that love the Lord and are called according to His purpose, and that something good can come of this?" Or, do you want to celebrate the first grading period of first grade again?

We're talking this month about the Holy Ghost, and I want to ask you, some of you set up here today—I don't remember who it was, it might have been Andy—but somebody said, "You know, it's not just speaking in tongues and that's the end of it." Was it Kirk, was it Andy? It was Andy? Andy, you said that, and it's not just, you know, receive ye the Holy Ghost and speak in tongues and then I can check that box and then, let's go back to that first grading period of first grade again, because that's a good comfort zone. "I'm a Christian. I've got my bumper sticker. I go to church 'most every Sunday. You know, I give ten percent." Or, is there something for us to do in this journey? Is there something for us to do in this life? Does that make sense?

I saw a documentary on Michael Jordan recently. A brief documentary. It was one of those YouTube things; it lasted about eleven minutes, I think. In one of the sections of that documentary, he gave the statistics on his losses. How many times he had the opportunity to make the winning shot in the game—in other words, they were down by one point and if he had made the basket, they would have won—and he took the shot, and didn't make it. How many times that, and he went down a whole list of things that, that was a failure. And it was big numbers. And he said, "But the reason I'm a winner, is because I'm not afraid to lose." And I thought that was an interesting teaching point, because, you know, as Christians, if we really keep living for and working for Jesus, we're going to make some mistakes. Now, I'm not here to say that mistakes don't matter; we should try not to make those mistakes. And, when we do make a mistake, we should quickly get back up, face the right direction, look forward to what He has for us, and get on with the business at hand. Amen?

But I'm talking to you today about the Holy Ghost, and I wanted to lay that foundation for the fact that life is a journey. It's intended to be a journey. We're not supposed to live this life in a vacuum. We're not supposed to live this life in first grade. We're supposed to grow in the Lord. And, the remainder of my time will probably be spent more sharing Scripture than sharing thoughts with you. And I hope that you can stay with the amount of Scripture that I have, that I feel the Lord has laid on my heart to give today, and that you will get something wonderful from it, you'll be blessed by it. Come with me, if you would, to John chapter fourteen. Jesus is speaking here, and He is speaking words that are important to us in first grade, and they're important for us after we graduate with our doctorate, using that as a metaphorical reference. Does that make sense?

John 14:1 **Let not your heart be troubled...**

Let not your heart be troubled... That makes sense, doesn't it, as a beginner? You say that to a child, you say that to a newly-baptized believer, "Let not your heart be troubled." But, how about somebody who has been in the ministry for forty years, or they've lived life for forty years, and they've

slipped and they've fallen, they've made a mistake, others have treated them bad, they have gone through some trials and tribulations of life; they've got the scars to prove it. Some of you have the scars to prove it, that you've been living for the Lord a long time. I remember one time, we were sitting at the dinner table, and our daughter, Heather, was, at that time, probably fourteen or fifteen years old, and, you know, we were just having family discussion after dinner, and she took my hand. And she was just kind of gently looking at my hand, and she was looking at my hand, and my wrist, then she took note of my left thumb. She spent a lot of time on my left thumb. She said, "You've got a lot of scars, Dad." I said, "Yeah." She said, "It looks like you got stitches here," I said, "Yeah." She said, "It looks like you got a bad cut there," "Yeah." Like any person, you know, through the years, you get those little bumps and bruises. Then she said, "Did you used to work?" I said, "Yeah, a long time ago, I used to work." She said, "Your hands are soft, but you've got lots of scars." And I'm going to ask, this morning, "Is your heart soft, even though it's got lots of scars?" Is your spirit soft, even though you've maybe got lots of scars? Are you tender towards the Lord, even though you've had lots of battles, lots of bruises, lots of scrapes? Or, have you learned how to deal with it by toughening up? "I don't let things bother me anymore. I don't cry anymore. I don't get sensitive anymore." That's a scary place to be. I spent a little bit of my Christian journey there. I got tough enough. I got tough enough that I'm just going to plow through this, but I realized that that's a dangerous place to be. And, if you think I'm just wandering right now, I hope it will all make sense as we tie it together with Scripture. Because, in our journey of life, you see, there's a Holy Ghost, and God want to empower us with His Holy Spirit. And He wants us to grow in him, and He wants us to be yielded to Him, but we won't hear the still, small voice if we're still screaming. I'm going to say that again: We won't hear the still, small voice if we're still screaming.

God has something for us, today, Saints.

John 14:1 *Let not your heart be troubled: ye believe in God, believe also in me.*

He's talking about His divinity right there. He's talking about what His mission is, and who He is, and He's sharing with them something that they just can't quite understand, and that's the theme of this message today, is that those who were closest to Christ couldn't understand what was happening at this point. But, you see, we have a blessing that they didn't have: We have the Book. Amen? We have the story. We know how it ends. They had the moment they were in. They didn't have the New Testament to read. They couldn't say, "Okay, let's see what happens after the crucifixion." Jesus was telling them, but it hasn't happened yet, so they couldn't understand it. Does that make sense? He said:

John 14:1-2 *Let not your heart be troubled: ye believe in God, believe also in me. In my Father's house are many mansions...*

He's talking about heaven, isn't He?

John 14:2 *...if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you.*

He's talking about leaving His ministry on earth, and going to do the Spiritual work of preparing a place for us in Heaven. It's a very powerful thing that He's sharing with those who were closest to Him, but they couldn't quite comprehend it, now. We're talking about the Holy Ghost this month, and it's the Holy Ghost that's going to help us understand things. It's the Holy Ghost that's going to let us know what to let go of and what to embrace. It's the Holy Ghost that's going to help us to grow. Can the church say amen? He said he went away to prepare a place for us. He said:

John 14:3 *And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto myself; that where I am, there ye may be also.*

So, think of the words of comfort he was speaking that they couldn't quite get yet. If your mother or your father or your rabbi or whoever it is, said to you, "I'm going to die, but it's okay; I'll be back." What would we say? Has any of us ever known any human being that's said to us, on their deathbed, "I'm going to die, but it's okay; I'll be back." Hello? And, when Jesus said it to them, they had no experience, of—we know that He's returning. We know that He's coming back. He's going to spend forty days with them. He's going to reappear and teach them what He has to teach them, and show them what He has to show them. And we're going to wind up, in a few moments, in the Book of Acts, where the Holy Spirit is falling, and people are receiving the gift of the Holy Ghost. But, right now, imagine the trial of them understanding, imagine the challenge, is maybe a better word, for them to understand that Jesus is saying, "Look, I'm going to go get Heaven ready for you guys. I'll be back. It's all good." And, I really hope that I'm helping you to get a snapshot of that moment in the disciples' lives, because, sometimes, we're in that snapshot. Sometimes we're in the moment where none of this makes sense. Sometimes we're in the place where this moment of life, it just seems like everything that could go wrong has gone wrong or soon will go wrong. Right? Sometimes in our life, things aren't rosy and merry and healthy and happy. Sometimes we're acing bad news, and then there's worse news to follow. He said, in the last part of verse three:

John 14:3 *...that where I am, there ye may be also.*

And then in verse four, He said:

John 14:4 *And whither I go ye know, and the way ye know.*

Come with me, if you would, to the sixteenth chapter of the same Gospel of John. Just come over a couple of pages, here. And, in John sixteen, let's look at these first seen verses:

John 16:1 *These things have I spoken unto you, that ye should not be offended.*

He said, "I've spoken these things to you that you shouldn't be offended, you shouldn't be upset, you shouldn't be challenged, you shouldn't be—you shouldn't wonder, 'Is this going to be all right?' It's going to be all right." Amen? And if you don't hear anything else in this message, please hear this: That God can say to you and to me, "It's going to be all right." You know, when I say to you, "It's going to be all right," you think, "Well, you know, it's nice of Pete to say that. I'm really glad he did; it's nice, but..." But when God says to you—hello? "It's going to be all right." He said in verse one:

John 16:1-2 *These things have I spoken unto you, that ye should not be offended. They shall put you out of the synagogues...*

Now, Jesus—do you where we're at here, in John sixteen?—He hasn't been crucified yet. He's telling them, "It's going to get worse before it gets better." Hello? Hello? And I started by asking you, "Are you a fair-weather fan?" It's going to get worse before it gets better. Some parts of our life, some parts of our journey, it's going to get worse before it gets better. "How about a great marriage?" Good! God can do that for you, but there's going to be a moment in that marriage where it gets worse before it gets better. "I want a great relationship with my adult children!" Great! But, between the times that they're born and that great relationship with your adult children, it's going to get worse before it gets

better. Some of you might think that's doom and gloom preaching; it's not! It's the reality of the journey of life. It'll get worse, and then it'll get worse—I know that's not a word; work with me—if you let go of God in the middle of the battle. Hello? So He said, "They shall put you out of the synagogues." This is not good news. This is not good news. He said:

John 16:2 ...*yea, the time cometh, that whosoever killeth you...*

I've been in a couple of fights in my life, but no one's killed me yet.

John 16:2 ...*whosoever killeth you will think that he doeth God service.*

This is not good news. This is not good news. I don't care who you are, this is not good news.

John 16:3 *And these things will they do unto you, because they have not known the Father, nor me.*

Who was speaking? Jesus. He said, "The reason that they're doing this is because they don't understand the message. They don't know the Father, they don't know Me, they don't have the Holy Ghost, they don't get it." He said:

John 16:3-4 ... *they have not known the Father, nor me. But these things have I told you, that when the time shall come, ye may remember that I told you of them...*

Put this in your memory bank. Put this in your tool chest. You're going to need it. Amen? You're going to need it.

John 16:4-7 ... *And these things I said not unto you at the beginning, because I was with you. But now I go my way to him that sent me; and none of you asketh me, Whither goest thou? But because I have said these things unto you, sorrow hath filled your heart. Nevertheless I tell you the truth; It is expedient [it's necessary, it's advantageous, it's expedient] for you that I go away...*

Nevertheless, I tell you the truth: It's expedient for you that I go away. It's good for you that I go away. This bad thing that's about to happen, my crucifixion, and all that's going to be surrounding it? Good stuff, guys. Embrace it. We're talking this month about the Holy Ghost. Do you know bad things are going to happen to you; if you have God's perspective, you can see the good in it? Amen?

Then he said:

John 16:7 ... *for if I go not away, the Comforter will not come unto you...*

If I go not away, the Comforter will not come unto you. Remember the story I told earlier, the first grade? "You can't just stay here, with Me, and that's the end of the story. We've got to advance here. We've got to go forward. If I go not away, the Comforter will not come unto you."

John 16:7 ...*but if I depart, I will send him unto you.*

"I've got to leave you so that I can come back to you. I've got to leave you so that the Holy Ghost can come upon you. I've got something good for you, but you can't get it until you go through this trial. You can't get it until this happens." And sometimes in life, that's just the way it is, Saints. We've got to go through this trial, we've got to go through this tribulation, we've got to go through this

misunderstanding, we've got to go through this battle. We've got to be refined and honed so that God can really do for us what he wants to do for us. You know, I laugh at myself, because, at this stage of my life, there are things that I know are not important to me anymore that used to be so important, that I laugh and wonder, "Why was that ever so important?" Debbie and I drove here this time from Norfolk, Virginia, and, so, you know, if you drive from Norfolk to here, this time of year, you get all that white, powdery tuff on your vehicle, right? I have not washed my car since I've arrived in town. Exactly! Woo! Thirty years ago, if I had made the same trip, I know I would have washed the car at least three times by now. I know I would have washed the car at least by Indiana, I would have washed it on the South side of Chicago, and then I would have washed it when I got in town. It really just doesn't matter that much to me anymore. I suppose, by comparison, my car is probably pretty clean. By comparison. But, you know what I realized, somewhere along my journey? That whatever car I'm driving now, it's going to be rusted out a few years from now. And, then, whatever suit I'm wearing now is going to be gone a few years from now. Hello? I've kept a few of the suits in my closet that I've outgrown, because I'm trying to 'grow' back into them. Don't laugh too much. Some of you can pretend you don't know what I'm talking about.

Go back to the Gospel of John fourteen for me for just a few moments. I'm just going to read two verses here, right now.

John 14:15 *If ye love me, keep my commandments.*

We're talking about the Holy Ghost, but this verse doesn't change, after the death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus Christ. John fourteen and fifteen; those are pretty strong words: If you love Me, keep My commandments. Even if we grew up in a strict home, imagine Dad saying, "If you love me, keep my commandments." It's true; it's fine, but you'd better know there's some love involved if somebody's going to say that, right? I mean, that can't be a one-way street. That better come from a loving father who's a provider and a provider and always watching out for your best interests and you know if they say, "If you love me, keep my commandments," that there's no hook in it. Right? "If you love me, keep my commandments." You've got to know where the source of that is if you're going to be happy about it. Does that make sense? Well, we do know who the source is, and it's fair for Him to say that, because there is no hook in it. He's just saying, "I'm always looking out for your best interests." We're talking about the Holy Ghost today, but we're talking about this earthly platform, we're talking about Heaven, we're talking about the bridge between the two. And then, in the next verse, He said these words:

John 14:16 *And I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter, that he may abide [stay] with you for ever;*

That He may abide with you forever! Here's Jesus saying, "I'm going to pray. Another Comforter is coming, and He's going to abide with you forever. Come down to verse twenty-six with me, please.

John 14:26 *But the Comforter, which is the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in my name, he shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you.*

"...**Whatsoever I have said unto you.**" He's going to bring it unto your remembrance. And this whole thing, here, that we just read in these portions of John the fourteenth chapter and John the sixteenth chapter, all of this is stuff that they need to learn and know, but it's not going to apply to them right now, it's going to apply to them later, but they need to get it. How many of you are like me; when you sat in science class or geometry class, you thought, "I'm never going to use this stuff," and somewhere on your journey, you were on your job or doing something, and you thought, "Wow! I wish I'd have paid more attention?" Anybody can relate to what I'm talking about? Does that make sense? And, of course,

I meant that to be a little humorous in how I worded it, but, think about the reality of it: There you were in your teen years, there I was in my teen years, thinking, "There is nothing that this man is going to say to me that will ever apply to me in my life," only to become an adult, and say, "Wow! I really wish I'd have studied a little more, because that would be helpful right now." Does that make sense? And here's Jesus speaking to His disciples, and He's speaking to us. And He's speaking to us, but now, we know where we're at, chronologically, we're after the fact. Some of you are anxious to get to that part of the story; come with me now to the Book of Acts. We're going to start with the first chapter in the Book of Acts. If you're with me, say amen.

Saints, we're talking about the Holy Ghost, today, and here's the thing I want to say to you, that many of us are living beneath our privilege. I've got to help you understand what's in the message for you, so that you don't miss it. Here's the deal: How many of you grew up in homes where, at Christmastime, you got gifts for Christmas? Many of us did. And, in my house, usually, there'd be two gifts, maybe three. It wasn't just one gift; I liked that, it was cool. Once I opened a gift that said, "Pete" on it, I was looking for the next one. Does that make sense? So, in my house, when I was a young kid—and my mom was a practical person, and we lived in a pretty practical house, so, for Christmas I'd get things I needed, you know, clothing items, and there'd always be one fun thing that I didn't need, I just wanted. But, six kids, it was sort of a practical time to give gifts to your kids. "Oh, Pete needs a sweater, Pete needs a pair of shoes," that kind of thing. Does that make sense? Pete didn't need, but he wanted, this toy. Okay? So, once I opened one gift, I wasn't saying, "Hey! I got a gift!" Are you with me? I'm checking to see if there's any more. I'm checking for more gifts. Where's what I'm asking today: We're talking today about receiving the Holy Ghost; anybody here think maybe you've got a few unwrapped gifts? What if God's got something for you, it's already got your name on it, it's been bought and paid for, it's been wrapped, it's there, but you haven't opened it yet? Wouldn't it be cool today to go home and find a gift that's yours that you haven't opened yet? How about maybe right in this service that you would get a gift that God had for you, throughout your journey, throughout your life, but you haven't opened it yet? God's got gifts for us, Saints.

And, now, I'm going to get real personal. That was meant as an encouragement statement, but this one, now, I'm going to step on your toes with it. Are you ready? Sometimes the gift that God wants to give you isn't about you; it's so that you can do what you're supposed to do in the body of Christ. Amen? In First Corinthians chapter twelve, somewhere along in there, it talks about this whole idea of the body of Christ (1 Corinthians 12:8-31), and it takes the idea of the eye, and the nose, and the ear, right? It talks about he put them all severally in the body as it pleased Him. God wants to put good gifts in the church as it pleases Him. What if he wants you to have a gift so that you can bless your brothers and your sisters? Amen? And I say that because, some of us, our personality is such that we're so modest, so humble, so meek, "I've got enough gifts; I'm happy." Yeah, but what if God wants to give you a gift to bless this body? What if God wants to give you a gift to bless others? What if God wants to give you a gift so that you can encourage, edify, walk through the valley of death with somebody? Amen?

I want to tell you a short story to make a point. Many of you that have known me through the years know this story, but there was a time in 1995 when there was a family tragedy; my brother and his wife and three children were killed in a plane crash. Now, fast-forward to a year later, there was a young man that came to our church; he was in the Navy. And, somebody came up to me and said, (we'll call him John) "John's really hurting, because, last year, his father and mother, and three of his siblings were killed in an accident. All of them were killed in one tragic accident, and John is the survivor. He wasn't in the accident, but he's the only survivor of his family; everyone else in his immediate family was killed. And he's really hurting and he wants to talk to somebody." And I said, "Well, I'd be glad to talk with him." And, so, after service, I sat down with John, and a quickening of the Holy Ghost said, "Don't tell him your story." So, I sat down with John and I listened. And we talked for about an hour. I didn't say much. And, after an hour, John said something very interesting. He said, "I've talked to lots of people in the last year

about this, but it seems to me, you're the first person that understands my grief." Now, why did he feel that? Because, I didn't have the exact situation, I had a similar situation; I could draw a little bit from my experience on how he might have felt. I think his situation was worse than mine, by far. Does that make sense? But I had some empathy for what he went through. You can't even believe it when you get the news. It doesn't even make sense.

What if the trial or tribulation you're going through is meant to strengthen the body? What if the gift that God wants to give you is meant to strengthen the body, and you're complacent and happy? "I'm saved; I'm going to Heaven. It doesn't matter if I get any more gifts." It might to your brother or your sister. I'm not saying that to yell at you, I'm saying it to help you today to say, "God, give me all You want me to have, so that I can be all You want me to be." Does that make sense? I know that I don't have a personal relationship with all of you; if it seems like I'm yelling at you today, I'm crying out to say, please don't miss what God has for you. Please don't miss the blessing that God wants you to have.

So, now, let's come back and look at acts chapter one. You know, when I was deciding what I wanted to share today, I wanted to read all of acts one, and two, and three, and, four, and five, but we couldn't do it all, so here we go:

Acts 1:4 *And, being assembled together with them...*

Just in case, I want to make sure that we completely understand, everything that I've read up until now has been prior to the crucifixion. Right? Now we're talking New Testament Church, post-crucifixion, after. It makes a difference. It makes a difference. For those of you who wonder—I don't really have time to make this point so big, but I'll just distill it down to this—there is a big piece of understanding that comes by realizing whether we're talking pre- or post-crucifixion. It makes all the difference in the world. Amen? Prior to us becoming a country, who's rule were we under? England, right. I remember hearing an English historian, and he was being interviewed on a radio show, and they opened up the lines for call-ins, and somebody called in. I don't know if they did it humorously, or if they just didn't realize how humorous it was, but they said, "Do you celebrate the Fourth of July in England?" and he said, "Not quite like you chaps over here do." Think about it. So, it makes a difference if we're talking about pre- or post-crucifixion.

Acts 1:4-5 *And, being assembled together with them, commanded them that they should not depart from Jerusalem, but wait for the promise of the Father, which, saith he, ye have heard of me. For John truly baptized with water; but ye shall be baptized with the Holy Ghost not many days hence.*

Prior to the resurrection of Christ, this baptism of the Holy Ghost wasn't available. Because, he hadn't gone away to the Father. He hadn't gone. He said, "If I go not away, the Comforter cannot come," we just read that, remember? So, now He has gone away, and, now, the Comforter has come. And it said, here:

Acts 1:6 *When they therefore were come together, they asked of him, saying, Lord, wilt thou at this time restore again the kingdom to Israel?*

They had questions. You have questions. I have questions, but God has answers.

Acts 1:7-8 *And he said unto them, It is not for you to know the times or the seasons, which the Father hath put in his own power. But ye shall receive power...*

How many want more power? How many want more power?

Acts 1:8 *But ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you: and ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judæa, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth.*

Why do we get power? So we can witness for the Lord. So that we can tell others who He is, and what He's about, and that he has an ear that is not heavy that it cannot hear, and His hand is not short that it cannot save (Isaiah 59:1), and the people have separated themselves from God because of their sins and their iniquities (Isaiah 59:2), but if you draw nigh to God, he will draw nigh to you (James 4:8). That's the importance of receiving power.

Acts 1:9-10 *And when he had spoken these things, while they beheld [while they watched], he was taken up; and a cloud received him out of their sight. And while they looked stedfastly toward heaven as he went up, behold, two men stood by them in white apparel;*

Who were these men? Angels! Angels!

Acts 1:11 *Which also said, Ye men of Galilee, why stand ye gazing up into heaven? this same Jesus, which is taken up from you into heaven, shall so come in like manner as ye have seen him go into heaven.*

Saints, we're living between the crucifixion and the return, and this Holy Ghost is for us. We're part of the New Testament Church. Receiving the Holy Ghost is more than speaking in tongues. I believe that speaking in tongues is an evidence of receiving the Holy Ghost. I do. It can be in the form of a prayer language, or—and we can talk more about that, I suspect, in the days and the weeks ahead, as you study this topic, you will, but, for right now, here's what I want to say: The Holy Ghost is for you. The Holy Ghost is for you. It's not just for somebody else in the church; it's for you. And, if you haven't received the Holy Ghost, you haven't received the power that comes with the Holy Ghost. Amen?

Come with me to the second chapter of the Book of Acts.

Acts 2:1 *And when the day of Pentecost was fully come...*

"And when the day of Pentecost was fully come..." They went to Jerusalem. They knew He was coming. Something powerful's happening; people came from all around. They arrived there, and they were waiting for the message that God had for them in this time and in this place.

Acts 2:1 *And when the day of Pentecost was fully come, they were all with one accord in one place.*

That one accord part is very important. That one accord part is very important, it's critical that you understand how important it is that you get in harmony with your brothers and sisters. How many of you grew up with siblings, brothers and sisters, even if it was only one sibling? Many of you. How many of you are parents of children, you have more than one child? Ever fight with each other? Anybody here have siblings, or you're a parent of more than one child, and you've never had them argue with each other, fight with each other; never had any disagreements? Anybody? Do they do that in Tyler, Texas, Ty? Do siblings fight with each other? They do it here, too. I have a feeling they do it all over the world. You know what? My brothers and I would fight with each other, but, if, at school, somebody said something about one of the Paine boys, all the Paine boys felt like they had to take up the cause. Yep. My brother Steve would beat me up on Monday night, and defend me Tuesday at school. And then he'd beat me up Tuesday night, and I'm thinking, "How about if you just defend me? I mean, what's the

beatings in between? What's that about?" You know? A little humorous, but, it's more funny, *now*. Yeah.

Acts 2:1-2 *And when the day of Pentecost was fully come, they were all with one accord in one place. And suddenly there came a sound from heaven as of a rushing mighty wind, and it filled all the house where they were sitting.*

No one knew it was going to happen exactly like this. It happened for them—we've read it, we know it, we understand it, and, if it happens again, we know what the reference is. But they were experiencing something very powerful for the very first time.

Acts 2:2-3 *...it filled all the house where they were sitting. And there appeared unto them cloven tongues like as of fire, and it sat upon [some of them. Did I read that wrong? It sat upon] each of them.*

Okay.

Acts 2:4 *And they were all filled with the...*

What? Holy Ghost.

Acts 2:4-6 *...and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance. And there were dwelling at Jerusalem Jews, devout men, out of every nation under heaven. Now when this was noised abroad, the multitude came together, and were confounded, because that every man heard them speak in his own language.*

We could get into a real study—and maybe you will this month—about the difference between the prayer language of tongues, and the interpretation of tongues, when it's meant as a Word for the church, and, also on this occasion, when people of different languages all got together, and God, through the Holy Ghost, spoke to everyone in their own language. Amen?

Where were we?

Acts 2:7-8 *And they were all amazed and marvelled, saying one to another, Behold, are not all these which speak Galilæans? And how hear we every man in our own tongue, wherein we were born?*

They're from all over the world. They're:

Acts 2:9 *Parthians, and Medes, and Elamites, and the dwellers in Mesopotamia, and in Judæa, and Cappadocia, in Pontus, and Asia,*

And all these hard names to pronounce, like Waukegan. So, they're from all over the world, and they all had their own language, right? They heard them in their own language, didn't they? And it goes on to say:

Acts 2:10-11 *Phrygia, and Pamphylia, in Egypt, and in the parts of Libya about Cyrene, and strangers of Rome, Jews and proselytes, Cretes and Arabians, we do hear them speak in our tongues the wonderful...*

What? Works of God. Everybody's hearing this message, this work of God in their own tongue, so it can't be misunderstood. I was preaching in Africa one time; I had an interpreter. And, I remember

the bishop of that church stood up, and he went over, and he started to whisper in the interpreter's ear, and he gave me, like, a 'hold on a second,' as I was preaching that day. And it was a large church; there were a few thousand people there. Do you remember that, Debbie? Some of you were there. Becky, you were there. Do you remember that incident? He said, "Just a minute, Pastor Paine," and he went over to the interpreter, and he whispered something in his ear. I didn't understand what it was, but after the service, he told me, "He wasn't interpreting; he was explaining." He said, "I told him to stop explaining, and just say what he says." See, that was a real benefit of what was happening here. There was no one interpreting or explaining, it was happening simultaneously. Everyone was hearing it in their own language at the same time. God can speak any language.

Acts 2:12 *And they were all amazed, and were in doubt, saying one to another, What meaneth this?*

What meaneth this? Well, the Holy Ghost is here. The Holy Ghost is here. That's what it means. That's the bottom line. That's what it's all about. And, saints, I want to tell you today that the Holy Ghost is here. The Holy Ghost is here; God has something for you. And, you know, we could read 1 Corinthians 14, they got a little out of balance on worshipping, and speaking in tongues, and what it was for, and when it was to be used, and how it was to be used... I'd rather get out of balance, I'd rather make a mess and let God speak to us and clean it up than just avoid it. I've heard some pastors say, "This Holy Ghost thing, this speaking in tongues, we just don't do it in our church because it creates confusion and God is not the author of confusion," but God is the author of the Holy Ghost. Can the church say amen? Amen?

My dad came to visit the church once, and, I know, I tell a lot of childhood stories, and I hope that they don't frustrate you, because, for me, it's one of those things where a picture is worth a thousand words. And, there was a young guy in church, and, not everybody was shouting hallelujah at this moment, but he had his hands raised, and he was shouting hallelujah, and he was speaking in tongues, and it was in decency and in order, in that moment in the service. And my dad said to me afterwards, he said, "What was he reaching for, Peter? He kept going like this (raising his hands)." I said, "Well, I don't know, dad. Remember when I was a kid, and you took me a Pittsburgh Pirates game, and somebody would hit a homerun, and I'd stand up and do like this (raising hands again)?" He said, "Yeah," and I said, "I think that's pretty much the same thing. I think he thought our team was winning at that moment, and he was just real pleased with it." I mean, how do explain that to somebody who doesn't go to church?

Something powerful was happening in this place, wasn't it? Something powerful was happening.

Acts 2:13 *Others mocking said, These men are full of new wine.*

They thought they were drunk. "These men are full of new wine."

Acts 2:14 *But Peter, standing up with the eleven, lifted up his voice, and said unto them, Ye men of Judæa, and all ye that dwell at Jerusalem, be this known unto you, and hearken to my words:*

He's saying, "You guys, pay attention. Listen to me. I've got something to tell you here. You need to know this:

Acts 2:15-16 *For these are not drunken, as ye suppose, seeing it is but the third hour of the day. But this is that which was spoken by the prophet Joel;*

We're going all the way back to Joel, now.

Acts 2:17 *And it shall come to pass in the last days...*

Saints, we're living in the last days. I know, in our society, in our culture, with our lifespan, you say, "Last days? This was two thousand years ago!" That's right. We're in the last days. It's getting closer to the end, every day. I didn't think we'd last this long, but we're in the last days.

Acts 2:17 *And it shall come to pass in the last days, saith God, I will pour out of my Spirit upon all flesh: and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, and your young men shall see visions, and your old men shall dream dreams:*

Parrish and Andy and I were talking yesterday, and we were talking about people who were having this spiritual revival in their lives. Some of you are seeing that awakening, and I believe it's because the Lord is soon to return. But I believe it's because, what we do, we must do quickly. I believe God has a work for us to do, and I believe some of us have become complacent in our walk, and it's time for us to revisit this thing, and say, "God, what would You have for me?" But I have a word for you from the Lord. I really feel like the Lord gave me something to give to you. I touched on this briefly in Men's Fellowship yesterday, but I want to share it with the whole congregation right now. I tried to plow the field earlier for this statement by saying, you know, siblings, and fights and all that stuff. You know what? This is a pretty big family. You don't think there's going to be personality conflicts, and challenges, and moments where I think somebody's left not carrying their fair share of the load, or somebody shouldn't have said this, or done that, or done this, times where I get my feelings hurt, times when I hurt other people's feelings. That's part of being part of a family. If you don't want that, go live alone in a cabin in the woods, right? Because, if you're going to interact with other human beings, that's the price you pay. Does that make sense? That's part of interaction with other human beings, whether you're related to each other, or whether you're a church family—we're all related, because we all have the same Heavenly Father. That's going to be part of it. But, here's the word that I feel that the Lord gave me. If I'm not able to share anything else this week-end, I would lie to share this: Lift your brothers and sisters up when you see that they're doing something wrong. When they've done something that offends you, pray for them. When they've done something that you don't like, pray for them. That's whether they're your leader, or you're their leader. If you see your brother or sister in a fault, ye which are spiritual, restore such a one I the spirit of meekness (Galatians 6:1). Somebody should put that in the Bible, don't you think? Work with me, Saints. If you see your brother or sister in a fault, ye which are spiritual, restore such a one I the spirit of meekness, considering thyself, lest thou also be tempted. We're going to reap what we sew (Galatians 6:7-8). I think one of the reasons that God—I don't mean this boastfully; I'm going to use Apostle Paul's words, "If I boast, I boast in Christ." I think one of the reasons that God's been so merciful to me, and I've been allowed to live and serve as many years as I have, is because I haven't sent too much of my life finding fault with others. I don't mean that boastfully, I just needed to say, you know what? I've been offended, I've been hurt, I've been disappointed, I think I've even been mistreated at times, but I try not to spend too much time on it, because a grudge is a heavy thing to carry day after day after day after day. And I'm not saying that to make light of what you feel you have been cheated, you feel you have been done dirty, done wrong...

You know, one more childhood story (I promise it will be the last one, only, it occurs to me that this is not really a childhood story, because it spans from my last day of my senior year of high school until our first child was born. Whatever that would have been; that would have been eight years later. So, my dad didn't come to my high school graduation, and it really hurt my feelings—I love my father; he's my hero, and I try to tell all my stories in a light that favors him—but, on the day of my high school graduation, he decided to stay home, and he stayed home that day. When I came home, I said, "Hey, dad, I graduated high school today." And he said, "Oh, that was today?" I said, "Yeah, it was today, dad, and I sure was hoping you'd be there, too. I'm disappointed you didn't come." He said, "Well, I've been to other

graduations; I figure they're all pretty much the same." I said, "I guess they are, dad, except, today was mine." And he sort of dismissed it, and I didn't feel any resolution. Fast-forward eight years or so later; I'm dropping my dad off at the airport after he's come to visit us and see his grandson, Adam. I said, "Hey, dad, remember when I graduated high school, and you didn't come to my graduation?" And he said, "I don't know what you're talking about, Pete. I don't know what you're talking about." I wasted eight years of my life being angry about something that didn't matter. I wasted eight years of my life because he made a mistake that day. It hurt me. And then he said, "Peter, I don't remember that day, but if I hurt you, or if I ever do, I'm so sorry. Please forgive me." And it was like a concrete block was lifted off my chest.

Somebody here, today, you're interfering with what the Holy Ghost wants to do for you, because you're holding grudges from a long time ago. And God wants to heal you and forgive you—I'm not saying that they weren't wrong; if it was with me, I'm not saying I wasn't wrong—but what I'm saying is receive ye the Holy Ghost. Let's get on with the business at hand. Let's be about our Father's business, because, at the end of our journey, we're not going to hold court with those that we hold grudges with. It's going to be you and God, and it's going to be me and God, and He's not going to say, "Tell me who else you've got gripes with, because I'm going to get to them soon." It's just, it's a very personal thing, come the end of our journey. Amen? And I wanted to be ready, how about you?

Singers, musicians, could you come up and sing the song that you sang just before I came up? We're going to close with these two verses in Acts chapter two. So, the Day of Pentecost has fully come, and they're all in one place, something big and powerful is happening, people are receiving the Holy Ghost; they're experiencing the Holy Ghost, in most cases, for the very first moment in their lives.

Acts 2:37 *Now when they heard this, they were pricked in their heart, and said unto Peter and to the rest of the apostles, Men and brethren, what shall we do?*

And so, if you're asking today, "what shall I do? What shall I do with this message? What shall I do with this Holy Ghost? He said:

Acts 2:38 *Then Peter said unto them, Repent...*

And before we go any further, I want to pause right there, because, if you're familiar with that verse, it might be easy to gloss over that word. But, there's a lot of power in that word: repent. Repent: Be sorry, and change. I'm going to do that again. Repent: Be sorry, and change. Be sorry, and change. Don't hold that grudge any longer. Don't find that fault over and over and over again; it's a bitter pill to swallow day after day. It's a bitter pill to swallow day after day. I've been there, I've done it, I've wasted time in my life, swallowing that bitter pill every day. To no gain, and it interferes with receiving the Holy Ghost. I'm reaching out for somebody today, to say, "God, what would You have me to do with this? What would You have me to do with this?" So, the first thing he said was repent, and repent means to be sorry and change. To be sorry and change. Amen?

You know, there's all kinds of jokes, and all kinds of stories about people that are driving down the road, and they find out they're going the wrong way, but what do they do? They just keep going the wrong way. They like the view, or whatever it is. One time Debbie asked me, she said, "Pete, do you think we ought to stop and ask directions?" And, this is silly; I know it's silly, but I really said to her, I said, "I don't think I'm that lost yet." How lost do you want to get before you ask, "What is the direction you have for me, God? What's the direction you have for me, God? Is today the day I stop holding this grudge?"

He said, repent. What's the next thing he said? He said:

Acts 2:38 *...be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins...*

That's the baptism in water that we read about in Romans, the burial. He said, "The old man has passed away. Behold, all things become new." (Romans 6:3-6) And the next thing he (Peter) said after that is what?

Acts 2:38 ... and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost.

What he said applies to use right here, right now.

Acts 2:39 For the promise is unto you, and to your children, and to all that are afar off, even as many as the Lord our God shall call.

Receive ye the Holy Ghost.

