

Introduction: Pg. _____

We are coming to a watershed moment. It is a point in history, that will not only change these faithful followers of Jesus, but will change history itself. God is a promise maker and a promise keeper. Just as he promised the Messiah, who would redeem through suffering (cross) and triumph over death (resurrection), he also promised his empowering presence to rest on his people to help them do everything he calls us to do.

The disciples would never be the same.

**“Never the Same”
Acts 1:12-2:13**

History would never be the same.

And the same is true for us, if we have the humility to accept and live the story.

Read 1:14-26

The Point: Reflect the Spirit’s transforming presence through prayer and a powerful life.

I. A church united in prayer will never be the same (Acts 1:13-26).

Who is Praying?

- After the apostles listened to Jesus’ post-resurrection teaching and saw him ascend to heaven before their very eyes, they returned to Jerusalem and stayed in “the upper room,” possibly the same room where they shared the Passover meal with Jesus.
- With the apostles were “the women,” possibly the wives of the apostles, very possibly the women who witnessed his crucifixion. And some very notable names: Jesus’ mother, Mary and his brothers, the biological sons of Mary *and* Joseph [Mark 6:3 tells us their names: James, Judas, Joseph, and Simon - which is amazing because they once did not believe in him.].
- What were they doing? They were (don’t miss this word) “DEVOTING themselves to prayer.”

United Prayer

- And they prayed with “one accord.” They were unified!
- Some see verse 14 as the first summary of life in the early church. I can’t argue with them... As you read through Acts, mark the places where you see the role of prayer in the early church!
- But they weren’t just praying, their hearts were locked together. Their motivations, praises, and requests were all aimed in the same direction.
- Listen to me carefully: unity is hard to build and easy to destroy. We must fight for it. We must protect the unity we enjoy. Speak words that build one another up. If there is an issue or disagreement, have the courage to go have a face to face conversation, not the cowardice to talk behind each other’s back.
- Prayer both reflects *and* builds unity.

Let’s keep building a culture of prayer at Redemption Hill. I’m so thankful for what God has done over the past 5 months, but we’re only getting started.

- Lent kicks off Wednesday... where we join in with other Christians around the world to journey toward Easter in seeking God through fasting from material wants and needs, in order to feast on

God and seek more and more and more of him. Check your inbox tomorrow evening for encouragement and detail (fasting, reading, prayer).

- Groups Night of Prayer (Feb. 26-28)
- Night of Prayer - March 8th
- Dreams... Prayer Circles... [Tufts Prayer... every morning at 7:30a.!!] Friday am @ my house (6:15a). (Find the time that works for you).

Let's be a church that assaults the gates of hell and knock until the doors of heaven open with God's power through our prayers.

T: We see them united in prayer for two things: Guidance and the Spirit's Coming

Prayer for Guidance

- One of the first and most important decision they had to make regarded their leadership.
- The man named Judas, by his own evil heart and the influence of the evil one, Satan, decided to betray his mentor for 30 pieces of silver.
- We're talking about one of Jesus' 12 closest followers! This should be a warning to us.
 - Warning from Judas' life. Explain v. 18 briefly - apparent contradiction.
 - Money/Field
 - Death by hanging or headlong (See ESV notes)
- They decided they should fill his absence and choose another apostle to bring them back to a group of 12.
- Why 12? Why not just keep 11?
 - Scripture - the Word. 19-21
 - Psalm 69:25 (v. 20)
 - Psalm 109:8 (Let another take his office)
 - The centrality of the Word (sidebar??)
 - The apostles knew the Word. (Keep up with those 30 days of reading! Copy, paste, send!)
 - Spirit-inspired word: The Holy Spirit said (16)
 - 12 tribes: Represent a new Israel, a new people of God.
 - Criteria - 21-23 and why it's important (verse 8)
- This group, after praying intensely, left it in the Lord's hands by an extreme measure.
- They casted lots: probably by marked stones shaken out of a pot. In the OT, casting lots was always seen to be determined by God. There is no command in NT or teaching that we should do so today.
- The lot fell on Matthias. He was chosen by God, through the prayers of God's people to be one who would continue building the foundation of the church in these earliest days.

T: They prayed for Guidance and they prayed for the coming of the Spirit.

Prayer and the Coming of the Spirit

- The fact that they were praying for the coming of the Spirit is implied, and I believe it is clearly implied by Jesus instruction to them to *wait*.
- There is an intimate relationship between waiting and prayer.
- What God says he will do, HE WILL DO, AND YET, God has also said that he ordains our prayers as the vehicle for his promises to be fulfilled and his power to be made known.
- Pray the promises DOWN! Pray them down!
 - God, you said, "you would lead me in paths of righteousness for your name's sake." God, lead me now.

- Jesus, you said, "You're coming back." So here I am, saying, "Come, Lord Jesus."
- God does not mind us saying, "God, now?"
- Pic: If I promise my kids, "I'll take you to get ice cream this week." I don't mind if they ask me every single day until I take them.

PLEASE don't miss the clear pattern of the NT: **Prayer precedes the Spirit's power!**

- What was Jesus doing before the Spirit descended on him (like a dove)? That's right. *Praying!*
- Hmm... Should we be surprised to find the disciples spending time in prayer before they receive the Spirit's power?
- Luke seems to "repeat" the idea "that the grand object of prayer is the gift of the Spirit." (Lampe, via Morris, 45).
- When you lack power, check your prayer life! Keep asking God for the Spirit's work in you! (Luke 11:13)

T: Which is where Luke takes us in chapter 2. *Not only will a united, praying people never be the same...*

II. A people baptized by the Spirit will never be the same (2:1-13).

Read 2:1-13

Pentecost

- Pentecost was the second of three harvest festivals celebrated by the Jews pilgrimaging to Jerusalem (between Passover and Tabernacles. It occurred seven weeks after Passover, and often saw larger crowds due to the weather that time of year.
- It was also known as the Feast of Harvest, and it's hard not to imagine that God looked down from heaven with a smile at the great harvest of souls that would step into his kingdom on this day (as we will see next week).

T: But this would Pentecost would be like no other.

What we see in verses 2-4 the undeniable manifestation of God's Spirit baptizing the followers of Jesus as represented in three other-worldly, supernatural phenomena: sound, sight, and surprising speech.

1. Verse 2 says "a sound from heaven like a mighty rushing wind filled the house."

- The Greek word *pneuma* has the double connotation of both wind and Spirit.
- Just as the breath/wind of God brought life in Ezekiel's (37:9-14) vision of dry bones, so Jesus says in John 3:7-8: "Do not marvel that I said to you, 'You must be born again.' The wind blows where it wishes... So it is with everyone who is born of the Spirit.
- The wind is a sign of the Spirit, and...

2. The howling wind was followed by fire.

- As the wind is howling, a great flame divided into the appearance of tongues and rested on each person one gathered.
- Like the wind, fire has rich association with the Spirit and presence of God.
 - God called Moses out of bush of fire (Ex 3).
 - God led the people of Israel through the wilderness by night with a pillar of fire (Ex 13).
 - John the Baptist spoke of the greatness of Jesus: "I baptize you with water, but "he will baptize you with *the Holy Spirit and with fire.*"
 - *If you are in Christ, that has happened to you! The fire of God's presence is in you!*

3. And God enabled them to speak in languages they had never spoken in before!
- We know these were actual languages because of vv. 5-7.
 - This experience of the Spirit's enablement was different than what Paul speaks of to the Corinthians.
 - Acts 2 are intelligible languages. 1 Corinthians 12-14 are non-intelligible, but also utterance of the Spirit.
 - Every case of the Spirit's working is a sign pointing to a greater reality! Jesus, cross, empty tomb.
 - That's why we consistently see wonders followed by the witness of the Word.

Baptism vs. Filling

All of this was the fulfillment of Jesus' promise to Baptize them with the Spirit (Acts 1:5)! Interestingly, the term Luke uses in verse 4 is "filling." In other places in Acts, we will see the Spirit described as "poured out" (2:17; 10:45); "coming upon" (8:16; 10:44; 11:15) and being "received" (2:38; 10:47) to describe how new believers in Jesus received the Spirit as a gift from God.

I believe it is helpful to distinguish Spirit-baptism from subsequent fillings of God's Spirit as we will see in Acts, which we are to continuously seek, as we saw two weeks ago in Ephesians 5:18: "Be being filled with the Spirit."

Spirit Baptism

Spirit-baptism (the Spirit immersing, covering, engulfing) **describes the experience of every believer when they receive the Holy Spirit at the moment of conversion to Jesus through repentance and faith. It is an unrepeatable and permanent gift.**

- Again, if you are IN CHRIST, you have been baptized into the Spirit who now makes you more like Jesus and empowers you to serve others like Jesus.
- But the disciples experience at Pentecost was unique. Why?
- They already believed in Jesus and were born again before Pentecost. But had they received the Spirit? No, at least not in this way. When Jesus breathes on them in John 20:22 and says: "Receive the Holy Spirit." it seems likely it was a picture of what was to come (an acted-out prophesy of what would happen) at Pentecost.
- Acts 2 marks the "point of transition" between the way the Spirit worked during the Old Covenant with his temporary presences and empowerment, and how he now works in the New Covenant as the constant empowering presence of God in us. Aren't you glad to be living on this side of the cross?
- That's Spirit-baptism

Spirit Filling

"To be filled with the Spirit is to come under progressively more intense and intimate influence of the Spirit." (Storms) It continues to happen after conversion in varying degrees. It is repeatable but not permanent.

- Fullness can be experienced as both steady waves vs. Spontaneous WAVES
- Acts 6 can describe Stephen "full of the Spirit" referring to his consistent character.
- At the same time, Acts 7 can say that Stephen was full of the Spirit with a special, momentary wave of anointing to endure being murdered, even seeing a vision of Jesus, and enabled to forgive his murderers as he falls to his death!
- Give me more and more and more of you God (Balloon)

Supernatural Speech: The primary manifestation of this new coming of the Spirit is the fulfillment of Jesus promise in

“But you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth.” (Acts 1:8)

There is so much to love here: God fulfilling his promises; Jesus pushing his kingdom forward; God working extraordinary wonders through ordinary people in a way that no one could ignore (I long for that day in Medford - cmon!), but there are two other realities we can't miss!

The comprehensive scope of witnesses.

- It seems clear that these tongues of fire fall on *all 120 people* gathered in the upper room, not just the 12 apostles.
- To state the obvious, men and women were moving through Jerusalem's streets to the temple where the largest crowd of the city would have gathered.
- And... this is what verse 17 indicates: God “pours out his Spirit - sons *and* daughters shall prophesy.”
 - I dream of a day where every man and every woman of RH are so full of God you just have to talk about him.
 - I dream of a day where *everyone* is revived to see revival, *everyone* is experiencing the fullness of God overflowing through them!

T: The scope of witnesses was comprehensive, as was...

The comprehensive scope of the crowd.

- Verses 8-11 tell us that Jews had gathered in Jerusalem from parts of North Africa (Libya, Egypt), the Middle East (Mesopotamia, modern day Iran) and all the way around to present day Turkey and Rome.
- An area so vast, Luke says in verse 5, there were devout men dwelling in Jerusalem from every nation under heaven.
- As we peer into this scene, we see a glimpse of the reversal of Babel. The scattering of languages and nations vs the bringing back together of languages and nations. Man once ascending trying to be God. God now descending in order to save man!

But what was their response? Verse 12-13

- Some were in awe and amazement. Something major is going down! “What does this mean?”
- Others mocked them saying “they are filled with new wine.”
- Some believe. Some disbelieve.
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Conclusion:

The question for us is not how they responded, but how will we respond. *Call up the Band...*

The God of wonders is not done. As we embrace and live in the power of the gift of his Holy Spirit, we will never be the same again.

Open your Hands...

God, give me a heart devoted to prayer like I've never known.

God, give me your Spirit - change me through the gospel.

God, give me more of your Spirit's power.

Come and Receive Prayer

Pray.