

Acts 2:1-21

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Date: 06 December 2020

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[0:00] Good morning. I invite you to turn with me to Acts chapter 2. As you turn there, I think there's one other thing to announce today. Just a thank you to the Crab Trees. Yesterday, Officer's Christian Fellowship hosted a men's retreat and a number of guys, I think, in the room here were a part of that and I've heard good things. If you want to know more, ask one of those guys.

Oh, yes. Is it next week, Josiah? Okay. So the elders are recommending Josiah for membership next week. So register your no votes now. And then we'll be affirming him as a congregation next week. And then Kevin Marr. Hi, Kevin. The elders are also recommending Kevin. If you've not gotten to know Kevin yet, he's a cool guy. I enjoy his company and his testimony in Christ. And so get to know him. And we have not yet set a date that we will be recommending him to the congregation for your affirmation. But stand by for that and we'll announce it soon. Let's pray and then dig into Acts chapter 2. Lord, as we come to your word and as we look to see your son, will you, by your spirit, show us tremendous things in your love that we might be transformed, that we might glory in you and that we might glorify you. And pray that in the name of Jesus Christ, who makes our approach to your throne in prayer possible by his blood. Amen.

[1:49] So friends, now that our Lord has come, and now that he has made an end of all our guilt and shame on his cross, now that he has conquered death and plundered the grave, now that he has ascended to the right hand of the Father, where he rules and reigns, now that he has promised to come again, what about that in-between time, between his ascension and his return?

What do the disciples do now? And what do we do now? Well, just as Jesus had promised, today we're going to be looking at the day of Pentecost in Acts chapter 2, as he had promised 10 days earlier, in Acts chapter 1, verse 8, he said, You will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you, and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria and to the ends of the earth.

And that's just what happened. Next, and so we look at Acts chapter 2, verse 1. When the day of Pentecost arrived, we were all together in one place, and suddenly there came from heaven a sound like a mighty rushing wind, and it filled the entire house where they were sitting. And divided tongues as of fire appeared to them and rested on each one of them. And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other tongues as the Spirit gave them utterance. Friends, Jesus doesn't disappoint. He promises it, and it happens. Right? Now, when something incredible like this happens, well, you want to know, what does that mean?

[3:50] What's this all about? And, well, so did everybody else that day, because we pick up in verse 5. Now there were dwelling in Jerusalem Jews, devout men from every nation under heaven.

And at this sound, the multitude came together, and they were bewildered, because each one was hearing them speak in his own language. And they were amazed and astonished, saying, Are not all these who are speaking Galileans?

That is, rednecks. And how is it that we hear each of us in his own native language? That is, how is it that we are hearing, like, educated linguists now suddenly speaking to us, right?

Parthenians and Medes and Elamites and residents of Mesopotamia, Judea and Cappadocia, Pontus and Asia, Phrygia and Pampylia, Egypt and the parts of Libya belonging to Cyrene, and

visitors from Rome, both Jews and proselytes, Cretans and Arabians, we hear them telling in our own tongues the mighty works of God.

And all were amazed and perplexed, saying to one another, What does this mean? Now, Peter is about to give them their answer.

[5:15] But before we get to what does this mean, let's quickly consider what is it that we're seeing here. First off, it's the day of Pentecost.

That's one of the three major feast days in the Jewish calendar where the people of Israel congregated in Jerusalem for worship. That's noted in Deuteronomy chapter 16.

The Lord said three times a year, these are the three high feast days, All your males shall appear before the Lord your God at the place that he will choose, that is Jerusalem, at the Feast of Unleavened Bread, at the Feast of Weeks, and at the Feast of Booths.

Now, the Feast of Unleavened Bread was also called the Passover. It reminded the Jewish people of their salvation from slavery in Egypt, where they cooked unleavened bread and then sacrificed the Passover lamb, and then the Lord spared them from the last plague, the one that freed them, when Pharaoh finally relented and sent them.

The second feast day, the Feast of Weeks, or the day of Pentecost, was held seven Sabbaths, that's seven weeks, after Passover.

[6:32] And so the seven sevens is 49 days in between the Passover and the Feast of Weeks. And so it's on the 50th day after the Passover, and Pentecost is the Greek word for 50th.

Very creative. Now, both of those second feast days, the Feast of Weeks, or Pentecost, or Firstfruits, and the Feast of Booths, or Ingathering, were harvest festivals, where the people gave thanks to the Lord via offerings for the home, the land, the harvest that the Lord was giving them in the promised land that he had given them.

And so we see in Exodus chapter 23, he explains what this day of Pentecost is. He says, You shall keep the Feast of Harvest of the firstfruits of your labor, and so this is the Pentecost day, of what you sow in the field.

You shall keep the Feast of Ingathering at the end of the year, when you gather in from the field the fruit of your labor. And so what is happening in Jerusalem on this day of Pentecost?

Just now that we've set up the stage, that's what Pentecost is. What's going on there in Acts chapter 2? The people of God are gathered to give thanks that the Lord was faithful to his promise, to give them this land and its fruit.

[8:00] The people of God were gathered here together to celebrate a harvest. And there's something more.

Do you remember when we were looking through the Passion Week of Jesus and how the Passover feast, what was going on in Jerusalem as well? It was like there was a hope.

There was an expectation. These feast days, there was a longing among the people of God, a knowledge that he was going to do something greater that he had been promising, and there was an expectation that as they gathered, maybe this was the time.

Maybe this was the time that the Lord would do the next thing in his redemptive plan. And that's why we saw Pilate's actions during the week of Holy Week, right, were predicated on the idea that like Jerusalem was a tinderbox.

There was this huge expectation at these feast days. So it's so fitting that today our Advent reflection was on the hope of the gospel, the hope of Christ, the hope that he had instilled in his people because that's what's going on in these feasts.

[9:15] So the people are gathered together to give thanks to the Lord that he's faithful to his promise and that God, the people of God were gathered together to celebrate a harvest. and I hope you see where that's headed, right, how artful the Lord is in arranging redemptive history because that's exactly the explanation that they're going to receive.

Peter's going to say, you, O people of God, who are here gathered to give thanks that the Lord is faithful to his promises, right, that's what you're doing here for Pentecost. In your midst, he's fulfilling a greater, his greatest promise.

You, O Israel, who are gathered here to celebrate a harvest. Today, we harvest, not grain, but living souls for the living God that he might pour out his blessing on them.

And so, it's this extraordinary way the Lord is taking what they're already doing and extending it and fulfilling it and taking it to the next level. And this promise, this harvest, it wouldn't be, like, news coming out of the blue for Israel.

Right? Throughout their history, the people of God have been expecting. This is their hope because God has promised something more than a grain harvest. Right? The prophets had been predicting for generations.

[10:42] Here's just one taste, right, from the prophet Jeremiah. Behold, the days are coming, declares the Lord, when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and the house of Judah.

This is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, declares the Lord, and will put my law within them. I will write it on their hearts, and I will be their God, and they will be my people.

No longer shall each one teach his neighbor and each his brother, saying, Know the Lord, for they shall all know. From the least of them to the greatest, declares the Lord. For I will forgive their iniquity, and I will remember their sin no more.

And what had Jesus done, just done, as he went to his cross? He took a cup, and when he had given thanks, he gave it to them, saying, Drink of it, all of you, for this is my blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many for the forgiveness of sins.

And so, just as Jeremiah said, Behold, the days are coming. Here in Acts chapter 2, beginning in verse 12, Peter is saying, The day is now here.

[11:57] Verse 12, And all were amazed and perplexed, saying to one another, What does this mean? But others mocked and said, They are filled with new wine.

But Peter, standing with the eleven, lifted up his voice and addressed them, Men of Judea and all who dwell in Jerusalem, let this be known to you, and give ear to my words, for these people are not drunk, as you suppose, since it is only then the third hour of the day.

But this is what was uttered through the prophet Joel. And in the last days, it shall be, God declares, that I will pour out my spirit on all flesh.

And your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, and your young men shall see visions, and your old men shall dream dreams. Even on my male servants and female servants, in those days, I will pour out my spirit and they shall prophesy, and I will show wonders in the heavens above and signs on the earth below, blood and fire and vapor and smoke, the sun shall be turned to darkness and the moon to blood before the day of the Lord comes, the great and magnificent day.

And it shall come to pass that everyone who calls upon the name of the Lord shall be saved. He's quoting from the prophet Joel there.

[13:20] The book of Joel is three short chapters. I commend it to your reading. this part of his prophecy comes at the end of chapter two. Up to that point, God was telling his people about a phenomenal judgment that was coming.

He pleads with them to repent. And he promises good to them. And he reaffirms his promise of a new covenant.

And Peter is saying, this has transpired in the ministry of Jesus Christ. And friends, that is the gospel, is it not? So great a judgment.

Not the armies of Assyria, not plagues, no, but standing before the judgment seat of the Most High God. So great a judgment. But for all who repent and believe in his Messiah, it is turned to great blessing.

I've heard it said, and I love this, the gospel turns the courtroom of heaven from a sentencing hearing to an adoption. That judgment is turned by the Messiah into blessing for all who call on the name of the Lord.

[14:39] And there is an entrance into this new covenant, this final covenant of the Lord. And so, what we're seeing here in Acts chapter 2 is God's faithfulness to his promises.

Do you believe that God is faithful? Because that's a super, super important question, practical, for your life, is it not? If you think God is faithful, you'll follow after him.

You'll take him at his word. You will find comfort in his word. But if you don't think he's faithful, you're going to go somewhere else, right? He really will. But here we see that this is the fulfillment of God's faithfulness, right?

Of all of his new covenant promises, he's faithful. The fulfillment of John the Baptist's prophecy, I baptize you with water for repentance, but he who is coming after me is mightier than I, whose sandals I am not worthy to carry.

He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and fire. It's the fulfillment, the faithfulness of Jesus' words ten days earlier. You will receive the power, receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you.

[15:54] You will be my witnesses in Jerusalem and all Judea and Samaria to the ends of the earth. It's also, friends, this is such a comfort. journey. It's also the fulfillment of Christ's promise in the Great Commission.

What are the final words of the book of Matthew? Behold, I am with you always to the end of the age. And so, the apostles are probably thinking, well, he's just ascended to heaven.

How is he going to be with us? And here is the testimony that he is with us and with us by his Spirit. Jesus had said in John chapter 10, I and the Father are one.

Even more, when in John 14, Philip said to him, Lord, show us the Father and it is enough for us. Jesus said to him, have I been with you so long and you still do not know me, Philip?

Whoever has seen me has seen the Father. The Father and Son share one divine essence.

[17:19] The Triune Lord is not a committee. It's one. He is one God in three persons. And so, to see the Son, Christ says, is to see the Father.

Father. And likewise, the Son and the Spirit share in that same divine essence. One God in three persons so that where the Spirit is, so too is the risen, reigning Lord, the Son.

So much so that the Apostle Paul in Romans chapter 8 tells us that the deposit of our inheritance, the indwelling Holy Spirit is the Spirit of Christ, he says.

So how is Jesus Christ, God the Son, the risen, reigning Lord with us to the end of the age? By the Spirit, His Spirit, together with the Father, one God, forever to be praised.

Amen. The day of Pentecost is God's faithfulness and God's faithfulness and God's faithfulness and God's faithfulness to His covenant promises, to His people, and to His glory.

[18:30] How good is our God? Now, that might raise a couple questions for us about the nature of the Holy Spirit in His people, in us, right?

Especially this idea of being filled with the Holy Spirit and some of the spectacular effects that has on the day of Pentecost. Now, by my count, there are 17 times in the book of Acts where we see someone filled with the Holy Spirit or full of the Holy Spirit or having the Holy Spirit poured out on them.

Of those 17, and you might count it a little differently than me, but it's about that, right? Of those, there are only this and two more that include a reference to tongues. I'm going to argue that that's not very central to the outpouring of the Spirit of Christ.

Instead, what is clearly central in the filling events is the proclamation of Christ. Each outpouring, including this one, especially this one, like, look at the whole of chapter 2.

we're going to get to Peter's sermon, basically, next week. Is it about the Spirit? When they see the Spirit, what does he start talking about?

[19:50] The Son. Every outpouring of the Spirit, of all those 17 times, without exception, is either about a bold proclamation of the gospel by an evangelist or the glad reception of the gospel by someone who heard it.

Just a sampling. Acts chapter 4. When they had prayed, the place in which they were gathered together was shaken, and they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and continued to speak the word of God.

And so, in the filling of the Holy Spirit, tongues isn't the thing. It's what the tongues say. That's the thing.

And here, everyone who hears in their own language what's being spoken, what do they say? The mighty works of God.

That's the gospel, right? Right? And so, on all of the occasions where tongues are present, and all of the other occasions where the Holy Spirit is said in the book of Acts to fill his people, Christians are using their tongues to proclaim the glories, the gospel of the Lord.

[21:16] And so, Peter is saying, not just as the prophecy through Joel that's being fulfilled in their midst, but also that there are hopes, right?

Their expectations are coming to pass. The new covenant established, the Messiah had come, the Spirit is poured out. Peter is saying, what you have been longing for has come.

He's also saying, again and again, God is faithful to every aspect of everything that he has been pointing these people towards throughout their entire history, and your longing has come to pass in this Jesus.

But that was a very particularly Jewish hope, right? All of the people who are there have gathered together to do what?

To come to the Jewish capital, the Jewish temple, to worship the Jewish God in accordance with the Jewish scriptures. What if you aren't Jewish?

[22:15] I'm not. What if you came here today or tuned in today, right? And you weren't looking for, hoping for, longing for the Jewish Messiah.

Does this have bearing on you? first and foremost, absolutely. He's the Lord of all the earth. And so when he offers salvation, this message is for you.

And that's why Jesus said, you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem and Judea and Samaria and to the ends of the earth. Because this one God is God over all.

And every one of us will stand before him. And so the faithfulness to his gospel covenant is so wonderful. great news. The whole world.

And so I bid you come. And I also want to say that whatever else you're longing for, and friends, this is for those who are separated from Christ.

[23:25] It's also for all of us. This is a passage about hope. This is a passage about longing and expectation. Just like our Advent we did tonight. The way we live our lives, we follow after what we're longing for.

So this matters. Because, right, we might not long, you might not long for what the pilgrims in Jerusalem did. that way. But wrapped up in Pentecost is the answer to your hopes to you.

I can say that with confidence. Not even knowing each and every one of you what your desires are for today. I can say that with confidence because there is no domain of human longing that is not bound up and fulfilled in Jesus Christ.

He's the one who made you. He is your telos, your end point. You were made for Him.

Right? And so for you who are searching for belonging, who want to feel at home, you were made for the one who knows you perfectly and still loves you perfectly and aims to perfect you.

[24:47] And you will never be at home until you find yourself again. Those of you who are hoping to escape cabin fever right now, right, even if you get out, you'll find yourself in another cabin.

Right? One kind or another. What you need is the peace He brings wherever you go. you who desire safety, you will never find rest until you find a place in the good shepherd's flock where He says, my sheep hear my voice and I know them and they follow me.

I give them eternal life and they will never perish and no one will snatch them out of my hand. That's safety. The only permanent and true safety.

You who desire rest, who are run down and weary from the cares and sufferings of this world and this pandemic and everything that is grinding on you, you will not find permanent rest.

The rest you need until you lean on the one who has said it is finished. Your strivings may cease.

You who desire health, who fear death, can never consume enough vitamins or run enough miles to outrun the Reaper.

[26:18] but you can be joined to the one who conquered death. There is no domain of human longing that is not fulfilled to the uttermost, beyond what we can expect in the gospel of Jesus Christ.

the problem isn't our desires that we desire. It's the shallow and sometimes twisted ways that we go about trying to satisfy our desires.

when we look for belonging in one person's bed after another, we never find it. We hurt ourselves. We hurt others. We dishonor the Lord. When we look for safety in our bank account, well, it's Christmas time, right? Maybe you have been listening to the Christmas tales. Ebenezer Scrooge sought safety in his bank account what did it do to him? What did he do to those around him?

[27:38] Longing and safety, they're not wrong hopes. But the way we pursue them can destroy us and harm others and disdain a holy God.

This passage is a fulfillment of hope and a testimony that God is faithful. You can take all your hopes to this God, the one who fulfills his commitments.

He is faithful. And the one who can fulfill your hopes beyond your expectations. Right?

The people in Jerusalem didn't understand Jesus because he was talking on another level. Right?

They wanted the restoration of the Davidic kingdom. He's like, my kingdom is not even of this world.

It's bigger. And the gospel is bigger. It is the consummation of all our hopes beyond what we have hoped for. instead of the person who is seeking.

[28:51] Both the Christian and the non-Christian. Right? Because Christians, just because we've trusted in Christ and received his mercy doesn't mean that we aren't tempted to fulfill those longings the same way we did before.

To that person, the Lord says, Isaiah 55, why do you spend your money for that which is not bread and your labor for that which does not satisfy?

Instead, he says, come, everyone who thirsts, come to the waters. He who has no money, come, buy, and eat.

Come buy wine and milk without money and without price. not that he is going to give us just the things that we have been desiring. He will satisfy the desires of his people's souls.

Those desires that rest beneath the things we're striving after. And the testimony, the answer, is that he will, that we see on the day of Pentecost is what?

[30:00] That he will satisfy us with himself. He is the great treasure. To know and be known.

That is why the promise of the new covenant that is coming to pass on the day of Pentecost is I will be their God and they will be my people. And so the Bible concludes with now the dwelling place of God is with men.

There is no temple because he's there in their midst. next week as Peter continues in his sermon in verse 22.

The first Christian sermon. We're going to see that when the Holy Spirit comes the tongues aren't really the thing. No, when the Holy Spirit comes, actually the Holy Spirit really isn't the thing except because Jesus said the Holy Spirit will testify about him.

We'll see that when the Holy Spirit comes the thing is this Jesus and what will you do with him? He he is the thing let's pray.

[31:20] our great God and Father thank you that you satisfy to the uttermost.

Thank you that we can look to the testimony of the day of Pentecost and see that you are faithful to all you have promised. and Father we ask today that you would by your Son send your Spirit renew us and fill us that we might declare the mighty works of God.

Amen. Amen. Thank you.