

1. Sermon Introduction

- a. Context
 - i. Research on why people go to church = become closer to God
 - ii. This month we're giving you focused opportunities to draw close to God, to acknowledge his presence, and to invite him to speak to you.
- b. Series Review
 - i. Moses at the burning bush - notice, investigate & hear God's voice
 - ii. Israel at Mount Sinai - overcome the barriers (namely sin) that keep us from God - preparation/consecration = confession, repentance & faith (1 John 1:9, Hebrews 10:19, ABCs, Sorry/ThankYou/Please, RomansRoad), name our unworthiness/uncertainty/fear and draw near (Lucy & Aslan)
 - iii. Today: Acts 2 - Pentecost - the fire spreads!
 - iv. Three things to do: 1) Invite God to speak to you, 2) engage him through active participation, and 3) remember what you hear.
 - v. Three movements today
 - 1. Guided Prayer of Preparation
 - 2. Sermon
 - 3. Guided Prayer of Empowerment

2. Guided Prayer 1: Preparation to Enter God's Presence

- a. **1 John 1:5-2:2.** *This is the message we have heard from him and declare to you: God is light, and there is absolutely no darkness in him. 6 If we say, "We have fellowship with him," and yet we walk in darkness, we are lying and are not practicing the truth. 7 If we walk in the light as he himself is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus his Son cleanses us from all sin. 8 If we say, "We have no sin," we are deceiving ourselves, and the truth is not in us. 9 If we confess our sins, he is faithful and righteous to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. 10 If we say, "We have not sinned," we make him a liar, and his word is not in us. 2:1 My little children, I am writing you these things so that you may not sin. But if anyone does sin, we have an advocate with the Father—Jesus Christ the righteous one. 2 He himself is the atoning sacrifice for our sins, and not only for ours, but also for those of the whole world.*

- i. “I’m sorry” = confessing/admitting/owning our sin that keeps us from God
- ii. “Thank you” = trusting/receiving Jesus as the sacrifice that brings forgiveness
- iii. “Please” = fill me with your Spirit, help me walk in the light of your presence

3. Sermon

a. Acts 2:1-12

b. What does this mean - this miraculous filling of the Holy Spirit?

- i. **It meant the followers of Jesus experienced the presence of YHWH.** The same God who appeared at the burning bush and Sinai. There are clues the Jews would have recognized immediately.

1. This experience happened on the day of Pentecost.

- a. Greek: Pentecost = the Jewish Feast of Weeks/Harvest celebrated 50 days after the Passover which occurred just before the exodus from Egypt. This was when Israel commemorated the giving of the 10 Commandments at Sinai. Timeline: Passover/Exodus to Mt Sinai = 50 days
- b. God manifested his presence on the very day the Jews celebrated the day he descended on Mount Sinai.

2. Not only the day, but the experience itself repeated Sinai.

- a. Acts 2 sound of wind/storm = Ex 19 thunder/lightning
- b. Acts 2 tongues of fire = Ex 19 mountain on fire
- c. Acts 2 voices/languages = Ex 19 God’s voice
- d. All were clear signs that they were experiencing the presence of YHWH just like their ancestors did. This was significant - fits into the stream of God progressively revealing himself to his people.
 - i. Also moves the stream closer to us. God’s presence was not only for OT Israel.
 - ii. What does all this mean for us? **Followers of Jesus can experience the presence of the living God.**

3. Scholars/Jews recognize the signs immediately, but Luke doesn't point them out. Not the main point of the text, which leads to another layer of meaning? What does this mean?

ii. It meant the followers of Jesus were empowered by his Spirit.

1. Purpose = rest of Acts, NT, and church history
2. **Acts 1:8.** Jesus said to his disciples, “you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes upon you, and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, Judea, Samaria and to the ends of the earth.”
 - a. Baton-pass from Jesus to his followers. His earthly ministry was teaching, training, and investing. Now his Spirit would empower them as witnesses.
 - b. Acts 2 was Jesus' promised empowerment and is the main focus of Luke in writing the account.
3. This empowerment benefitted Jesus' followers but it was not ultimately for them; it was for the sake of others, for the sake of the kingdom Christ established in his ministry on earth.
 - a. Not an earthly kingdom. Jesus' mission was building the eternal spiritual kingdom of his father.
 - b. When he ascended and gave the HS to his followers it was for the express purpose of continuing his kingdom-building mission.
 - i. Acts 2 cont: Peter preaches - 3000 new followers
 - ii. The kingdom grew immediately, continued in the coming days & weeks, and expanded outward.
 - c. What does all this mean for us? **Followers of Jesus are empowered by his Spirit to build his kingdom.**

iii. It meant people far from God would become empowered followers of Jesus.

1. **Acts 2:38-39.** Peter's conclusion/explanation to all who were listening. What does all this mean? It means to 'repent and be baptized, each of you, in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins, and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. For the promise is for you and for your children, and for all

who are far off, as many as the Lord our God will call.”

2. Good news for us! The experience and empowerment of God was not just for the 120 disciples in the house that day. And not just for those in Jerusalem. It is for YOU. For me.
 - a. When we repent, when we’re baptized, when we take on the name of Jesus and are forgiven of our sins, we also will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. An amazing promise we can claim today.
 - b. What does this mean for us? **Even if you’re far from God today, you can be forgiven and receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.**
3. Repent = turn and go another direction.
 - a. Many of us have recognized and repented of our sin at some point. But repentance has never been a one-time event. It’s a new lifestyle of turning away from our natural, selfish inclinations and turning toward God - discovering his power for living in his kingdom.
 - b. You may need to repent and receive the Holy Spirit for the first time today. If so, you can pray the prayer we began with - “I’m sorry, thank you, please.”
- c. We all need the power Jesus promised. For the early followers, the experience of God’s presence came before the empowerment of the Holy Spirit. I think the same is true for us, and it’s why it’s so important for us to learn to engage God and experience his presence.
 - i. So what does all this mean for us? **The experience of God’s presence comes before the empowerment of his Spirit.**
 1. In other words, if we want to know God’s power we must experience his presence. We need to learn how to engage him.
 2. Jesus’ disciples wanted to learn as well. They saw Jesus engaging the Father in prayer and said, “Lord, teach us to pray.”
 - a. In Luke 11, we have the way he taught them to engage God - The Lord’s Prayer. We’re going to let Jesus’ words guide us now.

4. Guided Prayer 2: Empowerment to Live in God's Kingdom

Introduction

For the next few minutes, we will walk through the Lord's Prayer and notice how Jesus is teaching us to engage God for the building up of his kingdom. We will pause throughout leaving space to pray our own prayers based on the pattern of this important prayer.

First Movement

Our Father

Notice the prayer begins with "our." Jesus reminds us that we are welcomed into a new community, a family of people committed to the ways of Jesus. We don't walk alone. We follow Jesus together.

He also invites us to direct our prayers personally. God is not a distant, unconcerned deity. God is personal. God is overflowing with love for you personally.

Second Movement

Our Father in heaven

Jesus is speaking not only about a location we hope to reside when we die. Jesus is telling us that God is every nook and cranny of creation - both spiritual and physical. God is always with us. God is even closer than the air we breathe.

Third Movement

Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name.

Hallowed simply means holy or sacred. God is set apart for reverence. God is King, creator and sustainer of the universe. The depth of God's power and authority is too great to comprehend.

Let's take a deep breath together. God is with us now. We don't need to earn our way into God's presence, we just need to turn our attention to God. Take another deep breath. God is closer than the air we breathe.

Consider the one you are addressing this morning. Our holy God who loves us more deeply than we can possibly comprehend.

And finally think about who God is. Who do you need God to be in this season? Provider? Comforter? Healer? Sustainer? Take a moment and tell God.

15-Second Pause

Fourth Movement

Your kingdom come; your will be done on earth as it is in heaven.

The kingdom of God is where what God wants to be done is done. It is a place marked by deep love, authentic joy, and abiding peace.

Jesus invites us to live with him in the kingdom, to align our lives with his teaching, and serve his kingdom today.

Express your desire for God's kingdom to come in your own words. Is there a specific place you are longing for God's kingdom to come? Tell God about it now.

20-Second Pause

Fifth Movement

Give us this day our daily bread.

In the original language it reads, "Give us today the bread we need for today."

What do you need today? What concerns are on your mind, for yourself, for your friends and family, for the body of Christ? Jesus invites us to bring these needs to God in prayer.

What do you need today? Bring your requests to the Lord.

20-Second Pause

Sixth Movement

Forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us.

Notice Jesus invites us to consider our own brokenness before forgiving others. If we are willing to examine our own lives first, name the ways we have missed the mark, and ask for forgiveness, we will find ourselves humble enough to truly forgive others.

Take a moment to consider how you have fallen short this week and ask for God's forgiveness.

15-Second Pause

Forgiving those who have hurt us is not a way of dismissing the hurt. It is simply a way of letting go. When we hold onto unforgiveness we find ourselves trapped, stuck in the past offense. But Jesus invites us into the freedom of forgiveness, to let go.

Who do you need to forgive? Who is God bringing to mind this morning? Take a moment and express your forgiveness or even your desire to forgive.

20-Second Pause

Seventh Movement

Lead us not into temptation; but deliver us from evil.

Jesus is teaching us to pray against the evil one. In scripture, Satan is not a proper name. It is a word that means 'the accuser.' Perhaps you know the accuser's voice as one that whispers, "You won't fit in if you don't have that." "No one will know if you exaggerate a little to make yourself look good." "If you don't succeed, you're worthless." Or maybe the voice says "See. You can't do it. Who could love you?"

When we pray against evil, we are standing against those voices whispering lies into our ears. These lies stand against the truth that we are loved. God's love for you is the very foundation of your identity.

Take a moment to ask God to help you in times of struggle. Can you identify what lies the accuser whispers in your ear? Ask God to help you live grounded in your beloved-ness.

20-Second Pause

Eighth Movement

We're going to close this segment by praying the Lord's Prayer aloud together, and then we're going to move into another time of engaging God through worship. Allow God to continue speaking to you as we pray and sing.

**Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name.
Your kingdom come, your will be done on earth as it is in heaven.
Give us this day our daily bread,
And forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us.
And lead us not into temptation; but deliver us from evil,
For yours is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory forever.
Amen.**