What are you?

A message delivered to
MAYER COMMUNITY CHURCH

May 2nd, 1999

TITLE: What are you?

TEXT: Acts 1:1-13

THEME: Witnessing for Jesus

THRUST: The Holy Spirit is the *power* in our witness.

INTRODUCTION:

For the past several weeks,
we have been considering John's account
of some of Jesus' post-resurrection appearances.
Those appearances and conversations Jesus had with Peter
have given us insight into becoming more effective
in our various ministries, as ministers of the Gospel.

> A number of years ago, a Russian Baptist preacher was brought before the Soviet secret police, he was asked, "How many preachers do you have in your church?" "Five hundred," he replied. "Five hundred!" exclaimed the interrogator. "How many members do you have, then?" "Five hundred," was the quick reply. "You see, every member of my congregation is a preacher of the Gospel." ~*Voice of Europe* in The Sermon Builder, 2/1982, p. 34.

So too, we need to accept that all of us have been called
into ministry to proclaim the Gospel of Jesus Christ
This morning, I would like for us to consider the last
of Jesus' earthly appearances to His disciples.
For 40 days, Jesus has proved
to numerous individuals that He is alive!
Over a month has passed since that encounter
we visited over the past three weeks.
During that interval, Jesus is instructing His disciples
about the Kingdom of God.

Acts 1:1-13

I want to deal with the question ***"What are you?"***
Unfortunately, the answer you give
may greatly impact how you interpret this scripture.
Along with the instructions Jesus gave
concerning the Kingdom of God,
He also told His disciples to stay in Jerusalem
until they had been Baptized with the Holy Spirit.
This passage, and its corresponding fulfillment in Acts 2
have, in the last century, become
one of the most controversial passages in Scripture.
Churches have split.

Denominations have been shaken.
Friendships have deteriorated ....
All because of something Jesus said
and Jesus brought to fulfillment 2000 years ago.
Now, it is not our job to sift through all that controversy
and try to find common ground.
It is our job to come to understand
what Jesus said, and
what Jesus did (v1).
One of the reasons for this heightened controversy
is because the role of the Holy Spirit
is crucial to effectiveness in ministry.
Remove the Holy Spirit, and what is left is flesh,
and, flesh is unacceptable to God.
Even in His post-resurrection ministry,
Jesus Himself, relied on the Holy Spirit
as He instructed the disciples (v2)!
Depending on your "denominational preference"
you may or may not believe in
the "Baptism of the Holy Spirit."
I believe in the "Baptism of the Holy Spirit."
My *baptism* took place 25 years after my conversion.
I was like those Christians in Ephesus, (Acts 19)
Disciples of Jesus, but baptized with the baptism of John
(meaning John the Baptist).
Paul asked them if they had received the Holy Ghost
since they believed.
They responded that they had never heard
of the Holy Ghost.
Unlike them, I knew of the Holy Spirit,
but it was more a theological and clinical understanding,
for the most part devoid of intimate experience.
I further believe that this awesome work of grace
has become so abused
as to render it unrecognizable from
the simplicity of Jesus' statement.
Paul told the Christians in Corinth:
2 Cor 11:3 But I fear, lest by any means, as the serpent beguiled Eve through his subtilty,
so your minds should be corrupted from the simplicity that is in Christ. (KJV)
The confusion, the controversy, and the outright corruption
of this work of God is nothing less than shameful!
It is shameful that so many who call themselves Christians

are living lives that are devoid of this promised power.
It is shameful that so many who claim to have this power
are living lives that are devoid of the Spirit's fruit ... Love!
It is shameful that all the sides of this controversy
have bought into Satan's craftiness and
have been rendered ineffective
because they have become guilty of
either taking away from these truths,
or adding things to them.
Taking away:
by saying there is no such experience no such work of grace.
Adding to this work:
by putting conditions on the results that are *extra biblical*!
I challenge you to prove from scripture
that the Baptism with the Holy Spirit
is evidenced 100% of the time
by speaking in tongues.
The *evidence* of the work of the Spirit
is the *fruit* of the Spirit!
Jesus said, "A tree is known by its fruit...."
The *fruit of the Spirit* is ***Agape`***
Remember Peter?
The one who could not give to Jesus, what Jesus wanted?
Neither can we!
We are powerless to produce the depth and degree
of love He requires.
When you are baptized with the Spirit,
the proof of that is found in the ***Fruit of the Spirit***.
When you are baptized with the Spirit,
the proof of that is ***Love – Agape`***
It's like Jesus was saying:
"Peter, wait in Jerusalem until you have received
the *Promise of the Father*;
wait Peter, and the Holy Spirit will so fill you
that you will be able to respond to me,
with 'yes Lord, I agape` You!'"
I have seen Christians,
Christians who claim to have been baptized with the Spirit,
Christians who claim the evidence of that baptism
by their ability to speak in tongues;
I have seen those same Christians
stab their brothers and sisters in the back.

John said, “How can you say you love God, whom you have not seen and hate your brother whom you have seen.”

Satan can mimic any spiritual gift!

There are demonically controlled tribes in this world

who manifest their demons by speaking in tongues.

There are demonically controlled individuals

who manifest their demons by miraculous healing’s.

There are demons who reveal hidden things.

There are demons who exhibit superpower.

The *gifts of the Spirit* can and are duplicated.

The *fruit of the Spirit* cannot be duplicated.

Do you know why?

Because the fruit is proof of the tree!

Love is proof that the tree is of God!

Hate is proof that the tree is of the evil one!

Hate is his root. He cannot produce love!

Jesus said, “By this shall all men know that you are my disciples, by the ***Agape`*** you have one towards another.” (John 13:35)

I love what one preacher said about evangelism,

he said, “You can’t teach evangelism, evangelism is a result of our love for Jesus – our obedience to His commands.

It is true, that *this* command, the command to wait in Jerusalem,

was to the disciples in that time frame.

True, in the sense of waiting in Jerusalem

until they had been baptized.

In that regard the command was specific

as to time and place.

The purpose of that waiting period

was not like our gun laws,

to make sure that these were worthy

of the power they were about to receive,

but to emphasize that we cannot,

we should not attempt *any* work for God

without the empowerment of His Holy Spirit.

It is equally true, that this “promise”

is for us today – Peter preached:

“This *promise* is for you, and to your children, and to all who are afar off,

even as many as the Lord our God shall call.” (Acts 2:39)

We are the ones who are afar off from Peter’s time.

This *Promise* is for us today!

Some of you are still waiting ...

perhaps you are waiting for God to do something,

something spectacular like Pentecost.
*This promise is for **you**!*
Perhaps you are waiting
because you have been misinformed
about your rights as a child of God.
*This promise is for **you**!*
Perhaps you are waiting
because you fear becoming like *them*!
Some dreaded misconception fostered by
lack of understanding and irrational fears.
Please listen, the whole purpose of this
is not to make us like *them* ...
but to make us like ***Him!***
If you want to be like Jesus ... then you need His Spirit!
If Jesus needed the Holy Spirit to minister to His disciples,
how much more do we need the Holy Spirit
in our areas of ministry?
Bently D. Ackley, a hymn-writer, wrote,
"Be like Jesus, this my song, In the home and in the throng;
Be like Jesus all day long! I would be like Jesus."

When missionary Ray Dibble and his wife left Nigeria at the beginning of World War II, they had just finished translating the New Testament into the Igala language. There were only six typewritten copies of the New Testament and a handful of Christians when they left. Returning after the war the Dibbles found fifty congregations. Tribesmen had made at least one hundred copies of the New Testament by hand. Some pages were torn, so some tribesmen had committed whole gospels to memory that they might not be lost. The believers were persecuted by nonbelievers and called "The Word of God People."

We should have no desire to be named after a denomination
or a spiritual movement.
We should be called "The Word of God People!"
The Word of God states that we *must* be born again!
The Word of God states that we *must* be baptized
~water baptism and Spirit baptism.
There is no need to wait!
This *Promise* can be fulfilled at the point of conversion,
or days, weeks or years later.
This *Promise* is for you ... all that is needed is
repentance and faith.
Acts 2:38-41 —Repentance!
Galatians 3:2, 14 —Faith!

Jesus told His disciples, in preparation for that promise,

> "... how much more shall your Heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to them that *ask* Him?" (Luke 11:13).

CONCLUSION: "*Come, Holy Spirit*" © 1964 William J. Gaither, Inc.

1
Come as a wisdom to children
Come as new sight to the blind
Come Lord as strength to my weakness
Take me soul body and mind

Chorus
Come Holy Spirit I need Thee
Come sweet Spirit I pray
Come in Thy strength and Thy power
Come in Thy own gentle way

2
Come as a rest to the weary
Come as a balm for the sore
Come as a dew to my dryness
Fill me with joy evermore

3
Come like a spring in the desert
Come to the withered of soul
O let Thy sweet healing power
Touch me and make me whole