

The Church – A Big Bang Beginning

Acts 2:1-12

Acts 2:1 When the day of Pentecost arrived, they were all together in one place. 2 And suddenly there came from heaven a sound like a mighty rushing wind, and it filled the entire house where they were sitting. 3 And divided tongues as of fire appeared to them and rested on each one of them. 4 And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other tongues as the Spirit gave them utterance.

5 Now there were dwelling in Jerusalem Jews, devout men from every nation under heaven. 6 And at this sound the multitude came together, and they were bewildered, because each one was hearing them speak in his own language. 7 And they were amazed and astonished, saying, "Are not all these who are speaking Galileans? 8 And how is it that we hear, each of us in his own native language? 9 Parthians and Medes and Elamites and residents of Mesopotamia, Judea and Cappadocia, Pontus and Asia, 10 Phrygia and Pamphylia, Egypt and the parts of Libya belonging to Cyrene, and visitors from Rome, 11 both Jews and proselytes, Cretans and Arabians—we hear them telling in our own tongues the mighty works of God." 12 And all were amazed and perplexed, saying to one another, "What does this mean?"

There are some who believe in what is called the Big Bang Theory. This is a theory or belief about the beginning of the universe. According to the Big Bang model, the universe was originally in an extremely hot and dense state that expanded rapidly. This expansion caused the universe to cool and resulted in the present diluted state that continues to expand today. We as believers know that we have a designer and by his hand the universe was crafted and formed not the result of a big bang.

SO, what makes us different than the church of Scientology, what makes us different than the church of atheist or a group of people who just gather and do good work.

Are we just a group who shows up on Sunday to sing happy songs and be encouraged to go out and come back next week and do it again? Is that what God intended for us when we were established?

Anybody can do that, but I believe there is more to being the church than that.

The church, in scripture is described as the body of Christ. So where did this body come from? How did this institution begin...Well when we look at Acts chapter 2 we see that the church begin with a bang...It was not gradual, it did not sneak up on the world...With the power of God the church was catapulted into existence.

This occurred on what we know as the Day of Pentecost. What is the day of Pentecost?

Well, In addition to keeping the Sabbath, the Jews celebrate seven major festivals. One of those major festivals is Pentecost. It is also known as the festival of first fruits or the feast celebrating the ingathering of the first of the wheat harvest. The word Pentecost comes from the Greek word that means fiftieth. It derived this name because this festival took place 50 days after the Passover celebration. Because the celebration takes place 50 days after Passover they call it Pentecost. Pentecost was one of the Major

celebrations so much so that if money was too tight to make it to Jerusalem for the other festivals, you would carve out enough to go to Jerusalem for the Passover and the Pentecost festivals.

And We know that God does not accidentally do anything.... because so many were gathered for this first fruit celebration, it set a perfect stage for many to witness the birth of the church. On this celebration of the first fruits, we see the first fruits of the church....what we see in Chapter 2 is the follow through of what occurred in chapter 1.

Over a period of forty days they had listened to the teaching of their Lord (1:3). They had received his commission to be worldwide witnesses, and they had been given his promise that the Holy Spirit would be granted to them as empowerment for that mission (1:5; 1:8). With the Lord's final departure in his ascension, nothing was left to do but to wait and pray for the fulfillment of that promise (1:14). In chap. 2 their prayer was answered in a mighty way.

What we see is the church established, set up. Or as Mark quoting Ron Wheeler called it, the Vival before Revival was needed. That institution that was birthed on that day is still what God is using to accomplish His purpose today.

Raymond Ortlund in his book, Let the church be the church says, "Are you ready for a new, old, revolutionary, deeply-rooted, biblical, mind-boggling idea for your church? In your corporate life put Jesus Christ first. That's it! His presence, His lordship must be taken with total seriousness... And to the extent that Christ is not yet total Lord of the Church, we will be hassled, confused, quarrelsome, and exhausted."

A few weeks ago we preached that the Church is God's plan A and there is no plan B, as we see the move of revival happening, as we desire to see God do something great in our time, we better listen to instruction and comply to Biblical authority.

There are three lessons about the church I want us to learn...

1. The church is the fulfillment of Jesus' promise – Acts 1:8

Acts 1:8 But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you, and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth."

In Acts 1:8 we have Jesus' promise – Jesus promises that When the Spirit has come upon you, you shall be my witnesses...

What we see in Jesus' statement is the promise of the Holy spirit.

- a. The Promise is of a filling of the Holy Spirit.

We see this in Acts 1:8, And in Acts 2:4 And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other tongues as the Spirit gave them utterance.

We have to understand, the Holy Spirit has always been present and at work.

Genesis says the Holy Spirit was hovering over the waters before God began to form the universe.

In Luke chapter 1:15 we are told that John the Baptist was filled with the Holy Spirit to be the witness and fore runner for Christ

Luke 1:41 says Elizabeth who is John the Baptist' Mother was filled with the Holy Spirit When John kicked in her womb after coming in contact with Mary who was carrying Jesus.

Luke 1:67 says: And his father Zacharias was filled with the Holy Spirit, and prophesied, saying: 68 "Blessed be the Lord God of Israel, For He has visited us and accomplished redemption for His people,

Luke 1:35 tells us that Jesus was born of the Holy Spirit Luke 3:22 tells us that when Jesus was baptized, the Holy Spirit descended upon him like a dove.

Right after that Jesus was even led by the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted by Satan...

So what we see now in Acts 1:8 is Jesus promising these men and women who had been following him that they had a charge to spread the message of Jesus and the power that would fuel their efforts was the Holy Spirit.

Jesus understood that what I am asking you to do is not an easy task...you are going to need some help...so he promised them the Holy Spirit also known as the helper one who comes along side, would give them the power, they needed to accomplish their assignment.

They would not have to try by their own strength to get it done, they would have the Power of the Holy Spirit, they would not have to beg for support from God to do the work, they would have the Power of the third person in the trinity, very God himself...Jesus said all the power you will need to accomplish what I am asking of you will be **given** to you through the Holy Spirit and everyone who believes will receive this power...that's a promise...You don't have to beg God for the Holy Spirit...you don't have to labor and wait for it...since the Holy Spirit indwelled the people on the day Pentecost, it immediately indwells all who believe at the point of believing...it is a promise to all who believe.

- b. The Promise is of an indwelling seal – Ephesians 1:13 In him you also, when you heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation, and believed in him, were sealed with the promised Holy Spirit,

Ephesians 1:13 teaches that the Holy Spirit seals us until the day of redemption. When the Holy Spirit comes into the believer when they receive Christ, it is the fulfillment of the promise, but it is also the sign of another promise and that is that Jesus is coming back, and until he returns, no one can take your salvation away, once you are saved you are sealed by the Spirit.

The picture is of the king's signet ring and the king would place his seal on a document with his ring and the only person that could release the seal was one with the authority of the king....

As believers we have the seal of the King on us in the presence of the Holy Spirit and that means nothing can take us from his hand, because we are baptized by the Spirit into the body of Christ, nothing can take you away...not even yourself.

Does that mean that because I am a part of the church that I can sin more because I don't have to worry about losing my salvation...

No...because you are a part of the church, you have a father that will discipline you and keep you in line ...because you are saved and sealed...you are no longer under the bondage of sin and because of that you should not let it master you...but allow the power of the Holy Spirit that dwells in you to lead you and guide you and convict you when you are wrong. Also...

c. The Promise is of an external showing of God's presence.

Acts 2:2-4 2 And suddenly there came from heaven a sound like a mighty rushing wind, and it filled the entire house where they were sitting. 3 And divided tongues as of fire appeared to them and rested on each one of them. 4 And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other tongues as the Spirit gave them utterance.

What we see is God's ability to show his power in order for his people to accomplish his purpose.

The text says that there appeared tongues of fire that rested on each of them. The significance of the fire is a sign of the presence of God. – In Genesis 15:17, God shows his approval of Abraham's sacrifice and the solidifying of his covenant by passing through it with fire – In Exodus 3, we see God's presence speaking to Moses from a bush that was on fire and would not burn up – In Exodus 13 we see God leading the people of Israel with a pillar of fire – In Matt 3:11 John the Baptist declares that he could only baptize with water, but the one coming after him would baptize with the holy Spirit and fire signifying God's approval and presence.

So here... when the people were gathered and waiting on the promise to be fulfilled needing to know this was of God, God showed himself through fire in the form of tongues that rested on all who were there letting them know that this thing that you are a part of is not some local Galilean phenomenon. What you are a part of is divinely orchestrated and sealed with the Fire of God so that they could be assured that what was promised is surely fulfilled.

In Acts 2:6 it says the surrounding people all heard these men and women who had just received the holy spirit were speaking in their own language or the Greek word is Dialektos – from which we get our English word dialects or language.

Paul talks about the gift of tongues in 1 Cor 12-14 and a prayer language that could be something other than an earthly language, that's another message about the gifts of the spirit.

The purpose of the tongues here was not to say that it was a sign for all that you are a part of the church...the specific purpose for this specific display was to solidify that those who were present waiting

on the promise that Jesus had given them were visited by God and that from that day forward they nor the world would ever be the same.

I remember the first time I had cotton candy...I can see it like it was yesterday...we were at the movies and they had it in this bag and I remember taking it and pulling it with my fingers and the texture of it was amazing then I put it in my mouth and it was like a match made in heaven...I knew from that day forward I would never be the same the sweetness captured my attention...the joy it brought my soul I had never experienced before...It was unexplainable.

In acts chapter 2...All the people were gathered in the upper room waiting on the fulfillment of the promise...then like a mighty wind and with fire they experienced something they had never had before...God solidifies and confirms his presence through the fulfillment of the Holy Spirit and the sweetness was unexplainable...the power was beyond this world and the Joy that filled them jumped out as they begin to proclaim the works of God.

This is because Jesus in Acts 1:8 made a promise and in chapter 2 that promise was fulfilled.

The church is the fulfilment of Jesus's promise...

2. The church is the collection of Jesus' Proclaimers

In Acts 1:8 Jesus says that when they received the Holy Spirit, they would become witnesses...not just witnesses, but witnesses with Power beyond their understanding to fuel a work that was beyond human capability.

If you try to be a witness for God relying on your communication skills...I don't care if you have two Doctorate degrees and speak with the eloquence of Broadway actor...you cannot be an effective witness for God unless you allow God to speak through you...that is to rely on God to give you what to say at the right time.

These men and women received power to be witnesses and immediately they were used to spread the message of God.

Verse 9-11 says...Acts 2:9–11 (ESV) 9 Parthians and Medes and Elamites and residents of Mesopotamia, Judea and Cappadocia, Pontus and Asia, 10 Phrygia and Pamphylia, Egypt and the parts of Libya belonging to Cyrene, and visitors from Rome, 11 both Jews and proselytes, Cretans and Arabians—we hear them telling in our own tongues the mighty works of God.”

These bystanders were just minding their business and then all of a sudden all they could hear were people praising God for all that he has done for them.

Look, it says they all heard them speaking of the wonderful deeds of God...the wonderful works of God.

Notice that they did not receive the Holy Spirit and begin to try to explain the trinity...they did not receive the Holy Spirit and begin to try to impress the people with their knowledge of the Old testament

scriptures...They didn't even start preaching the Gospel of repentance...They received Power and their immediate reaction was to speak of the wonderful works of God.

It's something about telling the world about the wonderful works of God...or being an expression of the goodness of God.

By expressing the goodness of God, the door opened for the people to want to know more... look at verse 12....Acts 2:12 And all were amazed and perplexed, saying to one another, "What does this mean?"

They hear the people telling of the goodness of God through this supernatural display of people speaking in different languages and when seeing the power of God and hearing of the goodness of God their response is what does this mean....Their attention is drawn in...

People need to see God working in your life...the miracles of deliverance...the miracles of mended relationships...the miracles of provision...the miracle of comfort....not only see it, they need to hear you tell of how God came through ...they need to hear how God brought you from a nobody to a somebody...to hear how God took you from being a sinner dead set on hell to a saint dead set on heaven...they need to hear it and by seeing God work in your life and by hearing of the goodness of God... I'm telling you like a kid that sees a sign that says don't touch, they will be dying with anticipation to ask you tell them more.

You know how you can put a box in front of a child and tell them not to open it...they will be antsy, poking at it, pushing on it, doing everything satisfy their curiosity because it is just too much for them to have something so inviting that close and not find out more.

In the same way these bystanders see these men who have been baptized in the Spirit speaking in different languages about the goodness of God and it is all they can do but beg, tell me more....That's when the opportunity to tell them about a man who died for their sins opens up.....look at Peter...

The church launches into witness mode, and they witness about the goodness of God and now the opportunity to go deeper presents itself.

Then Peter proceeds to preach the gospel from verse 14 to verse 36 telling them the whole story of Jesus and how he came from the line of David and how he was hung on a cross and how he was crucified so that they might have life.

And when a heart is ripe to hear that message...the message of new life and a fresh start....that's when you get verse 37-41....

Acts 2:37 Now when they heard this they were cut to the heart, and said to Peter and the rest of the apostles, "Brothers, what shall we do?" 38 And Peter said to them, "Repent and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins, and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.

Acts 2:41 So those who received his word were baptized, and there were added that day about three thousand souls.

The people saw and heard the witnesses...having heard and seen the witnesses they want to know more...Peter preaches the whole Gospel of Jesus death burial and resurrection...after hearing such good news...the people say...sounds good...tell me where to sign.

We have to admit, we the Church, have not presented a great attractive picture of Jesus. This is not a suggestion to compromise, but to evaluate how we have presented Christianity in this day and time.

David Kinnaman in his book, UnChristian quotes a young 35 year old who says, "Christians have become political, judgmental, intolerant, weak, religious, angry, and without balance. Christianity has become a nice Sunday drive. Where is the living God, the Holy Spirit, an amazing Jesus, the love, the compassion, the holiness? This type of life, how I yearn for that."

Kinnaman goes on to say, "Jesus was called a friend of sinners, relentlessly pursuing the downtrodden, What an irony that today his followers are seen in the opposite light!"

Peter proclaimed a Gospel that those around came running asking, how can I know this Jesus. I want to know more.

You know how you go to buy something new, and the salesperson does such a great Job that before they get through talking, you want to say I got it... I'm ready... just tell me where to sign.

After Peter gets through telling the story...they all said tell us what to do to get this gift. Tell us where to sign. I want this Jesus, I want this changed life.

1-The church is the fulfillment of Jesus' promise, 2-the church is the collection of Jesus' proclaimers...

3. The church is still fueled by Jesus' power.

Acts 1:8, Jesus promises you will have power, Acts 2, the spirit came and they had power.

It's March 2023, and understand this, you still have power!

That same power on the first day of the church is available for us to be witnesses today...The power that was present at the Vival is present in the Revival. You who have received the gift of eternal life have been given the gift of the Holy Spirit and have been launched into service to be a witness for Christ and the same power that allowed the men and women to speak of the good ness of God is in you right now...The same power that moved through that valley and brought dry bones to life, is with you right now! The same power that was in Peter to tell the story of God who loved the world so much that he gave his son to die for it and to give all the chance to live free, is in you right now!

You have that same power to be witnesses today...and the same reaction that came that day, you will experience ...because if you tell enough people the story of God, you're going to find one ready to

sign....you are going to find those whom God has prepared to receive the message...and that's all we are called to do is be available and be ready to tell the story and trust God to change the heart. That's what they did on day one.

That's the significance of Pentecost...That's the big bang of the Church...over 2000 years ago the first church was launched into service to tell of the goodness of God under the power of the Holy Spirit looking to turn the world upside down and give God Glory.

On that day they only had 120 people testifying and over 3,000 came to Christ...We have exceedingly more than that in this city and at least 10 times that at Colonial....what God is waiting on us to do is to trust the power he gave us in the beginning like we believe he can do the same thing today...and I don't know about you, but I am ready to see God do some amazing things... and he is waiting to use you to do it....you are the church...you have the power....you are the witnesses...you are the beloved of God....when you go to work you are a witness...when you go to the grocery store...you are a witness...when you go to the bank...you are a witness...as you walk on the street...you are a witness and if you don't know what to say...just tell of the goodness of God...tell how God made a way for you when there was no way...tell how God brought you out of bondage...tell how Satan tried to make you throw in the towel, but the power of God showed up and showed out...tell what you know...tell them I was blind but now I see...tell them I was thirsty but now I thirst no more...tell them I was hungry and he gave me the bread of life....tell them ...be a witness!

And no matter what may come our way...we must know that greater is he that is in us than he who is in the world and we have a charge to be witnesses but not only do we have a charge, we have the power to carry out that charge

All those who want to be a witness for Christ and see revival say Amen!