Special Message of New Year 2014 Msn. Juan Seo

**YOUR YOUNG MEN WILL SEE VISIONS**

Acts 2:17

“In the last days, God says, I will pour out my Spirit on all people. Your sons and daughters will prophesy, your young men will see visions, your old men will dream dreams.”

Happy New Year! May God bless you to see God’s vision this New Year and live with his vision. Thank God for the opportunity to share this word with you. Thank M. John Kwon who allowed me to deliver today’s message. Now I want to show you a short video about the prayer of an American missionary who served Korean people in the last of 19th century and the early of 20th century.

 This video is the prayer of the missionary Underwood, who was the first Presbyterian missionary to Korea. The mind of Korea was not visible, he did not see what to do, but he saw the vision of God by faith. “We believe that in the near future this land will become a land of blessing. Lord, please strengthen my faith!” In 1883, when Underwood was 23 years old, he heard about Korea. He was preparing himself to go to India, so he recommended his friends to go to Korea as missionaries. But nobody wanted to go there. Underwood felt sorry thinking: ‘Why nobody wants to go to Korea as missionary, the land where God is waiting?’ In that moment a voice of God touched his heart: “Why can’t you go there?” Underwood could live comfortably in America, but when he was called by God and saw His vision, he made decision to live a sacrificial life for God. He touched Korean land as a missionary in 1885, when he was 25 years old. And he gave his life for the evangelization of Korea. He translated the Bible and the Hymn book in Korean, built orphanages, started YMCA movement for young men and founded Yonsei University based on Christian values. When he died as a kernel of wheat for the evangelization of Korea, a lot of Koreans were saved and the country was changed to be a missionary sending country. Underwood is a great servant of God in Christian history of Korea. Do you have this kind of vision of Underwood to be used for the salvation work of God?

Acts 2:17 teaches us how we can live this wonderful life. Let’s read it together. “In the last days, God says, I will pour out my Spirit on all people. Your sons and daughters will prophesy, your young men will see visions, your old men will dream dreams.” When Jesus resurrected and ascended to the heaven, the Holy Spirit came on the day of Pentecost. The 120 disciples were praying in a house and suddenly a sound like the blowing of a violent wind came from heaven and filled the whole house where they were sitting. They saw what seemed to be tongues of fire that separated and came to rest on each of them. And all of them were filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other languages as the Spirit enabled them. The people utterly amazed and perplexed. They asked one another, “What does this mean?” However some made fun of them and said, “They have had too much wine.” Then Peter stood up with the Eleven, raised his voice and addressed them that they were not drunk and interpreted what happened to them with the word of the prophet Joel: “In the last days, God says, I will pour out my Spirit on all people. Your sons and daughters will prophesy, your young men will see visions, your old men will dream dreams.”

When is ‘the last days’? Some people say that the last days do not exist expecting that the world may continue forever. Others say that the last days still have not come. But according to Hebrews 1:2 “But in these last days he has spoken to us by his Son, whom he appointed heir of all things, and through whom also he made the universe”, the appearance of Jesus Christ is the beginning of the last days. Peter regarded the outpouring of the Spirit as the last days. The last days began when the Messiah came to this world, died for our sins, ascended to the Heaven and sent us the Holy Spirit. The last days are not a single point of time, but an entire period. The last days will finish when Jesus comes again to this world. Now we are living in the final of the last days.

Then, what happens in the last days? “In the last days, God says, I will pour out my Spirit on all people.” In the last days, God will pour out his Holy Spirit on all people. Who is the Holy Spirit? Some Christians think that the Holy Spirit is a power to achieve their purpose. In South America there is great work of the Holy Spirit. Every year many people accept Jesus and the evangelic churches are growing. At the same time there is much confusion about the work of the Holy Spirit. Some brothers of Venezuela UBF participated in a worship service of a local church and one of them fell backward after receiving a prayer. And he said that he had received the Holy Spirit at that time. But he had accepted Jesus as his Savior and received the Holy Spirit before. Rom.8:9 says: “If anyone does not have the Spirit of Christ, they do not belong to Christ.” The Holy Spirit is not an instrument that moves here and there by the hands of men. The Holy Spirit is God of the Trinity. Nobody can accept Jesus as his Savior without the work of the Holy Spirit. And the Holy Spirit dwells in the people who accepted Jesus. He guides us into all truth. He let us know God’s will in our life and helps us to live for it.

It is the Holy Spirit who shows us the vision of God. In the time of the Old Testament the Holy Spirit came on some selected people to accomplish God’s special purpose. But in the time of the New Testament God gave us a new promise. After that day of Pentecost, God said that he would pour out the Holy Spirit on all people. This promise is to all people who believe in Jesus.

We have to take note of the words ‘pour out’. It is not simply to give, but to pour out. It is not in drops, but in streams. It is to give us abundantly. Three years ago I met a new year in Korea. On the first day of the year 2011, when I opened my eyes in the morning, it was snowing heavily. I had not seen such a lot of snow before. My son and daughter were born in Venezuela and they never saw snow there, so they were very happy for the snowfalls. I was also happy like a child, so I played with my children making a snowman. God’s promise is not to give us his Spirit stingily, but to pour it out on all people like a heavy snowfall. God gave us the promise of fullness of the Holy Spirit. God wants to fill us with his Holy Spirit. We have to know this promise of God and be full of the Holy Spirit, which is God’s will for us. Ephesians 5:18 says: “Be filled with the Spirit.” This is a command of Jesus. The fullness of the Holy Spirit is the duty of all Christians. At the same time it is the amazing blessing of God. Being full of the Holy Spirit we can live according to God’s will. Being full of the Holy Spirit we can receive power to preach his gospel to all nations. Being full of the Holy Spirit we can receive spiritual gifts to serve God’s ministry. Being full of the Holy Spirit we can bear the fruit of the Spirit: love, joy, peace, forbearance, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control. Do you want to be full of the Holy Spirit?

Then what we have to do for it?

**First, we have to repent of our sins.** Acts 2:38 says: “Repent and be baptized, every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of you sins. And you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.” We have to repent of our sins and be forgiven by the grace of Jesus. The repentance is the change of direction of our lives. It is to change our steps from the world to God. It is to change our mind from sins to holiness. It is to change our sinful desire to spiritual desire. If we repent our sins sincerely, we can be full of the Holy Spirit.

**Second, we have to love the word of God and pray to be full of the Holy Spirit.** The Holy Spirit works by the word of God. John 16:13 says: “When he, the Spirit of truth, comes, he will guide you into all the truth. He will not speak on his own; he will speak only what he hears, and he will tell you what is yet to come.” When we read the Bible with a humble and open mind, we can hear the voice of the Holy Spirit. And praying is very important to be full of the Holy Spirit. Luke 11:13 says: “If you then, though you are evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Father in heaven give the Holy Spirit to those who ask him!” If we ask God to fill us with the Holy Spirit, he will respond us with great joy. Please pray early in the morning to meet Jesus and be filled with the Holy Spirit!

**Third, we have to desire to be full of the Holy Spirit.** The spiritual desire to be full of the Holy Spirit is very important. Proverbs 8:17 says: “I love those who love me, and those who seek me find me.” Isaiah 44:3 says: “For I will pour water on the thirsty land, and streams on the dry ground; I will pour out my Spirit on your offspring, and my blessing on your descendants.” The thirsty land means the thirsty desire. When we desire earnestly to be full of the Holy Spirit, God will pour out his Spirit on us.

What is the promise of being full of the Holy Spirit? Let’s read again Acts 2:17: “In the last days, God says, I will pour out my Spirit on all people. Your sons and daughters will prophesy, your young men will see visions, your old men will dream dreams.” Your sons and daughters will prophesy, your young men will see visions, your old men will dream dreams. ‘Your sons and daughters’, ‘your young men’ and ‘your old men’ represent ‘all Christian people’. It means that when we are full of the Holy Spirit, we can prophesy, see visions, and dream dreams.

What is ‘prophesy’? It is to deliver the revelation of God to the people. In the Old Testament, God used to reveal his will directly to the prophets and they delivered it to the people. The Bible is the prophecy of God. As Hebrews 1:2 says, in these last days God has spoken to us by his Son and it is in the Bible. Therefore understanding the Bible, interpreting the Bible, finding God’s will and teaching the words of God is prophesying. Those who are full of the Holy Spirit love the words of God, receive God’s wisdom and understand his will. And they have a great desire to share the words of God with others, so they make their best efforts to preach the gospel of salvation. As 2Timothy 4:2 says: “Preach the word; be prepared in season and out of season”, they preach the word of God in season and out of season. Msn. Philip Lee preaches the word in season and out of season. He plays soccer every Sunday. Do you know why? Yes, he likes playing soccer. But he has more important reason. He does it to invite new sheep to Bible Study. He plays soccer to preach the word! Is he crazy? Yes, he is crazy, but he is crazy for Jesus. Because he loves Jesus and his words, he wants to preach the word in season and out of season. The Christians should be crazy for Jesus. When Apostle Paul preached the gospel to the king Agrippa, Festus shouted: “You are out of your mind, Paul! Your great learning is driving you insane.” Have you heard that you were insane for Jesus? When I received Jesus as my Savior, the direction of my life was changed completely. So my mother was very afraid for me and said to me: “You are crazy because of Jesus.” When I told her that I would go to Venezuela as a missionary, she thought that I had lost my mind because of Jesus. But when she visited to me in Venezuela, she was very impressed at my crazy life for Jesus and accepted Jesus as her Savior and received the eternal life. After then she has been supporting me by prayer. If you have not preached the gospel as an insane, you have to check your life of faith very seriously. If you are not preaching the gospel now like a crazy, you have to check your life of faith very seriously, asking you: “Am I full of the Holy Spirit?”

The word says: “Your young men will see visions.” These days many people say about the vision. The people who do not believe in God also talk about the vision. They think that the vision is what they want to obtain in the future. But now we are talking about God’s vision. It does not come from us, but from God. God’s vision is what God wants to do with us. It is what God shows us for our future. Seeing God’s vision is to know God’s will for us, to accept it and to wish it to be accomplished. When we are full of the Holy Spirit, we can see clearly what God wants with us, what we have to do for Him and we can accept it with great joy and we act to realize it. When the young men are full of the Holy Spirit, they seek God’s plan for their lives and make decision to live for it. They abandon their human desire and plans to obey God’s plan. Many young men have not seen God’s vision yet, so what they want is only to enjoy their life. They are worry about their future, work hard to buy cars, houses and live comfortably. That is the purpose of their life. But, do you think that it is the vision of God on your life? It is necessary to earn money and be stable, but don’t you think that the more important thing is to see God’s vision and live for it? The young men who are full of the Holy Spirit see God’s vision and do their best to fulfill it in his life. Mother Barry gave up her comfortable life and went to Korea which was ruined by the Korean War when she was 25 years old. She did not marry to serve Korean young men with the gospel. How she could make such a decision? It was because when she was young, she saw God’s vision on her life. When she was guided by the Holy Spirit, she could live to fulfill God’s vision. Did you see God’s vision for you? Are you living to fulfill God’s vision? May God help us to be full of the Holy Spirit and see his vision and live for it in all of our life. Amen.

When I was young, my human vision was to be a lawyer and make much money. So I studied hard and got an admission from Law School of Korea University. But when I was freshman in 1989, I lost my human vision because I did not know the real purpose of my life. In those days I was invited to Bible Study and John 13:34 touched my heart. “A new command I give you: Love one another. As I have loved you, so you must love one another.” I repented of my selfishness, hypocrisy, lustful desire, disobedience and was forgiven under the cross of Jesus. Then I could receive a great peace of God and my heart was full of joy. A shepherdess told me that my face was shining. When I repented of my sins and was forgiven by the grace of Jesus, the Holy Spirit came to me, filled me and showed me his vision. Two years later through a mission report of a Russian missionary I could see God’s vision on me. From then on every day in the morning I prayed: “Lord, please use me for your salvation work in the world.” In 1996 I was asked if I could go to Venezuela as a missionary. I never had thought of Venezuela and I did not know anything about the country, but I answered: “Let me pray.” And in the midst of prayer God showed me his vision by his word Genesis 12:2 “I will make you into a great nation, and I will bless you; I will make your name great, and you will be a blessing.” I answered to God saying: “Lord, I will go. Please send me.” I could abandon my human plans and desires because I was full of the Holy Spirit and saw the vision of God on me.

My mission life in Venezuela was a continuous spiritual struggle to remind me on God’s vision. When I had many difficulties for the ministry and self-supporting business, I did not forget God’s vision on me. And God responded to my faith in his words. During the Summer Bible Conference of 1998 the Holy Spirit worked powerfully by the sincere repentance of Sarah Ruz for her sexual immorality and all the participants repented of their sins. Every year we experienced the work of the Holy Spirit by the repentance of our sins and God raised his faithful disciples in our ministry. For long time we had common life with our sheep and they became our spiritual coworkers. The new disciples were raised every year and the ministry grew to have more than 150 Sunday Worship Services in 4 Chapters of Venezuela – Caracas, Valles del Tuy, Merida and Maracaibo. We could send missionary Helen to Chicago, missionaries Josue and Maria to Panama. The three Venezuela Chapters were pioneered by the local shepherds and Shep. Gustavo Prato succeeded Caracas Chapter when I came to Los Angeles for my study at Fuller Theological Seminary. Actually Venezuelan ministry is being served by local shepherds. And they sent my family as Venezuelan missionary to United States of America like Antioch Church sent Paul and Barnabas as missionaries. Leaving from Venezuela I thanked and glorified God because He fulfilled his promise with me and guided me according to his vision. Now I continue to live with God’s vision on my life.

Beginning this message, I showed you a video about the prayer of Underwood. His life was an example for my mission life. May God bless each of us abundantly with his Holy Spirit! May God let us be full of the Holy Spirit every day and see his vision! May we live to fulfill God’s vision on us! Amen.