

Work of the Holy Spirit emphasized at African-American Rally

October 24, 2011

AMARILLO—The Holy Spirit moves throughout the world, changing hearts and transforming lives. And the Spirit carries out God's purpose while working through his people, Larry Rhea told the [African-American Fellowship](#) Rally prior to the Baptist General Convention of Texas annual meeting.

Rhea, interim pastor of Saint John Baptist Church in Amarillo, reminded listeners of the promise Jesus gave in Acts 1:8 that his people would receive power when the Holy Spirit came upon them.



Gregory Pride, pastor of Joshua Tabernacle Baptist Church in Amarillo, preached at the African-American Fellowship Rally in Amarillo. (PHOTO/Robbie Rogers)

"And you will be my witnesses," Rhea read from the passage—"to the ends of the earth."

The Holy Spirit moves as his people are obedient and walk in faith. Faith, Rhea noted, is demonstrated through action.

That faith rests in Jesus Christ, whose shed blood on the cross made evident God's will—to redeem the souls of humankind.

"He poured out his love in compassion, breaking the hearts of sinful men," Rhea said.

As hearts are changed, they become ripe for the work of the Spirit—regeneration, sanctification, consecration and new life in Christ. This is the story of all of the redeemed, he said.

"Holy Ghost power is about changing individuals," Rhea said. "Jesus is anxious to save, and his desire is to fill the redeemed with his power."

This power comes upon every believer, working through them to then reach out to others. In this way, the work of the Spirit is viral, Rhea said.

"We can go all over the world with power," he said. "We are to change the world one life at a time."

Christians must hold fast to a hope—a desire to see the lost saved and for God to receive the glory.

"We are clothed with power when we love the glory of God and long for his presence, to press forward with compassion for the lost and hurting people," Rhea said.

This concept ties in with Texas Baptists' commitment to Hope 1:8, an initiative underscoring the Acts 1:8 mandate encouraging believers to live out their faith through missions and outreach.

Michael Evans, president of the fellowship, affirmed Rhea's message and reminded listeners of the importance of collaboration.

"Together we can save souls. We can positively impact the lives of all Texas Baptists," he said. "We are serving with a group of pastors and lay men and women who share the same hope, the same dream. And we will see that happen."