

ACTS

Please turn in your Bibles this evening to Acts chapter 2 as we continue our study through the Word of God. Now as we said last time, the disciples of Jesus had the tools for ministry, but they were lacking the power to run those tools.

And in Luke 24:49 we see Jesus tell His men before He was taken up into heaven, **“Behold, I send the Promise of My Father upon you; but tarry in the city of Jerusalem until you are endued with power from on high.”**

And that is what we will see here in Acts chapter 2, the church will be born with a bang! Not by the power or strength of men but by the power of God’s Spirit upon their lives.

Vance Havner wrote these words, “We are not going to move this world by criticism of it nor conformity to it, but by the combustion within it of lives ignited by the Spirit of God”

And truly that is what we see in the book of Acts, lives on fire for Jesus and empowered by the Holy Spirit to turn the world upside down for Jesus!

And as we saw last time, Jesus told His men, **“for John truly baptized with water, but you shall be baptized with the Holy Spirit not many days from now.”** Acts 1:5.

After spending forty days with His men post resurrection, Jesus is taken up into heaven. And now they are waiting for the promise of the Father, this empowering of the Holy Spirit upon their lives.

It was only ten days from Jesus being taken up into heaven until Pentecost! That is the day that the Holy Spirit came upon these men and the church age began!

The Feast of Pentecost, or the Hebrew Shavuot, marks the anniversary of the giving of the Law to the Jewish nation and celebrates the theophany, or God’s appearance, at Mount Sinai.

And what is interesting here is that we see the contrast between the giving of the Law and the giving of the Spirit!

One writer put it like this in comparing the two. He wrote, “The Spirit’s coming is in continuity of God’s purpose in giving the law and yet . . . the Spirit’s coming signals the essential difference between the Jewish faith and commitment to Jesus . . . the former is Torah-centered and Torah-directed, the latter is Christ-centered and Spirit-directed.” (Richard N. Longenecker, The Expositor’s Bible Commentary, Volume 9, John-Acts, p. 269)

And we will see what the Law does and what the Spirit does as we go through this chapter. But to give you a hint, one kills and the other brings forth life!

So, with that said, let’s begin reading in Acts chapter 2 beginning in verse 1 and let’s see what the Lord has for us as we study through His Word this evening.

ACTS 2

VERSES 1-4

As they gathered together to wait for this Promise of the Father they were in unity or **“with one accord.”** It was not about them, their ideas but upon the Lord and they waited and now it is Pentecost.

Pentecost was one of the three Jewish Feasts in which every adult male Jew living within 20 miles of Jerusalem was required to attend, the other two being Passover, which included the Feast of Unleavened Bread and the Feast of Tabernacles in the fall.

Pentecost took place 50 days after Passover and it was a celebration of thanksgiving as the firstfruits of the wheat harvest were brought in and given to the Lord. Thus, it was also called the Feast of Firstfruits, (Numbers 28:26, Leviticus 23:16).

According to Leviticus 23:15-22 we see the original instructions for the celebration of Pentecost. It says that two loaves of *leavened* bread were to be waved before the Lord by the priest as part of the celebration. “Were there not two loaves? Not only shall Israel be saved, but the multitude of the Gentiles shall be turned unto the Lord Jesus Christ.” (Spurgeon)

Now, why leavened bread when leaven speaks of sin or is a symbol of sin? That speaks of the fact that the Church, though refined (cleansed by the blood of Jesus’ sacrifice), still retains the human sin nature until that day when She will be presented as the Bride of Christ, without spot or wrinkle.

Now, when we read that 120 of these disciples were gathered together, where in the world were they meeting? It could be in one of the rooms by the Temple, for they had large meeting rooms, and they will need a large area as the crowds will soon gather around to see what is going on.

I know that in verse 2 it says “house” but it can also mean a dwelling place, which a room this size could be thought of that way. If it was in someone’s home, then it was very close to the Temple area for that is where these crowds had gathered for this Feast. Not only that but it had to be huge to accommodate 120 people!

So, as they are waiting upon the Lord for this promise from the Father we read of this sound of a rushing wind, which must have been different than just a little wind storm, it got their attention. It was like a hurricane blowing through!

This wind speaks of God's Spirit being poured out upon them. It is as Jesus said in John 3:8, "**The wind blows where it wishes, and you hear the sound of it, but cannot tell where it comes from and where it goes. So is everyone who is born of the Spirit.**"

You see, we can't see the wind, but we can see the affects the wind has on people and different things.

The same is true with the Holy Spirit, we may not be able to see Him, but we can see the Spirit's affects on our life and those around us!

Secondly, these cloven tongues of fire could be speaking of purification; fire is spoken of that way.

The thing is, we don't see this anymore in the New Testament, the rushing wind and the tongues of fire but we do see the outpouring of God's Spirit upon believers.

This was used specially by God for a purpose.

Now, just because we don't hear the rushing wind or see the tongues of fire today doesn't mean the gift of the Spirit, the outpouring of the Holy Spirit is not true, we can experience the gift by asking!

And for those who reject this empowering of God's Spirit upon their lives, Peter will tell us in Acts 2:39, "**For the promise is to you and to your children, and to all who are afar off, as many as the Lord our God will call.**" In other words, we are far off and this promise of the Father is for us just as it was for the early church!

And as we look at Acts 2:4 we see the outpouring of God's Spirit upon believers and we see not only the 12 receive this, but the 120 were empowered by God and spoke.

Now this phrase "**other tongues**" HETERPIS GLOSSIAIS in the Greek, speaks of an unknown tongue to the person who is speaking it.

As they spoke the Spirit gave them heavy or weighty things to say. Now please understand that tongues is not a sign of the empowering of the Holy Spirit but is one of the gifts of the Spirit.

And this gift is primarily used as a private devotion language unto the Lord as you praise Him, pray to Him and it can be used to build up, edify people if there is someone to interpret the words that were spoken.

Paul makes that point in I Corinthians 14:26-28 when he said, **“How is it then, brethren? Whenever you come together, each of you has a psalm, has a teaching, has a tongue, has a revelation, has an interpretation. Let all things be done for edification. If anyone speaks in a tongue, let there be two or at the most three, each in turn, and let one interpret. But if there is no interpreter, let him keep silent in church, and let him speak to himself and to God.”**

Now let me also say this. The filling of the Holy Spirit was an experience that was repeated over and over again. And this idea of being filled with the Holy Spirit is to be “controlled by” or “under the influence of.” And we will see this as we go through the book of Acts!

And this speaking in tongues, I realize the abuse, but we can’t negate what the Scriptures teach because people are doing their own thing. You see, the Spirit gave them the ability but didn’t take control over them. He prompted them to open their mouths and make the sounds while the Spirit formed the words and sentences that was the language. And the person is in control as Paul says in I Corinthians chapter 14.

And let me also make this clear because there are those who will tell you that the evidence that you are saved is speaking in tongues and if you don't, you are not saved!

Foolishness.

In fact, Paul said in I Corinthians 12:30, “**Do all speak with tongues**” and the idea here is that not everyone does. So, having the gift of tongues is not an evidence of salvation or spiritual maturity, you can look at the church in Corinth that was very carnal and yet exercised these gifts. This is a gift of the Spirit not to be mistaken for a fruit of the Spirit - one is given the other is grown.

Now look at how this is played out.

VERSES 5-13

So, it was not only the 120 who gathered who heard this rushing wind, but those who were gathered in Jerusalem, probably those who were in the Temple area. And remember, it is Pentecost so Jerusalem is filled with people!

And as they heard the sound of the rushing wind they came to see what was going on. And as they did they heard the disciples speak the things of God in their own language, in their own dialect. They were praising God!

And then some confusion. You see, they recognized these were Galileans and thus, how could they speak another language that they didn't know?

In fact, Longenecker said this regarding these people, “Galileans had difficulty pronouncing gutturals and had the habit of swallowing syllables when speaking; so they were looked down upon by the people of Jerusalem as being provincial [unsophisticated].”

And yet, here they spoke in some 15 different languages, languages they didn't know, and yet they spoke perfectly, how?

Because the Holy Spirit gave them the words to say and even though the person speaking didn't understand these words, those standing around them did!

And again, what they said was so important. They were speaking praise unto God, of the wonderful works of God!

And I do understand that many have a hard time with this gift, some even going to the extreme and saying that those who exercise this gift today are not doing it by the power of God, but the power of the Devil.

But the Scriptures don't tell us that this gift is finished.

I believe this gift of the Spirit, as well as the others, are for today but the Spirit gives them as He sees fit, not when we want them.

In Mark 16:17-18 we are told, **“And these signs will follow those who believe: In My name they will cast out demons; they will speak with new tongues; they will take up serpents; and if they drink anything deadly, it will by no means hurt them; they will lay hands on the sick, and they will recover.”**

Who is Jesus speaking to? That is a very important question for us to know and understand. He is speaking not to just the Apostles, not just to the disciples of Jesus day. How can I be so sure? Because He said to, **“... those who believe...”**

You see, He is speaking of us, it is for us today! Please let the Scriptures speak for themselves; don't come with preconceived ideas that you have to manipulate the Scriptures to make your idea fit. In fact, to say it was not practiced by the early church or not found in church history except in heretical churches is ridiculous!

Do we see this gift exercised today, the gift of tongues? You bet we do! Let me give you one example to show you what I mean and the proper way to handle this gift in a group setting.

Jon Courson tells us,

I'll never forget a meeting I attended at the Lake Arrowhead Hilton where about 100 believers had gathered together for a time of waiting upon the Lord. Since hotel rules dictated that the bar remain open whenever the conference room was in use, the bartender stood in the back of the room polishing glasses while we studied, worshipped, and prayed.

Towards the end of the meeting, a fellow stood up and gave a beautiful utterance in tongues. Because there was no interpretation, the brother overseeing the meeting wisely said, 'We thank the Lord for that utterance, but since there is not interpretation flowing here tonight, that will be our only public utterance of tongues.'

When the meeting concluded, the bartender approached us, and with tears running down his cheeks, said, 'I must talk to that man who stood up and prayed. How does he know my tongue? I'm Iranian, and he worshipped the True and Living God in perfect Farsi.'

Needless to say, the bartender got saved that night.

- Jon Courson, *Jon Courson's Application Commentary*, p. 622

Do you see how beautiful that was, how orderly it was done, not out of control or chaotic, and out of this we see this man get saved!

Now, as usual, there are two groups of people who witnessed this. Some people who were interested, they wanted to know more about what was going on. On the other end of the spectrum where those who mocked what was going on and saying that they are drunk and out of their minds.

Now, I don't know about you, but before I got saved, when I was drunk, I did not speak a foreign language that I didn't know. I wish that were true, I would have done much better in my language class in school, but that is not the case!

So how is this going to be resolved? Let's read on and see.

VERSES 14-15

Did you see what Peter did? We are told that he **“raised his voice and said to them . . .”** You see, there was a remarkable change in Peter. He had courage and boldness that was a complete contrast to his denials of Jesus before being filled with the Holy Spirit.

Not only that but do you see that the gift of tongues is no longer in operation! But he did exercise other spiritual gifts as he spoke forth the words of God.

Here at Calvary Chapel we don't see the gift of tongues in operation on Thursday evenings or Sunday mornings as the Word of God is being taught. Why is that? Because the Holy Spirit is working through me as I teach with the word of wisdom, the word of knowledge, prophecy, the gift of teaching and-so-on, as the Spirit desires.

Thus, the Holy Spirit is not going to work against Himself through tongues at the same time!

During our special praise, prayer and worship nights we wait upon God to speak to us and that is the time this gift can be used by the Holy Spirit as long as there is an interpreter.

Also, it is mostly used during our personal time with the Lord.

Remember what some of the onlookers said as they saw the gift of tongues in operation, **“They are full of new wine.”** And Peter tells them that there is no way they are drunk with wine, it was only 9 in the morning.

You see, no Jew would eat or drink until after this time of prayer. I like the way that Stott put it, he said, “Nor, must we add, did the believer’s experience the Spirit’s fullness seem to them or look to others like intoxication, because they had lost control of their normal mental and physical functions. No, the fruit of the Spirit is ‘self-control,’ not the loss of it.”

Now there is that fad in the church, not Scriptural, of being drunk in the Spirit and they look like they are drunk. They will fall, stumble, they will even have designated drivers take them home from the church service because they are too drunk to drive!

That is just plain foolishness. Paul said in Ephesians 5:18, “**And do not be drunk with wine, in which is dissipation; but be filled with the Spirit.**”

Paul is telling us that we must “*be continually being filled with the Holy Spirit.*” The idea is a total surrender, moment by moment, day by day, week by week and-so-on to the Holy Spirit!

In contrast, drinking is wasteful and as much as you think you are in control, it has control over you!

It is far better to be controlled by the Spirit of God.

Think about it, alcohol is a depressant and it depresses our self-control. The Holy Spirit is a stimulant; He controls every aspect of our life. Who do you want to be controlled by?

And, as you can see, being drunk in the Spirit, those that do this, lose control. That is not the Holy Spirit doing that and, it is a doctrine of demons because it is not drawing you closer to God but pushing you away from the God of the Bible.

Now, as we read on we will see this powerful sermon given by Peter as he is empowered by the Holy Spirit to move the Gospel message forward!

VERSES 16-21

Think about all that is going on here. We see this great outpouring of God's Spirit with signs and wonders and speaking in tongues. And what does Peter do? "Guys, let's have a Bible study and look at what the prophet Joel spoke about!"

Today some would say that Peter was quenching the Spirit, but not at all! This is what the Holy Spirit wanted to do and all the signs and wonders and speaking in tongues was just preparing for the work of God's Word in their lives and as we will see, it is powerful!

Today we have all kinds of spiritual things going on in the church and we don't see them even spoken of in the Scriptures. Peter takes what had happened, what the people saw, and he tells them that this is what the prophet Joel spoke of, it is according to the Scriptures not apart from the Scriptures. That is so important!

Now some still don't like this, they feel that God is bigger than His Word and He can do whatever He wants. Hey, that is true. But we must understand that God is not going to do something that is contrary to His Word!

It is as David said in Psalm 138:2, "**I will worship toward Your holy temple, And praise Your name For Your lovingkindness and Your truth; For You have magnified Your word above all Your name.**"

The name of God is the totality of who He is. Thus, if God goes against His Word then His name is worthless! Of course that is not true. The Word never goes against the Spirit nor does the Spirit go against the Word!

It is as Jesus said "**Sanctify them by Your truth. Your word is truth.**" John 17:17.

Also, when someone asks you why you do this or don't do that, what do you say? You should say, "This is what God's Word says, and I believe it!" You see, it is not my feelings or emotions but the truths of God that are found in His Word!

Now what Peter says here is interesting because, again, many like to say these gifts are not for today. But Joel says that in the last days this is what will happen, these gifts will be poured out.

Thus, when did the last days begin?

In Hebrews 1:1-2 we are told, "**God, who at various times and in various ways spoke in time past to the fathers by the prophets, has in these last days spoken to us by His Son, whom He has appointed heir of all things, through whom also He made the worlds.**"

In I Peter 1:20 we are told, "**He indeed was foreordained before the foundation of the world, but was manifest in these last times for you.**"

And in I John 2:18 we are told, "**Little children, it is the last hour; and as you have heard that the Antichrist is coming, even now many antichrists have come, by which we know that it is the last hour.**"

Thus, the last days began with the coming of Jesus and here we see the fulfillment begin with His death and resurrection as the outpouring of God's Spirit has come upon all.

And as you read through what Peter says it is not only for his day, but it will continue on through the Tribulation Period.

That is what is spoken of as Peter speaks of the sun turning to darkness and the moon to blood!

And keep in mind that prior to this the Holy Spirit was just poured out upon certain individuals to empower them for service. But know, all who believe will be empowered by God's Spirit!

One writer put it like this, "Peter did not say of that Pentecostal enduement, 'Now is fulfilled that which was spoken by the prophet Joel,' but, more guardedly, 'This is that which was spoken;' that is to say, Joel's words furnish the *explanation* of this first Pentecost, though this does not finish their *fulfillment*." (Pierson)

Now, as we read on we get to this sermon of Peter and there are five main points here.

Jesus' Life – Acts 2:22

Jesus' Death – Acts 2:23

Jesus' Resurrection – Acts 2:24-32

Jesus' Ascension and Exaltation – Acts 2:33-35

The Application – Acts 2:36

So, let's read through this sermon of Peter's and see what the Lord has for us.

VERSE 22

Keep in mind that this is Peter, the one who was afraid to say he knew Jesus. But now, empowered by the Holy Spirit, he is speaking forth the Word of God with boldness!

And he starts out wanting them to remember all they saw Jesus do! That Greek word for "**attested**" means "to point out, to show forth." And what these miracles, wonders and signs did was to show the people that Jesus is the Messiah, the Son of God as He fulfilled the Old Testament prophecies in His life!

Let's look at what these miracles, wonders and signs are all about.

Miracles are mighty, they are powerful, they are supernatural deeds.

Wonders is what happens when a miracle is done. The person who witnessed it has this wonder in his mind of what happened!

Signs just point you to something or tell you something and the signs that Jesus did pointed to the fact that He is Almighty God!

THE LIFE OF JESUS!

VERSE 23

Peter's next point was the crucifixion of Jesus. And some like to say Jesus just got a little too big for His britches and lost control and was put to death!

Not at all. Jesus was crucified and put to death by God's predetermined plan. Jesus is the Lamb of God who was slain before the foundations of the world! (Revelation 13:8)

And when you look at the Scriptures you can see that the Old Testament spoke of what would happen to the Messiah, that He would be crucified, executed for a capital crime – Psalm 22, Isaiah 53, Daniel 9.

THE CRUCIFIXION OF JESUS!

VERSES 24-32

Peter now focuses on the resurrection of Jesus. You see, death could not hold Jesus.

What is interesting to me is that the word "**pains**" speaks of birth pains. What is the point? Just as a pregnant woman who is in labor cannot stop the child who is coming, so too we see that the tomb was not able to hold Jesus!

As one writer put it, “It was not possible that the chosen one of God should remain in the grip of death; ‘the abyss can no more hold the Redeemer than a pregnant woman can hold the child in her body.’” (Bruce, also quoting Bertram)

Also, notice the working knowledge that Peter has of the Scriptures. He quoted out of Joel and here out of Psalm 16:8-11. And he relates these words of David to the Messiah, to Jesus!

Now, here in Acts Peter is quoting out of Psalm 16:8-11 and relating these words of David to the Messiah, to Jesus. How did Peter know these things? Because Jesus taught them to him and His men before His ascension and now the Holy Spirit opens up to them and us the things of God.

Prior to the ascension of Jesus, we read in Luke 24:44-45, “**Then He said to them, ‘These are the words which I spoke to you while I was still with you, that all things must be fulfilled which were written in the Law of Moses and the Prophets and the Psalms concerning Me.’ And He opened their understanding, that they might comprehend the Scriptures.**”

It is as Paul said in I Corinthians 2:9-14, **“But as it is written: ‘Eye has not seen, nor ear heard, Nor have entered into the heart of man The things which God has prepared for those who love Him.’ But God has revealed them to us through His Spirit. For the Spirit searches all things, yes, the deep things of God. For what man knows the things of a man except the spirit of the man which is in him? Even so no one knows the things of God except the Spirit of God. Now we have received, not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit who is from God, that we might know the things that have been freely given to us by God. These things we also speak, not in words which man’s wisdom teaches but which the Holy Spirit teaches, comparing spiritual things with spiritual. But the natural man does not receive the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness to him; nor can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned.”**

Now, as you read through this Psalm, see it through the eyes of Jesus as He trusted fully in God the Father, that no matter what came His way, He trusted in Him!

In the Jewish mind a dead body saw corruption on the fourth day, no longer could the spirit be united with the body, but Jesus was raised on the third day never seeing corruption.

And out of death came glory, out of pain came joy as Jesus was raised from the dead and is now at the right hand of the Father!

Peter gives us a very interesting perspective of what this Psalm was all about, and he continues to expound on that more in these verses.

You see, just in case you thought this Psalm was about David, Peter explains why this Psalm is not speaking of David but of the Messiah, of Jesus.

You see, David died, he was buried and even to this day, on Mount Zion, they have the tomb which they believe is the tomb of David.

But Jesus was only in the tomb for three days before He was raised from the dead and thus, by the inspiration of the Holy Spirit David wrote of an event, the death and resurrection of Jesus some 1,000 years before it transpired!

Remember that Jesus said to the Scribes and the Pharisees who wanted a sign from Jesus to prove that He is the Messiah, rejecting His whole life being a sign, that, “**... ‘An evil and adulterous generation seeks after a sign, and no sign will be given to it except the sign of the prophet Jonah. For as Jonah was three days and three nights in the belly of the great fish, so will the Son of Man be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth.’**” Matthew 12:39-40.

And now it has come to pass, and Peter is saying that many have seen the risen Lord, including himself.

Thus, because of the eyewitness testimony, they could not deny the resurrection. It is as Peter said in II Peter, “**For we did not follow cunningly devised fables when we made known to you the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, but were eyewitnesses of His majesty.**” II Peter 1:16.

Now there are many who try to deny the resurrection, to say it never happened, it never took place. They feel that the Apostle’s made up the story.

But the evidence does not support their claims. Let me show you what I mean. Thomas Arnold, the famous scholar said this,

The evidence for our Lord's life and death and resurrection may be, and often has been, shown to be satisfactory; it is good according to the common rules for distinguishing good evidence from bad. Thousands and tens of thousands of persons have gone through it piece by piece, as carefully as every judge summing up on a most important cause. I have myself done it many times over, not to persuade others but to satisfy myself. I have been used for many years to study the histories of other times, and to examine and weigh the evidence of those who have written about them, and I know of no one fact in the history of mankind which is proved by better and fuller evidence of every sort, to the understanding of a fair inquirer, than the great sign which God hath given us that Christ died and rose again from the dead."

- Thomas Arnold

And eyewitness testimony is important and that is what Peter tells them. They saw the risen Lord! Let's face it. Just look at the evidence, because once you do, I think you will come to the conclusion that Christ is risen, the tomb is empty!

THE RESURRECTION OF JESUS!

VERSES 33-35

In these verses we see the ascension and the exaltation of Jesus. He was raised in glory and is seated at the right hand of the Father for His work has been completed and accepted. And He is seated with the Father because He is equal to the Father!

Now I know that as some read these verses, when they come to the word "**Lord**" in speaking of Jesus, they see it as "master, leader" but not Yahweh.

I have a problem with that. You see, the Greek word for “**Lord**” in verse 36 is KURIOS. Now notice in verse 34 that God the Father, “**Lord**” says to God the Son, Jesus, “**Lord**” to sit at His right hand.

They are the same Greek words and now Peter is telling us, as well as David in this Psalm, that the Messiah, Jesus is God, equal with the Father! Jesus is both Lord and Savior!

Bruce put it like this, “That the early Christians meant to give Jesus the title *Lord* in this highest sense of all is indicated by their not hesitating on occasion to apply to him passages of Old Testament scripture referring to Yahweh.”

Did Jesus ever say that He was God? You bet He did. The whole Gospel of John focus on the deity of Jesus.

But let me share with you out of Matthew chapter 22, beginning in verse 41 where Matthew tells us, “**While the Pharisees were gathered together, Jesus asked them, saying, ‘What do you think about the Christ? Whose Son is He?’ They said to Him, The Son of David.’ He said to them, ‘How then does David in the Spirit call Him “Lord,” saying: “The LORD said to my Lord, ‘Sit at My right hand, Till I make Your enemies Your footstool’”? If David then calls Him “Lord,” how is He his Son?’ And no one was able to answer Him a word, nor from that day on did anyone dare question Him anymore.**” Matthew 22:41-46.

Jesus wants these religious leaders to think about what David said regarding the Messiah. You see, they knew that the Messiah would be a Son of David; the problem comes when David calls his son Lord, it was not a kosher thing to do, it would never happen!

Jesus wants them to think about this, if David said these things then how can he call his son Lord? The answer is very simple, and they knew the answer they just refused to respond to it and they kept silent.

You see, not only would the Messiah be the son of David, but He would also be God Incarnate!

Paul, in Romans chapter 1 put it this way, **“concerning His Son Jesus Christ our Lord, who was born of the seed of David according to the flesh, and declared to be the Son of God with power according to the Spirit of holiness, by the resurrection from the dead.”** Romans 1:3-4.

You see, not only the son of David but the Son of God! Thus, David could call Him Lord because He was and still is!

It is as Jesus said in John 8:24, **“Therefore I said to you that you will die in your sins; for if you do not believe that *I am* [He], you will die in your sins.”**

THE ASCENSION AND EXALTATION OF JESUS!

VERSE 36

Here we see Peter end his sermon with the application. It is important to understand what we are to do with the information that we have heard.

And here Peter simply tells them that, ***“You were wrong about Jesus. You crucified Him as a criminal, you put Him to death! But, by the resurrection God proved that He is Lord and Messiah!”***

THE APPLICATION!

Not a feel-good message but one they needed to hear. And how would they respond to what Peter said? We don't have to guess. Look at verse 37.

VERSE 37

Notice there is no altar call, no statement to the effect “Anyone who wants to receive Jesus come forward.”

Just the speaking forth of the Word of God and the hearts of the people were cut, they were exposed to the truths of God, conviction set in and they wanted to know what they should do about the condition they were in!

It is as Hebrews 4:12 tells us, **“For the word of God is living and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the division of soul and spirit, and of joints and marrow, and is a Discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart.”**

The Word of God and the Holy Spirit working together to convict us of our sin!

This is the response of Spirit-filled preaching but that is not always the case. You can read in Acts chapter 7 of Stephen, who was filled with the Holy Spirit and how the religious leaders responded to what he said.

We are told in Acts 7:54-60, **“When they heard these things they were cut to the heart, and they gnashed at him with their teeth. But he, being full of the Holy Spirit, gazed into heaven and saw the glory of God, and Jesus standing at the right hand of God, and said, ‘Look! I see the heavens opened and the Son of Man standing at the right hand of God!’ Then they cried out with a loud voice, stopped their ears, and ran at him with one accord; and they cast him out of the city and stoned him. And the witnesses laid down their clothes at the feet of a young man named Saul. And they stoned Stephen as he was calling on God and saying, ‘Lord Jesus, receive my spirit.’ Then he knelt down and cried out with a loud voice, ‘Lord, do not charge them with this sin.’ And when he had said this, he fell asleep.”**

The conviction of God will affect a person one of two ways. They will either repent of their sins and come to Christ or they will fight against what the Holy Spirit is doing in their lives and attack those who are bringing them the Gospel message!

And notice what Peter says next. He does not say, “Let me get to know you and then I will tell you what you need to do!”

Nor does he say, “There’s nothing you can do. If God saves you, you’re saved. If God doesn’t save you, you’ll never be saved.”

Though it was true that only God could do the saving, the people had to receive through repentance and faith.

Listen carefully to what Peter says!

VERSES 38-40

People today don’t want to mention the word “**repentance**” because they believe it turns people off. Let me say this. If you are turned off by repentance, then you are not saved! John the Baptist spoke of repenting. Jesus spoke of repenting. The disciples spoke of repenting.

Look at this word “**repent.**” It comes from the Greek word METANOESATE and it speaks of turning around, turning back to God, which means you were moving away from Him, but you now have turned 180 degrees back to Him. So, if you don’t repent of your sins, if you don’t turn back to God, then how in the world can you be saved? You can’t!

This is a direct command, it is something that **MUST** be done if you are to be saved, turn to Jesus!

Paul says this of the Thessalonians regarding repentance, **“For they themselves declare concerning us what manner of entry we had to you, and how you turned to God from idols to serve the living and true God.”** I Thessalonians 1:9.

You see, a 180 degree turn from worshiping idols to worshiping God! That is what repentance is all about!

Now what about baptism because, as some read this they think that you must repent and you must be baptized if you are going to be saved! Is that what the Scriptures are saying here?

That is not what this is saying, and it is not what the rest of the Scriptures are saying.

When Peter speaks of baptism, BAPTIZO in the Greek, this is in the indirect passive imperative. What does that mean?

First of all, to tie this all together, when Peter says, **“... ‘Repent, and let every one of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins.’ . . .”** the word **“for”** in the Greek is EIS and it can be translated “because of” or “unto.”

In other words, ***“Repent, and let every one of you be baptized for the purpose of identifying you with the remission of sins.”***

You see, that is what this is talking about.

To just show you from another verse, in I Corinthians 10:2 Paul tells us, **“all were baptized into Moses in the cloud and in the sea.”**

The word **“into”** in the Greek is EIS, and it is the same Greek word and they were identifying themselves with the work and the ministry of Moses.

Here Peter is identifying these people with the forgiveness of sins and it is seen in baptism, not because of it.

And so, baptism is not a requirement for salvation, but it is something that the Lord has called us to do.

You see, repentance is something for us to do as individuals; it is a matter of each of our hearts.

Now, baptism is the outward expression of what has taken place in your heart, telling others you are saved, that the old life has been put to death and you have come up new in Christ.

It is as Logenecker said, “While baptism with water was the expected symbol for conversion, it was not an indispensable criterion for salvation.”

Just a couple of verses to show you what I mean.

Paul, in Romans 10:9-10 said, **“that if you confess with your mouth the Lord Jesus and believe in your heart that God has raised Him from the dead, you will be saved. For with the heart one believes unto righteousness, and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation.”**

In Galatians 2:16 he said, **“knowing that a man is not justified by the works of the law but by faith in Jesus Christ, even we have believed in Christ Jesus, that we might be justified by faith in Christ and not by the works of the law; for by the works of the law no flesh shall be justified.”**

And lastly, notice what Paul said in I Corinthians 1:14-17, **“I thank God that I baptized none of you except Crispus and Gaius, lest anyone should say that I had baptized in my own name. Yes, I also baptized the household of Stephanas. Besides, I do not know whether I baptized any other. For Christ did not send me to baptize, but to preach the gospel, not with wisdom of words, lest the cross of Christ should be made of no effect.”**

If baptism was needed for salvation Paul would have carried around a portable baptismal, but it was not the issue, repentance is!

Now we have talked about this a little already but what is the “**promise of the Father**”? Some say it is the Holy Spirit coming inside a believer at the time of conversion.

I disagree. I believe it is more than that; it is the empowerment with the Holy Spirit, the Holy Spirit coming upon a believer.

Remember in John, after Jesus breathed on them and told them to receive the Holy Spirit on the evening of His resurrection, and the Holy Spirit came in them, they were New Testament believers, (John 20:22).

Now prior to His ascension He told His men in Luke 24:49, “**Behold, I send the Promise of My Father upon you; but tarry in the city of Jerusalem until you are endued with power from on high.**”

That is what we see here in Acts chapter 2 and it is a promise not only to the first century church, but to every believer, it is a gift that is received by faith, the power of God to be witnesses of Him!

How did they respond to what Peter said to them about repenting? Listen to their response.

VERSE 41

Remember that the Feast of Pentecost is when this took place. And on Pentecost they would take the first fruits of the wheat harvest as an offering to God and God would receive it and guarantee a great harvest in the fall. Here we see the first fruits of the Church harvest - a much greater harvest was coming.

Also, on the day the Law was given to Moses the people already were breaking it by making a golden calf to worship God by and in their rebellion, judgment fell and 3,000 died.

Now, as the Spirit of grace is poured out, 3,000 souls are added to the kingdom of God!

It is as Paul said in II Corinthians 3:6, “**who also made us sufficient as ministers of the new covenant, not of the letter but of the Spirit; for the letter kills, but the Spirit gives life.**”

Make no mistake about it, as you move into a legalistic Christianity, you will reek of death. But allow the Spirit to come upon you, and life will flow from you.

Thus, the church started out with a bang as the Holy Spirit was poured out upon these new believers!

Now listen to how the early church functioned, what made them so powerful. It is something that is lacking in the church today. And I love coming to these verses because over 22 years ago this was the first message I gave as Pastor of Calvary Chapel of Manitowoc because I believed and still believe this is how the church is to function. Listen to what they were all about!

VERSES 42-43

Here is a model for the church, the things that they did. Now, please understand it was not a perfect church, there are none. In a few chapters we will see some problems, but the foundation was strong and that is what is missing many times today.

Look at what they did. They continued steadfastly in –

THE APOSTLE’S DOCTRINE. In other words, the teachings of the apostles that were delivered first orally and now they are preserved for us in the New Testament.

FELLOWSHIP. The ancient Greek word *koinonia* (translated here as **fellowship**) has the idea of association, communion, fellowship, and participation; it means to *share* in something.

THE BREAKING OF BREAD. Now this can speak of communion, sharing in the Lord's supper and eating a common meal together. As you read the text here it seems to be pointing to the Lord's supper as the meaning, as fellowship would include the sharing of a meal. From Acts 20:7 we learn that the practice of the early Christians was to break bread on the first day of the week.

PRAYERS. Here we see that they prayed together, and it showed their total dependence upon God in all that they did!

The result is the power of God working in and through these believers in such a way that within 30 years the Gospel message went throughout the whole known world! They lived what they believed, and others noticed it, they saw the power of God in them!

Oh, how I pray for that to be the case in each of our lives today! Instead of us being fearful of the world, the world is fearful of the power of God at work in the life of a believer! That through the empowering of God's Spirit in our lives we can turn this world upside down or really right side up for Jesus!

VERSES 44-47

Now some read this and they believe that they lived in a communal setting. I don't believe that is the case. What it seems is that they sold the extras they had to help out those in need. They allowed those who lost all to live with them, they had a oneness. Their homes and lives were open for all to see Jesus by.

When it says that they went “**from house to house**” it means that they owned houses. They did not sell them and just live together!

And the result of their love for God and God working in their lives is that they were filled with joy. They may not have had a lot of physical possessions, but they had the Lord!

Maybe that is our problem today; we have so much that we have to fit God in instead of making the Lord our priority and then fitting the other things in!

Now here is something that I think really feeds into the flesh. And that is how to grow a church. I used to get tons of mailings and e-mails on this, not so much anymore, thank God!

You see, I can give you the seminar in just about 20 seconds and it is hard to get people to pay and attend a seminar that is that short or purchase a book that is not even a page long!

This is how you grow a church, “**And they continued steadfastly in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship, in the breaking of bread, and in prayers.**” Acts 2:42.

But how does the church grow? “**And the Lord added to the church daily those who were being saved.**” Acts 2:47b. God will take care of His church and He will grow it as He sees fit! We just need to be obedient to Him!

Let me leave you with this. We need that joy in our lives, that devotion, that we are surrendering our lives to the Lord so that He can not only work in us but through us in a powerful way!

We are the church, the EKKLESIA in the Greek, the “called out ones,” called out from the world and unto God to show people Jesus and by His Spirit we can!

Thus, as Jesus said, **“Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age.’ Amen.”** Matthew 28:19-20.

This is God’s prescription for church growth. If we take care to follow the example of Acts 2:42-47a, God will take care of growing the church Himself.