

# Acts #1: Birth of the Body of Christ

by Stephen Kaung

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*The Book of Acts is a vital part of the Bible that reveals the character of God and demonstrates the importance of unity and community through the corporate body of Christ.*

**Duration:** 1:17:15

**Scripture:** Acts 1:1-5, Acts 2:1-4

**Topics:** "Holy Spirit", "Church Formation"

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## Description

In this sermon, the preacher discusses the importance of looking back to the beginning when approaching the end. He emphasizes the need for God's people to go back to the book of Acts to understand how the Lord formed His body and continued to work and speak. The preacher also highlights the significance of the day of Pentecost, where the disciples were gathered together and experienced the coming of the Holy Spirit. He describes the miraculous events that took place, such as a sound from heaven and tongues of fire appearing on each of them, leading them to speak in different languages as the Spirit enabled them. The preacher concludes by referencing Jeremiah 18 and the analogy of the potter and the clay, emphasizing the need for individuals to surrender to God's molding and shaping in their lives.

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## Transcript

Acts chapter 1, we'll read from verse 1 through verse 5. I composed the first discourse, O Theophilus, concerning all things which Jesus began both to do and to teach, until that day in which, having by the Holy Spirit charged the apostles whom he had chosen, he was taken up, to whom also he presented himself living, after he had suffered with many proofs, being seen by them during forty days, and speaking of the things which concerned the kingdom of God, and being assembled with them, commanded them not to depart from Jerusalem, but to await the promise of the Father, which saith he, Ye have heard of me, for John indeed baptized with water, but ye shall be baptized with the Holy Spirit, after now not many days. Verse 13 and verse 14. And when they were come into the city, they went up to the upper chamber, where were staying both Peter, and John, and James, an angel, Philip, and Thomas, Bartholomew, and Matthew, James son of Alpha, and Simon the zealous, and you the brother of James.

These gave themselves all with one accord, to continual prayer, with several women, and Mary the mother of Jesus, and with his brethren. Chapter 2 verse 1 to verse 4. And when the day of Pentecost was now accomplishing, they were all together in one place, and there came suddenly a sound out of heaven, as of a violent impetuous blowing, and filled all the house where they were sitting, and there appeared to them

party tongues as of fire, and it set upon each one of them, and they were all filled with the Holy Spirit, and began to speak with other tongues as the Spirit gave to them to speak for. In the past we have fellowshiped together in a very general way, the four Gospels.

We find that it takes four evangelists to present to us a full picture of our Lord Jesus. It is the same, the one Lord Jesus, and yet he is of such fullness that it has to take four evangelists to present him to us. We see in the Gospel according to Matthew, that our Lord Jesus is the King, and he comes to establish his kingdom on earth, and we are his kingdom if we obey him.

In the Gospel according to Mark, we find Christ is presented to us as a servant of the Lord, the model servant. He came not to be ministered to, but to minister, and to gain his life a ransom for man. He is both the King of kings, and the servant of all servants.

Then in the Gospel according to Luke, we find Christ is presented to us as the Son of man. He is the man, the true man, the man at the God's own heart, the new man, the new mankind, after whom we are all to be conformed. And then lastly, in the Gospel according to John, Christ is presented to us as the Son of God.

He is God. He is our very life, and he is all in all. Now after we have fellowship together on the Gospel, that is after we have seen the Lord, then I think we can go on and begin to read the Book of Acts, and probably later on the Epistle.

We should never begin with the Book of Acts, nor should we ever begin with the Epistle. We should always begin with the Gospel. The reason is, we have to see the Lord.

And if we see the Lord, then everything will follow, and will fall in line. But if we do not see the Lord, and try to see other things first, or try to know other doctrines first, then we'll go off tangent somewhere. So I think it is very basic for us to understand this.

The order in the Scripture is very meaningful. God wants us to see his Son, our Lord Jesus. And after we have seen him, then we are given to see something more.

The Book of Acts is a continuation. It is written by Luke the Evangelist. He himself tells us that in his first discourse, he has written something.

And now this is his second discourse. In other words, in the Gospel according to Luke, he tells us what the Lord Jesus began to do and to teach. But now, in the second discourse, he is to continue on what the Lord Jesus is doing and is teaching.

In other words, the Gospel of Luke is the beginning of the teaching and the doing of our Lord Jesus. Our Lord Jesus has begun to do and to speak. But he hasn't finished his doing and his speaking yet.

And the continuation of his speaking and of his doing is to be found in the Book of Acts. It is rather unfortunate. Because we find in our Bible, this Book of the Acts is called the Acts of the Apostles.

Now you know in the original manuscript, there is no such title. It is being traditionally called the Acts of the Apostles. And when you think of it as the Acts of the Apostles, naturally you think of the doings of the Apostles.

In a sense, if you read the Book of Acts superficially, you do find that it is the Acts of the Apostles. Of the first twelve chapters, it is mainly the Acts of the Apostle Peter. And in the second part of the Book of Acts,

it is predominantly the Acts of the Apostle Paul.

The other Apostles are just thrown in. But mainly you find these are the Acts of the Apostle Peter and the Apostle Paul. But this is only superstition.

Because Luke himself tells us that this is not his intention of writing the second discourse. The intention of his writing the second discourse is to show us how the Lord Jesus continues to do and to teach. It is not the doing and the teaching of the Apostles, strictly speaking.

It is still the doing and the teaching of our Lord Jesus. In the Gospel according to Luke, he began to do and to speak. Now in the Book of Acts, he continues to do and to speak.

The only difference is, in the Gospel according to Luke, he began to do and to speak in his one person. In that one person, the Word became flesh called Jesus. He began to do things and he began to speak many words.

But in the Book of Acts, he is still doing. He is still speaking, but not in his own person. He speaks and he does.

Through a company of people. In the Gospel according to Luke, he does things and he speaks words in the body of Jesus. But in the Book of Acts, he speaks and he does through a corporate body of Christ.

In the Gospel according to Luke, it is Christ who does and who teaches. In the Book of Acts, it is THE Christ who is doing and is speaking. You know, in the Bible you have Christ and THE Christ.

When Christ is being used, it refers to himself. But when THE Christ is used, it is always used in connection with his people. That is the corporate body of Christ.

As you'll find in 1 Corinthians chapter 12, as the body is one and has many members, though there are many members, yet there is one body. So also is THE Christ. It is still Christ, but Christ in his person and Christ in his corporate body.

Now that is the only difference. In other words, awkwardly there may be some difference, but in reality it is the same Christ, the same Lord, who is speaking and who is doing. So strictly speaking, the Book of Acts is not the Acts of the Apostles.

The Book of Acts is the Acts of our Lord Jesus by his Spirit through the Church. Now that is the Book of Acts. So there you'll find he continues to do and to speak, but it is in a corporate body.

Our Lord Jesus was on earth roughly a little over 30 years. 33 years or some say 33 years and a half. And during those 33 years, he did many things.

He said many words. And they were all very precious. So when you open the Book of Acts, you will find the period of the Book of Acts covered approximately 30 some years.

Because it begins with the expansion of our Lord and it ends with the imprisonment of Paul in Rome. And roughly it continues on to about 62 or 63 AD. So it's also roughly about 30 years.

The first 30 years we find in the Gospel according to Luke. The second 30 years we find in the Book of Acts. The first 30 years he began to speak and to do.

The next 30 years he continues to do and to speak. Now having said these things as a foundation, then I think we would like to go on a little bit tonight. And I do not know how far we'll go, but we'll go on and see.

We are living in the very last of the last days. For this reason, I believe it is very essential for us to look back to the beginning. When you are approaching the end, it is the time that you look back to the beginning.

Because this is the only way to see whether you end up with the beginning or you end up somewhere else. I believe it is time for God's people to really go back to Acts. To see how it all began when the Lord first formed his body.

And through that body he continues to do and to speak. After about 2,000 years, I wonder how close or how far we are away from the beginning. I wonder how we shall end up.

Whether it will be like a circle, it will end up at the beginning. And I do believe this is the way God wants to end. He is the beginning, he is the end.

There is no beginning, there is no end. And this is the way that you'll find it shall return. So to me, I feel it is most essential for us today to really go back to the beginning and allow the Holy Spirit to show us how does everything begin? How is the Church formed? How does it enable Jesus, the risen Lord, to continue to speak and to do? And as we are approaching the end, surely we want him to finish his doing and finish his speaking.

But if we want him to finish his doing and his speaking, and remember it is through a copper body now, we have to check whether that body will allow him. Because this is the only way he can speak. This is the only way he can do.

This is what he intends to do and to speak through a body. It is therefore very important for us to see that he still has, that he can still speak and finish his speaking. He can still do and finish his doing.

You know, very often, we are all individualists. Whether you pronounce yourself as an individualist or whether you don't say that, as a matter of fact, we are all individualists. Why? Because after sin came into this world, it divides and separates one from another.

That makes us all individualists. Even Adam and Eve were separated, spiritually speaking. Sin separated us not only from God, but separated us from one another.

We are all individualists. And even when we come to the Lord, even when we come to the things of God, we remain as individualists. It is true.

In your relationship with the Lord, you have to be personal. Nobody else can believe for you. They can help you to believe, but they cannot believe for you.

But strangely, as you look back yourself, you will find that your whole approach to God is on an individual basis, which is very different from God's approach to man. So sooner or later, I believe, God will have to shift you from your individual approach and begin to see God's corporate approach. In other words, someday God has to show you it is more than a matter of your individual relationship with the Lord.

Yes, it is still there. It is very basic, and yet it is not enough. Because the Lord Jesus cannot do and speak what he has begun to do and speak when he was on earth through individuals.

He can begin to do and to speak through one individual, that is, himself. But aside from himself, there has not been, there is not, any one individual or many individuals that can continue his doing. It has to be through a corporate.

This is the vessel through which he continues to do and to speak. So I do believe the Lord will gradually shift your attention from the individual to the corporate, from the selfish to the divine. And only after he has shifted you to his position and looked at things from his position, then you begin to realize how grand, how glorious is his divine.

It is therefore very important for us to know the book of Acts. The book of Acts begins with the resurrection of our Lord Jesus. After our Lord Jesus is raised from the dead, then he appeared himself living to his disciples.

He taught them the things concerning the kingdom of God. He appeared to them for a period of 40 days. And he told them that they should return to Jerusalem and they should wait until they receive the power from on high.

That is, they should be baptized with the Holy Spirit. And then they will be witnesses from Jerusalem all Judea, Samaria, to the end of this world. In other words, for 40 days our Lord Jesus appeared to them after his resurrection.

And after 40 days was over, he was taken. And the disciples returned to Jerusalem and there they waited for 10 days until the Day of Pentecost. Let's use a typology first in order to help us to understand.

You know, if you read the book of Leviticus, you find in Leviticus chapter 23 all those set feets of God. Aside from the Sabbath, which will come back once a week, there are holy convocations. There are set feets of God.

Now the first feast, of course, is the Feast of Passover. It is in memory of how God delivered them out of death. That night, when the angel of destruction passed through the whole land of Egypt, he will go into every house and destroy the firstborn.

God commanded the children of Israel to prepare a lamb for each house. They will put the blood on the doorpost and the lintel. And they will all gather within the house.

They will roast the lamb and eat, getting ready to go out. And that night, when the angel of destruction passed by, when he saw the blood, he passed over. Why? Because blood was already dead.

And that was the way that the children of Israel were delivered out of death and also out of Egypt. Now, brothers and sisters, I believe you all understand the spiritual meaning of Passover. See, God foretells us in 1 Corinthians 5, our Passover is Christ.

Christ is our Paschal Lamb. We were all condemned to death. We were all sinners.

We were all condemned to death. We will all be destroyed. But thank God, our Lord Jesus was the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of this world.

And because we believe in Him, we have sprinkled His blood on our hearts. So destruction has passed over us. Those who believe in the Lord Jesus, judgment has passed over them.

They are no longer to die, but they have eternal life. And how we feed upon the Lord as our food. And by His strength, we walk out of this world.

We are no longer of this world. We are in the world, but thus do not belong to this world. We belong.

Passover. Passover. It speaks of the death of our Lord Jesus.

On Passover, our Lord Jesus was the Paschal Lamb that God had given to the children of Israel for generations to come. It was fulfilled in Christ. Then, of course, immediately following the Passover, or in connection with Passover, is the Feast of Unleavened Bread for seven days.

Now Paul explains to us, our Passover is Christ. And because we have had our Passover, therefore now, in this present age, we are in the Feast of Unleavened Bread. It is seven days, in other words, perfection.

So since we believe in the Lord Jesus, now we are in the Feast of Unleavened Bread. We should remember the Lord, we should worship the Lord, we should serve the Lord, not with leavened bread, not with malice or wickedness, but with the unleavened bread of sincerity and of truth. In other words, after we believe in the Lord Jesus, our whole life is a continuous feast of unleavened bread.

There shall be no leavening in our house, nothing evil, neither in teaching or doctrine, nor in conduct or behavior. But we shall serve the Lord, worship the Lord, with a spirit of sincerity and truth. Then you know, on the third day at the Passover, that is the second day after Saturday, actually it was the third day after Passover, it is the Feast of the First Fruit.

Passover, and we put the Feast of Unleavened Bread together with Passover, and on the third day, there is the Feast of the First Fruit. And there you'll find the children of Israel should take a piece of the first fruit of barley. Because barley was, is harvested in Palestine before wheat.

It is the first harvest. So before the harvest of barley, there will be those first fruits of barley. First ripe.

And the first ripe are always the best. And it guarantees the harvest. So the children of Israel will cut a piece of the first fruit, and wave it before the Lord, present it before the Lord, and wave it before the Lord, in other words, offer it.

Now this is of the resurrection of our Lord Jesus. Because you'll find, in 1 Corinthians chapter 15, when Paul speaks to us on the resurrection, he says, Christ is our first fruit. And then after him, the harvest.

That's what we offer. Our Lord Jesus died. But on the third day, he was risen.

So it speaks of the resurrection of our Lord. Then you'll find after the first fruit, there will be seven weeks. It is called the Feast of Weeks.

After you count seven weeks, then on the fiftieth day, that is the day of Pentecost, you have the Feast of Pentecost. And at the time of the Pentecost, the harvest is all in. So here you'll find, the priest will prepare two loaves of flour, fine flour, and will bake them with leaven.

Notice this. With leaven. And present them before the Lord.

It is not a sheet. It is fine flour. It is not just a sheet of barley.

The flour are made into dough and baked into bread. Two is the number of witness and testimony. Two loaves, here speaks of the truth.

Except a grain fall into the ground and die, it abides alone. But if it dies, it bears much fruit. And out of these many grains, we are being ground and made into dough and baked.

So that we may be presented to God. of all the offerings to God, there shall be no leaven except these two loaves. Because all the other loaves speak of Christ.

He was tempting all things as we are without sin. But however perfect we are, there is always the Christ. There is the leaven.

But thank God, even if there is leaven, it is counteracted by the burn offerings, the sing offerings, and the other offerings. So the day of Pentecost, we often times use to say that if Passover speaks or speaks of the death of our Lord, the feast of first fruit, speaks of the resurrection of the Lord, then Pentecost speaks of the birth of the Church. That mystic, corporate body through which the Lord, the risen Lord, is able to continue His doing and His feast.

But in between the first fruit and the Pentecost, you have 50 days. These 50 days are very, very meaningful. We do not see much.

Not very much is described to us in the Bible concerning these 50 days. All we know is these 50 days are divided into two parts. 40 days and 10 days.

40 days after the resurrection of our Lord, He appeared to His disciples for 40 days. And then after He was ascended, then the disciples gathered together with one accord in Jerusalem for 10 days. What happened during those 40 days? What happened during those 10 days? Brothers and sisters, even though we did not find much in the Bible, but the little that is there is enough.

It's more than enough. If you read very carefully, you'll find those 40 days were most important days. Why is it that our Lord Jesus, after He is resurrected from the dead, He just appeared to all the brethren and we would think that would be the best thing to do.

Why should He remain as it were officially for 40 days on earth? Had He not spent 33 years on earth? Had He not finished His work of salvation? Now everything was alright, everything was finished. He just showed Himself to His disciples on the Mount of Olives, gathered them all to the Mount of Olives, showed Himself to them and said goodbye until I come again. That should be enough.

Why should He stay 40 days? Is there any special reason for that? Is there anything He has to do during those 40 days? So far as His work of redemption on the cross is concerned, it is finished. Thank God. But there is some unfinished business with His disciples.

And here they are. Number one. During those 40 days He appeared to them living.

Underline the word living. These disciples knew the Lord. While He was in this body, these disciples were with the Lord for three years or more.

They knew Him. These disciples knew that the Lord was crucified. But now the Lord appeared to them.

What is the difference between the Lord who was alive before He died and the Lord who is living after Him? The Lord who was alive before He died, He is life. But this life is only in death. But when He appeared to them living after resurrection, this resurrection life is able to be imparted.

For 33 years these disciples followed the Lord. 33 years. These disciples followed the Lord.

They watched Him. They observed Him. They heard Him.

They saw Him. They even talked to Him. Beautiful.

Wonderful. Glorious. Oh, such life.

Never before on earth before. A heavenly life walking on earth. Nothing higher than that.

Nothing more glorious than that. How they must have admired. Oh, if only we can live.

But the more they live with the Lord, the more they feel they are far away. It is a hope. Finally, when the shepherd was smitten, the sheep finished.

You know, the picture I saw is the picture in Jeremiah 18. The potter. He takes up a clay.

Put it on the wheel. Begin to turn the wheel. Put his loving hand upon the clay and try to make it a basket.

It's marred. Is it because the potter is not skillful enough? No. It is because there is something in the clay that resists the hand of the potter.

It is marred. But does the potter throw this clay away? He remakes this clay again into a new one. These disciples followed the Lord for three years.

They were in the hands of the Lord. As it were, the Lord was trying to form them into a vessel. But when the Lord was crucified, they were all scattered.

In spite of all that they had heard, they had seen, they had touched. It didn't seem to bring them up to it. But did the Lord throw them away? After he was resurrected, he regathered them.

He made them into it. But there is a difference. The difference is, of course, in spiritual things you cannot be too literal.

The difference is, what was marred in his hand, he can never make anew that. He has raised, has raised us up. Giving to us his new life.

Living, that is to say, we do not live by our own life anymore. Now we live by his risen life. And because we live by his risen life in us, he is able to strengthen us.

During those 40 days, you know, these were difficult days for the disciples. Two disciples were walking from Jerusalem to Enoch. And they were talking and they were very sad.

They really loved the Lord, you know. But the Lord was crucified, died. And some women say, when the tomb was anointed, the Lord was risen.

And they had seen the Lord. But they had, these two disciples. So they were so downhearted, they left Jerusalem and they were walking towards Enoch.

And a man appeared as a traveler, a fellow traveler, and walked with them. And began to ask them, what are you talking about? Oh, they said, you don't know that? That's news in Jerusalem. Everybody, everybody knows it.

Oh, this man Jesus, whom we considered as God's prophet. And now he's dead. And the strangest thing is, some women say he's alive.

Oh, we haven't seen him. And you remember the Lord began to expound the word to them, you know. As the Lord opened the word to them, they feel warm in their hearts.

Oh, they don't know where this man gets such knowledge. So when they arrive at Enoch, you know, this man was going on. He was still continuing his traveling.

So they had to persuade him, you stay with us. You stay with us. We'd like to have you, you know.

So they forced him to stay with them. And then they sat down and began to eat. And this man took the bread, blessed, and gave to them.

Ah, the Lord. But as soon as they say the Lord, the Lord disappears. I think that is the strangest thing that ever happened.

If the Lord wants to appear to you, of course he wants you to know him. But when you begin to know him, this has disappeared. Then why does he appear to you? And you know, this happens not only once.

Every time. During those 40 days, he suddenly appeared and he suddenly disappeared. He appeared when you were not ready and he disappeared when you recognized him.

See? Oh, you know, even Mary of Magdala, the first one who saw the Lord, you know, she was weeping outside this home, you know. Peter and John, they went to their home, but to Mary of Magdala, without the Lord, she had no more home. She heard a man calling him, What are you doing here? What do you want? Oh, he thought it must be the gardener.

And he said, Sir, if you have taken him away, just tell me where he is and I will go and get him. And that man said, Suddenly he recognized it was the Lord. Rabboni, he went forward to grasp his feet.

As he always did. And the Lord said, Don't touch me. Don't touch me.

Hadn't Mary touched the Lord many times in the past? Probably Mary had washed the Lord's feet many times. And now the Lord says, Don't touch me. Now suppose you love a person and you always do something to that person.

You know, with the Jews, if you love a person so much, you wash his feet. And suddenly he, he refused to let you do it. You begin to wonder, right? But every time you find this thing happened, the disciples were in a room, the doors shut, everything was shut, they were frightened.

And suddenly the Lord appeared to them. And please be with me. Do you have anything to eat? During those 40 days.

Now no wonder Peter, you see, Peter was one who couldn't wait. So after the Lord appeared once or twice or maybe once to him and once to the other disciples, and then he waited and waited and waited,

every moment expecting the Lord to appear, and he didn't. So finally Peter said, Well, let's do something.

Let's go fishing. We cannot just wait there until he suddenly appears. And then disappeared.

So that probably was one of the reasons why Peter said, Let's go fishing. Do something, you know. Do something.

It's just too much. Now, dear brothers and sisters, you understand why during those 40 days he appeared and disappeared and appeared again and disappeared again. There is a most important reason there.

The reason is all their former relationship with the Lord, when they saw the Lord, they heard him, they touched him, their relationship with the Lord was physical. It was very close, yes. The Lord was with them and they were with the Lord.

They were always together. And that was their relationship with the Lord. And they found that relationship most satisfying.

But the Lord did not. From now on, your relationship with me is no longer a physical one, it is spiritual. You no longer know me by the flesh.

No one does. But now you ought to know me. I appear to you to draw you away from the flesh.

And as soon as you recognize me in the Spirit, I disappear. Because this will be my relationship with you. How important is that relationship.

How often, you know, I heard believers say it, and I myself say that to you. Oh, if I only lived two thousand years ago. If only I was born a Jew, a Galilean.

If only I was born at the same time as Jesus was, at the same place as Jesus was. Oh, if I could only follow him and touch him. If I do, I will not be as I am today.

I will be much more. But the Lord said, it is more profitable for me to die. The disciples said, don't go, don't go.

Just stay here. Nothing better than this. The Lord said, it is more profitable for you that I die.

Before, if I don't go, the Holy Spirit will not come. I can be with you, but I cannot be near you. There is something far better than with.

There is a you there. Why do you want to maintain your relation with me on an earthly basis, on a physical basis? However satisfying it may be, there is a better relationship, a relationship in the Spirit, a newness. When we see the better, we don't want the better.

So he has to take the better away that we may want the better. During those 40 days, our Lord Jesus was trying to draw them out of themselves into His life. To draw them out from the physical into His life.

The Lord was teaching them a lesson they have never learned before. In other words, the Lord is putting them on in the realm of the Spirit. Because only when they are able to enter into the resurrection realm and in the realm of the Spirit He is able to inform them.

During those 40 days, He talks to them things concerning the kingdom of God. Oh, you know, when I read the Bible, I say, Lord, why don't you tell me what do you talk about? You talk about the kingdom of God. That's most important.

I'd like to know what did you say. The Lord must have said many wonderful things about the kingdom of God. He said a lot about the kingdom of God when He was on earth for three years.

But now He said, during those 40 days, as if He talked nothing but the kingdom of God. Wow, I'd like to know what He said. I know you are interested to know that too.

But no record. There's no record. Just say the kingdom of God.

I think our Lord Jesus is the best teacher in this world. I always admire people. Well, let me mention one, Brother Fonke.

When our Brother Fonke is speaking, he likes to draw. He uses a blackboard and draws. And you know, I always admire that.

But I cannot do that because if I want to draw a dog, it becomes a cat. So I dare not do any drawing. But I know that visual aid is important.

In other words, if you want to speak, it's better if you can demonstrate. But I have to confess I don't have that ability. But you know, our Lord Jesus, the Bible does not say, does not tell us what He said about the kingdom of God.

Ah, I suddenly realize He hasn't. You understand that? He suddenly appeared. He suddenly disappeared.

He suddenly appeared. He suddenly disappeared. What is it? That's the kingdom of God.

The kingdom of God is not eating and drinking, but righteousness and peace and joy of the Holy Spirit. In other words, what is the kingdom of God? The kingdom of God is found on His risen life. The kingdom of God is on resurrection ground.

The kingdom of God is in the Spirit. There is a reality, if you want to talk to children, demonstration is the best way of speaking. And you know, these disciples, during those 40 days, our Lord Jesus actually was lifting them up on the basis of His death.

The Lord is raising them up to a resurrection ground. A relationship with Him, it takes 40 days, on the day of resurrection, He appeared to them. He breathed into them and said, Receive ye the Holy Spirit.

They have received the Holy Spirit. Therefore, they are able to enter into the realm and be maintained in a spiritual way. It takes the Lord.

You know, 40 is a number of trials. It must be a great testing to the disciples, but I think it must be a great trial to the Lord too. As a matter of fact, all His time with the disciples, even before His death, was a trial.

How they misunderstood Him all the time. I would like to use a word to describe it. To describe the feeling of the Lord.

All that happened in the Lord during those 40 days. And also, including the three years with His disciples. There is one word in the Bible, and that one word is travail.

Out of the travail of His soul, He shall be. God refers to His death. Yes.

Because of His death, He has given birth to all of us. But, those 40 days are a continuation of this travail. He travails for us.

That we may be lifted out of ourselves, into His life, out of the flesh, into the Spirit. Out of the old creation, into the new creation. That He may be able to form us into His mystic.

Those 40 days were the travail of our Lord Jesus. But, the Lord ascended up to heaven. And the disciples returned to Jerusalem.

And there they were for 10. You know, 10 is the number of responsibilities. They returned to Jerusalem.

Now probably, when the Lord ascended from Mount Olive, probably there were 500 dailies. You know, because in 1 Corinthians 15, it says at one time the Lord appeared to 500 dailies. So, most commentators feel that probably that refers to the time of His ascension.

But strangely speaking, you'll find only 120 remain there in that upper chamber in Jerusalem. Most of the people seem to have returned to Galilee or disappeared. But these 120, they were together.

They gave themselves to continual prayer with one echo. There is nothing that tests your flesh more than prayer. There is nothing that will try your flesh than praying together.

There is nothing harder than give yourself together to continual prayer with one echo. It is much easier to go out and do something. It is much easier to do something together.

But to give yourself to prayer with one echo, that is very difficult. Very difficult. Why do they come together to pray? The Lord said, return to Jerusalem and wait.

Until you receive power from on high. How do they wait? They just sit there and wait passively? No. They know.

If the Lord said, wait until you receive the power from on high, the Lord expects them to wait actively, not just passively. So they gave themselves to prayer. They know that there is only one thing they can do and that thing is to pray.

Brothers and sisters, what kind of prayer is that? God has a principle in all His work concerning the new creation. You know, in the old creation, when God created the heavens and the earth, He did them all alone. He did not ask for help.

But in the work of the new creation, God has set a principle. And that principle binds Him. He will not do anything unless He gets the call.

So I remember Brother Mee said, God is almighty in heaven, but His power is restricted by man on earth. Not because man has such power to limit Him. It's because God has set down a principle.

That is good pleasure. So far as the new creation is concerned, He will not do anything until He finds a response from the earth to ask Him. That's the reason why you'll find in Matthew 18, if you bind on earth, He will also bind in heaven.

If you lose on earth, He will also lose in heaven. What does it mean? The earth governs the heaven. But it is the heaven who wants to bind.

But the heaven shares its burden with you. You take up that burden and say, Lord, we want to bind. Then the heaven says, All right, I'll bind it.

After giving up His body in the flesh on the cross, the risen Lord is to take upon Himself a coffered body to continue His speaking and His doing. That's what He wants. He trembles for that.

He will not and He cannot do it alone. He told the brethren, Go and they understood. They went back to Jerusalem, not just sitting there or lying there and waiting.

As if it would come automatically. That is not God's way with a new creation. They fully understood.

They had found it with affliction of Christ concerning them. They came together. It was a most difficult trying thing to the flesh.

But in view of what the Lord wants, the Lord wants a body, they were willing to come together to give themselves to continual prayer with one another. They travail for the birth of the Church. They, as it were, fellowship with the Lord in His travail.

It is on the basis of the travail of the Lord that they are able to. It is by His life within them they are able to travel with the Lord. Remember, this has nothing to do with atonement.

There our Lord is all alone, there in our sins, all by Him. We receive the good of it, but we don't hear it. But so far as this new creation is concerned, the hundred and twenty people gave themselves to continual prayer.

It is conveying prayer. It is praying with, they want this. What? What is the five hundred brethren all went out? It cannot be more than that.

What if the Lord should have risen to heaven and He couldn't find a body on earth? He cannot see. He cannot do. He cannot think.

What He wants to say, what He wants to do, even though the majority of the brethren seemed to stop, the hundred and twenty gave themselves to continual prayer, to travel for the birth. Dear brothers and sisters, during those ten days, they were not only praying, they were making adjustments. You cannot pray together without making adjustments, lots of adjustments.

Though the Bible only illustrates one thing, they feel in the vacancy of Judas, the materialist. But we can, from our experience, we can understand there must be lots of adjustments. With the Lord, and after ten days, after that, the day of Pentecost was a, and suddenly a sound out of heaven as a heart bleeding, filled the house.

And there is fire as tongues coming upon each one of them. They were all filled with the Holy Spirit and they began to speak in tongues, speaking of the great things of God. Brothers and sisters, what is it? The birth of the Church.

This is as great a miracle as Christ was born through Mary. One is personal, the other is complete. One is the foundation, the other is the superstructure.

One is the beginning, the other is the continuation. Christ and His Church are one. It is the same Christ who is speaking and who is through what? Law.

Through the law of today. Dear brothers and sisters, what we need today is to know what God wants and to prevail for that. This is working together.

And out of this, that which God wants will come. This is the beginning of that body of Christ. And you see how He could speak and He could do things through that body.

Just as He was able to do when He was in that physical body, Jesus of Nazareth. And this is the Book of Acts. So I think probably we will stop here for tonight.

What I do pray to the Lord is just this. The Lord needs a body. The Church is the body of Christ.

It's the extension of Christ. It is through that body He is to speak and to do as He used to speak and do. But it will not come into being if there is lacking on our part of today.

He has to live, but hasn't. Our Heavenly Father, how we praise and thank Thee for sending Thy Son, our Lord Jesus, to this world to take upon Himself a human flesh. And in that body He began to speak and to do.

O our Heavenly Father, how we praise and thank Thee as our Lord Jesus had accomplished the work of redemption. He has risen from the dead. He is now seated at Thy right hand waiting Thine enemies to be Thy foes.

But He has sent the Holy Spirit O that we may be baptized into one body that He may be able to continue to do and to speak. O Lord, what a privilege, but what a responsibility. We humble ourselves before Thee.

We ask Thee to show us, show us Thy mind. We ask Thee that Thou would enable us to prevail with Thyself for the body's sake. O we worship Thee together.

In the name of our Lord Jesus. Amen.

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