



THE CROSS *and* CROWN

"No Cross, No Crown"

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This Sunday, as we work our way through the book of Acts, I'll have the pleasure of speaking on one of my favorite passages, Luke's recounting of the outpouring of the Holy Spirit, in Acts 2. Whenever I speak on this passage, I link it to Elijah's encounter with the Spirit, as recorded in I Kings 19. You remember the story: When Elijah fled from Jezebel, God led him to a cave on Mount Horeb and announced that he was about to pass by. There followed a mighty wind, but the Lord was not in the wind; then, an earthquake, but the Lord was not in the earthquake; then, a fire, but the Lord was not in the fire. Finally, there was a gentle whisper, and Elijah covered his face, recognizing that he was in the presence of the Almighty.



On the day of Pentecost, there was a sound like a violent wind along with tongues of fire. If we jump ahead to the outpouring of the Spirit in Acts 4, we see that the place where they were meeting shook – an earthquake. Following these outpourings, the disciples “began to speak . . . as the Spirit enabled them,” (Acts 2:4) and “spoke the Word of God boldly.” (Acts 4:31). My point is simple: While the wind, fire and earthquake were evidence of that God was present, his presence itself is in the Word. When we hear someone say (or, when we ourselves say), “The Spirit of the Lord was present in that service!” our question must be, “Well, what did he say?” Sadly, we can be carried along by compelling worship and passionate messages, but unless there is a Word from God, we cannot say that we have fully engaged with him.

Being people of the Spirit means being people of the Word. To be clear, I'm not speaking only of the Bible. Speaking the Word boldly (and I hope to flesh this point out more deeply on Sunday) means speaking as God did, when he spoke light into existence, as Jesus did, when he spoke life into Lazarus' dead and decaying body, and as Peter and John did, when they spoke healing into the beggar's legs. But if we aspire to speak the Word in this way, we must first be filled – to overflowing – with it. Oh, that we were filled to the extent that Jeremiah was so that we could say, as he did, “his Word is in my heart like a fire, a fire shut up in my bones. I am weary of holding it in; indeed, I cannot.” (Jeremiah 20:9)

For the one whom God has sent speaks the words of God, for God gives the Spirit without limit.
(John 3:34)

Thanks for Praying!

Your prayers for “Sprouting Remnants” carried the evening! We are grateful for what God did and is doing as a result. Please also pray with us for:





- our summer camp and other upcoming ministries,
- a fresh Word for our Tioga-Nicetown neighborhood,
- fresh laborers, leaders, staff, interns and teams called to minister alongside us, and
- a fresh passion for missions.



We're praying with you!

If you're on our mailing list*, you're on our prayer list! If there's anything specific that we can join with you in praying for, please let us know. (We will only publish your requests in this newsletter with your permission.)

We really do love hearing from you! Every message and phone call helps us keep going!

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* **Important:** If you'd rather not be on our mailing list, we won't be offended! Just call or write us, and we'll remove you. (We'll still keep you on our prayer list!)

If you'd rather receive this letter via e-mail, please let us know, or subscribe to it at crossandcrown.online/subscribe !

Did you know?

After the Norman Conquest, the French-speaking noble class in England referred to the cows they ate by their French name, “bœufs.” This is why, centuries later, we say that we are eating beef, not cow. On the other hand, chicken, the food of the English-speaking peasants, retained its English name, so we now eat chicken, rather than poulet.

I will praise you as long as I live, and in your name I will lift up my hands. I will be fully satisfied as with the richest of foods; with singing lips my mouth will praise you.

(Psalm 63:4,5)



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