

May 23, 2021  
Adams Center Baptist Church  
“Fresh Wind” — Acts 2

Over the last several weeks, we have been addressing some of the biggest objections to the Christian faith.

What about Hypocrites in the Church?  
The Bible is Full of Errors  
The Bible is Full of Contradictions  
Reasons to Believe in the Resurrection  
Can a Loving God Send People to Hell?  
How Could a Good God Allow Suffering?

And I've attempted to give you some thoughts and tools to answer these objections, but today, on Pentecost Sunday, I want to remind you and I want to remind me that as desperately as we want to reach people with the Gospel of Jesus Christ, as clever as we can be with reasons to believe, we need the power of Holy Spirit to break through. If we are going to reach the people around us, our neighbors, our friends, our family members, our villages, our towns, our counties, our State and our Country, we need a Fresh Wind of the Holy Spirit.

You see, there was a time in the Church, when the Church was without the power that it needed to transform the city and the world in which it lived. The Bible describes this time in Acts 1:1-8. Let's start there this morning. Read Acts 1:1-8.

1 In my former book, Theophilus, I wrote about all that Jesus began to do and to teach 2 until the day he was taken up to heaven, after giving instructions through the Holy Spirit to the apostles he had chosen. 3 After his suffering, he presented himself to them and gave many convincing proofs that he was alive. He appeared to them over a period of forty days and spoke about the kingdom of God. 4 On one occasion, while he was eating with them, he gave them this command: “Do not leave Jerusalem, but wait for the gift my Father promised, which you have heard me speak about. 5 For John baptized with water, but in a few days you will be baptized with the Holy Spirit.”

6 Then they gathered around him and asked him, “Lord, are you at this time going to restore the kingdom to Israel?”

7 He said to them: “It is not for you to know the times or dates the Father has set by his own authority. 8 But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth.”

I love the fact that Luke opens his book, written to Theophilus, by saying that in his Gospel, the book of Luke, he previously “wrote about all that Jesus began to do and teach.” You see, Jesus

wasn't done doing and teaching when he died for our sins on the cross. He still had more doing and teaching to do, and He still is actively doing and teaching today. Amen?

After His death for our sins, His burial, and His resurrection from the dead, Jesus appeared to many people. This was one of reasons we gave to believe in the Resurrection. He appeared to Peter, to the Twelve apostles including Matthias who took Judas' place. He appeared to more than 500 of the brothers at the same time, and many of those were still living when Paul wrote his first letter to the Corinthians around 53-54 AD, which would have been just 20 years or so after these events in the book of Acts. He appeared to all these people over a period of 40 days and spoke about the Kingdom of God. On one of these occasions, while He was eating with them (interesting that the Risen Jesus is still eating), He gives them a command.

"Do not leave Jerusalem, but wait for the gift my Father promised, which you have heard me speak about."

You see, during His earthly ministry, Jesus spoke of this "pouring out of the Spirit" that was to come:

37 On the last and greatest day of the festival, Jesus stood and said in a loud voice, "Let anyone who is thirsty come to me and drink. 38 Whoever believes in me, as Scripture has said, rivers of living water will flow from within them." 39 By this he meant the Spirit, whom those who believed in him were later to receive. Up to that time the Spirit had not been given, since Jesus had not yet been glorified. (John 7:37-39 NIV)

In John 14, Jesus goes on to say,

16 And I will ask the Father, and he will give you another advocate to help you and be with you forever— 17 the Spirit of truth. The world cannot accept him, because it neither sees him nor knows him. But you know him, for he lives with you and will be in you.

And then in verse 26, He says,

26 But the Advocate, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, will teach you all things and will remind you of everything I have said to you.

There is continuity between the OT and the NT, but what happens on the day of Pentecost is something pivotal. It is really a dramatic fulfillment of what Moses prayed for in Numbers 11. You might remember this. Moses is burdened with caring for all of Israel. He can't feed them all. He can't teach them all. He can't be the judge for all their disputes. He basically says to God, "just kill me, because I can't keep up with all this."

So, God tells Moses to gather 70 men from the elders of Israel, and He places the Holy Spirit on these 70 men, and they prophesied. Two of the guys counted among the 70 didn't go to the tent where all the others did. They stayed in the camp, but the Holy Spirit came on them too, and they prophesied. There's probably a sermon in there about those that go to the tent with the special club and those that stay in the camp with the people, but I'll leave that for the moment.

A young man runs to snitch on these two men who are prophesying in the camp, and Joshua, Moses' right hand man, says, "Moses, you've got to put a stop to this."

In Numbers 11:29, we read, "But Moses said to him, "Are you jealous for my sake? If only all the Lord's people were prophets, that the Lord would put His Spirit upon them!"

If only all the Lord's people were prophets! In Acts 1:5 Jesus says, "For John baptized with water, but in a few days you will be baptized with the Holy Spirit." What happens in Acts, chapter 2 is the fulfillment of what Moses was after — all of God's people would prophesy the great deeds of God.

Now, because Jesus talked about the coming of the Spirit, the disciples wonder, "Are you at this time going to restore the kingdom to Israel?"

Jesus, very directly and yet very kindly says, "Don't worry about that. Don't worry about politics. Don't worry about what government is in control." You see, the disciples were thinking, if the Holy Spirit is coming, then the establishment of God's Kingdom on this earth is coming. In one sense, they were right. The Kingdom of God is established, inaugurated by the ministry of Jesus. You remember when the Pharisees come after Jesus, saying that He was casting demons out by the power of the Devil? A part of Jesus' answer to them is in Matthew 12:28

"But if I cast out the demons by the Spirit of God, then the kingdom of God has come upon you."

Jesus taught the disciples to pray, "Your kingdom come. Your will be done, On earth as it is in heaven." The Kingdom of God is established and growing. Matthew 13:31 says:

31 "The Kingdom of God is like a mustard seed, which a person took and sowed in his field; 32 and this is smaller than all the other seeds, but when it is fully grown, it is larger than the garden plants and becomes a tree, so that the birds of the sky come and nest in its branches."

33 He spoke another parable to them: "The kingdom of heaven is like leaven, which a woman took and hid in three sata of flour until it was all leavened."

But, at the same time the disciples also got it wrong, because the fulfillment of the Kingdom of God would not be fully realized until the end of time. Jesus explains this further in Matthew 13.

37 And He said, "The one who sows the good seed is the Son of Man, 38 and the field is the world; and as for the good seed, these are the sons of the kingdom; and the weeds are the sons of the evil one; 39 and the enemy who sowed them is the devil, and the harvest is the end of the age; and the reapers are angels. 40 So just as the weeds are gathered up and burned with fire, so shall it be at the end of the age. 41 The Son of Man will send forth His angels, and they will gather out of His kingdom all stumbling blocks, and those who commit lawlessness, 42 and they will throw them into the furnace of fire; in that place there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth. 43 Then the righteous will

shine forth like the sun in the kingdom of their Father. The one who has ears, let him hear.

So, Jesus says, “Don’t worry about the end of time, BUT . . .”. But what? What should I be concerned about? Verse 8, “But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth.”

What should we be concerned about? Receiving the power of the Holy Spirit to be witnesses all over the world.

The Greek word used here for witnesses is the word martures. We get our word martyr from the root word here “martus.” (SLIDE). The definition is one who can make an assertion based on what he himself has seen or heard or knows by any other means. It can also be defined as one who, after Jesus’ example, has proved the strength and genuineness of their faith in Christ by undergoing a violent death.

Jesus says, “You will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you, and you will testify of what you yourselves have seen and heard and know about Me.”

Right after giving the disciples one of the biggest jobs imaginable, being witnesses martures in all the world, He disappears. And they wait. For about a week.

The whole world was waiting to hear the Gospel message that Jesus had come to deliver, but not a sound could be heard. The disciples who had been called and trained by Jesus to carry his message to the ends of the earth were all locked up inside the upper room. They were hiding from the very people they were supposed to be challenging with the message. They were whispering to each other behind locked doors rather than shouting to Jerusalem about the message of salvation.

Right outside their doors were the blind, the crippled and the sick. Jesus had touched people just like them and restored health to them, but these men couldn’t do a thing because they had no power. Right outside their door were Roman soldiers who were imposing their will on other nations through force of arms. Jesus had already told Peter that if you live by the sword you will perish by the sword. But these disciples couldn’t act on that principle, because they had no power. Right outside their door were people who were going through the motions of religion; saying prayers that held no meaning to them and sacrificing dead animals, which had no long-term effect on them. But these men couldn’t offer the world anything better because they had no power.

However, on the Day of Pentecost, a day that marked 50 days after the Jewish festival of Passover, something happened that touched and transformed the men in that room and they in turn stepped outside of the doors and touched and transformed the rest of the world. The Bible says the room was filled with a sound like the roaring of a mighty wind. What appeared to be

tongues of flame (SLIDE). rested upon the head of every man in that room. Each one of them was filled with the Holy Spirit and they began to speak in unknown tongues.

As they spoke, those men began moving out into the city and a mysterious thing happened; people from various nations throughout the Mediterranean world understood what those men were saying in their own native language. The human speech that God had confused at the Tower of Babel back in the book of Genesis had been reversed. The Gospel was being preached. By the end of the day 3,000 new converts had been added to the church. Those who heard the message that day took it with them back to their homes all over the world.

All of this happened, because men who had no influence and no power on one day had suddenly been filled with the Holy Spirit. Now they could preach with power. Now they could pray with power. Now they could sing and witness with power, because on Pentecost they had been filled with the Holy Ghost. And on this Pentecost Sunday, I am inviting every one of us to pray to God that something similar happen to us. I am praying that God give me the power of Pentecost. I am praying that God give our music, and our prayers, and our preaching and our worship the power of Pentecost. I am praying that God wake us up and bring us alive so that the churches all over the North Country will have the power that is needed to see thousands come to faith in Jesus Christ.

Those men were so excited about their faith that some of the people in the city said, "These men must be filled with wine." It looked as if they must have been drunk. Peter responded by saying, "These men are not drunk; it is just the ninth hour of the hour and it is much too early to be drunk." They have simply been filled with the Holy Spirit. Now I know that some people don't want to appear to be drunk in the spirit. We want to appear to be "cool", "calm" and "collected." But we need to receive the spirit of God that can set a fire inside of our souls that will melt our "cool" away and set us ablaze for the cause of Jesus Christ.

I want to have happen to me what obviously happened to Peter. The last time anybody had heard anything from Peter prior to Pentecost, he was telling people on three separate occasions that he did not know Jesus. However, once the power of the Holy Spirit came upon Peter he was walking boldly throughout Jerusalem telling anyone who would stop and listen, that Jesus Christ was Lord. I want that boldness, and I hope that you want it as well. I hope that all of us want to have the power and the boldness and the desire to share our faith and live openly for God. We need a Fresh Wind.

The last thing I want you to notice here is that the very first act of this one God, tongue-talking, holy-roller, Born again, heaven-bound, believer in the liberated power of Jesus name, Peter, his very first act is to do an exposition on study of the Scriptures.

In the midst of this great outpouring of the Holy Spirit, among signs and wonders and speaking in tongues, what did Peter do? Essentially, he said, "Let's have a Bible study! Let's study Joel to gain an understanding of what is happening."

Notice what Paul calls the Church:

15 if I am delayed, you will know how people ought to conduct themselves in God's household, which is the church of the living God, the pillar and foundation of the truth. (1 Timothy 3:15 NIV)

Paul calls the church: "the pillar and foundation of the truth". The word "pillar" here is the idea of "display". The idea is that the church's mission is to hold up the truth of God for all men to see. The church is to support and display the truth of God. We are not the source of truth, the Bible is, but we are to support and display it. The Bible is God's Word, and the church is to support and display that truth. Timothy was to do this through preaching and teaching the Word of God:

11 Command and teach these things. 12 Don't let anyone look down on you because you are young, but set an example for the believers in speech, in conduct, in love, in faith and in purity. 13 Until I come, devote yourself to the public reading of Scripture, to preaching and to teaching. (1 Timothy 4:11-13 NIV)

And in 2 Timothy:

In the presence of God and of Christ Jesus, who will judge the living and the dead, and in view of his appearing and his kingdom, I give you this charge: 2 Preach the word; be prepared in season and out of season; correct, rebuke and encourage—with great patience and careful instruction. (2 Timothy 4:1-2 NIV)

I don't believe that the church's mission has changed, we are to be the pillar and support of the truth. This is done through faithfully expounding the truth of God's Word and living out the truth of God's Word. This is the mission of every local church.

In his book *Amusing Ourselves to Death*, Neil Postman writes, "Toward the end of the nineteenth century... the Age of Exposition began to pass, and the early signs of its replacement could be discerned. Its replacement was to be the Age of Show Business."

Postman is right on with his assessment. In this Age of Show Business, truth is irrelevant; what really matters is whether we are entertained. Substance counts for little; style is everything. I'm afraid that the church is forsaking its calling; it is no longer the pillar and ground of the truth, but has become a source of entertainment.

The first act of the newly constructed Church was to expound the Word of God, and Paul told Timothy to live out and preach the Word to the Church. This calling hasn't changed. This is our mission, this is our calling as a local church, we are to preach the Word and live out the Word. May God grant us strength and grace to do just that. We need the power of the Holy Spirit to enable us to be His witnesses.

In two weeks, I want to continue where we leave off here in Acts, chapter 2, and look further at what Peter says about what is taking place as the Holy Spirit is poured out on His people. Next

week, don't forget, we'll be doing an interview with our very own Ernie Miller, that will focus on sharing our faith with others.

For now, let me pray for you.