

# (Acts) the Age of the Harvest

by Brian Brodersen

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*The sermon emphasizes the significance of the day of Pentecost as the beginning of the church age and the age of harvest, where God pours out his spirit to empower his people to reach out to the nations and spread the gospel.*

**Duration:** 55:47

**Scripture:** Joel 2:28-32, Acts 1:8, Acts 2:4, Acts 2:16-24, Acts 2:32-33, Acts 2:36, Acts 2:38-39

**Topics:** "Evangelism", "Holy Spirit"

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## Description

In this sermon, the preacher emphasizes the need to capture people's attention and make them curious about the message of God. He explains that the miraculous acts of God are meant to arrest people's attention and create a desire for explanation and understanding. The preacher highlights the importance of effectively communicating the message of sin and salvation to those who may not have a concept of sin. He then focuses on Peter's use of the word of God to drive his point home and present the gospel to the listeners. The sermon also briefly mentions the events leading up to the second chapter of Acts, where Jesus instructs his disciples to wait in Jerusalem for the promised Holy Spirit.

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## Transcript

All right, let's turn in our Bibles tonight to the second chapter of Acts. So here we are, we come tonight to the second chapter in our study through the book of the Acts of the Apostles, and just to refresh your memory, Jesus, of course, after he had died and risen again, he spent 40 days with his disciples and he was speaking to them concerning the things of the kingdom. And of course, he had commissioned them to go into the world and to preach this gospel message to everyone and to make disciples of all nations.

But you remember, he also said to them, he said, wait in Jerusalem until you are endued with power from on high. And so he spoke to them of the promise of the spirits coming. And he said to them, you'll be baptized not many days from now.

And so as we pick up in chapter two, we come to the fulfillment of that promise and we come now to 10 days after the ascension of Christ, the day of Pentecost. And so we read. And when the day of Pentecost was fully come, they were all with one accord in one place.

Now, Pentecost itself, the word means 50th. So this was the 50th day, actually, after the Passover, and that was the feast that was known as the Feast of Weeks, or it was also known as the Feast of Harvest or also known as the Feast of First Fruits. But it became known as Pentecost because it followed Passover

by 50 days.

Now, this feast of Pentecost was one of three feasts that every male Jew over the age of 20 was required by the law to attend. And so there was the Feast of Passover that was mandatory. There was the Feast of Pentecost.

And then at the end of the year, there was the Feast of Tabernacles. And these three feasts were to be attended by all of the male Jews over the age of 20. And specifically for those within the vicinity, if a person lived in another country, there were provisions made for that.

But it was a time of great celebration in Israel. And it was a time when people would come from all over the world to Jerusalem for a time of celebration. And so that's what we have here as we pick up the story.

Here they are in Jerusalem on the day of Pentecost. And there are people from every part of the world there. And God is going to do a very interesting thing at this point.

But just for a moment, touching once again on this feast, as I said, it was called the Feast of Weeks because it was celebrated seven complete weeks after the Passover. But it was also called the Feast of Harvest because it concluded the harvest of the latter grains. And then it was also called the Day of First Fruits because the first loaves made from the new grain were offered at that time on the altar.

Now, the interesting thing about all of the feast is that. They were in some cases to commemorate some event in Israel's past, for example, the Passover, of course, commemorated their deliverance from Egypt, but they were also prophetic. They also looked forward to something that God was going to do in the future.

And although there was a tradition that Pentecost commemorated the giving of the law, the 50th day after the exodus on Mount Sinai, there's no real biblical basis for that. That's more just Jewish tradition. So we don't know if that was really the case.

But what we do know about Pentecost is that it was a prophecy. It was a prophecy of the beginning of the church age. It was a prophecy of the end gathering of souls into the kingdom of God.

And something that's really quite interesting about it is that the two cakes that were to be made and offered at that specific time were made of leavened bread rather than unleavened. And that's a very unusual thing for there to be a specific command by God to make it with leaven. But that in and of itself was speaking about the fact that the church would be made up of sinners.

And because there were two loaves, it was speaking prophetically about the merging together of the Jew and the Gentile in this new entity that God would develop in the future, this entity called the church. And so there was a prophetic element to it. And that's why these things happened on this particular day versus just happening on some other day.

They happened on this day because it was a fulfillment of the prophecy that was built there into the very feast itself. And so when the day of Pentecost was fully come. It says suddenly there came a sound from heaven as of a rushing mighty wind and it filled all the house where they were sitting and there appeared unto them divided tongues like as a fire and it set upon each of them and they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak with other tongues as the spirit gave them entrance.

So here they are. They're assembled in this room, perhaps a room in the temple somewhere, perhaps another location in Jerusalem. But they're all gathered together, that hundred and twenty, and they're there in one accord.

They're waiting as Jesus had told them to do for the promise of the father. And Jesus specifically referred to that as the baptism with the Holy Spirit. He told them that they would be baptized not many days from his ascension.

Now, the interesting thing to me is that as the event transpires, the fulfillment of the promise, no doubt it's not referred to here as the baptism with the spirit, but rather it says and they were all filled with the spirit. And the reason I bring that up is because there are those who try to make a distinction between the baptism of the spirit and being filled with the spirit. But I don't think you can make any sharp distinction.

I think they are synonymous terms. Jesus said you're going to be baptized with the spirit. He was obviously talking about what would happen on the day of Pentecost.

And now that it happens, it says and they were all filled with the Holy Spirit. And so this is that promise that God had given. You remember, Jesus said, wait in Jerusalem till you receive power for the Holy Spirit will come upon you and you shall be witnesses to me.

And so here it's now all coming to pass, as Jesus said that it would. They were there and suddenly the spirit of God came upon them. There was the sound like as of a mighty rushing wind.

And it would seem that this sound was noised abroad throughout all of Jerusalem. So it sounded like a hurricane or something was blowing through. But of course, there weren't those kinds of devastating effects.

There was the sound of a rushing mighty wind, but there wasn't that that sense of a wind, you know, coming and destroying at all. The Greek word that we translate spirit. *Pneuma* is also the same word that would be translated wind or breath, spirit, wind and breath are all from the same word in both the Greek and the Hebrew.

Interestingly, Hebrew is the word the word is *Ruach*, but that word translates spirit, breath and wind in Hebrew and *Pneuma* translate spirit, breath and wind in Greek. And so here this sound of this. Rushing mighty wind is an indication of the presence of the spirit, you remember when Jesus was talking to Nicodemus and he was talking about the necessity of the new birth and Nicodemus didn't understand what he was talking about, Jesus was saying, you need to be born of the spirit.

And Jesus said the wind blows where it does. You hear the sound of it, but you don't know from where it's coming or where it's going. And so here, once again, as the spirit is moving, there's the sound of a rushing mighty wind.

And then as they're all seated together, there appears to them divided tongues. It seems that these little flaming this flicker, this flame that sort of symbolized the tongue was then seen to just sort of reside upon each one of them. And as this happened, the spirit of God came upon them and they began to speak with other tongues as the spirit gave them utterance.

And so here's this extraordinary thing that happens as the Holy Spirit comes upon them and they begin now to speak in languages that they previously did not know. And listen, in verse five, and there were

dwelling at Jerusalem, Jews, devout men out of every nation under heaven. Now, when this was noised abroad, the multitude came together and were confounded because that every man heard them speak in his own language.

And they were all amazed and marveled, saying one to another. Behold, are not all these which speak Galileans? And how do we hear every man in our own tongue wherein we were born? Parthians and Medes and Elamites and the dwellers in Mesopotamia and in Judea and Cappadocia and Pontus and Asia and Phrygia and Pamphylia in Egypt and in the parts of Libya about Cyrene and strangers of Rome, Jews and proselytes, Cretans and Arabians. We do hear them speak in our tongues the wonderful works of God.

So you see, Jews from every nation under heaven are gathered together in Jerusalem. And it's now at this moment that God pours out his spirit. It's an opportune moment because, of course.

The commission of Jesus was to get the gospel out to the world, and here's the ideal situation. The world has come to Jerusalem and now God is going to work to impact these people that have come. And there's going to be then as they go back to where they've come from, there's going to be this spreading of the gospel.

And so the Lord arranged this event to occur on this special day when Jews from all over the world would be gathered there. Now, as they come, the thing that gets their attention, the sound of the wind initially got their attention. But when they come to the place where they sense that sound was coming from, they find that these Galileans are speaking in the various languages of the people represented there.

Now, the Galileans, interestingly, were notorious for having what was considered really a speech impediment. And we get a hint at that in the Gospels. The Gospels make allusion to the fact that there was some distinct sort of a speech thing with the Galileans.

And when Peter was standing by the fire and warming himself, you remember he denied having been with Jesus. But they said, oh, no, you truly were with him. You're a Galilee and we can tell by your accent.

So there was a specific accent and it was really considered more of a speech impediment that the Galileans, they couldn't pronounce certain words properly. And it was said that they would they would drop certain syllables and just sort of run their words together. So here God takes this group of people that are not known for their ability to articulate even in their own language.

And he puts his spirit upon them and he gives them the ability to articulate in the languages of these other people. And so here they are, they're proclaiming. The wonderful works of God in the languages of the people who are now standing there amazed at this phenomenon, they're hearing these Galileans speak forth the wonderful works of God.

You know. The Lord. Is looking to save.

All kinds of people, he's not interested in one specific group of people, only he's interested in everybody, he's interested in all of the nations and the gospel message is a message that's really for every people, every tribe, every time. Every nation. And.

The goal of the church really. Is to get the gospel to the nations, that's really the I think the primary purpose in so many ways of what the church is to be doing as we look at this whole thing of the day of

Pentecost, what it really was, was the beginning of the harvest. You remember, it was referred to as the Feast of Harvest and it's the beginning of the harvest.

In relation to the church as well, and really the implication of that is that the church age is an age of harvest, you remember, on one occasion, Jesus said to his own disciples, he said, do not say four months and then the harvest comes. For I tell you that the fields are already ripe for harvest. And, you know, the entire church age from the very day it began to this present day has been, from God's point of view, a day of harvest, it's a time of harvesting and it's always a time of harvesting, not just sometimes.

And yet sometimes in the church, we ourselves, you know, we find ourselves sort of thinking like the disciples did at that one point. Oh, the harvest. Well, you know, it's somewhere down the road.

It's coming later. It's not really happening right now. But Jesus said, no, the harvest time is now.

And there's some place in the world always where there is a harvest going on, but we have to keep that in mind. And I think as we look at this second chapter here, what we're really seeing specifically in this part of the chapter is just the whole emphasis upon the harvest. God is the God of the harvest.

And so he pours out his spirit and he empowers his people to reach out and then he either sends them out, as we'll see him do in the book of Acts or in this particular case. Initially, he brings all kinds of people from all over the world right to where they are. So we can impact them.

You know, I hear sometimes people complaining about. The immigration that's taken place in this country and how so many foreigners have moved into the country and so forth, and and sometimes even in our own particular area here, sometimes you'll hear people say things like that. And yet my personal feeling on it is that God has just brought the mission field right to us.

I think it's so exciting that the Lord has brought people from all over the world into Orange County. Recently, it was stated in one of the newspapers that Orange County has become the melting pot of the United States over and above New York City. I thought that was fascinating.

I remember growing up here as a kid and there was not a whole lot of ethnic or cultural diversity in this this part of Orange County. But now we see that many people have come from Asian countries, many people have come from parts of the Middle East, many people have come from all over the place. And I look at that as a very positive thing from the Christian standpoint, because it gives us a great opportunity to get the gospel to people.

And a thing that's interesting about that as well is that people who come from other countries, although they do immigrate to this country, they still have ties back to that nation generally. And here's the the exciting thing. If they can meet the Lord here and be touched by God and and be saved, they could potentially go back and impact the country that they've come from in some degree or another.

That was one of the most exciting things about our time living in London and our ministry in London, having a ministry that was so multi ethnic and multicultural. And to have people in the congregation sharing with us as as God would be working in their lives, they would be sending tapes back to India or they would be sending tapes to parts of Africa or different places. And to think that the word was going out and reaching more and more people all over the world.

That's exciting stuff. And that's what's on the heart of God. When you look at this whole thing of the church, the age of the church that we're living in, we call it the age of grace, which it indeed is.

But it's an age of harvest as well. It's a harvesting time. And that's what the church is really to be all about.

And so they are in these tongues through the supernatural ability given to them. They are speaking forth in the languages of these various people that are there, the wonderful works of God. So they're praising God.

And you don't know if they were, you know, maybe one person over here was speaking in Arabic, maybe another person over here was speaking in the language of the Medes and another one was speaking in Greek or, you know, maybe they all of them collectively as a choir were singing praises in the various languages. They were praising God. Whatever was going on, people were hearing articulated in their own language, the wonderful works of God.

They were hearing about the Messiah having come. They were hearing about his death upon the cross, his resurrection and victory over the grave. They were hearing all of this in their own language.

And this absolutely got their attention. And so they were all amazed. Verse 12 says, And we're in doubt, saying one to another, what does this mean? And others mocking said, These men are full of new wine.

So they were intrigued by this. Now, this, of course, was a miracle. And as is the case with miracles.

Miracles are not an end in themselves, miracles are actually always a means to an end. And here now we see this miraculous thing happen. It arrests the people, it stops them in their tracks, it gets them to turn and to say what in the world is going on here.

And this gives the opportunity now for the gospel to be presented. And so Peter takes advantage of this moment here and he stands and he says. Lifting up his voice with the 11 with him, he says, you men of Judea.

And all that dwell at Jerusalem, be this known unto you and hearken to my words, for these men are not drunken, as you suppose, seeing it is but the third hour of the day. Now, this was a feast day, and according to the authorities on the feast day, they would not have had anything to drink prior to nine o'clock in the morning because of the fast. And so Peter dismisses that immediately.

He says these are not drunken, as you suppose, seeing it is but the third hour of the day. But this is that which was spoken of by the prophet Joel. Now, some people have.

Taken from. The words of those scoffing that they were drunk with new wine, some have taken that to mean that they were acting as though they were drunk. And so they've drawn the false conclusion that when the Holy Spirit comes upon you, it's similar to being drunk.

And there have been. Groups of Christians who have. Got together and.

Had a time of getting drunk in the spirit. And they manifest all the behavior of a drunk person, slurred speech and excessive giggling and stumbling about and, you know, all of those kinds of things that would happen if you're under the influence of alcohol. Justifying it by what was stated here.

But remember, these guys were mocking, they were scoffing, they were just trying to dismiss this thing. There was not any true relationship between what was happening there with the spirit and any sort of manifestation of drunkenness. Peter just completely throws that out, he says, that's not what's happening at all, but rather this is that which was spoken of by the prophet Joel, and now he goes to quote the second chapter of Joel and it shall come to pass in the last days, says the Lord, I will pour out of my spirit upon all flesh.

Your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, your young men shall see visions and your old men shall dream dreams. And on my servants and on my handmaidens, I will pour out in those days of my spirit and they shall prophesy. So Peter says this is actually a fulfillment of our scriptures.

This is what Joel was talking about. These are the days that the prophets foretold would come. Now, you see, prior to this time, although the Israelites had a relationship with God and there was somewhat of a knowledge of the Holy Spirit, there wasn't an experience of the Holy Spirit by the average person.

The work of God among the nation of Israel was a work more in a corporate sense. There were occasionally those individuals that God would put his hand upon in a powerful way. He would pour his spirit upon them and he would raise them up and use them significantly in the lives of the people.

But as far as the average Israelite having a personal experience of the Holy Spirit coming powerfully upon his or her life, that wasn't occurring at all under the Old Testament dispensation. But according to Joel, there was going to come a day when the Lord was going to pour out his spirit upon all flesh. And your sons and your daughters would prophesy, so it would no longer be isolated to just a few individuals, but every person was going to be a recipient of the gifting and the power of the Holy Spirit.

Peter said. That's what's happening right now in your midst, the days that Joel spoke of have arrived and, you know, the days that Joel spoke of did arrive then and they haven't stopped today. And these are the things that have been occurring all throughout this harvest age.

And these are the things that are occurring still to this very day. And these are the things that we really need to be seeking God so that they might occur in a greater way among us, especially as we get closer and closer to the coming of the Lord Jesus. But notice just some of the details here.

Your sons and your daughters shall prophesy. To prophesy means to speak the word of God under the influence of the spirit. And so the promise that your sons and your daughters shall prophesy.

And then your young men shall see visions and your old men shall dream dreams. He's describing. An experience among God's people of a fullness of the spirit.

Where our lives are just so inundated by the spirit that as we speak, we're speaking prophetically, we're having visions and dreams and those kinds of things. And, you know, these are the kinds of things we really need to be looking for God to do again amongst us. I was talking to a friend of mine the other day, ministering over in Europe, and he was saying just he was telling me recently as he had been reading through.

Acts, he was really sensing from the Lord that God was going to move again in the future in a miraculous way. And as he was telling me that, I was thinking, you know, with the way the world is and the opposition that we have facing us as the church these days, we really do need a fresh outpouring of the spirit of God. We really need the power of God, the demonstration of the spirit like they had it back in those days when

they went out to that idolatrous world.

They went out in the power of the spirit. And again, as the spirit would manifest himself through miraculous signs and so forth, that would catch the attention of the people that would give them the curiosity that they needed to then listen to the message that was proclaimed. And boy, today we need to get people's attention.

We need to see people sort of just arrested, stopped in their tracks and, you know, turning and saying, what is that? Well, that's what the miraculous is meant to do. That's what it did there. And that's what hopefully we can see happening in our days where there's such an outpouring of the spirit that these kinds of things are going on.

And on my servants and on my handmaidens, I will pour out in those days of my spirit and they shall prophesy. And I will show wonders in heaven above and signs in the earth beneath blood and fire and vapor of smoke. The sun shall be turned into darkness and the moon into blood before the great and notable day of the Lord come.

And it shall come to pass that whosoever shall call on the name of the Lord shall be saved. So Peter tells him a new day has come. It's a day of salvation.

It's a day of the outpouring of the spirit. It's no longer going to be isolated cases here and there, but everyone can potentially be a recipient of the spirit and the gospel is going to go out to all. They didn't even themselves realize at this point how thoroughly that was going to happen.

I don't think they even at this point understood that whosoever shall call on the name of the Lord meant whosoever, not simply those among the nation of Israel, but those beyond the nation as well. But that, of course, was included in the prophecy. And now, Peter, in verse 22, on through verse 36, he takes advantage of this situation where he has the attention of the people and now he preaches the gospel to them.

And this is the first gospel message ever preached. Let me read it to you. So Peter said to them, the men of Israel hear these words, Jesus of Nazareth, a man approved of God among you by miracles and wonders and signs which God did by him in the midst of you, as you yourselves also know him being delivered by the determinant counsel and foreknowledge of God.

You have taken and by wicked hands have crucified and slain whom God has raised up, having loosed the pains of death because it was not possible that he should be held by it. For David spoke concerning him. I foresaw the Lord always before my face, for he is on my right hand, that I should not be moved.

Therefore, did my heart rejoice and my tongue was glad. Moreover, also my flesh shall rest in hope because thou wilt not leave my soul in hell. Neither wilt thou suffer thine holy one to see corruption.

Thou hast made known to me the ways of life. Thou shalt make me full of joy with thy countenance. Men and brethren, let me speak freely unto you of the patriarch, David, that he is both dead and buried in a sepulcher is with us unto this day.

Therefore, being a prophet and knowing that God had sworn with an oath to him that of the fruit of his loins, according to the flesh, he would raise up Christ to sit on his throne. He seen this before spoke of the resurrection of Christ, that his soul was not left in hell. Neither did his flesh see corruption.

This Jesus God had raised up, where of we are all witnesses, therefore being by the right hand of God, exalted and having received of the father the promise of the Holy Spirit. He had shed forth this, which you now see and hear. For David is not ascended into the heavens, but he said himself, the Lord said unto my Lord, sit now at my right hand until I make thy foes thy footstool.

Therefore, let all the house of Israel know assuredly that God hath made that same Jesus whom you have crucified, both Lord and Christ. Now, this is probably. A summary of the message that was given, I would imagine that Peter probably elaborated a bit more, but this is a condensed version, no doubt.

The key points, the main points that Peter made on that day, but a few things that I want to just briefly touch on as we look at it, notice in verse 22, he says to them, having mentioned Jesus of Nazareth and he was a man approved by God and so on. And then he says, as you yourselves also know. And the point that I think is important here is that Peter sought to relate to these people on a level that they could relate to.

He connected with them on the basis of things that they knew, and that's a pattern that you see is as the apostles would go out and minister, they would they would seek to connect with people wherever they were. They would seek to find that common ground. They would seek to find that place where they might introduce the gospel into the situation.

And that is. A good. Technique or strategy to take when we're seeking to minister to people to seek to find that that place where we might connect with that person and begin to introduce the gospel to them.

You know, sometimes in our attempts to reach out to people with the gospel. We're so desperate to do it, and sometimes we feel so pressured to do it that we we just sort of blunder our way through it. And we step on people's toes and we get them all offended and we never really get anywhere because, you know, we stepped in at the wrong place.

And it's an important thing to just be praying for sensitivity and wisdom so that as we do reach out to people, God shows us that open door. He shows that that place where, you know, there's a natural step into the situation. And whenever I'm in a situation where I sense the Lord is calling me to speak up, I'm really praying just under my breath.

I'm just praying, OK, Lord, show me the opening. Show me that place where I can interject you into this conversation without it being some abrupt sort of, you know, just an intrusion into everything. But but Lord, just, you know, show me that that way in.

You know, God is so gracious and he's so good. I mean, sometimes we do just stumble our way into it and and God still uses it. But looking for that common ground, so to speak, looking for that place where we can really interject in a way that will help them to be open to receive rather than, you know, immediately get on the defensive.

Sometimes if you meet somebody who has some other belief system and you're listening to them and you're thinking, oh, this is so ridiculous. You know, that's really not the best thing to say to him as you start a conversation. Hey, you know what you believe is so stupid.

I can't believe you believe it. Well, you probably just ended the conversation right there. But I'll tell you, I remember when I was back in New York City last year, September 11th time, and, you know, we were there doing ministry on the streets and there was this one guy that came up and I think even talked about

him before.

But I have met some strange people over the years and I met some people that have believed some really weird things. But I think this guy took the cake. I mean, he had he had the most bizarre belief system in the world.

And, you know, he was sitting there telling me all of this stuff and everything he said was just utterly ridiculous from a biblical standpoint, from a logical standpoint. You know, it was just this this contradictory system that he had developed himself that was just based upon what he thought things ought to be. And I'll never forget trying to navigate around that and just standing there listening to him and trying to be gracious and loving and not lose him.

But at the same time, not let him think for a moment that I agreed with anything he said, because it was just so ludicrous. And, you know, so he went on and on. And, you know, there were times I could tell by the way he was responding back to me.

He thought, yeah, he's really agreeing with me. This is great. We've got some common ground.

And, you know, so finally I said, look, you know what? You are a really nice guy. I really like talking to you. You know, this is great.

Please don't be offended by this. But I don't believe anything you said. I think it's totally ridiculous.

And this is why. And then I proceeded to to share with him. And I don't know if I got anywhere with him, but, you know, but sometimes it's just I mean, you have to be patient and you have to be praying and you're almost agonizing in your spirit.

Just, oh, Lord, show me that. And then, you know, something will open. But Peter, he connected with him.

He said, I want to tell you about Jesus of Nazareth, the man approved of God among you by miracles, wonders and signs which God did. You know this. You you saw this.

You heard about it. And so he starts there with them. But then I want you to notice as he goes on as well.

He's gracious in his introduction, but Peter doesn't pull any punches at all. He says him being delivered by the determined counsel and for knowledge of God, you have taken and by wicked hands have crucified and slain. So he lays the blame right on them.

He really seeks to bring home to them their responsibility for the death of Christ. And so he doesn't pull any punches. And as we also would seek to reach out to people, there is that balance.

We want to be sensitive, but we don't want to be so sensitive that we are afraid to offend people. We we should seek, I think, to avoid offending people by our presentation. But we should remember that our message many times will be offensive to people.

It's the nature of the message. The message itself hurts when people hear it because it points to them as being guilty. And that really unsettles people at times.

So Peter goes through and he. Also, I want you to notice how powerfully Peter applies the scriptures to the situation. He brings the scriptures right into it and he goes back to David and he quotes David.

And then he states that David is a prophet and he's he's building and communicating with them from the scriptures that they would have a knowledge of. But, you know, even if a person doesn't have a knowledge of scripture, we've got to remember that the word of God is living and powerful and we should always be using scripture, but using it in a way, using it effectively, using it in a way to support what we are saying. You know, sometimes I've heard people in their evangelistic approach, they do nothing but quote scriptures.

It's good to quote scripture, but do it with an explanation. Tell people what it means. I've often heard people say to others, don't you know, the Bible says all of sin and come short of the glory of God.

The wages of sin is death and the gift of God is eternal life. And if you confess with your mouth, Lord Jesus, and believe in your heart, God's risen from the dead, you shall be saved and end the story. Now, here, sign on the dotted line.

Those things are all true. They need an explanation, they need an exposition, they need they need to be communicated in such a way. I mean, saying those things is great to somebody who knows exactly what all of that means.

But when you talk to somebody who doesn't have any concept of sin. Then when you say the wages of sin is death or all of sin and come short of the glory of God, they don't know what you're talking about. So you've got to give an explanation to them of what that is.

And so Peter uses the word of God, he uses it effectively. And then as we continue on. We see in verse 36 how he drives his point home, he says, let all the house of Israel know assuredly that God has made this same Jesus whom you crucified once again laying the death of Christ right at their feet.

They are responsible for it. But God has made him both Lord and Christ. Now, when they heard this.

They were pricked in their heart. A better translation is that they were stabbed in their heart, wasn't a mere prick like a prick of a needle on your fingertip, but it was a stabbing in the heart. It was suddenly just this sense that they were guilty, that everything that Peter had said was true, that they had taken and by wicked hands they had crucified and they had slain the Messiah.

And they were guilty. And. They said to Peter and to the rest of the apostles, men and brethren, what shall we do? Boy, this is the desired response to a message, an evangelistic message.

Men and brethren, what should we do? What do I need to do to be saved? And, you know, we've got a lot of preaching going on today and God is using it. And I'm not questioning. Whether or not God is using the preaching that's going on today, I know that he is, but I wonder if it is being used to.

The fullest extent that it could be used. In other words. Perhaps because of sin in the church, perhaps because of sin in our lives, perhaps because of a lack of devotion or a commitment to prayer, perhaps because we quenched or grieved the spirit, although we're saying all the right things, it's not having the impact that it potentially could because the power is not there, because the spirit is not able to work for all of the reasons that I just mentioned.

And I do think that to some degree that is the case, because we see far too often today that many people sit in church Sunday after Sunday and live in sin Monday through Friday. And are not really moved to change, they hear good messages, sometimes they hear messages that are even, you know, from a

certain standpoint, they're powerful. Oh, that was a powerful message, but it's not having the impact on their lives.

The heart has become hardened. And here you have a situation where the Holy Spirit is being poured out, and here's what happens when the Holy Spirit is poured out. As I mentioned before, there are two things that occur.

First of all, the believers are empowered supernaturally to bring the gospel and the unbelievers are convicted because the work of the spirit in the world is to convict the world of sin, righteousness and judgment. The unbelievers are convicted so that when the unbeliever who's under conviction hears the word being proclaimed in power, there's this dynamic thing that happens, this mighty conviction coming upon their lives and this true conversion taking place at that moment. And that's the kind of thing that has occurred occasionally in church history and what we commonly call revival during times of revival, one of the main features during times of revival is a mighty conviction of sin and the word of God going out in simplicity, but in great power so that when people hear it, they come under the power of the spirit, the conviction of the spirit.

And like these men in Jerusalem, they're stabbed in their hearts. And I could imagine if we would have been there on that day, there would have been groans. There would have been a sense of agony among the people as they heard the words of Peter.

They they would have been moved greatly. They cried out, what shall we do? And Peter said unto them, repent and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. So Peter tells him to repent, and that's, of course, what we need to do.

But, you know, the word repent, sometimes we don't really understand what it is that's being said. A lot of times when we mention the word repentance, immediately somebody thinks of tears and agony, crying, weeping over their. State now, repentance could include that, but the word actually means to have a change of thinking or a change of direction.

And in this case, it actually means to have both. They needed a change of thinking, they were thinking that Jesus was an imposter, they were thinking that he was a phony, they were thinking that he was a fraud and therefore they consented to his death. Peter said, you need to repent.

You need to realize that Jesus is the Messiah. He's the son of God. That was repentance for them.

And of course, in changing their thinking about Jesus, then that would change the direction that they were going in instead of resisting him. They would then turn and begin to follow him. And so today, when a person comes under the conviction of the spirit.

The way out of that is repentance, it's a change of thinking, it's a change of direction, it's turning away from your sin and turning to God and living now for God. By his power, and so Peter said to them, repent and be baptized, every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins or a better way to translate the word for is because of the remission of sins. Because your sins are remitted, you are to be baptized, not in order for your sins to be remitted.

See, the Bible does not teach that baptism forgives our sin. The Bible teaches that repentance forgives our sin and baptism then is the public demonstration of the fact that our sins have been forgiven. So a

better way to understand the word translated for here is because of the remission of sins.

And you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit for the promise is unto you and to your children and to all that are afar off, even as many as the Lord, our God, shall call. Isn't that a glorious promise right there? Peter said to that generation, the promises to you and it's to your children, but it's also to all of those who are afar off. Peter knew somehow innately by the spirit at this point, no doubt that.

In the centuries ahead, God was going to be working and drawing people to himself and pouring out his spirit, so all of those who are afar off, not afar off in the sense of distant lands, but afar off in the distant future, even as many as the Lord, our God, shall call. So the promise of the Holy Spirit that Peter is talking to them about the thing that they've wondered about, the thing that they they ask the question, what does this mean? Peter says this very thing is going to be happening all the way until the Lord comes again. It's going to occur to all of those that the Lord, our God, will call, indicating that the baptism of the spirit is going to be something that we can anticipate all the way through the history of the church.

Now, the reason I even say that is because there are a large number of Christians today and particularly Christian leaders who deny that the baptism of the spirit is a present day experience for us. They want to relegate this to ages gone by. They want to leave it back in the apostolic age, and they even go to the point of saying that once the apostles passed off the scene and the Bible came into existence, there was no longer the manifestation of the spirit like they had.

That was just to get the church started. The signs, the wonders, the speaking in tongues, the prophesying, all of that, that all ceased with the death of the last apostle. It's known theologically as cessationism, but you know what? It's not biblical.

You can't find a biblical basis for the secessionist idea. It's just a theological concept that's developed more than anything as a reaction to the excesses that occur among the Pentecostal and charismatic groups. It's a classic case of throwing out the baby with the bathwater.

I hate to even use that term, but that's really what it is. They've seen the excesses among Pentecostals and among charismatics. They say these people are crazy.

There's no way this is of God, and therefore God is not working in any supernatural way today that stopped back in apostolic times. Well, you see what they're doing is they're overreacting to an extreme, and they in turn are going to another extreme. We don't look to the Pentecostal or charismatic movement for what the spirit is doing.

We look to the word of God. And here the scriptures tell us that the gift of the Holy Spirit is for as many as the Lord our God shall call. And with many other words, did he testify and exhort saying, save yourselves from this corrupt, perverse, wicked generation.

Then they that gladly received his word were baptized and the same day there were added unto them about three thousand souls. So the harvest has begun. The age of harvest begins with the in-gathering of three thousand on that first day.

And as we go through Acts, we're going to see that the numbers just keep growing to where we get to the latter part of the book of Acts. And Paul comes back to Jerusalem to visit and the council there says to him, see how many thousands upon thousands of Jews there are who are believers. The age of harvest.

And here we are tonight. Two thousand years later. But the harvest is still.

Great. The day of harvest is still lingering. The Lord is wanting to draw more and more people into his kingdom.

He's putting on our hearts vision for missions. He's sending out people to different parts of the world and he's bringing people like he did in Jerusalem from all over the world, bringing them right to us. And so when you meet those people, I really believe that we have a unique opportunity among peoples from other nations who have come to live to live in our midst.

I believe we have a unique opportunity in sharing the gospel there. And I believe that you will find as you step out and minister that these people are perhaps more open than your white Anglo-Saxon Protestant neighbors. I believe you might find that.

That God has brought many of them here for the purpose of hearing the gospel and being saved. And I would love to see one day this church overflowing with if we had to have six services on Sunday, but just multi-ethnic, multicultural, every nation. Wouldn't that be glorious as God is bringing them into our communities? We need to remember that it is a time of harvest and they're here so that we can reach out to them.

And let me tell you one thing about Muslims in this county. They are free in this county to listen to and receive the gospel. They're not free to do that where they came from.

They're very intimidated by their religious leaders. But there is a freedom here that I think brings to us an extraordinary opportunity. And I think today Muslim evangelism should be on the top of our prayer list that God would use us to reach the Muslims that he's brought into our community and that they in turn would then impact their family members, perhaps back in other countries.

So we'll continue on next week here in Acts and picking up in verse 42 and looking at the practice of the early church. Let's pray. Father, we thank you for.

Lord, your heart to save people, Lord, and we are the recipients of that heart full of love. And Lord, as you touched us and saved us and you just keep extending the harvest time, Lord, we know it's because there are more and more souls you want to gather in. And so, Lord, we pray for a fresh outpouring of the spirit upon us.

Upon our lives individually, upon our homes, Lord, upon our fellowship here, we pray for a fresh moving of your spirit. Empower amongst us. We pray, Lord, for your church and we pray that the power of the spirit might once again come upon your church.

We pray that the word would go forth, not just. Articulately, but powerfully, Lord. So that men's hearts might be pricked.

They might come under conviction. And repent. And Lord, many in the church need to repent, help us, Lord, to turn away from sin in our lives and to be full of the spirit and to be living for your glory and pursuing your goals in these days that we're living in, we pray these things in Jesus name, amen.

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