

***Fanning it into Flame***  
**Sunday, May 23, 2010**  
**The Purpose of Pentecost**

This past week I found myself making a conscious effort to compliment God on what he has done. It was more than just thanking him for what he's done for me personally, but his whole nature and his amazing attention to details. He is awesome! I was reminded of Psalm 8 where the psalmist exalts the Lord for the glory he displayed in his creation. He goes on to marvel at the prominent place God has given man. The King James Version translated vs. 5 as man being created a little lower than the *angels*, while the New International Version translates the same as *heavenly beings*. The New American Standard version translates it in the most mentally challenging way and yet perhaps the most accurate, i.e. *a little lower than God*. It seems like such a stretch, but is it? We were created in God's image with his grand design revealed through the life of Christ, who was totally man and yet totally God, giving us the example of what real Christianity looks like.

Genesis 3:22-24 *And the LORD God said, "The man has now become like one of us, knowing good and evil. He must not be allowed to reach out his hand and take also from the tree of life and eat, and live forever." 23 So the LORD God banished him from the Garden of Eden to work the ground from which he had been taken. 24 After he drove the man out, he placed on the east side of the Garden of Eden cherubim and a flaming sword flashing back and forth to guard the way to the tree of life.* (NIV) I believe God prevented man from eating from the tree of life in his fallen state because it would have sealed for eternity his present condition. Christ needed to die in our place in order to pay the penalty of sin and in order to give us the right to become children of God through him. God did not want anyone to perish, even after they had sinned. As we've stated in previous devotionals, God had to give man the right to choose, even if he chose wrongly in order to truly be made in the image of God. Although God never chooses wrongly, choice is essential for us. In Genesis 11:4-9 God addresses another side of man's abilities by stating, *"If as one people speaking the same language they have begun to do this, then nothing they plan to do will be impossible for them."* God has given us potential in our humanity, but had a greater purpose than what we would come up with. He wanted to baptize us in his Holy Spirit so we could do things his way.

John records Jesus telling the people in a loud voice (I guess he really wanted to be heard!), *"If anyone is thirsty, let him come to me and drink. 38 Whoever believes in me, as the Scripture has said, streams of living water will flow from within him."* Then John gives the meaning of the statement as the coming of the Holy Spirit. After Jesus rose from the dead he spent 40 days with his disciples and taught them about the Kingdom of God and that they were to wait in Jerusalem for the gift that Father had promised. Then on the Day of Pentecost 120 disciples were filled with the Holy Spirit with the evidence of speaking in other tongues or languages. They were so excited they appeared to be drunk. God gave them more than a message. He gave them himself. They were filled with the very presence of God. It is the purpose of Pentecost to have an experiential encounter with the presence of God by receiving his Spirit. Love personified comes into our lives and transforms us into his very image. Without the Holy Spirit we can only guess at what we think everything means. With the Holy Spirit we get to see things from his perspective. He wants to give good gifts to his children and have us carry out the message of Christ the way Christ did, experientially. John 20:21 *Again Jesus said, "Peace be with you! As the Father has sent me, I am sending you."* He meant that. He was filled with the Holy Spirit and we need this as well.

If you are hungry for more of God, then keep asking him for more. Delight yourself in the Lord and you will receive the desires of your heart. Don't reduce your faith in Christ to merely a doctrinal statement. Ask the Lord to baptize you with the Holy Spirit. The purpose of Pentecost is his power working in and through us to advance his Kingdom and change the world. **PRAY FOR MORE!**