

Week 4 The Resurrection Commission- The Outpouring

May 18, 2024

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Opening Monologue

Our Post Resurrection Sermon Series (The Resurrection Commission) is coming to a close this Sunday May 19th. I pray it has been as big of a blessing to you as it's been to me. I have talked about a lot, and in my approach it's always; "real & raw" preaching. If you missed any of the Sermons, please go to our Media Connections and check them out.

The Resurrection of Jesus Christ should never grow cold or old in our hearts; nor should it remain silent. We can only be effective Christian witnesses by the power of His Spirit.

Jesus talked extensively about the Holy Spirit in John Chapters 14-16... and we will examine much of Jesus' words in this sermon. Did you know Jesus said, "I tell you the truth anyone who has faith in me will do what I have been doing" (John 14:12) I know right... how is that possible? Understand... it's NOT possible with us... but with the power of the Holy Spirit anything is possible. Remember, Jesus is the one who promised this... not me... so, if you're not believing it or think it's untrue. Well, you might as well put your Bible on a shelf and do some serious soul searching and prayer.

Jesus made a promise to his followers that he would send us the Holy Spirit to empower our lives. The Great Commission talks about this: "do not leave Jerusalem, but wait for the gift my father promised, that you have heard me speak about." Jesus was talking about John Chapters 14-16. Jesus also said, "you receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and all

of Judea and Samaria into the ends of the Earth.” (Acts 1:4-8)

Jesus always keeps his promises... because they are the promises of the Lord. In Acts 2 we read of the Outpouring of the Holy Spirit. This outpouring is available to all people young and old as described in this chapter. We will talk boldly about this in this week’s sermon, including some real life stories. If you’re not empowered, you’re not a very effective Christian. I speak from personal Christian experience.

In Christ’s Love,

Rev. Brad Standfest

P.S. Be sure to check out this week’s sermon & engage in the APP Below.

To Listen to this week’s Sermon: “The Resurrection Commission- The Outpouring” Go to the Sermon tab here in our APP or use the links to our website or YouTube Channel where you can also listen to our Sermons:

Web: <https://www.almontvineyardchurch.org/media>

You Tube: <https://www.youtube.com/@almontvineyardchurch>

Key Sermon Text

John 14:11-18

<https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=John+14%3A11-18&version=NIV>

John 16: 5-7 & 12-14

(v.5-7)- <https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=John+16%3A+5-7+&version=NIV>

(v. 12-14)- <https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=John+16%3A+12-14&version=NIV>

Acts 1: 4a & 8

(v.4) <https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Acts+1%3A+4&version=NIV>

(v.8) <https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Acts+1%3A+8&version=NIV>

Acts 2:1-21

<https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Acts+2%3A1-21&version=NIV>

The Baptism of the Spirit Today (Short History of how Pastors, Churches and Theologians have interpreted the “Filling of the Holy Spirit”

From second-century Montanism on to the present there have been those who wondered whether they had received all that there was available to them in Christ when they came to him in repentance and faith and received the assurance of the forgiveness of their sins. Was there not “something more”? That growth and maturation in the Christian life is constantly encouraged by the apostles in their writings is, of course, obvious to all who know the New Testament. But the question is whether there is not yet another experience, perhaps not unlike conversion, by which the believer is lifted from the level of spiritual ordinariness to a higher plane.

Historically speaking the teaching of a second work of grace, often called Spirit baptism, received strong impetus from the Methodist-holiness quest for instantaneous sanctification, subsequent to conversion.

Charles Finney, a great leader in American revivalism and education in the mid-nineteenth century, also taught an experience subsequent to conversion which he called the baptism of the Holy Spirit. He understood this, however, to be an experience in which the believer was empowered in a special way for some ministry in God’s kingdom. This represented a shift from sanctification to enablement for service.

Toward the end of the nineteenth century churches in Anglo-Saxon countries in particular were strongly affected by the deeper life movements in which it was held that a “second blessing” should follow upon conversion. Some called it “complete sanctification,” others “endowment with power,” and still others “Spirit baptism.”

The Keswick movement in Britain furthered this doctrine of the second work of grace. Through the ministry of the American P. R. Pearsal Smith the holiness teaching of Keswick was taken to Germany, where it gave impetus to the Gemeinschaftsbewegung, where this teaching

was, however, rejected eventually.

A great many outstanding Christian leaders at the end of the nineteenth and the beginning of the twentieth centuries, such as A. J. Gordon, F. B. Meyer, A. B. Simpson, and others, testified to and advocated a "second experience." The American revivalist R. A. Torrey, president of Moody Bible Institute at the beginning of this century, was very influential in his advocacy of a second work of grace. Torrey understood the baptism with the Spirit along the lines advocated by Finney as a special endowment with power for service and witness.

Suffice it to say, the baptism with the Spirit has been understood in different ways in the past. There have also been those who have thought of salvation as occurring in two stages of Christian experience, yet without using the term "baptism of the Spirit" to describe the second work of grace.

In current "charismatic" circles, which have their spiritual roots in the holiness movements, the theology of the "second blessing" has found unique expression. The baptism of the Spirit is understood as a second stage in one's Christian experience in which one receives the gift of speaking in tongues.

It should be clearly understood that believers experience Christ in different ways; any experience which helps to make Christ and his gracious gifts more meaningful and real can hardly be condemned. In fact it would be a pity if a believer never experienced anything new after conversion. John R. Stott sums it up rather well:

Although I believe we must insist that, according to the New Testament, God's norm is one initiatory "baptism" with the Spirit, followed by a continuous and increasing appropriation of his fullness which involves a steady growth in holiness and into Christian maturity, yet it must be added that within this process of growth there may be many deeper experiences and that sometimes the Spirit works more abnormally still.

Professor Dunn adds to that: "The religious man should neither expect any particular experience simply because it is usual, nor suspect any particular experience because it is unusual; he must rather respect

the whole range of spiritual experience as possibly valid.”

Therefore, we should not reject or question the claims of devout followers of Christ who have had a significant second or third profound experience since their conversion. Nevertheless, one searches in vain in the New Testament for a description of a second work of grace (the experience of the Samaritans [Acts 8] and the Ephesian disciples [Acts 19] will be discussed later). For that reason, one should be careful not to use New Testament terminology which speaks of the beginning of the Christian life to describe one’s Christian experience following conversion. Otherwise, we fall into the error of Humpty Dumpty, who explained to mystified Alice, “When I use a word, it means just what I choose it to mean.” “The New Testament confines talk of Spirit-baptism to the experience of the Spirit at conversion-initiation, and speaks of all later experiences of empowering as a being filled with the Spirit.”

Returning for a moment to John the Baptist, who anticipated the baptism of the Spirit, we should add that he did not live to see the fulfillment of his prediction. The one coming after him, the Messiah, was to be the one who would baptize with the Holy Spirit. This greater one, however, first came upon the scene at the turning point of the ages as the bearer of the Spirit, and to that topic we turn next.

The Messiah, the Bearer of the Spirit

Two strands of expectation seem to be discernible in the prophetic hopes of the coming age of the Spirit. On the one hand, there is the hope that the Spirit will be poured out upon all flesh (Joel 2:28f.); on the other hand, the activity of the Spirit in the new age is associated with the coming of a unique personage, depicted either as a king in the line of David (Is. 11:1ff.) or as a suffering servant (Is. 42:1ff.) who is to be anointed with the Spirit of God to carry out his vocation.

In the New Testament these two strands of prophetic expectation are brought together in the person of Jesus, the Messiah. Jesus first received a special endowment of the Spirit of God and then imparted it to others. Not only was Jesus conceived of the Holy Spirit, not only was he anointed with the Spirit at his baptism, but, as John the Baptist predicted, he would also baptize others with the Spirit.

Jesus was supremely the man of the Spirit. Of John the Baptist it was said that he would be filled with the Spirit even from his mother's womb (Lk. 1:15); of Jesus it is reported that he was conceived of the Spirit.

Jesus' Ministry by the Spirit

Equipped by the Spirit of God, with the nature of his messiahship tested and affirmed, Jesus began his ministry in Galilee both in word and in deed. Rumors that a mighty prophet of God had appeared began to spread over all the province. Luke reports: "And Jesus returned in the power of the Spirit into Galilee, and a report concerning went out through all the surrounding country" (4:14). In the power of the Spirit he went to his hometown, Nazareth, where he attended the synagogue, as was his custom. When he was asked to read the selection from the prophets, he opened the scroll at Isaiah 61:1f., and read: "The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he has anointed me to preach good news to the poor ..." (Lk. 4:18). After the reading he closed the book and commented: "Today this scripture has been fulfilled in your hearing" (Lk. 4:21). The anointed prophet of Isaiah 61 is now the Messiah who proclaims good news. "Could anything stress more strongly the concentration of the Spirit in the person of the Messiah for mission?"

Jesus' message that day contained all the great themes of the gospel: to bring healing to those who are brokenhearted, release to prisoners of war, the recovery of sight for the blind, to set at liberty the oppressed. The good news was that the year of the Lord's favor had arrived. The Old Testament year of jubilee, the year of liberation and forgiveness of debt appointed by Yahweh (Lev. 25), symbolized for Jesus the day of salvation which he was announcing (Lk. 4:18, 19). Taylor writes, "Under the compulsion of the Spirit he goes to his combat with the devil and emerges victorious; he has bound the strong man. Now armed with the same Spirit he comes to unbind the prisoners and let the broken victims go free."¹⁷ The new era of salvation had begun. Before their very eyes that which was said of the anointed servant of Yahweh long ago was being fulfilled in the person and ministry of Jesus.

The words of our Lord were spoken with such grace that the audience

was initially quite overwhelmed, but in the end they were ready to kill him. Indeed the experience of Isaiah the prophet, from whom he had quoted, was being repeated in our Lord's experience in that the hearts of the hearers were sluggish and their ears heavy and their eyes closed (Is. 6:9, 10), so that they failed to grasp the message of salvation which God had sent through Jesus.

Now Jesus is King and what he says goes... just like a king's edict. Furthermore, Jesus has empowered his followers (Christians) to be his hands and feet and do what Jesus did. We read of the Outpouring in Acts 2, this supernatural event as promised by Christ began the ministry of the Spirit as seen in the Book of Acts and continues through the rest of the New Testament Text. In 1 Corinthians 2:4-5, the apostle Paul writes: "My message and my preaching were not with wise and persuasive words, but with a demonstration of the Spirit's power, so that your faith might not rest on human wisdom, but on God's power."

Sermon Passages Commentary:

John 14 & 16 Commentary on the Work of the Holy Spirit

The work of the Holy Spirit in the world (8-11)

He will convict the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment: Sin is the truth about man, righteousness is the truth about God, judgment is the inevitable combination of these two truths.

He will convict: Men cannot come to an understanding of sin, righteousness and judgment apart from the Holy Spirit. In its insanity, the world regarded Jesus as a sinner, itself as righteous, and it ended up pronouncing false judgment on Jesus Himself.

Because they do not believe in Me: It is unbelief, the rejection of Jesus, which proves one to be a sinner. "Christ is good and holy and pure; to reject him is to convict oneself of being opposed to goodness and holiness and purity and love." (Erdman)

The work of the Holy Spirit among the disciples (12-15)

I still have many things to say to you: Jesus frankly admitted that His own teaching was incomplete, and anticipated the further instruction

of the church by the Holy Spirit. This statement of Jesus leads us to anticipate the formation of the New Testament.

Jesus Himself refutes those who say “I’ll take what Jesus taught, but not what Paul or the others taught.” Paul and the other New Testament writers taught us the many things that Jesus spoke of.

He will guide you into all truth: Today, the Holy Spirit continues to personally lead us into truth, but never in opposition to the Scripture, because God’s supremely authoritative revelation is closed with the New Testament.

He will not speak on His own authority ... He will take of what is Mine and declare it to you: The Holy Spirit’s ministry is revealing Jesus to us. He has many different ways, and many different gifts He uses to accomplish this, but the purpose is always the same: to reveal Jesus.

JESUS PROMISES THE HOLY SPIRIT / 14:15-31

The second half of chapter 14 includes Jesus’ teaching on the resources of discipleship. Jesus prepared his followers for his physical absence by telling them that they would experience his presence more fully and intimately because the Counselor, the Holy Spirit, would take up residence in them. Among the resources that the Spirit brings to our lives will be: (1) an awareness of God’s love; (2) a sense of guidance and purpose in life; (3) the power to obey Jesus; (4) the realization that we are united in relationship with God; and (5) a recognition and understanding of truth.

Jesus reminded the disciples that his promised resources would be essential for spiritual survival. He would only be with them a while longer, but he did not want them to be unduly troubled. If they endured the difficulties by trusting in his promises, the hard times would prove to be only temporary. Christ’s promises are as real and necessary for us today as they were for that first small group of followers.

JESUS TEACHES ABOUT THE HOLY SPIRIT / 16:5-15

Not all the news for the disciples was grim. There would be persecution, but Jesus comforted his followers with the promise that

they would not be alone; he would send them the Counselor, the Spirit of truth. John highlighted five important tasks of the Holy Spirit: (1) to convict the world of its sin and call it to repentance, (2) to reveal the standard of God's righteousness to anyone who believes because Christ would no longer be physically present on earth, (3) to demonstrate Christ's judgment over Satan, (4) to direct believers into all truth, and (5) to reveal even more about Jesus Christ.

16:13 “When he, the Spirit of truth, comes, he will guide you into all truth.” The prominent role of the Spirit of truth is to guide the believers into (Greek eis) all truth. By truth Jesus meant the truth about his identity, the truth of his words and actions, and the truth about all that was to happen to him. In time they would fully understand that he was the Son, come from the Father, sent to save people from their sin. But only after these events occurred, and only through the Holy Spirit's guidance would the disciples be able to understand. The Holy Spirit is the true guide for all believers; his primary task is to instruct us about the truth (1 John 2:20).

THE JUDGMENT OF SATAN (The Holy Spirits power over Satan)

Satan has been judged so that his darkness cannot overcome believers' light.

Reference: Luke 10:18

Quotation: “I watched Satan fall from heaven like a flash of lightning” (NRSV)

Explanation: Pride was Satan's downfall. Jesus spoke of his fall from glory and pointed to his total destruction.

Reference: John 12:31

Quotation: “The prince of this world will be driven out” (NIV)

Explanation: Jesus' crucifixion gave him the victory over Satan.

Reference: John 16:11

Quotation: “The prince of this world now stands condemned” (NIV)

Explanation: Jesus announced that Satan’s judgment was complete.

Reference: Hebrews 2:14

Quotation: “He Himself likewise shared in the same, that through death He might destroy him who had the power of death, that is, the devil” (NKJV)

Explanation: Jesus’ crucifixion shattered Satan’s deadly power.

Reference: 1 John 3:8

Quotation: “The Son of God was revealed for this purpose to destroy the works of the devil” (NRSV)

Explanation: Jesus’ purpose was fulfilled in overcoming Satan.

Reference: Revelation 20:10

Quotation: “The devil, who deceived them, was cast into the lake of fire and brimstone . . . forever and ever” (NRSV)

Explanation: Jesus will have the complete and final victory over Satan.

“He will not speak on his own; he will speak only what he hears.” In addition to revealing Christ and guiding the believers into the truth of Christ, the Spirit would convey Jesus’ words both by way of teaching and by way of reminding the disciples of what Jesus had said during his ministry. The Spirit would also affirm Jesus’ ministry by bearing witness to him (15:26). The Lord had many things he wanted to tell the disciples before he departed from them, but they would not

be able to bear them at that time. When the Spirit came, he would speak to the disciples whatever he heard from Jesus.

Acts 2—The Holy Spirit Is Poured Out On the Church

The initial experience of the filling of the Holy Spirit [2:1-13]

The disciples are filled with the Holy Spirit (1-4a)

The Day of Pentecost: This was a Jewish feast held 50 days after Passover. It celebrated the firstfruits of the wheat harvest.

In the Jewish rituals of that time, the first sheaf reaped from the barley harvest was presented to God at Passover. But at Pentecost, the firstfruits of the wheat harvest were presented to God; therefore, Pentecost is called the day of the firstfruits (Numbers 28:26).

Jewish tradition also taught that Pentecost marked the day when the Law was given to Israel. The Jews sometimes called Pentecost *shimchath torah*, or “Joy of the Law.”

On the Old Testament Day of Pentecost Israel received the Law; on the New Testament Day of Pentecost the Church received the Spirit of Grace in fullness.

“It was the best-attended of the great feasts because traveling conditions were at their best. There was never a more cosmopolitan gathering in Jerusalem than this one.” (Hughes)

Leviticus 23:15–22 gives 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)

When the Day of Pentecost had fully come: It was now 10 days after the time Jesus ascended to heaven (Acts 1:3), and since Jesus commanded them to wait for the coming of the Holy Spirit.

The disciples were not strangers to the person and work of the Holy Spirit.

- The disciples saw the Holy Spirit continually at work in the ministry of

Jesus.

- The disciples experienced something of the power of the Spirit as they stepped out and served God (Luke 10:1-20).
- The disciples heard Jesus promise a new, coming work of the Holy Spirit (John 14:15-18).
- The disciples received the Holy Spirit in a new way after Jesus finishes His work on the cross and instituted the New Covenant in His blood (John 20:19-23).
- The disciples heard Jesus command them to wait for a promised baptism of the Holy Spirit that would empower them to be witnesses (Acts 1:4-5).

They waited until the Day of Pentecost had fully come, but they didn't know ahead of time how long they would have to wait. It would be easy for them to think it would come the same afternoon Jesus ascended to heaven; or after 3 days, or 7 days. But they had to wait a full 10 days, until the Day of Pentecost had fully come.

The only possible Scriptural precedent for this might be Jeremiah 42:7: Ten days later the word of the LORD came to Jeremiah. But who would have suspected that? God used this time to break them down and then to build them up. We can imagine how their patience and kindness and compassion was tested during this time, yet they all stayed together.

What this passage tells us about the gift of the Holy Spirit.

- The gift of the Holy Spirit is promised to us.
- The gift of the Holy Spirit is worth waiting for.
- The gift of the Holy Spirit comes as He wills, often not according to our expectation.
- The gift of the Holy Spirit can come upon not only individuals, but also upon groups (see also Acts 2:4, 4:31, 10:44).
- The gift of the Holy Spirit is often given as God deals with the flesh and there is a dying to self.

What this passage does not tell us about the gift of the Holy Spirit.

- The gift of the Holy Spirit is given according to formula.
- We earn the gift of the Holy Spirit by our seeking.

They were all with one accord in one place: They were gathered together sharing the same heart, the same love for God, the same

trust in His promise, and the same geography.

Before we can be filled, we must recognize our emptiness; by gathering together for prayer, in obedience, these disciples did just that. They recognized they did not have the resources in themselves to do what they could do or should do; they had to instead rely on the work of God.

Suddenly there came a sound from heaven: The association of the sound of a rushing mighty wind, filling the whole house, with the outpouring of the Holy Spirit is unusual. But it probably has connection with the fact that in both the Hebrew and Greek languages, the word for spirit (as in Holy Spirit) is the same word for breath or wind (this also happens to be true in Latin). Here, the sound from heaven was the sound of the Holy Spirit being poured out on the disciples.

The sound of this fast, mighty wind would make any of these men and women who knew the Hebrew Scriptures think of the presence of the Holy Spirit.

- In Genesis 1:1-2, it is the Spirit of God as the breath/wind of God, blowing over the waters of the newly created earth.
- In Genesis 2:7, it is the Spirit of God as the breath/wind of God, blowing life into newly created man.
- In Ezekiel 37:9-10, it is the Spirit of God as the breath/wind of God, moving over the dry bones of Israel bringing them life and strength. This single line tells us much about how the Holy Spirit moves.
- Suddenly: Sometimes God moves suddenly.
- Sound: It was real, though it could not be touched; it came by the ears.
- From heaven: It wasn't of earth; not created or manipulated or made here.
- Mighty: Full of force, coming with great power.

There appeared to them divided tongues as of fire, and one sat upon each of them: These divided tongues, as of fire, appearing over each one, were also unusual. It probably should be connected with John the Baptist's prophecy that Jesus would baptize you with the Holy Spirit and with fire (Matthew 3:11).

The idea behind the picture of fire is usually purification, as a refiner uses fire to make pure gold; or fire can burn away what is temporary, leaving only what will last. This is an excellent illustration of the principle that the filling of the Holy Spirit is not just for abstract power, but for purity.

In certain places in the Old Testament, God showed His special pleasure with a sacrifice by lighting the fire for it Himself—that is, fire from heaven came down and consumed the sacrifice. The experience of the followers of Jesus on Pentecost is another example of God sending fire from heaven to show His pleasure and power, but this time, it descended upon living sacrifices (Romans 12:1).

The Holy Spirit sat upon each of them. “The word ‘sat’ has a marked force in the New Testament. It carries the idea of a completed preparation, and a certain permanence of position and condition.” (Pierson)

Under the Old Covenant, the Holy Spirit rested on God’s people more as a nation, that is, Israel. But under the New Covenant, the Holy Spirit rests upon God’s people as individuals—the tongues of fire sat upon each of them. This strange phenomenon had never happened before and would never happen again in the pages of the Bible, but was given to emphasize this point, that the Spirit of God was present with and in and upon each individual.

And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit: Essentially, the rushing mighty wind and the tongues, as of fire, were only unusual, temporary phenomenon, which accompanied the true gift—being filled with the Holy Spirit.

While it would be wrong to expect a rushing mighty wind or tongues, as of fire, to be present today when the Holy Spirit is poured out, we can experience the true gift. We, just as they, can be all filled with the Holy Spirit.

But we should do what the disciples did before and during their filling with the Holy Spirit.

- The disciples were filled in fulfillment of a promise.
- They were filled as they received in faith.
- They were filled in God’s timing.

- They were filled as they were together in unity.
- They were filled in unusual ways.

This coming and filling of the Holy Spirit was so good, so essential for the work of the community of early Christians, that Jesus actually said that it was better for Him to leave the earth bodily so He could send the Holy Spirit (John 16:7).

The phenomenon of speaking in tongues (4b-13)

And began to speak with other tongues: In response to the filling of the Holy Spirit, those present (not only the twelve apostles) began to speak with other tongues. These were languages that they were never taught, and they spoke these languages, speaking as the Spirit gave them utterance.

Devout men, from every nation under heaven: The multitude from many nations gathered in Jerusalem because of the Feast of Pentecost. Many of these were the same people who gathered in Jerusalem at the last feast, Passover, when an angry mob demanded the execution of Jesus.

And when this sound occurred: A crowd quickly gathered, being attracted by this sound, which was either the sound of the rushing mighty wind or the sound of speaking in other tongues. When the crowd came, they heard the Christians speaking in their own foreign languages. Apparently, the Christians could be heard from the windows of the upper room, or they went out onto some kind of balcony or into the temple courts.

Not many homes of that day could hold 120 people. It is far more likely that this upper room was part of the temple courts, which was a huge structure, with porches and colonnades and rooms. The crowd came from people milling about the temple courts.

We hear them speaking in our tongues the wonderful works of God: This is what the crowd heard the Christians speak. From this remarkable event, all were amazed and perplexed, but some used it as a means of honest inquiry and asked, “Whatever could this mean?” Others used it as an excuse to dismiss the work of God and said,

“They are full of new wine.”

Look, are not all these who speak Galileans? People from Galilee (Galileans) were known to be uncultured and poor speakers. This was all the more reason to be impressed with their ability to speak eloquently in other languages. “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.” (Longenecker)

ii. They all spoke in different tongues, yet there was a unity among the believers. “Ever since the early church fathers, commentators have seen the blessing of Pentecost as a deliberate and dramatic reversal of the curse of Babel.” (Stott)

Whatever could this mean? What are we to make of the phenomenon of speaking in tongues? Speaking in tongues has been the focal point for significant controversy in the church. People still ask the same question these bystanders asked on the day of Pentecost.

There is no controversy that God, at least at one time, gave the church the gift of tongues. But much of the controversy centers on the question, “what is God’s purpose for the gift of tongues?”

Some think that the gift of tongues was given primarily as a sign to unbelievers (1 Corinthians 14:21–22) and as a means to miraculously communicate the gospel in diverse languages. They believe there is no longer the need for this sign, so they regard tongues as a gift no longer present in the church today.

Others argue that the gift of tongues, while a sign to unbelievers as stated by 1 Corinthians 14:21–22, are primarily a gift of communication between the believer and God (1 Corinthians 14:2, 13–15), and is a gift still given by God today.

Many mistakenly interpret this incident in Acts 2, assuming that the disciples used tongues to preach to the gathered crowd. But a careful look shows this idea is wrong. Notice what the people heard the disciples say: Speaking ... the wonderful works of God. The disciples declared the praises of God, thanking Him with all their might in unknown tongues. The gathered crowd merely overheard what the disciples exuberantly declared to God.

The idea that these disciples communicated to the diverse crowd in tongues is plainly wrong. The crowd had a common language (Greek), and Peter preached a sermon to them in that language! (Acts 2:14-40)

We hear them speaking in our tongues the wonderful works of God: The gift of tongues is a personal language of prayer given by God, whereby the believer communicates with God beyond the limits of knowledge and understanding (1 Corinthians 14:14-15).

The Gift of Tongues has an important place in the devotional life of the believer, but a small place in the corporate life of the church (1 Corinthians 14:18-19), especially in public meetings (1 Corinthians 14:23).

When tongues is practiced in the corporate life of the church, it must be carefully controlled, and never without an interpretation given by the Holy Spirit (1 Corinthians 14:27-28).

The ability to pray in an unknown tongue is not a gift given to every believer (1 Corinthians 12:20).

The ability to pray in an unknown tongue is not the primary or singularly true evidence of the filling of the Holy Spirit. This emphasis leads many to seek the gift of tongues (and to counterfeit it) merely to prove to themselves and others that they really are filled with the Holy Spirit.

Began to speak with other tongues as the Spirit gave them utterance: Was this speaking in tongues in Acts 2 the same gift of tongues described in 1 Corinthians 12 and 14?

Some say we are dealing with two separate gifts. They argue that the 1 Corinthians gift must be regulated and restricted, while the Acts 2 gift can be used any time without regulation. Those who believe they are two separate gifts emphasize that the speech of Acts 2 was immediately recognized by foreign visitors to Jerusalem, while the speech of 1 Corinthians was unintelligible to those present except with a divinely granted gift of interpretation.

However, this doesn't take into account that the differences have more to do with the circumstances in which the gifts were exercised

than with the gifts themselves.

In Jerusalem, the group spoken to was uniquely multi-national and multi-lingual; at least time (Pentecost), Jews of the dispersion from all over the world were in the city. Therefore, the likelihood that foreign ears would hear a tongue spoken in their language was much greater. On the other hand, in Corinth (though a rather cosmopolitan city itself), the gift was exercised in a local church, with members all sharing a common language (Greek). If one had the same diversity of foreigners visiting the Corinthian church when all were speaking in tongues, it is likely that many would hear members of the Corinthian church speaking in our own tongues the wonderful works of God.

As well, it should never be assumed that each person among the 120 who spoke in tongues on the Day of Pentecost spoke in a language immediately intelligible to human ears present that day. We read they all ... began to speak with other tongues; therefore there were some 120 individuals speaking in tongues. Since the nations spoken of in Acts 2:9-11 number only fifteen (with perhaps others present but not mentioned), it is likely that many (if not most) of the 120 spoke praises to God in a language that was not understood by someone immediately present. The text simply does not indicate that someone present could understand each person speaking in tongues.

However, we should not assume those who were not immediately understood by human ears spoke "gibberish," as the modern gift of tongues is sometimes called with derision. They may have praised God in a language completely unknown, yet completely human. After all, what would the language of the Aztecs sound like to Roman ears? Or some may have spoke in a completely unique language given by God and understood by Him and Him alone. After all, communication with God, not man, is the purpose of the gift of tongues (1 Corinthians 14:2). The repetition of simple phrases, unintelligible and perhaps nonsensical to human bystanders, does not mean someone speaks "gibberish." Praise to God may be simple and repetitive, and part of the whole dynamic of tongues is that it bypasses the understanding of the speaker (1 Corinthians 14:14), being understood by God and God alone.

All in all, we should regard the gift of Acts 2 and the gift of tongues in 1

Corinthians as the same, simply because the same term is used for both in the original language (heterais glossais). Also, the verb translated gave them utterance in Acts 2:4 is frequently used in Greek literature in connection with spiritually prompted (ecstatic) speech, not mere translation into other languages.

Peter's sermon on the day of Pentecost [2:14-36]

Peter begins his sermon (14-15)

Peter, standing up with the eleven: Peter stood and preached to the crowd as a representative of the whole group of apostles.

We should notice that the speaking in tongues stopped when Peter began to preach. The Holy Spirit now worked through Peter's preaching and would not work against Himself through tongues at the same time.

Raised his voice: 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.

On the Day of Pentecost Peter didn't teach as the rabbis in his day usually did, who gathered disciples around them, sat down, and instructed them and any others who might listen. Instead, Peter proclaimed the truth like a herald.

This remarkable sermon had no preparation behind it—it was spontaneously given. Peter didn't wake up that morning knowing he would preach to thousands, and that thousands would embrace Jesus in response. Yet we could say that this was a well-prepared sermon; it was prepared by Peter's prior life with God and relationship with Jesus. It flowed spontaneously out of that life, and out of a mind that thought and believed deeply.

It is good to remember that what we have in Acts 2 is a small portion of what Peter actually said. Acts 2:40 tells us, And with many other words he testified and exhorted them. Like almost all the sermons recorded in the Bible, what we have is a Holy Spirit inspired abridgment of a longer message.

For these are not drunk: Peter deflected the mocking criticism that the disciples were drunk. In that day it was unthinkable that people would be so drunk so early in the day (about 9:00 in the morning).

Commentator Adam Clarke says that most Jews—pious or not—did not eat or drink until after the third hour of the day, because that was the time for prayer, and they would only eat after their business with God was accomplished.

These are not drunk: We shouldn't think that the Christians were acting as if they were drunk. The idea of "being drunk in the Spirit" has no foundation in Scripture; the comment from the mockers on the Day of Pentecost had no basis in reality.

"Nor, must we add, did the believers' experience of 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." (Stott)

Quoting Joel 2, Peter explains the strange events at Pentecost (16-21)

But this is what was spoken by the prophet Joel: In the midst of this great outpouring of the Holy Spirit, among signs and wonders and speaking in tongues, what did Peter do? Essentially, he said, "Let's have a Bible study. Let's look at what the prophet Joel wrote."

This introduces the first of three Old Testament passages Peter will quote: Joel 2:28-32, Psalm 16:8-11, and Psalm 110:1.

This focus on God's Word did not quench the moving of the Holy Spirit; it fulfilled what the Holy Spirit wanted to do. All the signs and wonders and speaking in tongues were preparing for this work of God's Word.

Unfortunately, some people set the Word against the Spirit. They almost think it's more spiritual if there is no Bible study. Sadly, this is often due to the weak and unspiritual teaching of some who teach the Bible.

The prophet Joel: This quotation from Joel 2:28-32 focuses on God's

promise to pour out His Spirit on all flesh. What happened on the day of Pentecost was a near fulfillment of that promise, with the final fulfillment coming in the last days (which Peter had good reason to believe he was in).

Joel mostly prophesied about judgment that was coming to ancient Israel. Yet in the midst of the many warnings of judgment, God also gave several words of promise—promises of future blessing, like this one that announces an outpouring of the Holy Spirit.

It shall come to pass in the last days: The idea of the last days is that they are the times of the Messiah, encompassing both His humble coming and His return in glory. Because Jesus had already come in humility, they were aware that His return in glory could be any time.

Though there would be some 2,000 years until Jesus returned, until this point, history had been running towards the point of the ultimate establishment of God's kingdom on earth. But from this time on, history runs parallel to that point, ready at any time for the consummation.

It may also be helpful to see the last days as something like a season—a general period of time—more than a specific period, such as a week. In the whole span of God's plan for human history, we are in the season of the last days.

“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)

I will pour out of My Spirit on all flesh: In using the quotation from Joel, Peter explained what these curious onlookers saw—the Holy Spirit poured forth upon the people. Before the Holy Spirit was given in drops, now He is poured forth—and on all flesh.

This was a glorious emphasis on Pentecost. Under the Old Covenant, certain people were filled with the Spirit at certain times for specific purposes. Now, under the New Covenant, the outpouring of the Holy Spirit is for all who call upon the name of the LORD, even menservants and maidservants.

“There had been no provision for, and no promise of, an abiding presence of the Holy Spirit in the life of any Old Testament saint.” (Hughes). This changes under the New Covenant.

Whoever calls on the name of the LORD shall be saved: Peter also used this passage from Joel to an evangelistic purpose. This outpouring of the Holy Spirit meant that God now offered salvation in a way previously unknown—to whoever calls on the name of the LORD, whether they are Jew or Gentile.

It would be many years until the gospel was offered to Gentiles, yet Peter’s sermon text announced the gospel invitation by saying, whoever calls on the name of the LORD shall be saved.

The idea is expressed in Proverbs 18:10: The name of the LORD is a strong tower; the righteous run to it and are safe.

Peter introduces the focus of the sermon: The resurrected Messiah, Jesus of Nazareth (22-24)

Men of Israel, hear these words: Many people would think it would be enough for Peter to stop after the quotation from Joel, considering all we have in it. Joel told us of:

- An outpouring of the Holy Spirit.
- Miraculous dreams, visions, and prophecy.
- Signs and wonders regarding the Day of the Lord.
- An invitation to call on the name of the Lord.

But it wasn’t enough, because Peter had not yet spoken about the saving work of Jesus on our behalf. Everything until this point had been introduction, explaining the strange things they just saw. Now Peter would bring the essential message.

Men of Israel, hear these words: This was much as Peter had already said, let this be known to you, and heed my words (Acts 2:14). Peter wanted people to pay attention, and he spoke as if he had something important to say—something some teachers fail to do.

As you yourselves also know: Peter referred to what these people

already knew about Jesus. They already knew of His life and miraculous works. Often in speaking to people about Jesus, we should start with what they already know about Him.

Being delivered by the determined counsel and foreknowledge of God: Peter knew that Jesus' death was in the plan of God. At the same time, those who rejected Him and called for His execution were responsible for the actions of their lawless hands.

Peter did not flinch at saying, "You crucified this Man who God sent." His first concern was not to please his audience, but to tell them the truth. The Spirit-filled Peter was a different man than the Peter who a few months before, even knowing Jesus (Matthew 26:69-75).

It was not possible: Peter knew that Jesus could not remain bound by death, as explained by the following quotation from Psalm 16. It was not possible that Jesus should remain a victim of the sin and hatred of man; He would certainly triumph over it.

Having loosed the pains of death: In the phrase pains of death, the word pains is actually the word for "birth pains." In this sense, the tomb was a womb for Jesus.

"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, quoting Bertram)

Acts 2

THE HOLY SPIRIT COMES / 2:1-13

In Old Testament times, the Spirit of God came upon isolated individuals or smaller groups only on special occasions and only in a temporary way to help them accomplish God's purposes (Exodus 31:3; Judges 14:6; 1 Samuel 16:13). As the apostles were gathered together in Jerusalem for the feast of Pentecost, the time had come for the fulfillment of Christ's promise to send his Spirit completely and permanently upon all believers (Luke 24:49; John 14:16-17, 26; 16:5-

15). This marvelous outpouring of God provided the supernatural power for believers to take the life-changing message of the gospel to the ends of the earth (Acts 1:8). This is the day Christ made good on his promise to send the Helper, the Comforter, the Holy Spirit who would take up permanent residence in those who put their faith in Christ. And what a day it was! God's individualized pouring out of his Spirit into the lives of 120 believers resulted in the effective pouring out of his story, changing the lives of three thousand people in one day!

2:1 When the day of Pentecost had come, they were all together in one place. The day of Pentecost was an annual feast celebrated on "the day after the seventh Sabbath" after Passover (Leviticus 23:15-16). Since the date was determined by the passing of a "week" of weeks (seven weeks), it was often called the Feast of Weeks. The word "Pentecost" means "fifty," so named because this feast was celebrated fifty days after Passover. It was originally the Feast of the Firstfruits of the grain harvest. By this time Jews had associated Pentecost with the giving of the Law (Torah) at Mount Sinai. Pentecost was one of three major annual feasts celebrated by the Jews (along with Passover, fifty days earlier, and the Feast of Tabernacles about four months later). Jesus was crucified at Passover time, and he ascended forty days after his resurrection. The Holy Spirit came fifty days after the Resurrection, ten days after the Ascension. The identification of Pentecost with "firstfruits" likely has a real significance here, since the three thousand who came to faith in Christ this day were the "firstfruits" of many thousands who would follow. Those gathered were the 120 believers mentioned in 1:15. The one place where they were gathered was likely the same upper room mentioned in 1:13. Most likely the believers were praying, as had been their regular practice during the period since the Ascension (1:14). What happened this day would forever change the world.

2:2 Suddenly a sound like the blowing of a violent wind came from heaven and filled the whole house where they were sitting. Suddenly, as the believers were gathered, they heard a sound or noise like the blowing of a violent wind (it was not necessarily movement of air, but perhaps a sound like that of wind). The word for "wind" (pnoes) is similar in sound and spelling to the word for "spirit" (pneuma,). The wind is a good analogy for the Spirit: it is not seen,

though its effects are, and it can be found everywhere in never-ending supply.

Some have made the connection here between this event and the dry bones of Ezekiel 37:1–14 as well as the discussion between Jesus and Nicodemus (John 3:8), where Jesus compared the Spirit to the wind. Jews believed that the wind of God’s Spirit would precede and announce the coming of the messianic age.

The source of this sound is made clear: it came from heaven. It would affect everyone, for it filled the whole house where they were sitting. The “house” probably refers to the upper room mentioned in 1:13 where the believers had been meeting and praying.

2:3 Then, what looked like flames or tongues of fire appeared and settled on each of them. To the great sound of wind was added a visual image: what looked like flames or tongues of fire appeared and settled on each of them. Why tongues of fire? It may be that “tongues” symbolized speech and the communication of the gospel. “Fire” symbolizes God’s purifying presence, which burns away the undesirable elements in people’s lives and sets their hearts aflame to ignite the lives of others. On Mount Sinai, God confirmed the validity of the Old Testament law with fire from heaven (Exodus 19:16–18). Elsewhere in the Old Testament, fire was used to portray the presence of God (Genesis 15:17; Exodus 3:2–6; 13:21–22; 24:17; 40:38; see also Life Application

Bible Commentaries, Matthew and Luke, notes in Matthew 3:11 and Luke 3:16). John said that Jesus would baptize the people with the Holy Spirit and with fire.

“BAPTISM IN THE SPIRIT” IN THE NEW TESTAMENT

The term (or concept) occurs only a few times in the New Testament. It is used in basically three different ways.

PROPHETIC Matthew 3:11

HISTORICAL (Acts 2:1–4)

DOCTRINAL 1 Corinthians 12:13

PROPHETIC Mark 3:11

HISTORICAL Acts 11:15-17

DOCTRINAL (Romans 6:1-4)

PROPHETIC Mark 1:8

PROPHETIC Luke 3:16

PROPHETIC John 1:33

PROPHETIC Acts 1:5

- In the Gospels, John the Baptist used the term in describing Jesus' ministry.
- In Acts 1:5, Jesus quotes John's prophecy looking forward to Pentecost.
- In Acts 2, the process was initiated on the day of Pentecost: the Holy Spirit came to make the church his residence, indwelling every believer.
- In Acts 11:16 the term is used by Peter who referred to Jesus' quote of John's prophecy.
- In Romans 6:1-4 and 1 Corinthians 12:13 Paul taught its significance.

At Pentecost God confirmed the validity of the Holy Spirit's ministry by sending fire. And while at Mount Sinai fire had come down on one place, at Pentecost fire came down on many believers, symbolizing that God's presence is available to all who believe in him. This event certainly fulfilled John the Baptist's words about the Holy Spirit baptizing with fire (Luke 3:16). Peter declared that this event had been prophesied by Joel (Joel 2:28-29). Note, too, that every believer in the room received this blessing; no one was excluded. It was clear to all present that God was at work.

O Thou who camest from above the pure celestial fire to impart, Kindle a flame of sacred love On the mean altar of my heart! Jesus, confirm

my heart's desire To work, and speak, and think for Thee; Still let me guard the holy fire, And still stir up Thy gift in me... John Wesley

2:4 And everyone present was filled with the Holy Spirit and began speaking in other languages, as the Holy Spirit gave them this ability.

At this point in this wonderful scene, Luke recorded that everyone present was filled with the Holy Spirit and began speaking in other languages. The “filling” that occurred on Pentecost is called a “baptizing” (1:5 and 11:16) and a “receiving” (10:47). “Baptizing” or “filling” can be used to describe the basic act of receiving the Spirit. It can be understood to refer to the first occurrence of the Spirit’s indwelling a believer. Acts 1:5 looks forward to this day; Acts 11:15–16 refers back to it. Here, four short verses record it.

In principle, the filling of the Holy Spirit can be distinguished from the term “baptism” of the Spirit. “Baptism” is the theological, objective term referring to the Spirit’s initial work in a believer’s life, beginning the relationship, and—like water baptism—is not a repeated act (Acts 11:15–16; Romans 6:3; 1 Corinthians 12:13; Colossians 2:12). The believer who has taken this initial step of Spirit baptism must, however, continue to take advantage of the Spirit’s active work in his or her life. That phenomenon is described in the New Testament as the Spirit’s filling (see Acts 4:8, 31; 6:3, 5; 7:55; 9:17; 13:9, 52; Galatians 5:16; Ephesians 4:30; 5:18).

At Pentecost (2:1–4), the Holy Spirit was made available to all who believe in Jesus. Believers receive the Holy Spirit when they trust in Jesus Christ for salvation. (Initial infilling) The baptism of the Holy Spirit must be understood in the light of his total work in Christians:

- The Spirit marks the beginning of the Christian experience. No one belongs to Christ without his Spirit (Romans 8:9); no one is united to Christ without his Spirit (1 Corinthians 6:17); no one is adopted as God’s child without his Spirit (Romans 8:14–17; Galatians 4:6–7); no one is in the body of Christ except by baptism in the Spirit (1 Corinthians 12:13).
- The Spirit is the power for the new life. He begins a lifelong process of change as believers become more like Christ (Galatians 3:3; Philippians 1:6). Those who receive Christ by faith begin an immediate personal relationship with God. The Holy Spirit works in them to help

them become like Christ.

- The Spirit unites the Christian community in Christ (Ephesians 2:19–22). The Holy Spirit can be experienced by all, and he works through all (1 Corinthians 12:11; Ephesians 4:4).

Was this phenomenon the birthday of the church? Some think this was the inauguration day for the church, whereby the Spirit made the church into a corporate body (1 Corinthians 12:13). Most likely the church did not begin at Pentecost but at the time of Christ's resurrection. The Spirit of the risen Christ began a new, more intense relationship with individual believers than ever before. The promise of John 14:17 that the Spirit "will be in you" was fulfilled. As a new instrument of service called into action with the mission Israel formerly had, the church did have its birthday at Pentecost. It was the beginning of a time of rapid growth for the church.

These people literally spoke in "other languages" (see comments on the following verse)—a miraculous attention getter for the international crowd gathered in town for the feast. All the nationalities represented recognized their own languages being spoken. Jews believed that spoken prophecy had ceased with Malachi, the last of the writing prophets. They believed that from that point on, God spoke through the Torah as interpreted by scholars and teachers. So this was truly a remarkable day for the church, fulfilling Ezekiel 37:11–14.

The believers could speak in these other languages because the Holy Spirit gave them this ability. This is the clear teaching of the New Testament—that the Holy Spirit sovereignly determines which gift(s) a believer will have (1 Corinthians 12:7, 11). Furthermore, these gifts are meant to be used to build up the body of Christ.

2:5-8 Godly Jews from many nations were living in Jerusalem at that time. When they heard this sound, they came running to see what it was all about, and they were bewildered to hear their own languages being spoken by the believers. They were beside themselves with wonder. "How can this be?" they exclaimed. "These people are all from Galilee, and yet we hear them speaking the languages of the lands where we were born!" Such an event could not help but attract attention, and a crowd must have quickly gathered. The

godly Jews from many nations [who] were living in Jerusalem at that time were the Jews among the Diaspora (the Greek word for “scattering”), whose families had been driven from Jerusalem and forced to live in other nations but had since returned to Jerusalem to live. These people had been born and raised in other nations, so among them many different languages were spoken. Thus, they were bewildered to hear their own languages being spoken.... languages of the lands where [they] were born! As the international, multilingual crowd gathered, they were astonished to hear their native tongues spoken by these Galileans. The term for “their own languages” is *dialekto*, from which we get our English word “dialect.” These were spoken, living languages. At this point, “tongues” was not the ecstatic or heavenly utterance to which Paul referred in 1 Corinthians 12-14; these were languages people understood.

This gathering of the nations was a perfect platform for launching the worldwide mission of the church. This event told the Jerusalem church that God intended the gospel for all the nations in their own languages.

2:9-11 “Parthians, Medes and Elamites; residents of Mesopotamia, Judea and Cappadocia, Pontus and Asia, Phrygia and Pamphylia, Egypt and the parts of Libya near Cyrene; visitors from Rome (both Jews and converts to Judaism); Cretans and Arabs—we hear them declaring the wonders of God in our own tongues!” This list includes the many lands from which Jews came to Jerusalem—some living in Palestine and others who had been dispersed throughout the world through captivities and persecutions. The list begins from the east of the Roman Empire and sweeps to the south and west. Very likely, some of the Jews who responded to Peter’s message then returned to their homelands with God’s good news of salvation (for example, see Acts 8). Through this divine manifestation of languages, therefore, God prepared the way for the spread of the gospel across the world. Throughout the book of Acts, it is clear how often the way was prepared for Paul and other messengers by people who had become believers at Pentecost. The church at Rome, for example, was probably begun by such Jewish believers. The list of countries reads mostly from East to West geographically, but why they are cited and why in this order is not known.

The content of these speeches in each language was the wonders of God. The subject of discussion was not sin, repentance, judgment, not even the gospel, but rather the proclamation of the mighty works of God.

Some have called this event at Pentecost “Babel Reversed.” They speculate that God seems to be saying: “I confused your languages thousands of years ago because you failed to obey me, but now I’ve got a message so important, I’ll countermand that program to get this message out.”

The important fact to remember about this first occurrence of “tongues” is its purpose: to get the message of Christ out to the world. It was a sign for unbelieving Israel that the Messiah had come. The promised Spirit had been poured out as foretold in Joel, Isaiah, Jeremiah, and others. It was also an effective sign for the propagation of the gospel message—an instant, Spirit-given gift of a foreign language with which to spread the glorious news of God’s work in the world. And that is exactly the point of Pentecost. The faithful believers were waiting and praying. Then came the prophesied signal that something big was about to happen. When it occurred, God delivered his message to the world.

With all the misinformation available today, many believers tend to look at Pentecost in an entirely improper light. It is often viewed as only some tremendous outpouring of power—sound of wind, fire, signs and wonders. If believers will take a fresh and straight-forward look at the events of Pentecost, however, they will find that the focus is on the fulfillment of Old Testament prophecy and the beginning of the witness of the apostles to the world.

2:12-13 They stood there amazed and perplexed. “What can this mean?” they asked each other. But others in the crowd were mocking. “They’re drunk, that’s all!” they said. These two verses describe a typical response of the crowd, leading up to Peter’s speech. The crowd continued to be amazed (see 2:7), but their amazement led them to be perplexed and to try to figure out what was happening. Some were mocking. Others were speculating that the believers were drunk. Such confusion and the drawing of such wrong conclusions was just the prodding Peter needed to clear things up. There will always be those

who misunderstand the working of God, who mock it and call into question its integrity. Christians can either wring their hands and worry or, like Peter, seize the opportunity to tell the watching world about the work of God in their midst.

PETER PREACHES TO A CROWD / 2:14-41

In Luke's history of the church, there is always a close connection between the activity of God's Spirit and the proclamation of the gospel. Time and again those who experience the baptism or filling of the Spirit begin immediately speaking with others concerning the truth about God and his Son, Jesus Christ (1:8; 2:4, 17; 4:8, 31; 6:10; 10:44-46; 13:9; 19:6).

This was certainly the case when the Spirit of God was poured out at Pentecost. The people gathered in Jerusalem were astonished to hear the Spirit-filled Palestinian Jews speaking fluently about God in foreign languages they had never learned. Confusion reigned until Peter delivered a convicting sermon, challenging his audience: "Turn to God, and be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins" (2:38 NLT). God used this sermon, rich with Old Testament references, to draw about three thousand men and women to himself.

2:14 Then Peter stood up with the Eleven, raised his voice and addressed the crowd: "Fellow Jews and all of you who live in Jerusalem, let me explain this to you; listen carefully to what I say." Peter, the early spokesman for the Twelve, seized the opportunity. He stood up with the Eleven, raised his voice and addressed the crowd. Peter explained to the people why they should listen to the testimony of the believers: because the Old Testament prophecies had been entirely fulfilled in Jesus (2:14-21), because Jesus is the Messiah (2:25-36), and because the risen Christ could change their lives (2:37-40).

2:15-18 "These men are not drunk, as you suppose. It's only nine in the morning! No, this is what was spoken by 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. Even on my servants, both men and women, I will pour out my Spirit in those days, and they will prophesy.’ ”

Peter answered the accusation that they were all drunk (2:13) by saying it was much too early in the day for that. He then proceeded to tie the event the crowd had just witnessed to the words of the prophet Joel, quoting from Joel

2:28–32. Not everything mentioned in Joel 2:28–32 was occurring that particular morning. The last days include all the days between Christ’s first and second comings; it is another way of saying “from now on.”

Peter was reminding these Jewish listeners that from prophecies like this one recorded by Joel, I will pour out my Spirit on all people, they should recognize the event they had just witnessed as the work of the Spirit. It would be to all kinds of people—Jews and Gentiles, rich and poor—not just to kings and priests.

The “prophesying” mentioned by Peter is likely not only prediction of the future but also declaration of the nature and will of God. The visions and the dreams were common means that God used to reveal himself to all people. The point was that the insight into these visions and dreams would be the product of the Spirit’s work.

At Pentecost the Holy Spirit was released throughout the entire world—to men, women, slave owners, slaves, Jews, and Gentiles. Everyone can receive the Spirit. This was a revolutionary thought for first-century Jews. Pentecost was designed to be a clear indication—to Jew and Gentile alike—that the messianic age had arrived. The Messiah had come!

Resources: Rev. Brad Standfest, David Ewert, *The Holy Spirit in the New Testament*, Bruce B. Barton and Grant R. Osborne, *Acts, Life Application Bible Commentary*, David Guzik, John, David Guzik’s *Commentaries on the Bible*

Sermon Notes:

The Resurrection of Jesus Christ was the most Amazing & Profound Event ever recorded in History.

As Christians the Resurrection of Christ should never grow Old

or Cold in our hearts...

The Resurrection of Christ should never Grow Silent in our Souls...

Jesus gave us a powerful message of Promise & Hope to Empower our lives... It's the Promise of the Holy Spirit

Read John 14:11-18

Here's the Deal... If you don't believe that and are not praying with the Authority of His Spirit... NOTHING is going to happen... (Don't Expect)

I'm here to tell you that the Empowerment of the Holy Spirit changed my Life

I want to give you some Key Components to the Holy Spirits Roles- Who he is, Where he is, and What he does

Who, What, Where of the Holy Spirit

- The Holy Spirit is God- "Spirit of Christ" (Romans 8:9)
- Holy Spirit is- "The Spirit of Truth" (John 14:17)
- Holy Spirit is- a "Counselor" who speaks to us (John 14:16)
- Holy Spirit- Lives "with you" and "In You" (John 14:17, Romans 8)
- Holy Spirit is- a "Teacher" and "Reminder" (John 14:25-26)
- Holy Spirit- "Convicts the world of Sin/Guilt" (John 16:7-8)

Read John 16: 5-7 & 12-14

Holy Spirits Roles Continued (John 14-16)

- Holy Spirit: Spirit of Truth that guides us to "all truth" (John 16:12-13)
- Holy Spirit: Reveals Hidden things to us "what is yet to come" (John 16:13-15)
- Holy Spirit: Reveals Secret things to us "taking from what is mine (Christ) and making it known to you."

Most Christians don't tap into Gods power at all...

Here's how simple the Holy Spirit can reveal things to us.

[Short Story of Keys]

God is a Supernatural God so why would we doubt how he can Reveal or Empower our lives

You're going to see that the Promise of the Holy Spirit that Jesus said would come is not just for a select group of Christians

Read Acts 1: 4a & 8

Read Acts 2:1-21

Devotional Questions

- 1.** Read John 14:11-18. Reflect/ Answer the following questions. By faith in Jesus' Name what will we be able to do as Christians? (Look at V.12)
 - 2.** Read John 14:11-18. What does a Counselor do? Where does the Counselor live?
 - 3.** The Holy Spirit is "the Spirit of _____" (V.17)
 - 4.** List the multiple roles of the Holy Spirit. Look in the APP "Sermon Notes" write them down with any reflections you have.
 - 5.** Read John 16:5-7 & 12-14. Do you have a deeper understanding of how the Holy Spirit works within us?
 - 6.** Read Acts 1:4 & 8. "You will receive _____ when the Holy Spirit comes on you."
 - 7.** Read Acts 2:1-21. Record your reflections. You can use the sermon / commentary and alike to reflect on this important passage- have fun!
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May 12th, Made in His Image

Happy Mother's Day to all the women of God!

There is no denying it or getting around it. Every human being born on this earth (past & present) came from a mother's womb; and will so in the future.

As the Psalmists declares:

"For you created my inmost being; you knit me together in my mother's womb. I praise you because I am fearfully and wonderfully

made; your works are wonderful; I know that full well." (Psalm 139:13-14)

You are who you are because God created you. Christians know this truth, yet there are thousands...if not millions who deny this reality. It's sad to say but we live in a world filled with people in an identity crisis. People chose to believe we evolved by chance... a big boom exploded into humanity. Because of this altered reality... you, the human can be who you want to be. Who's to blame?

The classroom, media and scientific fiction has spilled its propaganda into the minds of our children; and sad to say people have now created their own identity. When people do such a thing... they become something or someone else that God never intended them to be.

I am not saying these people are bad people... they have been misled and lied to. We will dive into this topic in this week's sermon. Be sure to listen to... no matter what you may believe.

"For we are God's workmanship, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do."

The word workmanship literally means, "you're a piece of artwork" created by God.

I pray for the blessings and the favor of the Lord on your life!

In Christ,

Rev. Brad Standfest

To Listen to this week's Sermon: "Made in His Image" Go to the Sermon tab here in our APP or use the links to our website or YouTube Channel where you can also listen to our Sermons:

Web: <https://www.almontvineyardchurch.org/media>

You Tube: <https://www.youtube.com/@almontvineyardchurch>

Key Sermon Text

Genesis 1:26-27

<https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Genesis+1%3A26-27&version=NIV>

Psalms 139:13-14

<https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Psalms+139%3A13-14&version=NIV>

Jeremiah 29:11

<https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Jeremiah+29%3A11&version=NIV>

Ephesians 2:10

<https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Ephesians+2%3A10&version=NIV>

Commentary & Comments on Sermon Main Passages

Image of God

A phrase found several times in the book of Genesis (Gen 1:7–27; 5:1–3; 9:6). Distinguishes humankind from the animal and plant kingdoms. Elevates humankind above all terrestrial created things so as to exercise benevolent and ethical stewardship over creation. Image of God language is found in the New Testament as part of the Christian’s responsibility to imitate Christ, who is the image of God par excellence. This realization will give us a profound sense of dignity and significance as we reflect on the excellence of all the rest of God’s creation: the starry universe, the abundant earth, the world of plants and animals, and the angelic kingdoms are remarkable, even magnificent. But we are more like our Creator than any of these things. We are the culmination of God’s infinitely wise and skillful work of creation.

Psalms 139—Praise and Prayer to the God Who Knows All and Is Everywhere

This magnificent Psalm is titled, For the Chief Musician. A Psalm of David. It does not surprise us that such a significant Psalm came from David’s pen, who was “the sweet psalmist of Israel” (2 Samuel 23:1). The Chief Musician is thought by some to be the LORD God Himself, and others suppose him to be a leader of choirs or musicians in

David's time, such as Heman the Singer or Asaph (1 Chronicles 6:33; 16:17, and 25:6).

The greatness of God touches my life

The all-knowing God knows me (1-6)

You have searched me and known me: David prayed to Yahweh (God), understanding that He had personal knowledge of him. Pagans often thought that their gods were hostile or indifferent to men and women; David knew the true God cared to have **searched** and **known** each man and woman.

- It's not just that God knows everything, He knows me.
- It's not just that God is everywhere, He is everywhere with me.
- It's not just that God created everything, He created me.

"Any small thoughts that we may have of God are magnificently transcended by this psalm; yet for all its height and depth it remains intensely personal from first to last." (Kidner)

"All my postures, gestures, practices ... whether I sit, stand, walk, lie; thou searchest and knowest all. Some search but know not; thou dost both." (Trapp)

You know my sitting down and my rising up: David used this proverbial phrase to say that God knew everything about him, even the most everyday things. As Jesus would later say, God knows the number of hairs on our head (Matthew 10:30).

"Even these inconsiderable and casual things are under thy continual notice. I cannot so much as take a seat, or leave it, without being marked by thee." (Clarke)

VanGemeren points out that in the Hebrew grammar, **You know** (139:2) and You covered (139:13) the emphasis is on **You**. "This section continues the emphasis on divine involvement by an emphatic use of 'you'."

You understand my thought afar off: God not only knew the smallest aspects of David's everyday life, He also knew his thoughts. God knows our words before we speak them, and there is nothing of us

hidden from the all-knowing God. As David wrote, You are acquainted with all my ways.

The fact that God knows every word on my tongue should affect my speech. Those who claim to be disciples of Jesus Christ yet have little care for profanity or impurity of speech should remember that God hears and knows every word.

You have hedged me behind and before: The normal sense of a hedge in the Bible is of a protective barrier. God hedged David on every side, so that nothing could come to David unless it first passed through God's permission. What was true for David is true for all who trust in the LORD.

It can be very uncomfortable to know that you are always being watched. We may get nervous if we see video cameras monitoring us at all times. Yet our unease is based in the fact that we doubt the good intentions or good will of those who watch us. The child is comforted that a loving parent watches over them; when we are confident in the love and care of God our Father, His constant knowledge of us is a comfort, not a curse.

And laid Your hand upon me: As with the hedge mentioned in the previous line, this was an expression of God's love and care for David. This was not the hand of oppression, but the hand of grace.

"This statement of omniscience is characteristically vivid and concrete: not formulated as a doctrine but, as befits a psalm, confessed in adoration. This divine knowledge is not merely comprehensive, like that of some receptor that misses nothing, capturing everything alike. It is personal and active." (Kidner)

Such knowledge is too wonderful for me: David understood that God knew him better than he knew himself. This is a wonderful and humble place to be. We sometimes reject what God and His word says about us and our condition; we should recognize that He knows us better than we know ourselves.

Too wonderful for me: "I cannot grasp it. I can hardly endure to think of it. The theme overwhelms me. I am amazed and astounded at it. Such knowledge not only surpasses my comprehension, but even

my imagination.” (Spurgeon)

The all-present God is with me (7-12)

Where can I go from Your Spirit: David considered the truth that God is present everywhere, and there was no corner or dimension of the universe hidden from Him. Heaven isn't too high or hell isn't too low; God is everywhere.

“Here he argueth God’s omniscience from his omnipresence.” (Trapp)

“The psalmist is not trying to evade God, but he further amplifies that God’s knowledge is beyond the ability of humans to grasp. The knowledge or discernment of God can never be limited to any particular place, because God’s sovereignty extends to the whole created universe.” (VanGemeren)

“The Psalm was not written by a Pantheist. The Psalmist speaks of God as a Person everywhere present in creation, yet distinct from creation. In these verses he says, ‘Thy spirit ... thy presence ... thou art there ... thy hand ... thy right hand ... darkness hideth not from thee.’ God is everywhere, but he is not everything.” (Jones, cited in Spurgeon)

The eternal God formed me (13-16)

For You formed my inward parts: The God of all knowledge and constant presence had the care and concern to personally form the child in his **mother’s womb**. It speaks of the fact that God knew David from before his birth, as a child conceived and developing in the womb.

That fact that God knows and cares for children in the womb means that God’s concern for life begins at conception. It means that God’s people have a responsibility to also know and care for children in the womb.

It is common to argue for the moral right to abortion because the mother has the right to do as she pleases with her own body. Psalm 139 demonstrates that God sees another person in the mother’s womb.

I will praise You, for I am fearfully and wonderfully made:

David the Son of Jesse was a remarkable man. He was a shepherd, a special forces soldier, a hero, a poet, and a king. In some respect, here he also added scientist to his accomplishments. With the mind of a trained biologist but the skill of a poet, David declared that he was **fearfully and wonderfully** made.

The workings of the human body are stunning in their design and execution. We know far more than David ever did about how we are **made**, and it should make us full of more awe and praise than David ever had.

“Thy infinite power and wisdom, manifested in the rare and curious structure of man’s body, doth fill me with wonder and astonishment, and with the dread of thy majesty.” (Poole)

“The Psalmist had scarcely peered within the veil which hides the nerves, sinews, and blood-vessels from common inspection; the science of anatomy was quite unknown to him; and yet he had seen enough to arouse his admiration of the work and his reverence for the Worker.” (Spurgeon)

“The greatest miracle in the world is man; in whose very body (how much more in his soul!) are miracles enough (between head and feet) to fill a volume.” (Trapp)

“If we are marvelously wrought upon even before we are born, what shall we say of the Lord’s dealings with us after we quit his secret workshop, and he directs our pathway through the pilgrimage of life? What shall we not say of that new birth which is even more mysterious than the first, and exhibits even more the love and wisdom of the Lord.” (Spurgeon)

And skillfully wrought in the lowest parts of the earth: Here David used the phrase lowest parts of the earth to refer to any mysterious, unseen place. The process of a baby’s formation in a mother’s womb is as unseen and mysterious as that which happens in the lowest parts of the earth.

Skillfully wrought: “Hebrew embroidered; exquisitely composed of bones, and muscles, and sinews, and veins, and arteries, and other parts, all framed with such wonderful skill, that even heathens, upon

the contemplation of all the parts of man's body, and how excellently they were framed, both for beauty and use, have broken forth into pangs of admiration and adoration of the Creator of man, as Galen particularly did." (Poole)

The work of God in fashioning the body of the individual has made some wonder about the presence of birth defects, and what that may mean regarding God's work. We should regard such birth defects as injuries to God's original design, and even as a person may be injured out of the womb, so they can be injured while still in the womb and in the process of formation. Such injuries are the result of the fall and the corruption it introduced into the world, yet still the eye of faith can see the hand of God at work in what defects or injuries He would allow in His providence.

The lowest parts of the earth: "The mysterious receptacle in which the unborn body takes shape and grows is delicately described as 'secret' and likened to the hidden region of the underworld, where are the dead. The point of comparison is the mystery enwrapping both." (Maclaren)

"Much of the formation of our inner man still proceeds in secret; hence the more of solitude the better for us." (Spurgeon)

Your eyes saw my substance, being yet unformed: What David (and others) could not see, God could see perfectly. This is another demonstration of his perfect knowledge and care.

The Puritan commentator John Trapp had a strange statement on the phrase was not hidden: "Aquinas saith that at the resurrection the bodies of the saints shall be so clear and transparent that all the veins, humours, nerves, and bowels shall be seen, as in a glass. It is sure that they are so to God when first formed in the womb."

In Your book they were all written, the days fashioned for me: God's perfect knowledge did not only extend to the past, before David was born. It also extended to the future, and God knew David's days as if they had been written in a book.

"The Lord's writing in the book (cf. Psalm 51:1; Psalm 69:28) refers to God's knowledge and blessing of his child 'all the days' of his life (cf. Ephesians 2:10). His life was written in the book of life, and each of his

days was numbered.” (VanGemeren)

Jeremiah 29:11

Many Christians know and cling to the Jeremiah 29:11 verse by itself. But when we understand its historical and literary context, most will find that it takes on a deeper, more relevant and even more powerful meaning for their lives. Understanding the context of a passage of scripture will help us avoid the human tendency of reading into scripture our own desired meaning and will instead help us draw out of scripture the original meaning intended by God and His prophet.

Historical and Literary Context of Jeremiah 29:11

For historical context, Jeremiah spoke these words to Jews who had been living under the domination of the Egyptian and then Babylonian Empires before eventually being carried into exile from Jerusalem to Babylon. One can only imagine what it would be like to live under the domination of your enemies and then to be forced by those enemies to leave your homeland and settle in a foreign country.

For literary context, we discover from the previous chapter that Jeremiah has just pronounced judgment upon the false prophet Hananiah. Hananiah had told the people that God would break the yoke of Babylon, freeing the people to return home, within two years. While his message undoubtedly sounded appealing to the people, it was a lie and resulted in God removing Hananiah from the face of the Earth (Jeremiah 28:15-17). Instead, Jeremiah tells the people they would live in Babylon for at least 70 years. Therefore, they should settle down, build houses, marry and even pray for the peace and prosperity of the city in which they now found themselves (Jeremiah 29:4-10).

When understood in context, we discover that the words of Jeremiah 29:11 were spoken to people in the midst of hardship and suffering; people who were likely desiring an immediate rescue like the one Hananiah lied about. But God’s response is not to provide immediate escape from the difficult situation. Rather, God promises that He has a plan to prosper them in the midst of their current situation.

Christians facing difficult situations today can take comfort in Jeremiah

29:11 knowing that it is not a promise to immediately rescue us from hardship or suffering, but rather a promise that God has a plan for our lives and regardless of our current situation, He can work through it to prosper us and give us a hope and a future.

Furthermore, Christians can take comfort in knowing that God promises to be there for us in these situations. For in the verses immediately following Jeremiah 29:11, God proclaims through Jeremiah that when you “call on me and come and pray to me... I will listen to you. You will seek me and find me when you seek me with all your heart” (Jeremiah 19:12-13). Grand Canyon University Eric Hernando

Ephesians 2:10

2:10 For we are God’s workmanship, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do. But wait, there’s more. We are God’s workmanship (work of art, masterpiece, new creation). Salvation is something only God can do—it is his powerful, creative work in us. People are re-created into new people, and those new people form a new creation—the church.

The verb “created” is used only of God—for only God can truly create. As he created the universe from nothing, so he creates new, alive, spiritual beings from the old, dead, sinful creatures we were—“So if anyone is in Christ, there is a new creation: everything old has passed away; see, everything has become new!” (2 Corinthians 5:17 NRSV). Then God forms believers into a unified body, his church (see 2:15; 4:24; Colossians 3:10). In Christ Jesus emphasizes the source of this creation, as in 2:6–7—Christ has provided salvation.

GOD’S MASTERPIECES

Why would God do it? Why would he sacrifice his only Son for sinners like us? Ephesians 2:10 gives one reason: so that we could be living, breathing pictures of his grace and mercy. Not only does he change us radically into new creatures, he also wants to use us as display cases for his artistry. According to this verse, believers are his workmanship, his masterpieces. That would be an arrogant claim to make about ourselves if God hadn’t already said it. This statement also carries

some significant implications about how we ought to see ourselves and how we ought to treat one another. God's masterpieces should not lower or degrade themselves with sinful attitudes, words, or behaviors. Nor should we devalue his other works of art: our brothers and sisters in Christ. Treat fellow Christians as God's masterpieces.

That we are God's "workmanship" may be intended as a contrast leading into good works. God's "work" of salvation and new creation overturns our "sinful works" and makes doing "good works" possible. People become Christians through God's undeserved favor (his grace), not as the result of any efforts, abilities, intelligent choices, personal characteristics, or acts of service. Out of gratitude for this free gift, however, believers will seek "to do good works"—to help and serve others with kindness, love, and gentleness. While no action or work we do can help us obtain salvation, God's intention is that our salvation will result in acts of service. We are saved not merely for our own benefit but to serve Christ and build up the church (4:12). This solves the so-called conflict between faith and works. Works do not produce salvation but are the evidence of salvation (see James 1:22; 2:14-26).

The Greek word translated "do" (*peripateo*) means "to walk about in." We move ahead in this life of grace doing the good works which God prepared in advance for us to do. The new life that God gives cannot help but express itself in good works. This does not necessarily mean that God has set up all the specific good works each person will do—although there would be no point arguing against the possibility of our omniscient God doing just that. Just as God planned salvation in Jesus Christ before the foundation of the world, so he planned that believers should do good to others (see 1 Timothy 6:18; Titus 2:7; 1 Peter 2:12).

Resources: Rev. Brad Standfest, *Life Application Study Commentary*, David Guzik, *Psalms*, David Guzik's *Commentaries on the Bible*, Bruce B. Barton and Philip Wesley Comfort, *Ephesians*, *Life Application Bible Commentary*

Sermon Notes:

You are who God says you are... You are who God says you are

And the World answers back... No! You are whoever you want to be...

You are who God says you are

And the World answers back...

No! You originated from the Cosmic Explosion that Evolved into a Human Existence.

We are living a world with an Identity Crisis

Understand without an Identity people Create their Own...

When you create your own Identity... You become something that you're not...

Why do you think there are thousands, if not millions of people who feel Helpless, Hopeless, Worthless & Depressed...

Who told the World that you are something that you're not...

Who told us that?

The Classroom, Media, and Scientific Fiction...

You do realize that if your Faith/Belief is in a Big Bang...

Evolution... Whatever you want to call it...

If you believe that... Then you got here by Chance or Mistake... OR Big Boom... No one can explain...

Allow me now to Correct all of the Chaos & Lies that have manipulated the minds of God's Children.

You are not a Mistake... Nor was Humanity created by Chance or Cosmic Mishap

You my friends were created in the Image of God... With a purpose & a Plan to fulfill...

Here is the Divine Biblical Truth about Humanity...

The Creator of the Universe said this: Let us make man in

our own image and in our likeness. (Gen. 1:26-27, 5:1-3, 9:6)

Dr. Gruden comments on this terminology: “Let us make man in our own image literally means in its original language... Let us make man to be like us and to represent us.”

Gruden goes on to say: “This realization will give us a profound sense of dignity and significance as we reflect on the excellence of all the rest of God’s creation: the starry universe, the abundant earth, the world of plants and animals, and the angelic kingdoms are remarkable, even magnificent. But we are more like our Creator than any of these things. We are the culmination of God’s infinitely wise and skillful work of creation. (Gruden 449 Systematic Theology)

Psalm 139:13-14

God created my inmost being he knit me together in my mother’s womb. I praise you because I am fearfully and wonderfully made. Your works are wonderful, I know them full and well.

Jeremiah 29:11

For I know the plans I have for you,” declares the LORD, “plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future.

You’re the Apple of God’s eye... He loves you!!

I want to close with one last Biblical Truth from God’s Mouth: Ephesians 2:10

For we are God’s workmanship, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do.

- Workmanship= God’s piece of artwork

Family & Friends... You are who God says you are

Devotional Questions

1. Do you feel our society is in an Identity Crisis; how so, and in your opinion, what has led to this?

2. What can you learn and what gives you inspiration from Psalm 139:13-14?

3. Does God have plans and a purpose for your life? Read

Jeremiah 29:11

4. Read Ephesians 2:10... what is remarkable about this passage?

5. What does the word “workmanship” mean? (Look for it in the APP commentary if needed) (Ephesians 2:10)

6. CHALLENGE! Tell someone that needs to hear it that they are God’s piece of artwork.

The Kingdom of God/ Week 2

Opening Monologue

We are still in our Post Resurrection Series. Last week I described the Kingdom of God and how it impacts our Christian lives; how it should at least.

Acts 1:1-3 says this: “In my former book, Theophilus, I wrote about all that Jesus began to do and to teach until the day he was taken up to heaven, after giving instructions through the Holy Spirit to the apostles he had chosen. After his suffering, he presented himself to them and gave many convincing proofs that he was alive. He appeared to them over a period of forty days and spoke about the kingdom of God.”

Jesus spent part of his time, forty days talking to his disciples about the K.O.G. Wow! This indicates to me that the K.O.G must be an important topic to understand. Jesus also mentioned this topic roughly 115 times in the Gospels of Christ. This theology is all about Jesus Christ reigning and ruling as King.

This week we are going to dive much deeper into this topic and God’s Word; to gain a better understanding of what Jesus so importantly talked to his followers about. Understanding this theology will change your Christian life... unlocking all that the Lord has for us as Believers. I don’t know about you, but I want to walk in the authority of Jesus Christ!

“Once, having been asked by the Pharisees when the kingdom of God would come, Jesus replied, ‘The kingdom of God does not come with your careful observation, nor will people say, ‘Here it is,’ or ‘There it is,’ because the kingdom of God is within you.’” (Luke 17:20-21)

Be sure to listen to the sermon and engage in the commentary & devotional questions.

Be blessed!

In Christ,
Rev. Brad Standfest

To Listen to this week’s Sermon: “The Kingdom of God Within/Week 2” Go to the Sermon tab here in our APP or use the links to our website or YouTube Channel where you can also listen to our Sermons:

Web: <https://www.almontvineyardchurch.org/media>

You Tube: <https://www.youtube.com/@almontvineyardchurch>

Key Sermon Text

Luke 17:20-21

<https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Luke+17%3A20-21+&version=NIV>

Matthew 6:9-13

<https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Matthew+6%3A9-13&version=NIV>

Luke 4:18-19

<https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Luke+4%3A18-19&version=NIV>

Matthew 8: 5-13

<https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Matthew+8%3A+5-13&version=NIV>

Kingdom of God Summary PT 2:

THE KINGDOM IN THE REDEMPTIVE STORY

To many thinkers, the kingdom is one of the key ways of understanding the whole Bible story. The creation account is the account of the establishment of a world completely submitted to the reign of God. Humanity is created in God's image, which in the ancient Near East had royal significance, with rulers considered the sons of the gods or their representatives (cf. 2 Sam 7:13-16; Ps 2:7). As such, "Mankind is appointed as God's royal representatives (i.e., sonship) to rule the earth in his place." However, at the fall (Gen 3), due to human disobedience, the authority of God was usurped by Satan and sinful humanity, and evil and sin entered God's creation. Thus, humanity opted for another king and, while God remained King, his realm was violated, and a new ruler emerged.

The story of Israel is the story of God as King calling to himself a people and walking with them. The treaty at Sinai between God and Israel (Exod 20) was a treaty whereby God saved Israel and was established as her King, the law giving the terms of the covenant. The story continues with Israel falling in and out of relationship with God, a cycle of obedience and disobedience. The monarchy was in many ways a rejection of God as King, and it accelerated the idolatry of the nation as it opted for other gods and rejected the one true God. The call of the prophets was a call to honor God as King. They foretold his coming to establish his reign and to restore his world.

The coming of Christ is the decisive moment culminating God's redemption and Israel's story. Jesus came as Messiah (anointed King) to take back God's world from those who usurped his kingdom and so establish the reign of God. Jesus came to call a people to himself, to save them through his death and resurrection, and then to work in and through them for the restoration of God's world. This work is being done by the Spirit through God's people amid a world still broken with the enemies of God working against him and his purposes. Ultimately, Christ will return when the work of God through his people is complete to his satisfaction, and all will be well.

The mission of the kingdom then is a great mission of the restoration of the whole cosmos. As N. T. Wright puts it: "The world is God's great project. Just as a bride and bridegroom plan their wedding day, and work to make it perfect, God is working at bringing his world to perfection and doing what is necessary to make it complete." This

may be termed the “Great Cosmission”⁴⁵ of God in which God is on a mission to transform his cosmos, removing evil’s taint, so that goodness, love, and shalom are established.

At the heart of this glorious project, or Great Cosmission, is the transformation of the apex of creation—humanity—restored to right relationship with the King so that it will be the Imago Dei as God intended it to be. Evangelism, personal conversion, transformation, and discipleship are at the center of the kingdom (the Great Commission). Yet, the mission will always be greater than these central concerns. Those who heed the call of the King and experience conversion and transformation are thrust out into every part of God’s world, whether it be politics, justice, education, health, economics, sport, the arts, science, or business, and seek to reflect God’s ideals and be transforming agents in these spheres. There is nothing in life that stands outside the notion of the kingdom and the work of the King. Central to this, too, is local gatherings of Christians—the church. Each church in its local community is to embody the faith and ethic of the kingdom and bring Christ to the people among whom they are established.

THE CENTRALITY OF CHRIST TO THE KINGDOM OF GOD

The idea of the kingdom of God is rooted in the person of Christ. Just as in Daniel, where one like a son of man is the agent of the kingdom (Dan 7), so it is in the Gospels. Indeed, the coming of the Christ is coterminous with the coming of the kingdom.

Regarding the Old Testament and Judaism, Jesus is the long-awaited Messiah, through whom God establishes his kingdom. Jesus is both the proclaimer and the proclaimed of the kingdom. The present and future dimensions of the kingdom also center on the person of Christ—the kingdom inaugurated in his first coming as a child, the kingdom consummated at his second coming as triumphant King. He continues to exercise his reign through the Spirit from heaven, where he is enthroned as Lord at the right hand of the Father.

The utterly surprising and unforeseen dimension is that he first came, not as the all-conquering Davidic cosmic Son of Man, or Messiah, but as a baby, a carpenter, and then as a caring, healing servant to the

masses who died the most humiliating of deaths. He renounced all direct political and military action. He is the servant found in the Servant Songs of Isaiah (Isa 42:1-7; 49:1-6; 50:4-9; 52:13-53:12; 61:1-3). While he is the Davidic Messiah, and as John and Paul would say, the divine pre-existent God (John 1:1; Phil 2:6), he came encased in the form of a slave rather than the expected triumphant Davidic figure.

Finally, it is important to recognize the significance of the cross, resurrection, and Pentecost events to the kingdom. In these events, the kingdom is fully revealed in suffering and death and God's power to overcome death, and its extension, was set in place as his power was released to draw all humanity into his realm (Pentecost). This act not only saves the world but demonstrates the nature of true power. It is found not at the end of a sword, but in love and embrace, seen in the pattern of the cross: selflessness, servanthood, sacrifice, and suffering.

THE SUBVERSIVE NATURE OF THE KINGDOM'S COMING

The kingdom did not arrive as the Jews expected. Most Jews expected the Messiah and the kingdom to arrive at the climax of history, the end of the age. Instead, the kingdom arrived in the middle of time.

It was inaugurated in an unexpected way. The Gospels tell of a King who comes as a baby and not as a triumphant military and political ruler. This is made even more significant in that the womb of a woman in the ancient world was a place of extraordinary danger due to mortality rates.

The King established his rule in an unexpected way. Jesus renounced the use of coercive and political force or violence. Rather, he opted to identify himself with the servant of Isaiah, ministering as a servant and suffering and dying on the cross.

The death and resurrection of the King were unexpected. The vicarious death of the Messiah was not anticipated in Judaism. Christians tend to read passages like Isaiah 53 and find it incomprehensible that Jews did not see this and understand Jesus. However, political and militaristic notions of a victorious messiah, or another figure who ended suffering, dominated Jewish thought. Jesus suffered and died at

the hands of the gentiles, those he was expected to destroy. The manner of his death by crucifixion was also a great surprise; Jews considered anyone hung on a tree (or cross) cursed (cf. Deut 21:22; Gal 3:13). While there was a hope of the resurrection of the dead, the idea of a messiah dying and rising was too much for many Jews. Further, the notion of incarnation was problematic as it challenged the exclusivity of Yahweh.

It was also a surprise that the kingdom did not come for Israel alone and that its goal was not the subjugation of the gentiles to Yahweh and Yahwism. The Jews expected the messiah would establish Israel as supreme and Judaism would be the door to relationship with God. However, Jesus came with an adapted agenda. He certainly sought to restore Israel spiritually. But he called all people to repentance and faith in him, Jews included. He called for a breaking down of the barriers that divided humanity and a bringing together of the whole world into relationship with God. The basis of this was not the Jewish law, but love and unity around his person.

The mission of the kingdom was also a surprise. It was expected that God would subdue his enemies with power, and they would flock to Jerusalem to hear the law and bring the wealth of the nations. Anyone who wished to be saved needed to become a Jew. This meant submitting to the boundary markers of Judaism—exclusive belief in Yahweh, circumcision, Sabbath and other calendric rituals, ritual purity, kosher food, and synagogue attendance. They did not expect that Jew and gentile alike would be justified purely by repentance, faith, and following Jesus. Mission was primarily centripetal, or attraction. Now, mission is also centrifugal: believers are radiating out into all society serving, sharing the message, and giving themselves in service for the world.

The kingdom's coming was a reversal of many of Israel's expectations. It is a veiled kingdom, a subversive kingdom, an upside-down kingdom—a kingdom of love, service, suffering, humility, and sacrifice retaining the element of human volition as the kingdom is proclaimed.

Sermon Passages Commentary:

Luke 17:20-37/ JESUS TEACHES ABOUT THE COMING OF THE

KINGDOM OF GOD

Here Luke placed a series of Jesus' teachings about the kingdom of God in order to present a concise summary of it. This passage, plus 21:15–38, parallels the Olivet discourse of Matthew 24 and Mark 13. In answering the Pharisees' question about the kingdom, Jesus pointed out that the kingdom was already “among” them (17:21 NLT). With his ministry, Jesus had already inaugurated the kingdom of God. He was preaching to the poor, healing the sick, and freeing people from the grip of evil. The kingdom of God was already among them as manifest in Jesus' teaching and miracles.

But Jesus also warned his disciples (17:22) that the complete realization of the kingdom of God was still in the future. They had to be prepared, for without warning, the kingdom would come. Jesus cited the sudden judgment that fell on the people of Noah's time and the inhabitants of Sodom and Gomorrah as vivid examples of the coming judgment of God.

The way to be prepared for this coming judgment is to give away your life to Jesus—and in service to others—instead of centering your efforts around yourself (17:33). The kingdom of God is already here—in the spread of the gospel throughout the world. Prepare yourself for the full revelation of the kingdom of God by allying yourself with it now.

17:20-21 Once Jesus was asked by the Pharisees when the kingdom of God was coming, and he answered, “The kingdom of God is not coming with things that can be observed; nor will they say, ‘Look, here it is!’ or ‘There it is!’ For, in fact, the kingdom of God is among you.” Up to this point in the chapter, Jesus was explaining how his followers should live. From 17:20 to 18:8, as a response to a question brought by the Pharisees, Jesus discussed when the kingdom of God was coming. The Pharisees were expecting an altogether different kind of kingdom than what Jesus would bring. They may have thought, since Jesus had claimed to be the Messiah, that he would soon inaugurate his kingdom. They may also have been testing him since they had not seen him doing what a king would do to prepare himself for a takeover. They wondered when this kingdom he kept talking about was going to arrive.

The Pharisees did not understand that the kingdom of God had already arrived with Jesus. Jesus had made this clear in 11:20. In 19:11–27, he will explain that the full expression of God’s kingdom is yet to come (and is still to come). These are the days “between”—the kingdom has arrived in Jesus Christ, yet it has not arrived in its fullness. Believers are waiting for it, as Jesus has already described (12:35–48), knowing that it could come at any moment. So Jesus’ words here explain the nature of the kingdom now.

Jesus explained that the kingdom is not coming with things that can be observed; in other words, no one can project when it will come by looking for supernatural signs. Nor will anyone be able to point to anything that proves that the kingdom is here or there. The kingdom of God was among the people because Jesus was among them. Some translations say, “The kingdom of God is within you.” When Jesus returned to heaven, the kingdom remained and continues today, with the work of God’s Spirit in people’s lives and in relationships. Still, today, believers must resist looking to institutions or programs for evidence of the progress of God’s kingdom. Instead, they should look for what God is doing in people’s hearts. Rather than looking for signs or trying to figure out timetables, each person should look into his or her own heart to be sure to be ready. When the kingdom arrives, will you be ushered in or sent away?

Matthew 6:9-13/ JESUS TEACHES ABOUT THE LORD’S PRAYER

6:9 “In this manner, therefore, pray: Our Father in heaven, hallowed be Your name.” This prayer is called the Lord’s Prayer because Jesus gave it to the disciples to pray, as well as to be a pattern for their prayers. Jesus did not give this prayer as an incantation to be recited over and over—that would render it as ineffective as the “babblings” of the pagans (6:7). Jesus said, “in this manner, therefore, pray.” In other words, this is how I want you to pray—praise God (6:9), intercede for his work in the world (6:10), ask for provision of individual daily needs (6:11), and request help in daily struggles (6:12–13). Jesus gave the prayer to his disciples; therefore, those who follow Christ should pray it as well. The first person plural pronouns indicate that the believers could pray it corporately. The

pattern of praise, intercession, and request helps believers understand the nature and purpose of their personal prayers in their relationship with their Father.

The phrase “our Father in heaven” indicates that God is majestic and holy; he transcends everything on earth. But he is also personal and loving. The first line of this model prayer is a statement of praise and a commitment to “hallow,” or honor, God’s holy name. Christians, who bear the holy name of Christ, must be responsible to “hallow” him in every aspect of their lives. These words remind us that God wants to hear and listen as a loving Father, but that coming to him is an awesome privilege. We must enter the King’s throne room respectfully. When we pray for God’s name to be “hallowed,” we pray that this world will honor his name, and we look forward to Christ’s return when that will be a reality.

6:10 “Your kingdom come.” The phrase **“Your kingdom come”** refers to God’s spiritual reign, not Israel’s freedom from Rome. God announced his kingdom in the covenant with Abraham (8:11; Luke 13:28), and pious Jews were still waiting for it. Jesus’ followers recognize that the kingdom began with his coming to earth. Matthew’s readers understood the kingdom to be present in believers’ hearts as Christ reigned there (Luke 17:21). To say “your kingdom come” is to pray that more and more people will enter the kingdom. It also reaffirms belief that one day all evil will be destroyed, that God will establish the new heaven and earth, and that his glory will be known to all the nations (Psalm 110:1; Revelation 21:1).

“Your will be done on earth as it is in heaven.” Praying your will be done does not imply resignation to fate; rather, it is a prayer that God’s perfect purpose will be accomplished in this world (on earth) as it already is in heaven’s throne room. The phrase “on earth as it is in heaven” could apply to the three prior requests. Each previous request—that God’s name be hallowed, that his kingdom come, and that his will be done—desires that these will take place on earth while looking forward to complete fulfillment when Christ returns.

ONE FOOT IN HEAVEN, ONE ON EARTH

How does God accomplish his will on earth? He does it largely through people willing to do it.

We must not make this prayer as an abstract wish. Without personal commitment, the prayer would mean, "Let someone else do your will, or just get it done miraculously. I have other business today." When you make this prayer, you're saying, "I'll do it, Lord. Lead me, guide me, and give me the shovel (or whatever I need) to get it done."

6:11 "Give us this day our daily bread." These last two (verses 11 and 12) are requests for personal needs. "Bread" refers to food in general, although it also could refer to spiritual "food." We must trust God daily to provide what he knows we need. The word "daily" suggests that we should not worry about what God already knows we need (6:8). The adjective translated "daily" (*epiousios*) occurs only here in the New Testament and carries several possible meanings: (1) "for the day," perhaps recalling the daily provision of manna in the wilderness (Exodus 16:15-26); (2) "necessary," what I need for today in order to survive, "sufficient for today"; (3) "for the coming day," pointing to the coming kingdom.

Believers must trust God for provision and not worry. That God "gives" daily bread does not negate people's responsibility to work and earn the food they eat. Instead, it acknowledges that God is Sustainer and Provider. It is a misconception to think that we provide for our needs ourselves. God gives us our ability to work and earn money to buy our food.

6:12 "And forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors." The word "debts" is probably a literal rendering of an Aramaic word, the language Jesus used in preaching. It means "sin," picturing sin as something that requires reconciliation with God. Some have taken this sentence to mean that God's forgiveness of our sins is dependent on our forgiveness of others' sins against us; however, the rest of Scripture shows us that no one can earn God's forgiveness. The meaning, therefore, focuses on the true repentance of a believer who understands the greatness of the forgiveness that he or she has received. This believer willingly extends such forgiveness to others for their wrongs. The flip side of this thought reveals the selfishness of a person who seeks God's forgiveness yet willfully refuses to forgive others. Jesus expands on this in 6:14-15.

6:13 “And do not lead us into temptation but deliver us from the evil one.” God doesn’t lead us into temptation, for he does not tempt people to do evil (James 1:13). The Greek word translated “temptation” (peirasmos) does not mean “enticement to do evil” but “testing.” Sometimes God allows his people to be “tested” by temptation. But this testing is never without a purpose: God is always working to refine his people, teach them to depend on him, and strengthen their character to be more like him. How he does this differs in every person’s life.

Why would Jesus encourage us to ask God to avoid tempting or testing us? There are some interesting parallels between this prayer and Jesus’ prayer in the Garden of Gethsemane (26:36–46). The Lord’s Prayer affirms the will of God (“your will be done”), then asks for relief and delivery from trials. In the garden, Jesus asked the Father to remove the cup of trial while immediately declaring his willingness to cooperate with his Father’s will. Soon after, when Jesus discovered the disciples asleep, he encouraged them to pray not to fall into temptation. Jesus knew, however, that they would indeed fall and fail within moments.

The end of the Lord’s Prayer reminds us of the importance of testing, even though we seldom desire it. Our prayer should be: “And lead us not into further testing even while you are leading us out of evil.” Jesus both taught and modeled a freedom in prayer that dared to ask almost anything, fully knowing that the Father will do what is best.

Jesus wanted his followers to place their trust in God during trying times and to pray for deliverance from Satan (the evil one) and his deceit. All Christians struggle with temptation.

Sometimes it is so subtle that we don’t even realize what is happening to us. God has promised: “No testing has overtaken you that is not common to everyone. God is faithful, and he will not let you be tested beyond your strength, but with the testing he will also provide the way out so that you may be able to endure it” (1 Corinthians 10:13 NRSV). Believers who pray these words realize their sinful nature and their need to depend on God in the face of temptation. Some scholars suggest that these words may also include prayer regarding the

coming final conflict between God and Satan. If so, the believers' prayers are that they may be spared from the trials surrounding it.

Luke 4:18-19 3. Jesus reads from Isaiah 61:1-2 (18-19)

The Spirit of the LORD is upon Me: The one speaking in this Isaiah passage is the Anointed One; the Messiah, the Christ.

Anointed Me: The word "anoint" means to rub or sprinkle on; apply an unguent, ointment, or oily liquid to. Persons in the Old Testament were often literally anointed with oil. For example, priests were anointed for their special service to the LORD (Exodus 28:41). Literal oil was applied, but as a sign of the Holy Spirit upon their life and service. The oil on the head was only the outward representation of the real, spiritual work going on inside them.

He has anointed Me to ...: In this prophecy, the Messiah announced that He came heal the fivefold damage that sin brings. Sin does great damage, so there must be a great work of redemption.

- **To preach the gospel to the poor:** Sin impoverishes, and the Messiah brings good news to the poor.
- **To heal the brokenhearted:** Sin breaks hearts, and the Messiah has good news for brokenhearted.
- **To proclaim liberty to the captives:** Sin makes people captive and enslaves them, and the Messiah comes to set them free.
- **Recovery of sight to the blind:** Sin blinds us, and the Messiah comes to heal our spiritual and moral blindness.
- **To set at liberty those who are oppressed:** Sin oppresses its victims, and the Messiah comes to bring **liberty** to the **oppressed**.

Thankfully, Jesus didn't come to only preach deliverance or even to only bring deliverance. Jesus came to be deliverance for us. "Christ was the great enemy of bonds. He was the lover and the light of liberty." (Morrison)

To proclaim the acceptable year of the LORD: This seems to describe the Old Testament concept of the year of Jubilee (Leviticus 25:9-15 and following). In the year of Jubilee slaves were set free, debts cancelled, and things set to a new start.

"Jesus came to preach the Lord's acceptable year, a reference to the

year of Jubilee. It is just possible that the reason Jesus returned to His hometown was because it was Jubilee year.” (Pate)

Where Jesus stopped reading from Isaiah helps show us the nature of prophecy and its relation to time. The Isaiah passage goes on to describe what Jesus would do at His second coming (and the day of vengeance of our God, Isaiah 61:2). This is a 2,000-year-old comma between the two phrases.

Jesus teaches on Isaiah 61:1-2

And sat down: As Jesus sat, He prepared to teach instead of returning to His seat among the congregation. Everyone wondered how He would explain what He had just read.

Today this Scripture is fulfilled in your hearing: With these words Jesus answered two questions.

- “Whom did Isaiah write of?” Jesus answered, “Isaiah wrote of Me.”
- “When will this come to pass?” Jesus answered, “Isaiah wrote of now.”

Marveled at the gracious words which proceeded out of His mouth: This seems to mean that Jesus continued to speak on the theme just mentioned, and He did it with words that were literally full of grace. They sensed the goodness and grace of God in the announcement that the ministry of the Messiah was now present.

Is this not Joseph’s son? The response of Jesus following shows that this was not an impartial comment. After their initial amazement, they then began to resent that someone so familiar (Joseph’s son) could speak with such grace and claim to be the fulfillment of such remarkable prophecies.

Matthew 8:5-13 Jesus heals a centurion’s servant

Jesus is approached by a Roman centurion (5-6)

When Jesus had entered Capernaum: Matthew 4:13 tells us this is where Jesus lived; He came and dwelt in Capernaum.

A centurion came to Him: The centurion was obviously a Gentile,

because a centurion was an officer in the Roman army. Most every Jew under Roman occupation felt a reason to hate this centurion, yet he came to a Jewish teacher for help. Significantly, he came not for a selfish reason, but on behalf of his servant.

Whenever the New Testament mentions a centurion (there are at least seven), it presents them as honorable, good men.

This centurion had an unusual attitude towards his slave. Under Roman law a master had the right to kill his slave, and it was expected that he would do so if the slave became ill or injured to the point where he could no longer work.

Pleading with Him: This shows that the centurion did not make a casual request. Matthew describes him as **pleading with Jesus** on behalf of his servant.

“He seeks a cure but does not prescribe to the Lord how or where he shall work it; in fact, he does not put his request into words, but pleads the case, and lets the sorrow speak.” (Spurgeon)

The centurion’s understanding of Jesus’ spiritual authority (7-9)

I will come and heal him: Jesus did not hesitate to go to the centurion’s house, and we half wish the centurion would have allowed Him. It was completely against Jewish custom for a Jew to enter a Gentiles’ house; yet it was not against God’s law.

The centurion sensed this when he said, **“Lord, I am not worthy that You should come under my roof”**; most Jews believed that a Gentile home was not worthy of them, and the centurion supposed that a great rabbi and teacher like Jesus would consider his home unworthy.

The centurion also showed great sensitivity to Jesus, in that he wanted to spare Jesus the awkward challenge of whether or not to enter a Gentile’s house-as well as the time and trouble of travel. He didn’t know Jesus well enough to know that He would not feel awkward in the least; but his consideration of Jesus in this situation was impressive. In his concern for both his servant and for Jesus, this centurion was an others-centered person.

But only speak a word, and my servant will be healed: The centurion fully understood that Jesus' healing power was not some sort of magic trick that required the magician's presence. Instead he knew Jesus had true authority, and could command things to be done and completed outside His immediate presence.

The centurion showed great faith in Jesus' word. He understood that Jesus can heal with His word just as easily as with a touch.

"This means that the centurion's words presuppose an understanding of the Roman military system ... A footsoldier who disobeyed would not be defying a mere centurion but the emperor, Rome itself, with all its imperial majesty and might." (Carson)

For I also am a man under authority, having soldiers under me: The centurion also knew about the military chain of command, and how the orders of one in authority were unquestioningly obeyed. He saw that Jesus had at least that much authority.

"As the authority of the Caesars flowed through his own yielded life, so the authority of God over diseases, demons, and all else would flow through Christ's." (Meyer)

Jesus praises the centurion's faith and heals his servant (10-13)

When Jesus heard it, He marveled: The man's understanding of Jesus' spiritual authority made Jesus marvel. His simple confidence in the ability of Jesus' mere word to heal showed a faith that was free of any superstitious reliance on merely external things. This was truly great faith, worthy of praise.

Assuredly, I say to you, I have not found such great faith, not even in Israel: Jesus considered the faith of this Gentile centurion—a living symbol of Jewish oppression—and thought it greater than any faith He had seen among the people of Israel.

As a political entity, there was no Israel; there was only a covenant people descended from Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. Yet Jesus still called them Israel.

Many will come from east and west, and sit down with

Abraham: The fact that such faith was present in a Gentile caused Jesus to announce that there would be Gentiles in the kingdom of heaven. They will even sit down to dinner with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob!

This was a radical idea to many of the Jewish people in Jesus' day; they assumed that this great Messianic Banquet would have no Gentiles, and that all Jews would be there. Jesus corrected both mistaken ideas.

These few words of Jesus tell us a little something of what heaven is like.

- It is a place of rest; we **sit down** in heaven.
- It is a place of good company to sit with; we enjoy the friendship of **Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob** in heaven.
- It is a place with **many** people; Jesus said that many will come into heaven.
- It is a place with people from all over the earth; **from east and west** they will come to heaven.
- It is a certain place; Jesus said **many will come**, and when Jesus says it will happen, it will happen.

“But ye shall hear those loved voices again; ye shall hear those sweet voices once more, ye shall yet know that those whom ye loved have been loved by God. Would not that be a dreary heaven for us to inhabit, where we should be alike unknowing and unknown? I would not care to go to such a heaven as that. I believe that heaven is a fellowship of the saints, and that we shall know one another there.”
(Spurgeon)

Resources: Rev. Brad Standfest, Life Application Study Commentary, David Guzik, Luke, David Guzik's Commentaries on the Bible, David Guzik, Bruce B. Barton, Matthew, Life Application Bible Commentary, Mark J. Keown, Discovering the New Testament: An Introduction to Its Background, Theology, and Themes: The Gospels & Acts

Sermon Notes:

I want to remind you that After Jesus' Resurrection the word of God says Jesus spent 40 days with his Disciples talking about the KOG

The KOG Theology is a Big Topic amongst Theologians and Scholars...
(Look in APP for more descriptions)

To make the Biblical Truth about the KOG as simple as possible in the N.T. Here is what I would say:

The Kingdom of God is Jesus Christ Reigning & Ruling as King; in heaven and on earth (Now)...The KOG will be fulfilled in fullness at the Second Coming of Christ.

Let me give you 2 Important Facts about the KOG

1.The KOG has arrived in Jesus Christ

Jesus said: “If I drive out demons by the finger of God, then the kingdom of God has come to you” ... also translated “the kingdom has arrived.” Luke 11:20

2.The KOG is Within You... Christians

Luke 17:20-21 Once, having been asked by the Pharisees when the kingdom of God would come, Jesus replied, “The kingdom of God does not come with your careful observation, nor will people say, ‘Here it is,’ or ‘There it is,’ because the kingdom of God is within you.”

We get a clearer understanding of this in the Lord’s Prayer:

Matthew 6:9-13 This, then, is how you should pray: “Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name, your kingdom come, your will be done on earth as it is in heaven. Give us today our daily bread. Forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors. And lead us not into temptation but deliver us from the evil one.

Here are some Important Biblical Truths about the Lord’s Prayer:

- “Your Kingdom come”- May the power of the King (Jesus) come upon us/situation
- “On earth as it is in heaven”- May the glory of heaven come to earth

(Perfect/Sinless Heaven)

- “Deliver us from the evil one”- Rescue us from Satan’s strongholds

Because we live in a fallen world, we are all subject to Sickness, Disease, Sin, Death, Chaos & Troubles... (No getting around this)

At any given time, Jesus Christ can overturn the Satanic curse inflicted on us.

The Spirit of God lives in us as the KOG lives within.

We must use the Authority we have in Christ

Here’s the Truth: If Salvation from Christ still saves people than Miracles still happen

Let me share with you the KOG Proclamation from Jesus’ mouth: Read Luke 4:18-19

Guess what Jesus did after making the KOG Proclamation?

Jesus drove out a Demons and then starts Healing people all over the place (Luke 4:31-44) – You can Read this

Jesus was immediately showing his Disciples & the World who was King.

Let me share this Scholarly Explanation with you:

“In the Ancient & Biblical times Kings who ruled Kingdoms issued what is called Edicts. Edicts announced a new regulation, law or order that bound the citizens in the jurisdiction to follow. A Biblical example of this is found in Daniel 6:1-28 when King Darius issued a decree an (edict) that no one should worship any god or king except Darius... this led to Daniel being thrown into the lion’s den. Likewise, in the N.T. Jesus announced he is the Messiah... The King over the world... and what he says, or wills occurs- it happens.” (LA Church Bible Commentary, Keown Commentaries of the N/T.)

Read Matthew 8: 5-13

Christians if we don’t use the Authority we have in Christ & His Spirit then nothing is going to happen...

This is not Rocket Science & yet millions of Christians don’t

understand or operate their lives in this fashion...

I can't guarantee anything when I pray... I trust it to the King's control

Devotional Questions

1. We know that the Holy Spirit is within us (Romans 8:9-11)

What else is "within us"? Read Luke 17:20-21

2. What is the significance of Jesus teaching his disciples how to pray in the Lord's Prayer? Read Matthew 6:5-13

3. What is the meaning of the phrase "Your kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven" in the Lord's Prayer? Matthew 6:10

4. What was on Jesus and what did he say he came to do? Read the KOG Proclamation in Luke 4:18-19

5. What did Jesus start to do after he announced his Authority & Kingship? Read Luke 4:31-44

6. What about this story surprises you or builds your confidence... or both? Read Matthew 8:5-13

The Kingdom of God Within

Opening Monologue

We are in a Sermon Series surrounding the Post Resurrection Commission by Jesus to all Believers. If you haven't been following along, I would highly encourage you to listen to the last several sermons and engage in the APP to have the biggest impact on your life.

Do you know what happened 40 days after Jesus' Resurrection? He hung out with some of his closest friends and had some deep discussions. Luke tells us: "After his suffering, he showed himself to these men and gave many convincing proofs that he was alive. He appeared to them over a period of forty days and spoke about the kingdom of God." (Acts 1:3)

Jesus spoke to his followers for 40 days after his resurrection... he spoke to them about the kingdom of God... did you ever see that before? Some Christians think this means Jesus spoke to them about heaven. That makes sense on the surface... but that is not what the Kingdom of God is about. (BTW: we go way deeper in this week's sermon) The Kingdom of God is about Jesus' authority to reign and rule his creation as King. In other words, he spoke to them about his authority over the dominion of darkness and the "prince of this world" (Satan). (John 12:31) **(Please take time to Read the APP on the KOG- very powerful)**

As we have discussed in the Great Commission over the last several weeks. Jesus sent us to do his work in the world... and to spread the Good News. In order to be effective Christians, we must tap into the Holy Spirit Christ has given us to witness. The empowerment of the Spirit is crucial to overpowering the Satanic strongholds people are bound by. Jesus said this about the Kingdom of God: "Once, having been asked by the Pharisees when the kingdom of God would come, Jesus replied, "The kingdom of God does not come with your careful observation, nor will people say, here it is, or there it is, because the kingdom of God is within you." (Luke 17:20-21)

We have the KOG living within us! It's the most powerful witnessing tool we could ever have. Jesus doesn't need any more lackadaisical Christians waving their pom poms- yikes!

Apostle Paul said this: 1 Corinthians 2:4-5 "My message and my preaching were not with wise and persuasive words, but with a demonstration of the Spirit's power, so that your faith might not rest on men's wisdom, but on God's power."

Blessings in Christ,

Rev. Brad Standfest

To Listen to this week's Sermon: "The Kingdom of God Within" Go to the Sermon tab here in our APP or use the links to our website or YouTube Channel where you can also listen to our Sermons:

Web: <https://www.almontvineyardchurch.org/media>

You Tube: <https://www.youtube.com/@almontvineyardchurch>

Key Sermon Text

Matthew 28:18-20

<https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Matthew+28%3A18-20&version=NIV>

Luke 20:20 <https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Luke+20%3A20&version=NIV>

Mark 16:15-18

<https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Mark+16%3A15-18+&version=NIV>

Acts 1:1-8

<https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Acts+1%3A1-8+&version=NIV>

Luke 11:14-20

<https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Luke+11%3A14-20&version=NIV>

Luke 17:20-21

<https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Luke+17%3A20-21&version=NIV>

1 Corinthians 2:4-5

<https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=1+Corinthians+2%3A4-5&version=NIV>

Kingdom of God Summary:

OLD TESTAMENT

The Gospels introduce the kingdom without explanation, suggesting that the kingdom of God was a well-known concept. Yet, surprisingly, the actual phrase “kingdom of God” is absent from the Hebrew Old Testament. Yet, on closer examination, the idea of God’s kingdom saturates the Scriptures and Jewish thought.

“The kingdom of the LORD” is used in 1 Chronicles 28:5 and 2

Chronicles 13:8, of Israel. However, in Psalm 103:19, “his kingdom” is used of God’s reign in heaven. Similarly, in Daniel 6:26, “his kingdom” is used of God’s indestructible and eternal reign. “Yours is the kingdom, O LORD, and you are exalted as head above all.” The Scriptures and their history are saturated with the notion of human kingdoms, reign, and kingship. This is seen in the Old Testament (e.g., Gen 10:10; Num 32:33; Deut 3:4; Josh 13:12; 1 Sam 10:18; 1 Kgs 4:24; Esther 1:2) and in other Jewish literature where kingship is everywhere.¹⁰ Israel’s whole history was enmeshed in a world of kings and kingdoms from the time of Abraham (e.g., Gen 14:1-3), so much so that Israel cried out for a king “to judge us like all the nations” (1 Sam 8:5). These include the Egyptians (Pharaohs), Assyrians, Babylonians, Persians and Medes, Macedonians and Greeks (esp. Alexander), and the Romans (Caesar and the Roman Empire). In the ancient world, a king had all authority over his kingdom and subjects, so kingship could be a positive or a negative concept, depending on the relationship between the king and his kingdom. It is fair to say that kingship was the dominant political model in the world of the Bible. Another significant point in the Old Testament understanding of kingship was the promise to David of an eternal kingdom in 2 Samuel 7:12-16. God promises to establish a kingdom through David’s son, and he will build God’s house. He will be to him as a father to a son. David’s house and his kingdom will endure forever. (Fulfilled in Jesus Christ)

JESUS AND THE KINGDOM OF GOD

The human concept of kingship in Jesus’ parables, such as the wedding banquet (Matt 22:1-14), is evident. It is also seen in various other instances (Matt 4:8; 24:7; Mark 6:23; 13:8; Luke 4:5; 21:10). The notion of a supreme king was familiar to Jesus’ listeners, as the Roman world had Caesar and Israel was subject to him. However, if one dynamic defined the ideal of kingship to Jews at the time, it was an idealization of the Davidic reign.

The kingdom of God can be defined as the “governing activity of God as ruler; the time and sphere in which God’s kingly power will hold sway.” This definition suggests that the kingdom is primarily what God does, and secondarily, the sphere in which God’s reign is experienced and accepted.

A. M. Hunter describes the kingdom as “a power breaking into this world from the beyond, through the direct action of the living God. It is God invading history for us men [and women] and for our salvation.”

The kingdom has come in Christ. A close analysis gives evidence that Dodd is correct to say that the kingdom of God has come in the person and ministry of Christ and is continued through the work of the Spirit. This is seen in Matthew 12:28, where Jesus says, “But if it is by the Spirit of God that I drive out demons, then the kingdom of God has come [aorist; ephthasen] upon you” (NIV).³⁹ Similarly, in Luke 17:21 (NIV), Jesus states that “the kingdom of God is in your midst” (or within [Greek: en], in the sense of “within your purview”).

This present dimension is also indicated in Jesus’ statement: “From the days of John the Baptist until now [that is the point of Jesus’ speaking], the kingdom of heaven has been subjected to violence, and violent people have been raiding it” (Matt 11:12 NIV). This states that the kingdom has been growing from the time of John’s ministry, a point strongly reinforced by the mustard seed parable, which speaks of a seed planted and growing (Mark 4:30–32; and par.). It also points to the pivotal role of John the Baptist in the coming of the kingdom in Christ. The human dynamic in the advancement of the kingdom, seen in the current age of the Spirit and the church, is seen in the second part of this statement: “and violent people have been raiding it.” The transition from John the Baptist’s ministry to Jesus’ ministry points to a new order of things, the end of the pre-kingdom phase (“the law and the prophets”), and the beginning of the kingdom phase of history marked by the arrival of the King (Matt 11:11–14; Luke 16:16).

The eschaton (the end) then is active on earth in the person and ministry of Jesus. The heavens have been ripped open, and God has intervened dramatically, anointing his Son as Servant King with his Spirit, and releasing him to do the work of the King. The miracles of Jesus are “the kingdom of God in action.” This does not imply that the kingdom of God is completed; rather, it is inaugurated in the life and ministry of Christ. Beasley-Murray considers the present dimension of the kingdom “unambiguously plain,” and believers should not look for ways to reinterpret it. Hence, an inaugurated eschatology is the best way of understanding the kingdom.

The kingdom is extended by Christ through the work of the Spirit in his people. Taking the entire New Testament into account, Christ remains present through the work of his Spirit (Rom 8:9). By his Spirit, God exercises his reign, often through the people of God who believe and are filled and led by the Spirit to live lives through which the kingdom is seen and extended. Thus, the body of Christ continues the earthly ministry of the person of Jesus. This idea is seen in John's theology of the Paraclete (John 14-16), in Luke's theology of the Spirit, in Jesus, through the early church in Acts (see Acts 1:8; 2), and in Paul's theology of spiritual gifts and fruit working in the body of Christ (e.g., Rom 12; 1 Cor 12-14; Eph 4). The appeals for mission, which climax each Gospel and launch Acts, strongly indicate the role of the Spirit in mission (Matt 28:18-20; Mark 16:15-20, cf. 13:10; Luke 24:46-49; John 20:22; Acts 1:8). The parables of growth, such as the mustard seed parable, the parable of the sower, and the parable of the seed, all point to this same thing.

The kingdom will be consummated at some future point at Christ's return. Jesus taught about a point in history where he (the King) will return to enact the ultimate overthrow of evil and the establishment of the kingdom in its fullness (see especially Matt 24-25, cf. Matt 26:29; Mark 14:25; Luke 22:16-18). Some argue that Jesus believed the kingdom of God would come in all its fullness during the disciples' lifetime. This seems to be indicated in Matthew 16:28 (and parr.): "Truly, I say to you, there are some standing here who will not taste death until they see the Son of Man coming in his kingdom" (see also Mark 9:1; Matt 16:28; Luke 9:27). However, while this is a possible interpretation, it most likely points to the transfiguration that follows and, more pointedly, the coming resurrection at which time the disciples will realize who Jesus is—the King! It could also point to Pentecost, when the power of Christ filled believers purified by the redemptive death and resurrection of Christ. This seems particularly likely since death and resurrection are strongly indicated in the context (see Matt 16:23-27; 17:1-13).

One possible dimension of the prayer, "Your kingdom come" (Matt 6:10; Luke 11:2), is that it is a prayer for the full coming of the kingdom. It probably also has realized dimensions, asking God for the extension of the kingdom in the present (i.e., for the kingdom to come and grow). The subjects of the King are to be constantly ready for his

return, watching for the signs and seeking to be constantly vigilant (Matt 24-25).

In effect, the establishment of the kingdom is both an event and a process. As an event, it has a beginning point when the King comes. As a process, it begins with the ministry of Christ in the interim period, continues through the ministry of the Spirit in his people and world, and culminates with the return of Christ and the events that surround it. However, the full experience of the kingdom remains a future hope, when the Son will return and make all things right.

Commentary: THE PROMISE OF THE HOLY SPIRIT / ACTS 1:1-5

The book of Acts, written by Luke, picks up where Luke's Gospel left off, providing details of the birth and early years of the church that Jesus had promised to build. Together the two books, Luke and Acts, form a seamless account of how the followers of Jesus "turned ... the world upside down" (Acts 17:6 NLT) by taking the good news of the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ "to the ends of the earth" (Acts 1:8 NLT).

Before documenting this rapid spread of the gospel, however, Luke asserted two important truths in what serves as an introduction to the book of Acts: (1) the indisputable fact of Christ's resurrection; and (2) the indispensable presence of the Holy Spirit. Apart from these two strong foundations, the church would be without hope and without power. What was true in the first century is still true today.

1:1-2 Dear Theophilus: In my first book I told you about everything Jesus began to do and teach until the day he ascended to heaven after giving his chosen apostles further instructions from the Holy Spirit. Luke's opening statement ties this volume to his first book, the Gospel of Luke. That book was also addressed to Theophilus, whose name means "one who loves God." While some scholars have argued that this is a general term for all believers, it is more likely a proper name. When addressing Theophilus in Luke 1:3, Luke called him "most excellent." A proper name with a title indicates that this was probably a real person, someone who

belonged to the nobility, possibly as a high-ranking Roman official. Theophilus may have been Luke's patron who helped to finance the writing of both the Gospel and Acts. More likely Theophilus was a Roman acquaintance of Luke's with a strong interest in the new Christian religion.

The following verses provide a bridge between the events recorded in Luke's Gospel and the events marking the beginning of the church. Before he "ascended to heaven," the resurrected Christ taught his disciples for forty days. In that short period, he gave those "chosen apostles" the instruction that would radically change their lives and, through them, the world. The fact that the apostles had been chosen by Christ (Luke 6:12-16) is an extremely important point. With that choosing came apostolic authority to preach, teach, direct the church, and preserve the record of his life and teaching.

1:3 After his suffering, he showed himself to these men and gave many convincing proofs that he was alive. He appeared to them over a period of forty days and spoke about the kingdom of God. "After his suffering" refers to Jesus' crucifixion. During the days after Christ rose from the dead, he showed himself to many of his followers (see the chart, "Jesus' Appearances after His Resurrection" on page 3). Christ showed himself and (as if more were needed) also gave many convincing proofs that he was alive. The word "proofs" (tekmeriois) refers to demonstrated, decisive evidence. Jesus' resurrection had not been sleight of hand or illusion, with Jesus being merely a ghostly presence. Instead, these were solid, visible, and undeniable proofs of the fact that Jesus was alive.

These proofs would form the heart and soul of the forthcoming witness of the church (from Acts 1:8 forward). The apostles, and the church behind them, would spread the truth of Christ because they had seen him after he rose from the grave! If Jesus had not truly risen from the dead, then nothing that proceeds from this point on in the book of Acts (or the New Testament for that matter) would make any sense or make any difference in people's lives. (See Paul's comments in 1 Corinthians 15:13-14.)

Studying and using convincing proofs for the defense of Christianity (apologetics) is a valuable tool today. Not only does it help confirm the

faith of Christians, but it also functions to help unbelievers come to faith. Many Christians today owe their conversion, humanly speaking, to the work of C. S. Lewis, whose apologetic arguments in Mere Christianity led them to believe. C. S. Lewis himself was converted by means of these kinds of arguments.

JESUS' APPEARENCE AFTER HIS RESURRECTION

1. Mary Magdalene/ Mark 16:9-11; John 20:10-18
 2. The other women at the tomb/ Matthew 28:8-10
 3. Peter in Jerusalem/ Luke 24:34; 1 Corinthians 15:5
 4. The two travelers on the road/ Mark 16:12-13; Luke 24:13-35
 5. Ten disciples behind closed doors/ Luke 24:36-43; John 20:19-25
 6. All eleven disciples (including Thomas)/ Mark 16:14; John 20:26-31; 1 Corinthians 15:5
 7. Seven disciples while fishing on the Sea of Galilee/ John 21:1-14
 8. Eleven disciples on a mountain in Galilee/ Matthew 28:16-20; Mark 16:15-18
 9. A crowd of 500/ 1 Corinthians 15:6
 10. Jesus' brother James/ 1 Corinthians 15:7
 11. Those who watched Jesus ascend into heaven/ Mark 16:19-20; Luke 24:50-53; Acts 1:3-9
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FIVE RESULTS OF THE RESURRECTION

1. The Resurrection demonstrates that what Jesus predicted about his being raised was true (Mark 8:31; 9:9, 31; 10:34; John 2:19).
2. The Resurrection proves that Jesus is the Son of God (Romans 1:4).
3. The Resurrection testifies to the success of Christ's mission of

salvation (Romans 4:25).

4. The Resurrection entitles Jesus to a position of glory (1 Peter 1:11).
5. The Resurrection proclaims that Jesus is Lord (Acts 2:36).

During Jesus' post-Resurrection appearances, the main subject of Jesus' remarks was the kingdom of God. Throughout the Gospels the kingdom was always on Jesus' lips, for this unified his teachings and activities (see, for example, Luke 13:18–21; 17:20–37). When Christ came to earth, he brought God's kingdom, but it was not an earthly kingdom. The promised kingdom is present now only in part. The New Testament writers confirmed that through his death and resurrection, Christ bound Satan (Colossians 2:15; 1 Peter 3:22), provided forgiveness and holiness to sinners (Romans 3:21–26; Hebrews 9:11–12; 10:10), and is now enthroned as Lord over all (Acts 2:33–36; 5:31; Ephesians 1:20–22). Believers become participants of this kingdom through God's power (Matthew 19:24–26; John 3:3), by repentance and trust in Jesus (Matthew 4:17; John 14:6; Acts 8:12). His kingdom began in the hearts of his followers. When Christ returned to heaven, God's kingdom remained in the hearts of all believers through the presence of the Holy Spirit. God promised, however, that he would ultimately reign over all and bring about the end of all death and disease. The ultimate culmination of the kingdom of God will not be fully realized until Jesus Christ comes again to rule, defeat his enemies, and consummate the kingdom (Matthew 24:29–31; 25:31–46; John 14:1–3). Before that time believers are to work to spread God's kingdom across the world. Often the term "kingdom," at least in Acts, is used almost synonymously with the gospel message—see 8:12; 19:8; 20:25; 28:23, 31.

NO LEAP IN THE DARK

Jesus gave many proofs to the early followers. Today many people doubt Jesus' resurrection. But history records that Jesus appeared in bodily form to his disciples on many occasions after his resurrection, proving that he was alive. Note the change that occurred in the disciples' lives. At Jesus' death, they scattered; they were disillusioned and fearful. After seeing the resurrected Christ, they were fearless and

risked everything to spread the good news about him around the world. They faced imprisonment, beatings, rejection, and martyrdom, yet they never compromised their mission. These men would not have risked their lives for something they knew was a fraud. They knew that Jesus had been raised from the dead, and the early church members were fired with their enthusiasm to tell others. We can have confidence in their testimony. Twenty centuries later we can know that our faith is based on solid, historical fact.

So we have the two aspects of Christianity that would soon spread like wildfire from the temple porticoes in Jerusalem: (1) convinced witnesses who had been with the resurrected Christ; and (2) a clear message of Christ's desire to rule in people's hearts and of his promise to return (1:3-10).

1:4-5 In one of these meetings as he was eating a meal with them, he told them, "Do not leave Jerusalem until the Father sends you what he promised. Remember, I have told you about this before. John baptized with water, but in just a few days you will be baptized with the Holy Spirit." As the risen Christ met with his disciples, here eating a meal with them (yet another of the "convincing proofs" mentioned in 1:3), he surely told them many things. Luke records only a handful of sentences from those forty days of instruction, so they certainly are important words. These statements of Jesus are loaded with significance, giving us not only the outline of the book of Acts, but the general outline of church history.

Christ first told his followers to stay in Jerusalem until the Father sends you what he promised. This points back to Luke 24:49. He had spoken about this before, at the Last Supper: "And I will ask the Father, and he will give you another Counselor, who will never leave you. He is the Holy Spirit" (John 14:16-17 NLT; see also John 14:26).

This would be a new kind of baptism. John baptized with water, said Jesus, but these believers would be baptized with the Holy Spirit. John the Baptist had baptized people as a sign of repentance. They had confessed their sins and had determined to live as God wanted them to live. Baptism was an outward sign of commitment. To be effective, it had to be accompanied by an inward change of attitude leading to a

changed life. John's baptism did not give salvation; it prepared a person to welcome the coming Messiah and receive his message and his baptism. John himself had said, "I baptize you with water for repentance, but one who is more powerful than I is coming.... He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and fire" (Matthew 3:11 NRSV).

The "one" who was coming was Jesus, the promised Messiah. The coming of the Spirit had been prophesied as part of the Messiah's arrival:

- "I will pour out my Spirit on your offspring, and my blessing on your descendants." (Isaiah 44:3 NIV)
- "The time is coming.... I will put my law in their minds and write it on their hearts. I will be their God, and they will be my people.... For I will forgive their wickedness and will remember their sins no more." (Jeremiah 31:31-34 NIV)
- "I will give you a new heart and put a new spirit in you; I will remove from you your heart of stone and give you a heart of flesh. And I will put my Spirit in you and move you to follow my decrees and be careful to keep my laws." (Ezekiel 36:26-27 NIV)
- "And afterward, I will pour out my Spirit on all people. Your sons and daughters will prophesy, your old men will dream dreams, your young men will see visions. Even on my servants, both men and women, I will pour out my Spirit in those days." (Joel 2:28-29 NIV)

The Old Testament promised a time when God would demonstrate his purifying power among people (Isaiah 32:15; Ezekiel 39:29). The prophets also looked forward to a purifying fire (Isaiah 4:4; Malachi 3:2). This looked ahead to Pentecost (Acts 2:1-6), when the Holy Spirit would be sent by Jesus in the form of tongues of fire, empowering his followers to preach the gospel. All believers, those who would later come to Jesus Christ for salvation, would receive the baptism of the Holy Spirit and the fire of purification (in the Greek one article precedes these words, indicating that they were not two separate baptisms). This baptism would purify and refine each believer. When Jesus baptized with the Holy Spirit, the entire person would be transformed by the Spirit's power.

If Jesus had stayed on earth, his physical presence would have limited the spread of the gospel because physically he could be in only one place at a time. After Christ was taken up into heaven, he would be

spiritually present everywhere through the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit was sent so that God would be with and within his followers after Christ returned to heaven. The Spirit would comfort them, guide them to know his truth, remind them of Jesus' words, give them the right words to say, and fill them with power. As promised by Christ in the upper room (John 13–17) and by the Father (see Peter's speech in Acts 2:17 and following), the Holy Spirit would be the next great event in the life of the church. Many believe it to be the very birth of the church.

BELIEVERS HAVE PRIVILEGES

In a series of meetings with the living, resurrected Christ, the disciples had many questions answered. They became convinced of the Resurrection, learned about the kingdom of God, and discovered the truth about their power source—the Holy Spirit. By reading the Bible, we can sit with the resurrected Christ in his school of discipleship. By believing in him, we can receive his power through the Holy Spirit to be new people. By joining with other Christians in Christ's church, we can take part in doing his work on earth.

Luke 17:20-21 / The coming of the kingdom

If you want to know about Jesus' kingdom, get to know the King

When He was asked by the Pharisees when the kingdom of God would come: We may just imagine a hostile Pharisee coming to Jesus and demanding Him to either “put up” and produce the Kingdom of the Messiah, or to “shut up” and stop claiming He was the Messiah.

In Jesus' day, just like our own, people longed for the coming of the Messiah. They knew the prophecies in the Old Testament which spoke of the glory of the coming Messiah; they wanted that kind of life and earth now.

The kingdom of God does not come with observation: Jesus

made it clear to the Pharisee asking the question that the kingdom of God won't be found through a hostile questioning of Jesus. The ancient Greek word translated observation is better-translated, hostile examination. Jesus told the Pharisees that their hostile, doubting eyes were unable to see or receive the kingdom of God.

According to Geldenhuys, the verb from which the word observation comes from is used often in the New Testament and in the Septuagint; it means "hostile observation."

For indeed, the kingdom of God is within you: Jesus told them that the kingdom was right in their midst. **Within** you could be better translated in your midst or among you. The kingdom of God was among them because the King was among them.

This was not a mystical revelation by Jesus that in some seed form, the Kingdom of God is within everyone in a kingdom ruled by Jesus sense. After all, Jesus would not have told Pharisees that the kingdom of God was within them. The statement of Jesus called attention to Himself, not to man.

Like many today, the Pharisees said they wanted the Kingdom of God to come; but you can't want the Kingdom and reject the King. "The Pharisees asked Him when the Kingdom of God would appear, while it was right in their midst because the King Himself was there." (Morgan)

Luke 11 Notes on the KOG

Jesus proclaims His strength over all demonic forces

But if I cast out demons with the finger of God, surely the kingdom of God has come upon you: With this Jesus answered the charge that He was in partnership with the Devil. He said, "I'm not under Satan, instead, I'm proving that I am stronger than he is."

Jesus did not suggest the slightest doubt when He said, "If I cast out demons." As Scholar Pate suggests, the idea is more since than if. "Thus, 'since by the finger of God I cast out demons, then the kingdom of God has come upon you.' " (Pate)

But when a stronger than he comes upon him and

overcomes him: In the picture Jesus used, Satan is the **strong man**, who guards what belongs to him. Jesus' ministry, both in the case of casting the demon out of the man who was mute and in the broader sense, did the work of defeating this strong man.

But when a stronger than he comes: Jesus is the One who is stronger than he (Satan, the strong man of Luke 11:21). Jesus spoke about His work in overcoming Satan on several different stages:

He comes upon him: Jesus engaged Satan in battle, even on the ground of what seemed to belong to Satan (such as demon possessed people).

And overcomes him: Jesus simply defeated this strong man, showing to everyone that He is stronger than he. Jesus made it clear that He was the stronger man who was not captive under the strong man. His message was, "I'm not under Satan's power. Instead, I'm proving that I am stronger than he is by casting him out of those he has possessed."

He takes from him all his armor in which he trusted: Jesus not only defeated Satan on our behalf, He also disarmed him. As Colossians 2:15 says, Having disarmed principalities and powers, He made a public spectacle of them, triumphing over them in it [the cross].

And divides his spoils: Satan will never get to keep or enjoy the battle-spoil from his momentary victory. Jesus' victory over the **strong man** is complete. Jesus looks at every life delivered from Satan's domination and says, "**I'm plundering the kingdom of Satan one life at a time.**" There is nothing in our life that must stay under Satan's domination. The One who binds the strong man and divides his spoils is our risen Lord.

He who is not with Me is against Me, and he who does not gather with Me scatters: If Jesus is **stronger than** Satan, then each person is confronted by a decision: with whom will they partner? Will we be with Jesus or will we be **against Him**? Will we work for Jesus or will we work against Him?

"In the conflict against the powers of darkness there is no room for

neutrality.” (Geldenhuys)

In this sense, to be undecided is to be decided. There is no neutral ground; we are either with Jesus or against Him. There is no luxury of guarded neutrality.

If Satan is the **strong man**, and Jesus is **stronger than** Satan is, there are two strong forces at work, trying to win our allegiance. We will embrace one or the other, intentionally or unintentionally.

1 Corinthians 2:4-5 Notes

THE SPIRIT GIVES WISDOM / 2:1-16

The Corinthians were confusing the gospel by creating artificial standards of faith. They were using wisdom as the gauge. The more wisdom someone claimed, the more spiritual that person became. Standards were determined by teachers. They were arguing and dividing over which teacher had the deepest spirituality. For Paul, the gospel—God’s wisdom—was a pool of clear water. Believers were urged to go deeper, but they would find living water no matter how deep they dove.

2:1-2 When I came to you, brothers and sisters, I did not come proclaiming the mystery of God to you in lofty words or wisdom. For I decided to know nothing among you except Jesus Christ, and him crucified. The words “when I came to you” refer to Paul’s first visit to Corinth during his second missionary journey (A.D. 51), when he founded the church (Acts 18:1–18). As Paul had explained in chapter 1, the gospel message, by its very simplicity, appears foolish to those who think themselves wise by human standards. Paul was a brilliant scholar and could have overwhelmed his audience in Corinth with intellectual arguments, proclaiming the mystery of God ... in lofty words or wisdom. While this may have led to a measure of intellectual assent, it may not have led them to saving faith. Faith that depends on clever arguments and bright oratory can be undermined if another logical argument or better orator comes along. Faith grounded in the power of the Holy Spirit, however, cannot be undermined. So Paul decided instead to “know nothing among [them] except Jesus Christ, and him crucified.” Paul shared the simple

message of Jesus Christ, who had been crucified for the world's sins, and let that simple message move into the Corinthians' hearts by the power of the Holy Spirit (2:4). In sharing the gospel with others, believers should follow Paul's example and keep the message simple and basic. The power of the gospel message is not found in a preacher's eloquent use of words or ability to logically argue every detail. The power lies in the message itself: "Jesus Christ, and him crucified" for sin.

POWERFUL MESSAGE, POWERLESS MESSENGER

As Paul described his founding visit among the Corinthians (Acts 18:1-18), he reminded them of his unimpressive personal performance. His words had been plain and his physical appearance less than forceful. He certainly remembered himself as a person driven by a message, facing an intimidating environment. He "kept it simple." The Corinthians had responded. They were living examples of the power of the gospel.

While believers cannot rival Paul's training or match his experiences, they must still communicate the gospel in a hostile world. When they try, they quickly learn about feeling insignificant. The resistance is real. But Paul's example offers two valuable lessons as we share the gospel. (1) Feelings of confidence or insecurity should not be the motivation to communicate. Personal gratitude and obedience to Christ as well as compassion for others must drive our witnessing. (2) The power of the gospel does not depend on the skill or charisma of the speaker; it flows from God's Spirit, convincing persons of the truth. Share what you know about Christ with others and let the feelings take care of themselves.

2:3-4 I came to you in weakness—timid and trembling. And my message and my preaching were very plain. I did not use wise and persuasive speeches, but the Holy Spirit was powerful among you. Paul came to Corinth not as a powerful preacher and debater ready to take on the city but, rather, in weakness—timid and trembling. His attitude was not fearful, but utterly dependent upon God for the important task of bringing the gospel into this wicked and idolatrous city. Prior to coming to Corinth, Paul had faced many discouraging ministry events. At Philippi, his

ministry started strong but was nearly ruined by Jewish opposition (this also occurred in Thessalonica and Berea). In Athens, Paul had very little positive results. It would have been very disheartening. Paul's confidence was not in his keen intellect or debating ability but in his knowledge that the Holy Spirit was helping and guiding him. Paul was not denying the importance of study and preparation for preaching—he had a thorough education in the Scriptures. He did not depend, however, on using wise and persuasive speeches to change people's hearts. That would happen only by the work of the Holy Spirit among them.

God is completely sovereign in this process that seems foolish to the world—from the way God chose to accomplish salvation (through the cross, 1:18-25), to the people he chose to draw to himself (such as those hearing this letter, 1:26-31), and then to the one who brought the message (Paul, 2:1-5). A “weak” preacher with a plain message to an audience of “lower-class” or “nonintellectual” people seemed like a recipe for disaster. But with God's sovereignty and the Holy Spirit's power, a body of believers grew up and stood up to the surrounding sinfulness and idolatry of Corinth.

Paul mentioned that the Holy Spirit had been powerful among them (Paul's preaching had come “with a demonstration of the Spirit's power,” NIV). What exactly had occurred is unrecorded, but Paul may have been referring to their conversion, the receiving of the Holy Spirit upon conversion, and the gifts bestowed by the Holy Spirit on the Corinthian believers (the ability to speak in tongues, for example, as well as other gifts that Paul will discuss at length later in this letter). Paul's point was that the power of their conversion was not through him and his preaching but through the Holy Spirit.

2:5 I did this so that you might trust the power of God rather than human wisdom. Paul deliberately chose not to use the style of persuasion and oratory that so fascinated those in the Greek world. Instead, he brought a simple message that depended upon the Holy Spirit's power for its effectiveness. Paul did not want his listeners focusing on the speech he gave, or how he presented it, or whatever other brand of human wisdom might have been used to persuade the Corinthians to believe. Instead, Paul wanted them to trust in the simple message and so trust the power of God for their salvation. See

also Romans 1:16 for Paul's description of the gospel as God's "power." The Greek word translated "power" is dunamei in this verse; in Romans 1:16 it is dunamis.

Resources: Rev. Brad Standfest, Life Application Study Commentary, David Guzik, Luke, David Guzik's Commentaries on the Bible, David Guzik, Luke, David Guzik's Commentaries on the Bible, The International Standard Bible Encyclopedia, Lexham Bible Dictionary, Factbook Logos Bible

Sermon Notes:

We have been talking about Post Resurrection Commands Jesus gave to all Christians

The Commands are known as the Great Commission...

Honestly... The Great Commission is not working that great for the majority of American Christians... Sorry!

I have made this Statement during this Series: We (Christians) have all of Heaven backing us

Most Christians don't understand the Authority we have in Christ & His Spirit

I'm not talking about Charismatic Craziess... OR Yelling and Screaming... And I'm not talking about Speaking in Tongues

I'm talking about the Authority we have in the Holy Spirit to Effectively Witness

Jesus is the One who Promised us His Authority

Christ said: "All authority in heaven has been given to me" (Jesus) "Go Make Disciples" ... "I am Sending you" ... "Signs" ... Supernatural power will accompany you Mt. 28:18-20, Lk. 20:20, Mark 16:15-18

I'm going to show you something Very Important that can easily be overlooked...

Read Acts 1:1-8

We can Mistakenly say... Okay Jesus talked to them about Heaven... NO...

What is the Kingdom of God?

Description: “The Kingdom of God was a favorite theme in the preaching of Jesus. This doctrine describes the Rule & Reign of God over his creation as King. (Deeper details in the APP)

Let’s look at a Couple Examples about the Kingdom of God ... Read Luke 11:14-20 and Luke 17:20-21

Do you understand how Profound & Empowering this is for Christians?

We have the Authority of Christ Living In Us

When I realized this Truth of Jesus... And ASKED the Lord to Empower me... My life has never been the same...

What does this have to do with witnessing to people? (Good Question we will get to that in a minute)

I’m going to give it to you Real & Raw right now...

Jesus doesn’t need any more lackadaisical Christians shaking their Pom Poms around.

Jesus said:

Acts 1:8: But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth.”

Here is the Biblical Truth: The Holy Spirit gives us the Power to bear witness to His Name...

When we are trying to Share the Love of Jesus with others we must do these 3 Things:

Sharing the Love of Jesus Requires: Being Led by the Holy

Spirit to:

- 1.Hear (Listen):** to others & the Lords Voice
- 2.Do:** What God directs
- 3.Say:** What the Holy Spirit whispers in your ears

What does this look like in Witnessing?

[I share a short story/ listen to the Sermon]

1 Corinthians 2:4-5 My message and my preaching were not with wise and persuasive words, but with a demonstration of the Spirit's power, so that your faith might not rest on men's wisdom, but on God's power.

Devotional Questions

- 1.Read Acts 1:1-8: What was the significance of the Holy Spirit's role in empowering the apostles for their mission?**
 - 2. What similarities and differences do you see between the apostles' mission then and the mission of the Church today? Acts 1:1-8**
 - 3. Where is the Kingdom of God; how do you think this impacts our lives? Read Luke 17:20-21**
 - 4. Where is the Kingdom of God now? (v.20 is key) Read Luke 11:14-20**
 - 5. How did Apostle Paul witness? Read 1 Corinthians 2:4-5**
 - 6. What happens when we are empowered by the Holy Spirit? Read Acts 1:8**
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Sent By Jesus

Opening Monologue

We are in a post resurrection discussion. I titled this week's sermon: "Sent By Jesus."

"Jesus said: "as the Father has sent me, I am sending you" (John 20:21) So in other words, we are not going out alone... we don't walk alone, it's Jesus living inside of us that gives us strength to "go make disciples" (MT.28:18-20) We are under the authority of Christ and have the power of Christ living in us! (We will talk about the Holy Spirit next week).

Isaiah 52:7 says: "How beautiful [...] are the feet of those who bring good news, who proclaim peace, who bring good tidings, who proclaim salvation." Friends, we are carriers of the good news... that is, the Good News of Jesus Christ! However, good news is only as good as someone hears it. Let's be honest... you don't like to be the last person who is told something important from a family or friend - right!

Did you know that 4 BILLION people follow other world religions made of man-made teachings... 4 BILLION! (I share some details on their beliefs in the sermon) Some of these people you work with, or they are maybe your neighbors... they certainly are all around you in this world. Look, you carry something they don't have. You carry the only resurrected King in history- Jesus Christ our Lord!!

No, we can't change the whole world... but we can be the hands and feet of Jesus to those around us. Jesus invested in people... one person at a time. Be an encourager and ask the Holy Spirit to help you open up doors of opportunity to share your faith.

"But in your hearts revere Christ as Lord. Always be prepared to give an answer to everyone who asks you to give the reason for the hope that you have. But do this with gentleness and respect, keeping a clear conscience, so that those who speak maliciously against your good behavior in Christ may be ashamed of their slander. For Christ also suffered once for sins, the righteous for the unrighteous, to bring you to God. He was put to death in the body but made alive in the Spirit." 1 Peter 3:15-18

Be sure to listen to this week's sermon and dig a little deeper in the church application, commentary, and devotional questions below, also there are some **Conversational Starters listed below.**

Blessings in Christ,

Rev. Brad Standfest

To Listen to this week's Sermon: "Sent By Jesus." Go to the Sermon tab here in our APP or use the links to our website or YouTube Channel where you can also listen to our Sermons:

Web: <https://www.almontvineyardchurch.org/media>

You Tube: <https://www.youtube.com/@almontvineyardchurch>

Key Sermon Text

John 20:21

<https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=John+20%3A21&version=NIV>

Isaiah 52:7

<https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Isaiah+52%3A7&version=NIV>

Matthew 9:35-38

<https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Matthew+9%3A35-38&version=NIV>

1 Peter 3:15-16 & 18

<https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=1+Peter+3%3A15-16+&version=NIV>

<https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=1+Peter+3%3A18&version=NIV>

Digging Deeper:

The Great Commission is a directive from Jesus to his disciples to go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything that Jesus has commanded. This commission

emphasizes the spreading of the Gospel message, the importance of baptism, and the teaching of Jesus' teachings to all people around the world. It is a call to share the good news of salvation and to make disciples who will continue to spread the message of Jesus Christ.

The Great Commission is mentioned in the following passages in the New Testament:

- 1.** Matthew 28:18-20 - This is the most well-known version of the Great Commission, where Jesus instructs his disciples to go and make disciples of all nations.
- 2.** Mark 16:15-20 - In this passage, Jesus tells his disciples to go into all the world and preach the gospel to all creation.
- 3.** Luke 24:44-49 - Jesus opens the minds of his disciples to understand the Scriptures and commissions them to preach repentance and forgiveness of sins to all nations.
- 4.** John 20:21 - Jesus sends out his disciples just as the Father sent him, empowering them with the Holy Spirit to carry out their mission.
- 5.** Acts 1:8 - Just before his ascension, Jesus tells his disciples that they will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on them and that they will be his witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth.

Conversation Starters to witness and open the door to people for discussion:

1. "Have you ever thought about what life would be like without sin or death?"
2. "Have you ever wondered about what's the purpose of life?"
3. "If you had to describe God, how would you describe Him?"
4. "If you could ask God one question, what would it be?"
5. "Are you satisfied with your current life?"
6. "Do you think there can be true happiness without God?"
7. "Have you ever considered the impact that Jesus has had on the world and how His teachings continue to inspire and change lives today?"
8. "I've found so much peace and purpose in my relationship with Jesus."

9. "Do you have any spiritual beliefs or practices that are important to you?"
10. "I was reading in the Bible about Jesus' teachings on love and forgiveness. It really resonated with me. Have you ever explored what the Bible says about Him?"
11. "I've been reflecting on the hope and joy that Jesus brings into my life, especially during challenging times."

GET READY (Being Prepared)

Here's how ordinary people can be ready to witness (make a defense for their hope) without needing to become theological scholars:

- Pray, read the Bible, and review God's promises every day. Then you'll be ready to explain why you're hopeful.
- Make praising Christ your daily practice. If you focus on his power and glory, you will be fortified and courageous to speak to others.
- Be as natural in witnessing as you are in conversation. Talk like you, not imitating anyone else. Find the clues in your life that help explain God's Good News to others. If you are a plumber, talk about God's love like running water. If you are a doctor, portray God's love as a healing force.
- Respond with care. Trust God to melt stony hearts. "A gentle answer turns away wrath, but a harsh word stirs up anger" (Proverbs 15:1 NIV).
- Listen to your audience. Where are their heads and hearts? What burdens them? Listen long and hard. Frame your witness in the words and at the level your audience will understand.

Commentary on Main Passages: John 20

20:21-23 Jesus said to them again, "Peace be with you. As the Father has sent me, so I send you." Jesus gave his peace to them and then commissioned them to be his representatives, even as he had been the Father's (see 17:18). Jesus again identified himself with his Father. He told the disciples by whose authority he did his work. Then he gave the task to his disciples of spreading the gospel

message around the world. They were sent with authority from God to preach, teach, and do miracles (see Matthew 28:16–20; Luke 24:47–49)—in essence, to continue across the world what Jesus had begun in Palestine. Whatever God has asked you to do, remember: (1) Your authority comes from God, and (2) Jesus has demonstrated by words and actions how to accomplish the job he has given you. As the Father sent his Son, Jesus sends his followers ... and you. Your response is to determine from day to day those to whom the Father has sent you.

When He had said this, He breathed on them, and said to them, “Receive the Holy Spirit.” Before the disciples could carry out this commission, however, they needed the power of the Holy Spirit. And Jesus gave them this power by breathing into them the Holy Spirit. It could be said that this verse consummates the Gospel of John because the Spirit who had been promised (7:37–39; 14:16–20, 26; 15:26; and 16:7–15) at last was given to the disciples.

This act reminds us of what God did to make the first man come alive—he breathed into him and he became a living soul (Genesis 2:7). There is life in the breath of God. Man was created but did not come alive until God had breathed into him the breath of life (Genesis 2:7). God’s first breath made man different from all other forms of creation. Here, through the breath of Jesus, God imparted eternal, spiritual life. With this breathing came the power to do God’s will on earth.

If you forgive the sins of any, they are forgiven them; if you retain the sins of any, they are retained Jesus gave the disciples their Spirit-powered and Spirit-guided mission—to preach the Good News about him so that people’s sins might be forgiven. The disciples did not have the power to forgive sins (only God can forgive sins), but Jesus gave them the privilege of telling new believers that their sins have been forgiven because they have accepted Jesus’ message. All believers have this same privilege. We can announce the forgiveness of sin with certainty when we ourselves repent and believe. Those who don’t believe will not experience the forgiveness of sins; their sins will be retained (i.e., not forgiven).

**JESUS URGES THE DISCIPLES TO PRAY FOR WORKERS /
Matthew 9:35–38**

From 9:35 through 10:42, Matthew recorded a second discourse of Jesus, focusing on mission. (The first discourse was the Sermon on the Mount, recorded in chapters 5–7.) Jesus continued to share the Good News of the kingdom to all who would listen, and he exemplified the task and pattern his disciples would follow after his return to heaven.

9:35 Then Jesus went about all the cities and villages, teaching in their synagogues, preaching the gospel of the kingdom, and healing every sickness and every disease among the people. This verse introduces the next discourse that Matthew recorded (from 9:35 through 10:42). This verse also mirrors 4:23, a verse that introduced the last recorded discourse in chapters 5 through 7.

Jesus went about all the cities and villages. Again, Jesus' ministry is described as teaching, preaching, and healing. These were the three main aspects. "Teaching" shows Jesus' concern for understanding; "preaching" shows his concern for commitment; and "healing" shows his concern for wholeness. His miracles of healing authenticated his teaching and preaching, proving that he truly was from God. The Good News of the kingdom was that the promised and long-awaited Messiah had finally come. His healing miracles were a sign that his teaching was true.

9:36 But when He saw the multitudes, He was moved with compassion for them, because they were weary and scattered, like sheep having no shepherd. Wherever Jesus went, crowds gathered. But when Jesus saw these multitudes, he was moved with compassion for them. The word "compassion" describes the deep inner mercy of God, often described in the Old Testament. The prophet Ezekiel compared Israel to sheep without a shepherd (Ezekiel 34:5, 6; see also Numbers 27:17; 1 Kings 22:17); Jesus saw the weary and scattered people as sheep having no shepherd. The word for "weary" can also mean "troubled," "bewildered," or "despondent." The word for "scattered" is also "prostrate" or "thrown to the ground." The two words are near synonyms that stress man's helplessness without God. Jesus came to be the Shepherd, the one who could show people how to avoid life's pitfalls (see John 10:14; 1 Peter 2:25). Jesus considered the Pharisees to have failed in leading the people to God, who were therefore left without a shepherd.

9:37-38 Then He said to His disciples, “The harvest truly is plentiful, but the laborers are few. Therefore pray the Lord of the harvest to send out laborers into His harvest.” Jesus looked at the crowds following him and referred to them as a field ripe for harvest, but the laborers to bring in the harvest are few. These “laborers” were the disciples, then few in number. Jesus commanded his disciples to pray the Lord of the harvest to send out laborers. The “Lord of the harvest” refers to God. The verb translated “send out” is a strong term, meaning to “thrust forth.” In this context it speaks of a strong push to get workers into the field. These laborers must warn people of coming judgment and call them to repentance. Many people are ready to give their lives to Christ if someone would show them how. We are to pray that people will respond to this need for workers. Often, when we pray for something, God answers our prayers by using us. Be prepared for God to use you to show another person the way to him. Chapter 10 will describe this mission and what it will involve in more detail.

1 Peter 3:15-18

3:15 But in your hearts set apart Christ as Lord. Instead of being afraid of people, believers are to focus on Christ himself. This is also translated “reverence Christ as Lord” or “sanctify the Lord Christ in your hearts.” The “heart” was considered a place of deep emotions—that’s where fear would dwell. But Peter wanted these believers to replace fear with faith and reverence. By acknowledging Christ as Lord and Savior, they would recognize his holiness and be able to rest in him. There would be no room in their hearts for fear. This alludes to words from the prophet Isaiah: “But the Lord of hosts, him you shall regard as holy; let him be your fear, and let him be your dread” (Isaiah 8:13 NRSV). When believers have set apart Christ as Lord, regarding him as holy and reverencing him in their hearts, they know that he is in control of events, that he is the reigning king, and that all powers and authorities ultimately must answer to him.

Always be prepared to give an answer to everyone who asks you to give the reason for the hope that you have. But do this with gentleness and respect. When believers have Christ set apart in their hearts, the courage he gives them ought to make

them always ready to testify about him. Peter called upon the believers not to fear, but he didn't stop there. Their faith should be active, ready to speak out—prepared to give an answer to everyone who asks. While Peter may have been thinking about believers speaking in a court, he seems also to have had in mind the everyday informal inquiries that might be directed at the believers—from either hostile or friendly neighbors. The words “an answer” can also be translated “a defense” and usually refer to responding to an accusation (see, for example, Acts 22:1; 25:16; 1 Corinthians 9:3; Philippians 1:7, 16). Thus, these may refer to formal charges or informal accusations. Under any circumstances, the believers were to be ready to testify, explaining the reason for the hope that they had.

The believers would be persecuted for their faith alone because unbelievers would have no charges to bring against them except to question them on their “hope.” Unbelievers can see that Christians have something different; only “hope” gives us strength and joy in hardships and persecutions. Unbelievers will ask about it; believers must be ready to tell them. Christians need not worry about what they should say if accused, for they could prepare their defense ahead of time! Even in a hostile situation, believers can witness for Christ; their words might cause an accuser to come to faith. Paul certainly took advantage of every situation, no matter how hostile (read Acts 22:1–21; 24:10–24; 26:1–23). All Christians must be ready and able to give a reasonable defense of their faith. They need not be apologists or theologians, but every Christian ought to be able to clearly explain his or her own reasons for being a Christian. Some Christians believe that faith is a personal matter that should be kept to oneself. It is true that we shouldn't be boisterous or obnoxious in sharing our faith, but we should always be prepared to give an answer, gently and respectfully, when asked about our belief, our lifestyle, or our Christian perspective. Christians' words and manner of speaking to an accusation should align with their lifestyle. Peter had already said they should be sympathetic, tender, loving, and humble (3:8); he had explained that they were not to return insult for insult (3:9). Thus, if the believers were called upon to testify for their faith, they must do so with gentleness and respect. Believers were not to be arrogant, rude, or overly aggressive. They were to trust God for the outcome of any hostile situation, and they were to trust the Holy Spirit to work quietly in the hearts of their listeners. Thus, their manner of speaking ought to

reflect an attitude of meekness and gentleness (neither of which implies weakness), remembering their responsibility to always show respect (also translated “reverence”) for God.

GET READY

Here’s how ordinary people can be ready to witness (make a defense for their hope) without needing to become theological scholars:

- Pray, read the Bible, and review God’s promises every day. Then you’ll be ready to explain why you’re hopeful.
- Make praising Christ your daily practice. If you focus on his power and glory, you will be fortified and courageous to speak to others.
- Be as natural in witnessing as you are in conversation. Talk like you, not imitating anyone else. Find the clues in your life that help explain God’s Good News to others. If you are a plumber, talk about God’s love like running water. If you are a doctor, portray God’s love as a healing force.
- Respond with care. Trust God to melt stony hearts. “A gentle answer turns away wrath, but a harsh word stirs up anger” (Proverbs 15:1 NIV).
- Listen to your audience. Where are their heads and hearts? What burdens them? Listen long and hard. Frame your witness in the words and at the level your audience will understand.

3:16 Keeping a clear conscience. As believers’ outward actions should be above reproach, so should their inner life. A clear conscience refers to one’s personal integrity before God alone, as he or she lives consistently with their knowledge of God. Unbelievers also have consciences that ought to guard their morality and actions (Romans 2:14–15), but a Christian’s conscience has been transformed by God. The Holy Spirit helps each believer know and understand God’s will and sensitizes his or her conscience to God’s desires. All believers should keep clear consciences.

How can believers follow Peter’s advice to keep a clear conscience? We can treasure our faith in Christ more than anything else and do what we know is right. We can avoid willful disobedience. If we do disobey, we should stay in constant communication with God, repenting and asking forgiveness. Each time we deliberately ignore our conscience,

we harden our heart. Over a period of time our capacity to tell right from wrong will diminish. As we walk with God, he will speak to us through our conscience, letting us know the difference between right and wrong. By being sure to act on those inner tugs so that we do what is right, our conscience will remain clear. Paul wrote (all verses quoted from NRSV):

- “Brothers, up to this day I have lived my life with a clear conscience before God” (Acts 23:1).
- “Therefore I do my best always to have a clear conscience toward God and all people” (Acts 24:16).
- “I am speaking the truth in Christ—I am not lying; my conscience confirms it by the Holy Spirit” (Romans 9:1).
- “Indeed, this is our boast, the testimony of our conscience: we have behaved in the world with frankness and godly sincerity, not by earthly wisdom but by the grace of God—and all the more toward you” (2 Corinthians 1:12).
- “I am giving you these instructions, Timothy, ... so that by following them you may fight the good fight, having faith and a good conscience. By rejecting conscience, certain persons have suffered shipwreck in the faith” (1 Timothy 1:18-19).
- “I am grateful to God—whom I worship with a clear conscience” (2 Timothy 1:3).

We should remember that some Christians’ consciences are so sensitive that they feel they can do nothing right. We should refer them to Hebrews 9:14: “How much more, then, will the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered himself unblemished to God, cleanse our consciences from acts that lead to death, so that we may serve the living God!” (NIV). This will show them that Christ’s death removes the guilt they bear. They can have God’s help to retrain their consciences based on the freedom they have in Christ instead of on self-condemnation.

SELF-CONSCIOUS SAINTS

What happens when a Christian becomes so worried over “what other people think” that a clear conscience becomes confused with pride of perfection? It’s a sorry sight. Since perfection is impossible, such people chase windmills ferociously and religiously. To these people

Jesus says, “My yoke is easy and my burden is light” (Matthew 11:30). Keeping a clear conscience is the delight of walking with God without hidden sin. Pride of perfection is the burden of imagining God with a clipboard putting ticks next to your name. If you must suppose that God carries a clipboard, be assured that Jesus has erased all your ticks and always will. In gratitude, walk with him honestly and gladly.

So that those who speak maliciously against your good behavior in Christ may be ashamed of their slander. Why is there all this concern about right living and clear consciences?

Because the believers lived in a hostile world. Just by being Christians, they could find themselves facing persecution; they ought not supply their enemies with ammunition by also breaking laws or acting and speaking in an evil way. If the Christians’ lives were above reproach, unbelievers would end up ashamed of their slander when they speak maliciously against them. They would realize that they had done nothing more than slander good behavior (also translated “conduct,” see 1:15), an action that should make anyone ashamed. The word “slander” means to speak evil of another in order to destroy his or her good reputation.

That the believers should have good behavior in Christ refers to their relationship with their Lord and Savior. The only way to have a completely clear conscience and to live a life that is above reproach is to trust Christ and be transformed by the Holy Spirit.

This verse is much like 2:12, where Peter urged believers to act honorably before unbelievers. In 2:12, Peter wrote that if the unbelievers see the “honorable deeds” of the believers, they might end up glorifying God. In this verse, however, the reaction of the accusing unbelievers is quite different. Instead of glorifying God when they see the good behavior of believers, they persist in their slander. Thus, these evil people will be ashamed (or “put to shame”), referring to disgrace before God. They will be defeated, but will refuse to admit it; they will be wrong, but will refuse to turn to God.

ABOVE CRITICISM

You may not be able to keep people from slandering you, but you can at least stop supplying them with ammunition. As long as you do what is right, their accusations will be empty and will only embarrass them.

Helping your neighbors and contributing your service to the community will silence the detractors and keep your conduct above criticism.

3:17 It is better, if it is God's will, to suffer for doing good than for doing evil. Peter referred to the advice he had given servants in 2:19–20, suggesting that if Christians were to suffer, it should never be for wrongdoing. Here he expanded the teaching to all believers: If they had to suffer at all, they should suffer only for doing good, not for doing evil.

Why would it be better to suffer for doing good than for doing evil? Peter gave the answer in the next verse. Because Christ suffered unjustly so that people might be saved, so believers ought to patiently endure unjust suffering because such an attitude is a powerful witness that could lead unbelievers to Christ. Those who deservedly suffer for wrongdoing can hardly witness to unbelievers. Peter wanted his readers to know that no matter what happened to them, they should keep their integrity, their faith, and their clear consciences. In the end, God would bring them to glory and punish their enemies.

3:18 For Christ died for sins once for all, the righteous for the unrighteous, to bring you to God. The results of Christ's innocent suffering confirm Peter's point in 3:13–17 that unjustly persecuted believers can consider themselves blessed. Christ suffered, died, and although he seemed to have been defeated, he rose again to great glory. The believers could be confident and trust God for the outcome of their suffering. The word for at the beginning of a verse sometimes indicates that the writer was going to quote from a well-known hymn or liturgy.

Some Greek manuscripts say that Christ "suffered" for sins (using the word *pascho*), which makes the connection between this verse and 3:17 even more obvious; other manuscripts use *apothnesko* (died), as here. In any case, Christ's suffering resulted in his death for sins. Christ paid the penalty for the sins of every person. Jesus Christ, God's Son, the righteous one ("righteous" is singular), died for the sins of unrighteous people ("unrighteous" is plural). Peter had previously quoted from Isaiah 53:9, that Christ "committed no sin, and no deceit was found in his mouth" (2:22 NIV). Only because Christ was perfect

and righteous could he be an acceptable sacrifice for our sins. Only by paying the penalty that sin deserved could Christ bring sinners to God. Only by having our penalty paid can we sinners approach the holy God. Only by Christ's sacrifice can unholy people have a relationship with the holy God. Presently believers have spiritual access into God's very presence; in the future, we will actually dwell in God's presence.

Christ's death was once for all. His sacrifice was sufficient. No one else will have to die for people's sins; Christ will not have to die again. The words "for all" do not refer to people, but rather are a translation of the Greek word hapax (once) and thus mean that Christ died "once for all time."

He was put to death in the flesh, but made alive in the spirit. But Christ's death for sins was not the end of the story. While he had been put to death in the flesh, he was afterward made alive in the spirit. Scholars have suggested various interpretations for these words. For example, the NIV translates the last phrase as "made alive by the Spirit." This phrase translates the Greek word pneumati, a word that could refer to the Holy Spirit or to Christ's divine spirit, in contrast to his human flesh (or "body" as in NIV). Not everyone agrees as to whether or not "spirit" should be capitalized, referring to the Holy Spirit. Part of the answer depends on whether the Greek preposition en should be understood as "in" or "by."

To follow the NIV rendering of this verse, Christ's body died, but he was brought back to life by the Holy Spirit. Some scholars suggest, however, that the sentence should be grammatically parallel. Thus it would not read, "in the body ... by the Spirit," but instead would read, as above, "in the flesh ... in the spirit." These scholars look to similar references in other New Testament books to prove their points. However, the problem still remains because the Greek word pneuma can be translated "spirit" or "Spirit" (referring to the Holy Spirit).

Some scholars explain the contrast to death in the flesh and life in the Spirit this way: Christ died to his former mode of life ("flesh") but lived on in another mode. His spirit did not die and have to be brought to life again; rather, although he had lived and died fully as a human, he began to live a spiritual "resurrection" life. This verse, then, speaks of two modes of existence: first, life in the flesh ended by death on the cross; second, a resurrected state of being, called "in spirit." But this view should be rejected because it separates Christ's human and

divine nature.

Other scholars correctly emphasize that Jesus Christ was both human and divine throughout his life (see Luke 3:31; 2 Timothy 2:8).

Maintaining a clear emphasis on both Christ's human nature and his divine nature is important for a complete understanding of the gospel. In Christ's humanity, we see his identification with us and his excellent moral example. In Christ's divinity, we have one capable to take our place, to receive the punishment for sin that is due us. Christ's divinity and humanity cannot be separated into modes. This last view maintains that Christ's "flesh" and his "spirit" are not different parts of Christ or different "times" of his existence; rather, they regard Christ from different perspectives or spheres. This is the view we will take. Christ's "flesh" died, yet his flesh was made alive again in a glorified state. His being made alive "in the spirit" refers to the paradox that, although he died as a man, his eternal spirit and glorified body were restored to life by God's power. He came back to life not as a spirit without a body. He had a body, but one that was not hindered by normal human limitations.

Christ now lives in the spiritual realm—the realm of permanence and eternity. Christ lives "in the spirit" because of his death and resurrection. In that state, he brings us to God. He opens the way and ushers us into God's presence.

Resources: Rev. Brad Standfest, Bruce B. Barton, John, Life Application Bible Commentary, Bruce B. Barton, 1 Peter, 2 Peter, Jude, Life Application Bible Commentary

Sermon Notes:

1 Corinthians 15:3-8

For what I received I passed on to you as of first importance: that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, that he was buried, that he was raised on the third day according to the Scriptures, and that he appeared to Peter, and then to the Twelve. After that, he appeared to more than five hundred of the brothers at the same time, most of whom are still living, though some have fallen asleep. Then he appeared to James, then to all the apostles, and last of all he appeared to me also, as to one abnormally born.

Jesus is Alive... That should change everything about our lives...

I Titled this Sermon- "Sent by Jesus" ...

The Overwhelming Theme in the Great Commission was Jesus' words:
"I am Sending You"

Read John 20:21

We have the Authority of Jesus Christ backing us...
Christians...We have all of Heaven on our side!

[Listen to my Industrial Paint Business Story]

As a Christian Music Artist David Crowder wrote in his lyrics:

"Praise the everlasting King, He is everything... Praise Him...Praise Him... Who's gonna stop the King- No One, No One!!

We are witnesses to the Good News

Here's a Fact: Good News is only Good if people hear it!

Don't you hate it when you're the last person to find out about something important...

Isaiah the Prophet Declared this: How beautiful are the feet that bring good news, who proclaim peace... who bring good tidings, who proclaim salvation... (Isa. 52:7)

Let me ask you this: Does it bother you that Billions of people have No Hope in Jesus Christ?

"There are 3.7 Billion people in the top 3 world Religions. One group teaches a belief in reincarnation after death where you may become an animal. But the goal of the soul is to one day achieve liberation to a supreme soul called Moeksha... Where you gain Nirvana. Another teaches the soul is reborn into the Karma state. The goal of your recycled birth is to gain your own righteousness that leads to ultimate consciousness attaining peace and liberation. The last believes in Holy wars when necessary to convert the Infidels who don't believe in Allah nor the morals he teaches in their religious book. Heaven can be achieved by one's own righteousness to Allah or becoming a martyr for your faith and going directly to paradise and receiving multiple virgins."

Look we may want to laugh at this... But 4 billion people believe in this stuff..

Here's what Jesus said when he looked out into a world that was lost... Read Matthew 9:35-38

There is a Harvest Field out there... if not you than who?
Like I said last week, someone encouraged you in life... someone planted a seed... Wbn't you do the same?

I want to close with this Passage: Read 1 Peter 3:15-16 & 18

As stated last week: If you're the only Bible or Jesus people are exposed too... What are they Seeing and Reading?

Devotional Questions

- **In John 20:21 Jesus says, he is "sending you."** Do you find comfort or strength knowing you're not alone? Do you believe you have all of heaven backing you?
- **Read Corinthians 15:3-8:** "What key elements of the Gospel message does Paul highlight in these verses, and what significance do the appearances of Jesus to different individuals hold in establishing the truth of the resurrection?"
- **"How does Peter instruct believers to respond to those who question their faith or ask about the hope they have in Christ?** What does he emphasize about suffering for doing good in these verses?" Read 1 Peter 3:15-18
- **What does Isaiah say? Look up Isaiah 52:7**
- **Read Matthew 9:35-38:** "What was the ministry of Jesus as described in these verses, and how does Jesus' response to the crowds guide us in understanding the importance of praying for God to send out workers into the harvest field?"

The Resurrection Commission

Opening Monologue

We just celebrated the Resurrection of Jesus Christ. The Resurrection is only the beginning of what we now know as Christianity. “The disciples were called Christians first at Antioch.” (Acts 11:26b)

Now Jesus depends on us to carry the Good News of his resurrection to our hometown, to family and friends alike. In case you don't know... it's not a SECRET!

The Resurrection Commission came from Jesus in these passages. We will look at these in this week's sermon. Luke 24:47-49, MT. 28:18-20, JN. 20:21-23, Mark 16:15-18. What do all of these words/passages from Jesus have in common? “Go outside of your home and impact the world around you with the Good News of Jesus Christ.” (PB's paraphrase)

We must not become distracted by this world. We must not think it's someone else's job to tell others about Christ. If not you then who? Someone invested in you...someone planted a seed, didn't they? Don't become a complacent Christian.

You don't need a degree in theology, and you don't have to have the Bible memorized. Be you, and look for opportunities to share or be the hands and feet of Jesus. We are going to dig deeper into this in this week's sermon. Further down in the APP, I will also provide conversation starters to help you engage others towards a conversation about Jesus.

Remember, Jesus ripped you out of darkness!

“But you are a chosen people, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people belonging to God, that you may declare the praises of him who called you out of darkness into his wonderful light.” 1 Peter 2:9

Blessings in Christ,
Rev. Brad Standfest

To Listen to this week's Sermon: “The Resurrection Commission.” Go to the Sermon tab here in our APP or use the links to our website or YouTube Channel where you can also listen to our Sermons:

Web: <https://www.almontvineyardchurch.org/media>

You Tube: <https://www.youtube.com/@almontvineyardchurch>

Key Sermon Text

Luke 24: 45-48

<https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Luke+24%3A+45-48&version=NIV>

John 20: 19-22

<https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Luke+24%3A+45-48&version=NIV>

Matthew 28: 18-20

<https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Matthew+28%3A+18-20&version=NIV>

Mark 16:15-18

<https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Mark+16%3A15-18+&version=NIV>

1 Peter 2:9

<https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=1+Peter+2%3A9+&version=NIV>

Conversation Starters:

- I have been going to church... It's pretty cool... Do you ever go?
- I have been reading the Bible and stories of Jesus... It's amazing! Have you ever read any of the Bible?
- I just read the other day that Jesus Resurrected from the dead... What do you think of that?
- I started reading the Bible and I can't put it down... You ever read any of it?
- I heard a person tell me to Pray more... And so I have... and things are changing in my life.
- I know this may sound weird, but I prayed the other day and I felt God's presence come over me...Has that ever happened to you?
- Let me ask you a weird question... Do you believe in Prayer?
- [Situation Happens] Someone tells you some bad news about something or someone. Listen Carefully and Give them your attention. Ask them if you can Pray for them... If they say yes- Do a Simple prayer (not long) right away.

- What did you do this past weekend? Man, I went to church, and it was like God was talking right to me... it was unreal.
 - [Situation] Coworker, Friend, Family, Etc... Says my back, knee, head hurts... Wow! Sorry about that... Can I pray for you?-Do it right then
 - I swore in front of my kids the other day and I felt so bad.
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Digging Deeper: THE GREAT COMMISSION

Luke 24:45-48, John 20:19-22, Matthew 28:18-20, Mark 16:15-18

The manifestation of the Lord Jesus here recorded, was, in some respects, the most remarkable of all His appearing's during the forty days. It was the only one by special appointment, the others being merely incidental and mostly unexpected. This He had arranged for even before His crucifixion, saying to His disciples, "After that I am risen, I will go before you into Galilee;" and this had been the message of the angel to the women on the morning of His resurrection: "Go quickly, and tell His disciples that He is risen from the dead; and goeth before you into Galilee; there shall ye see Him: lo, I have told you." This also was the direct message of Christ Himself as He first met the women returning from the sepulchre: "Go tell my brethren that they go into Galilee, and there shall they see me." This, then, had been the special appointment for His great meeting with all His disciples, and it seems a little strange, in view of the urgency and emphasis with which the message had been given that they were so slow in obeying it, and in meeting their appointment with Him. They tarried in the neighborhood of Jerusalem at least eight days after the resurrection, for there were certainly two Sabbaths in immediate succession in which He appeared to them there. Were they waiting for Thomas to join their number, or were they needlessly tardy in beginning their journey? Perhaps the cause of the delay was in order that all the disciples might receive the message and have time to attend the solemn convocation. The place appointed we are not told; it was a mountain in Galilee. It would scarcely be Mount Hermon, the Mount of Transfiguration, for that would be more remote and difficult of access than was necessary. It may have been the same mountain where the sermon of Matt. 5:8, was delivered, the famous Horns of Hattin, where He had first proclaimed the principles of His kingdom to the world. It is probable that the five hundred brethren, of whom Paul speaks in the

15th chapter of First Corinthians as having all seen Him at once, were the persons present at this gathering. They formed the surviving few who still remained faithful after all the tragedy of the crucifixion.

At length they have come together and are waiting for His appearing. It was the first great missionary convention that the world ever held, and it is most remarkable that the only appointment that Jesus made with His disciples after the resurrection was a missionary one. What a solemn emphasis it gives to the great commission and the glorious work of evangelizing the world, to fully realize the dignity with which Christ has invested this great occasion! At length they were assembled, and the Lord appeared in their midst. His coming to them seems to have differed in the form of its manifestation from any of His previous appearings. The Greek word, translated “came to them,” has a special shade of meaning, implying the gradual approach—“He came toward them,” becoming visible at first at some distance and majestically coming nearer, until at length He stood before them, coming down, perhaps, from the lofty mountain top which rose above their heads. His appearance was impressive enough to throw most of them upon their faces in adoring reverence; yet there were some, even here, who doubted His identity.

Then He addressed to them His great and important message, containing, first, the claim of His kingly power and prerogatives; secondly, His great commission to them to go forth and establish His kingdom among all nations; and thirdly, the promise of His presence through all the days until the end of the age. Let us realize, as we dwell upon these three great themes, that this was not a message to the eleven but to all the disciples of Jesus Christ; to all the days until the end of the age; for the company He had in His mind’s eye must have included all that gathered around Him and would take up His commands even unto the end of the age of which He spoke. It included us, if we will meet the conditions of His promise and the responsibilities of His great command.

Commentary

Jesus instructs His disciples regarding their duty after His departure (18-20)

All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth:

This commission that follows is given in light of the authority of Jesus. This indicates that this is an authoritative command, not a suggestion. It is the same idea as if an officer reminded a private of his rank before he gave the order. Because He has this authority, He can send whomever He wills to do whatever He pleases.

“ ‘All’ dominates Matthew 28:18–20 and ties these verses together: all authority, all nations, all things, all the days.” (Carson)

“Power in the hands of some people is dangerous, but power in the hands of Christ is blessed. Oh, let him have all power! Let him do what he will with it, for he cannot will anything but that which is right, and just, and true, and good.” (Spurgeon)

“We believe in this power, and we rest in it.” (Spurgeon)

- We do not seek any other power.
- We defy every other power.
- We know our powerlessness will not hinder the progress of His kingdom.
- We give all our power unto Him.

“If Jesus Christ were not equal with the Father, could he have claimed this equality of power, without being guilty of impiety and blasphemy? Surely not; and does he not, in the fullest manner, assert his Godhead, and his equality with the Father, by claiming and possessing all the authority in heaven and earth?” (Clarke)

Go therefore: Because Jesus has this authority, we are **therefore** commanded to **go**. **It is His authority that sends us, His authority that guides us, and His authority that empowers us.** His work and message would continue to the world through His disciples.

“These verses thus magnificently conclude the final section ... but they also bring the whole Gospel to a dynamic conclusion, which is in fact more a beginning than an end.” (France)

Jesus said, “Go” to some very imperfect disciples. “Who is to go out of that first band of disciples? It is Peter, the rash and the headstrong. It is John, who sometimes wishes to call fire from heaven to destroy men. It is Philip, with whom the Savior has been so long, and yet he has not known him. It is Thomas, who must put his finger into the print

of the nails, or he will not believe him. Yet the Master says to them, 'Go ye; all power is given unto me, therefore go ye. You are as good for my purpose as anybody else would be. There is no power in you, I know, but then all power is in me, therefore go ye.' " (Spurgeon)

Make disciples of all the nations: The command is to make disciples, not merely converts or supporters of a cause. The idea behind the word disciples is of scholars, learners, or students.

Make disciples reminds us that disciples are made. Disciples are not spontaneously created at conversion; they are the product of a process involving other believers. This making of disciples is the power of spreading Christianity.

Of all the nations: In His previous ministry, Jesus deliberately restricted His work to the Jewish people (Matthew 15:24) and previously sent His disciples with the same restriction (Matthew 10:6). Only in rare exceptions did Jesus minister among the Gentiles (Matthew 15:21-28). Now all of that is in the past, and the disciples are commissioned to take the gospel to all the nations. There is no place on earth where the gospel of Jesus should not be preached and where disciples should not be made.

"The aim of Jesus' disciples, therefore, is to make disciples of all men everywhere, without distinction." (Carson)

"Christ commands them to go and baptize the nations: but how much time was past before such a journey was taken! And when the time was now come that this work should be begun, Peter doth not enter upon it without a previous admonition given him from heaven."
(Lightfoot, cited in Clarke)

Baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit: Significantly, when Jesus told them to go to all the nations, He did not tell them to circumcise those who became disciples. Instead, they were to baptize them, suggesting the break with traditional Judaism.

"In the name is literally 'into the name', implying entrance into an allegiance." (France)

The words and context certainly indicate that it is disciples who are baptized, those of age who can be taught and who can observe the things Jesus commanded.

In the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit: “The experience of God in these three Persons is the essential basis of discipleship. At the same time the singular noun name (not ‘names’) underlines the unity of the three Persons.” (France)

Teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you: Disciples are made through teaching. This teaching is not with words only, but with the power of the always-present Jesus. He will be present with His people until the job of making disciples is done—until the end of the age.

“Hitherto Jesus alone has been the teacher, and the verb has not been used by Matthew of his disciples’ ministry. Now they take over his role of teaching.” (France)

The content of the teaching must be all things that I have commanded you. The followers of Jesus are responsible to present the whole counsel of God to those who are made disciples.

Lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age: Jesus sent His disciples with a mission to fulfill, but He did not send them alone. The promise of His constant presence was more than enough to strengthen and guide the disciples as they obeyed Jesus in making disciples of all the nations.

The promise of His presence is complete. “The English adverb ‘always’ renders an expression found in the New Testament only here—strictly, ‘the whole of every day’. Not just the horizon is in view, but each day as we live it.” (Carson)

His presence means privilege, because we work with a Great King. Paul understood this principle well in 1 Corinthians 3:9, where he wrote: For we are God’s fellow workers. Since Jesus promised, “I am with you always,” then we work together with Him in all our service. We certainly work for Jesus, but more than that, we work with Jesus.

His presence means protection, because we are never out of His sight or supervision.

His presence means power, because as we fulfill this great command, we work in His name.

His presence means peace because it always reminds us that the church belongs to Jesus. It is His church, and His work. How, then, can we worry?

“When Christ saith, ‘I will be with you,’ you may add what you will; to protect you, to direct you, to comfort you, to carry on the work of grace in you, and in the end to crown you with immortality and glory. All this and more is included in this precious promise.” (Trapp)

JESUS GIVES THE GREAT COMMISSION / Mark 16:15-18

This paragraph represents a change of scene. This was another post-Resurrection appearance, the last to the remaining eleven disciples and other followers. This paragraph outlines Jesus’ final charge to his followers (see also Matthew 28:16–20). The phrase “And surely I am with you always” (Matthew 28:20 NIV) became, in this Gospel, a series of practical applications showing the disciples what Christ’s ongoing presence would mean in their lives. We must also obey Jesus’ final command, and we can also count on his presence as we go.

The Gospel of Mark is a record of the gospel (or Good News) from its beginning (1:1). As the book closes, the gospel does not end, but continues in the lives of Jesus’ followers. Jesus’ command is to go everywhere and preach the Good News.

16:15 And He said to them, “Go into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature.” This is the Great Commission. The disciples had been trained well, and they had seen the risen Lord. God had given Jesus authority over heaven and earth. On the basis of that authority, Jesus told his disciples to make more disciples as they preached, baptized, and taught. With this same authority, Jesus still commands us to tell others the Good News and make them disciples for the kingdom.

TRUE DISCIPLES

Jesus told his disciples to go into all the world, telling everyone that he had paid the penalty for sin and that those who believe in him can be forgiven and live eternally with God. Christian disciples today in all parts of the world are preaching this gospel to people who haven't heard about Christ. The driving power that carries missionaries around the world and sets Christ's church in motion is the faith that comes from the Resurrection. Do you ever feel as though you don't have the skill or determination to be a witness for Christ? You must personally realize that Jesus rose from the dead and lives for you today. As you grow in your relationship with Christ, he will give you both the opportunities and the inner strength to tell his message. We are to go—whether it is next door or to another country—and make disciples. It is not an option, but a command to all who call Jesus "Lord." We are not all evangelists in the formal sense, but we have all received gifts that we can use to help fulfill the Great Commission. As we obey, we have comfort in the knowledge that Jesus is always with us.

16:16 "The one who believes and is baptized will be saved; but the one who does not believe will be condemned." The disciples were to baptize people because baptism unites a believer with Jesus Christ in his or her death to sin and resurrection to new life. It is not the water of baptism that saves, but God's grace accepted through faith in Christ. Because of Jesus' response to the criminal on the cross who died with him, we know it is possible to be saved without being baptized (Luke 23:43). Jesus did not say that those who were not baptized would be condemned, but that those who did not believe would be condemned. Baptism alone, without faith, does not automatically bring a person to heaven. Those who refuse to believe will be condemned, regardless of whether or not they have been baptized. Baptism symbolizes submission to Christ, a willingness to live God's way, and identification with God's covenant people.

16:17-18 And these signs will accompany those who believe: In my name they will drive out demons; they will speak in new tongues; they will pick up snakes with their hands; and when they drink deadly poison, it will not hurt them at all; they will place their hands on sick people, and they will get well." These verses provide a summary of the miracles recorded in the book of Acts. As the disciples fulfilled their commission, and indeed as others believed and went on to spread the gospel, miraculous signs would accompany them. As

with Jesus' miracles, these signs would authenticate the source of their power and draw people to belief. Driving out demons was a power already given to the disciples (3:14-15). This power proved that the believers were not from Satan, but from God. Speaking in tongues was a spiritual gift that enabled people to speak in foreign languages. This occurred at Pentecost when the disciples "began to speak in other languages" (Acts 2:4 NRSV). The disciples placed their hands on many sick people and healed them (Acts 3:7-8; 5:12-16).

At times God would miraculously intervene on behalf of his followers. While some people have taken the "picking up snakes" literally, believing that one's faith is demonstrated by handling rattlesnakes, the writer seems to have in mind incidents like the one described in Acts 28:1-6 where Paul was bitten by a poisonous snake without being harmed. The same could happen for someone who accidentally drank deadly poison. This does not mean, however, that we should test God by putting ourselves in dangerous situations.

OFF THE DEEP END

Some sects practice handling poisonous snakes as a sign of faith. Such dramatic evidence tends to make some people more open to God's Word; however, others become more resistant.

Should Christians drink poison and make pets of rattlers as evidence of their faith?

No. God does not ask us to tempt the laws of nature. God is not a safety net for people who leap off of tall buildings. No one should build a religion on a portion of Scripture, not even in the New Testament canon. God calls us to live as new citizens in the eternal kingdom and to witness by word and service to God's love and power. Our witness should center on Jesus, not on superhero-type stunts.

Resources: Rev. Brad Standfest, Bruce B. Barton, Mark, Life Application Bible Commentary, David Guzik, Matthew, David Guzik's Commentaries on the Bible, A. B. Simpson, The Christ of the Forty Days

Sermon Notes:

The Resurrection of Jesus Christ was the most Amazing and Profound Event ever recorded in History...

The Resurrection of Christ should never grow Old or Cold in our Hearts... (2x)

We must not become Complacent Christians...

Let's be Honest... We have so many Distractions these days it's not funny...

We have the World in our Hands... For Real...

Are Smart Phones making us Smarter?

LOL: Hey Siri give me the number of Rite Aid in Imlay City... It gave me the number to Almont- I GOT MAD

I went to Alabama a month ago and I didn't even look at a Map... I just punched in the address in my truck

The Truth is... Distractions can lead is to Complacency...

Now... Let's get Real and Raw with your Faith...

When was the Last Time:

- When was the last time You talked to someone about your Faith in Christ other than another Christian?
- When was the last time You told a Non-Believer about the Resurrection of Jesus?
- When was the last time Your vocabulary (Your Words) reflected the Light of Christ... at Home/Work/ Marketplace?
- When was the lasty time Somebody Noticed something different about you?
- When was the last time Someone (Non-Christian) came to you for Prayer or Advice... Because you carry Jesus' Smile?

We are called by Jesus Christ to be his Witnesses...

It's Not... When we feel like it or when we get around to it...

If you're the Only Bible or Jesus People are exposed too... What are they Seeing & Reading?

**After the Resurrection Here's what Jesus told his followers:
(4
Resurrection Commissions)**

Read Luke 24: 45-48

Here's another Command: Read John 20: 19-22

Here's Another: Read Matthew 28:18-20

The Last One: Read Mark 16:15-18

Let me make this Fact known...

You don't Need a Biblical Degree to be the Hands & Feet of Jesus... You don't have to be a Pastor, Elder, or Missionary

Someone planted a seed in your life... You do the same...

Invest time into Someone... Be an Encourager...

I listed some Conversation Starters (See Above) you can use on someone to get them to talk about Jesus

I want to Close with this Passage: **Read 1 Peter 2:9**

Here are the Closing Life Applications from today's Sermon:

Resurrection Commission Truths

- We are all called to have a Christian Impact on this World... People/Community/Friends & Family
 - God put you on this Earth now... For such a time as this...
 - Don't try to be someone else... Be You... Look for ways to be Jesus' Hands & Feet
 - Ask the Holy Spirit to help you reach the Lost
 - Look for opportunities to let Your Light Shine
-

Devotional Questions

- 1. Has your faith in Christ become complacent in any way?**
- 2. What does Jesus command that we do? Read Luke 24:45-48 and John 20:19-22**
- 3. John 20:22 says, Jesus breathed on them, the Holy Spirit. When you think about witnessing/sharing your faith... do you ask the Holy Spirit for help?**
- 4. Do you have to fret about the words you're going to use? Read Luke 12:11-12... who's going to give you what you need?**
- 5. Matthew 28:18-20 tells Christians to do what?**
- 6. Read Mark 16:15-18: Do you believe this?**