

RADICAL DISCIPLESHIP (LESSON 49)

DISCIPLESHIP AND THE CHURCH. On the day of Pentecost the Holy Spirit descended as the disciples prayed. Three thousand souls were born again. For the first time the world experienced a miraculous overflowing presence of the Spirit in the church. The new church experienced unprecedented life and joy in the Holy Spirit. They immediately began to establish priorities based on what Jesus taught the Apostles, especially what He taught the night before He was crucified. This was spontaneous Christianity as God intends it to be. It was an evangelism explosion. It was a harvest of souls. G. C. Campbell Morgan points out, "In the Hebrew economy Pentecost was described as the 'Feast of harvest, the first fruits of thy labors.' The spiritual suggestiveness of the feast was fulfilled in the Christian dispensation on this occasion." This birthday of the church inaugurated the Age of the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit brought Pentecost, inspired Peter's sermon, brought 3,000 people to Christ, and produced a continuing flow of conversions in the Jerusalem church. The body of Christ in Jerusalem multiplied twenty-six times, from 120 to 3,120 in the space of one sermon. This happened because the apostles acted on what they had learned from Jesus' training, especially the night before His crucifixion. Everything the apostles learned was for this new organism called the church. The ingredient that made the difference was (and is) the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit was responsible for a revival that would last for decades. Every new ministry, every forward movement, every evangelism explosion, and every revival in the church age is a move of the Spirit. The "greater works" began in Jerusalem and continue today. When the church follows the Spirit, it does Jesus' works on a larger scale. The church was birthed as a "radical" movement. When the church ceases to be radical, it ceases to be what the Holy Spirit birthed it to be. Today – it is not radical. For the most part it is a shadow of what the Spirit created it to be. The church needs to return to the fundamentals, i.e. the radical roots, of what it is supposed to be. When that happens, we will once again see a renewal of the power of Pentecost.