

The Day of Pentecost

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[0 : 00] Acts chapter 2, and just reading at the beginning there. When the day of Pentecost arrived, they 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 a 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, and so on.

Now this morning we came to the end of the journey that we've been on for quite a long time as we worked our way through the Gospel of Luke, and I just tonight want to tie it all up together in a way, because all that Jesus lived and Jesus did, and all that was involved in his death and in his resurrection, we find its fulfillment and its meaning in what happens afterwards, and with the great impact that the death and burial and resurrection and the ascension of Jesus has for the church right up until where we are here today.

A journey through Acts would be very edifying, and maybe at some other stage that might be something worth considering. Now this morning we saw how Jesus was taken up, we saw how he went up on a cloud and was received up into heaven, and what a homecoming that would be. We often talk about homecomings, and homecomings are important, and I know that families, it's one of the things that you long for, you love when members of your family come home. There's always anticipation, there's always excitement, and there's always this great sense of thankfulness when reunited, and the homecoming is a very special time, I'm sure summer holidays very much a time of homecoming.

[2 : 09] Well, this homecoming was the homecoming of all homecomings, because Jesus is returning as the all-conquering hero, the all-conquering, mighty, powerful Lord over all, the one who has conquered all the enemies, sin, Satan, the grave, death, hell, the one who did absolutely and everything that the Father had asked him to do, and here he is coming home, and Jesus is going to his reward.

And what a reward that was, and what a reward that is. And heaven would reverberate with the praise and the majesty, the glorious welcome that Jesus would have received.

We read about the disciples in Acts at the beginning in chapter 1, when Jesus was taken up to heaven, that they returned to Jerusalem.

And it tells us in Luke's account how they were filled with joy and how they were praising God. And as we mentioned this morning, Acts of the Apostles is full of this praise. And the praise that is found in the Acts of the Apostles, in a sense, is a reflection of the praise that is in the church triumphant. There are two branches of the church. There's the church triumphant and the church militant. We are in the church militant, but they're all a one church. And I believe the veil that separates the two churches, or the two branches of the church, is much finer and much thinner than ever we realize.

[3 : 51] But there is endless praise and glory, and there should be endless praise here on earth. We are journeying to the land of praise. And it should be part and partial of our life here as we journey on towards glory.

There's praise and glory for our Savior. You go to the book of Revelation, and it's one of the features where there is a song, always a song, a song of praise and glory.

Can I ask you, is this something you look forward to? As you reflect over life, and you say to yourself, well, okay, I'm here. What happens when I die?

Do you think about that? And do you say to yourself, well, you know, I'd like to go to heaven. Have you thought, what is heaven? Now, I would imagine most probably all of you have reflected on these things, and I'm sure all of you say to yourself, well, I would love to go to heaven.

What is heaven? Well, we know from the Bible that it tells us many things, but one thing that it does tell us is that we are in the immediate presence of Christ. He is the one who is central to all that we are about.

[5 : 00] He is the Lamb who will feed us, and he will lead us to living fountains of water, and the church finds all its satisfaction and joy in him. Is that what you look forward to?

Or are you saying to yourself tonight, well, you know, that doesn't excite me too much? Because, you see, in this world, there are two roads, there are two heads, there are two representatives. And the Bible shows us very clearly how it is. And our first representative is Adam. And our second representative is the second Adam, or the last Adam, who is Jesus Christ.

And by nature, we are all tied up in Adam. Adam was, it talks about our first parents, Adam was father of all.

And when Adam fell, then what he became, we became. And what did Adam do when he fell? He ran away from God.

[6 : 06] And that's what people naturally do. We're born into this world with an inbuilt drawing to sin. That is the way we are. We're conceived in sin.

Sin is not something that we can say to ourselves as we grow up and say, right, that's me. I'm going to have nothing more to do with sin. Sin is out the door. I'm done with it.

We don't, A, we don't think like that. B, we cannot do that. Because it is our nature. We cannot go naturally against our nature.

It's what we are. But God in his mercy came after Adam, who was on the run. And he called to Adam, Adam, where are you? God came in his mercy and drew Adam to himself.

And brought Adam back and held out before Adam the great offer. Held out the great promise of a coming savior. And the Bible all the way through, through the law, through the prophets, through the Psalms, through everything, is pointing us to the savior and what the savior is to do.

[7 : 18] And this promise that God held out to Adam is what we preach about tonight. Where there is this new and a living way where we may want to get back to God.

And where we are able to get back to God. And where God accepts us. Let me ask you, is that what you want tonight?

Do you want to get back to God? If you're away from God. If you've been on the run from God. Do you want to get back to God? Well, you know, one of the wonderful things that the Bible shows us. It shows us, A, how to get back to God. And that is, of course, in his son, Jesus Christ. But it also shows us, and this is a wonderful thing.

Is that even if we don't have the desire to go back to God. That we can ask God to give us a desire. You see, at the end of the day, we are inexcusable.

[8 : 27] God tells us in his word that he will do for us in the sphere of salvation if we come to him and ask.

And I'm challenging anybody in here tonight who is saying, Well, you know, I don't have the desire for salvation. I'm challenging you to ask the Lord to give you that desire.

And if you're saying to yourself, I'm not going to do that. Then that shows very clearly that you are really on the run from God. And I pray that God in his mercy will come after you.

Because it's a solemn and a serious thing to be going down this other road. Because God, God has opened up the way in and through his son. And through this new and living way, he is offering us to walk in a more beautiful garden than Eden.

And bring us into even a greater paradise than Adam and Eve first walked in before they fell. And this, of course, is all part of what is set out for us in the gospel.

[9 : 36] All part of what the Lord Jesus Christ did. And so this is all part of us. Jesus leaves his world and heads back into glory as he ascends up there.

He is going into the reward where he is experiencing the fullness of joy. And this was the joy that was set before him in this world.

We're told about that. This is the joy that was set before him. Why he endured the cross. Because, you know, the Lord Jesus Christ loves to see sinners.

This is what he loves above all. Is to see sinners. I'm a sinner. You're a sinner. We're all sinners. Seeing sinners coming to trust in him.

Coming repentant. Coming to believe in him. Coming to accept him. My friend, there is joy.

Remember that. There's joy in heaven over every sinner that repenteth.

[10:37] There is joy in heaven. What is our reaction when someone comes to faith in Jesus Christ? Do we shrug our shoulders? Do we say, ah, well, that's all right. Well, I hope it's not.

I hope that there is real joy within our heart. This sense of thrill. Here's another person who's taken from darkness into light. From death to life.

Here is someone who's now an heir and a joint heir with Christ. Here is somebody's journey to heaven. This is why Jesus came into the world. Here's another blood-bought one making his way home.

But, of course, Jesus had promised his people that before he left, that he would send the Holy Spirit upon them.

And that's what we read about, that the promise would come. That the Father had given this promise that the Holy Spirit would come. That he would send someone. And that was the Holy Spirit. And, of course, the Holy Spirit's great work is convicting us and convincing us of our sin.

[11:41] The Holy Spirit's great work, of course, is holding out Christ before us and revealing Christ to us. And enabling us to embrace Jesus as he is offered in the gospel.

And continuing to reveal the things of Christ to us. Now, as we know, the Holy Spirit always was working in this world.

Always working in people's lives. The Holy Spirit enabled people to believe in the Old Testament just as he does in the New Testament. The believers in the Old Testament were saved.

We've mentioned this before. Were saved in accepting the Messiah who was to come. Who was promised. They believed in God's provision. The Messiah was to come.

We are saved by believing in the Messiah. The Christ who has come. There is only the one way of salvation. And, of course, it was through the ministry.

[12:40] Through the operation of the Holy Spirit. However, as we know, the Holy Spirit was to be poured out. He was to come in greater power. A greater manifestation, at least, of himself.

And so, we have this account of the coming of the Holy Spirit in power. Now, we're just going to look at this very, very briefly. Because there's a lot in it.

But just by way of an overview. And we read that on the day of Pentecost. Now, Pentecost was the second of the harvest feasts that the Jews kept.

Which was 50 days after the Passover. And we find all the disciples together. When all of a sudden, there came from heaven.

And it's important to notice where this comes from. From heaven, a sound like a mighty rushing wind. And we also find that divided tongues of fire appeared on them and rested on each one individually.

[13:39] So, this wind, it tells us, came from heaven. A sound like a mighty rushing wind. It was a violent wind. It wasn't just a breeze.

It was, the actual language indicates, like a violent wind. A powerful wind. And it came from heaven. Now, we know that different winds bring different things.

We know the old poem, a north wind doth blow and we shall have snow. And we know the north wind always brings cold. And the south wind, it tends to be a warmer climate that comes with it.

Well, here was a wind that didn't come from any of the directions on the compass. It came from above. It comes from heaven. And it is reckoned that when we see this, that the rushing mighty wind and the fire is speaking here of two of the powerful aspects of God that are so powerfully at work within salvation.

We see God's power and we see his holiness. And you cannot separate these things from the work of salvation. Because God's power and we see his holiness. They are integral parts of salvation.

[14:50] And wherever God is at work, working amongst us, there will always be his power and his holiness at work. We cannot divide God up.

But here we are seeing his power and his holiness. And, you know, this is part and partial of what happens in the work of salvation.

Because God's power comes into people's lives. Remember what Paul put it. Paul was talking about the gospel of Jesus. Paul said, I'm not ashamed of the gospel of Jesus.

Because it is. Because it is the power of God unto salvation. To everyone that believes. The word, where we get our word dynamite, that's the word, where it blows apart.

And that's what God does. God changes people's lives. God breaks down the barriers that are resistant to Jesus Christ.

[15 : 56] God breaks a heart to make a stubborn heart willing. And there are many of you in here tonight and you look back and you can remember your own resistance to the gospel.

Some of you may have been as hard as stones. Others may have been relatively soft to it. But the thing is this, all of you, however that you were, you still needed the power of God to break.

The power of God to dispel. The power of God to overcome. Because naturally, you don't want Jesus. And this is what the gospel does.

This is what the power of God does. Makes a person willing. Makes a person able to accept Jesus as Savior. And so there's a manifestation of God's power, but also of his holiness.

Of his purity. This is symbolized in the fire. Because that's what fire does. Fire purifies. And again, this is part of the, this is the effect, the impact that takes place in people's lives.

[17 : 02] As the power of God works in people's lives, Also, there is a developing holiness in the life of the believer. Some people say, ah, well, holiness doesn't matter.

Well, not according to the Bible. You know, you can sometimes hear Christians say, well, you know, I'm a Christian. But holiness is no big deal to me. Well, it is to God. Remember what the Lord says, without holiness, no man shall see the Lord.

The command is, be ye holy, for I am holy. And this is part of the Spirit's work within the believer, is conforming them to a Christ-likeness.

Holiness is important to God. And I'm sure it is one of our own regrets and sorrows as we come to the Lord so often in prayer. And we confess before the Lord, oh Lord, I wish I was a holier man, a holier woman.

I wish I was a better person. But God is at work. And he will see to it. He will see to it. And he's doing it. And it's often through the pains and the sorrows and the knocks.

[18 : 09] And you're saying, what's happening to me? And God is saying, I am making you a holier person. He's at work in and through all these things. But anyway, we see or hear, and it's interesting, it's affecting the senses.

There's the sound. There's the sight. And then there's the speech. They were all filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other tongues as the Spirit gave them utterance.

Now, I believe here that this, where they were speaking in other tongues, is not that they were speaking in a language that was unknown, but that they were speaking in languages that were not known to themselves, but not new languages.

They were speaking in other languages. The Holy Spirit gave them the ability. It's quite unique. It was quite an amazing thing. Like, for instance, that all of a sudden you could, now, here it talks about that they were, where do we have this?

That the, verse 5, now, there were dwelling in Jerusalem Jews, devout men from every nation under heaven. Now, it doesn't mean literally every nation under heaven, like to the furthest away in the South Seas and where we would have Eskimos or such like, but in the known world of that time, talking about, that's what it talks about.

[19 : 42] So, here you have all these different, and there's this great international gathering in Jerusalem, very cosmopolitan. And there were people, there's this great list of all the different people who would be of, who had been dispersed and going way, way back generations, who would have been of, there would be Jewish blood in them.

But they all are different languages. And these men, the disciples here, were given the ability to speak in all the different languages. If we were taking it into our own context here, we might, all of a sudden, if this was us, we might be able all of a sudden to speak in Spanish and in French and Italian and such like.

And it'd be an amazing thing that you could converse as fluently in one language as in another.

That's simply what is happening here. And that's what amazed the crowd, because each one of them was hearing the mighty works of God spoken in their own language.

Now, God didn't do this for impact or effect. He did it for a specific reason. Because, you see, back in chapter 1 of Acts, the disciples had asked, we saw that this morning, Lord, will you at this time restore the kingdom to Israel?

They were obsessed with Israel. Israel, Israel, Israel. This is where it was all going to happen. And the Lord Jesus kept saying to them laterally, it's going to be to the ends of the earth.

[21 : 19] They had to get past their own nose. They had to reach out and to move out and to go out. And so the Lord is saying here, this is the start of it. You have been given this ability to reach

into all the different peoples of this world to tell them about Jesus.

Some people have seen this as the overturning of Babel, the Tower of Babel. But that's something else. And so this was an amazing time where people from all the different areas of this world were hearing about the work of the Lord in their own language.

And then Peter comes to the front. And again, we're just rushing through this. And again, we see the impact and the power of the Holy Spirit. Here's Peter. Peter who had run away.

Peter who had, in many ways, had blown it. But you know the wonderful thing, as we've said before, that in Jesus' work, failure is never final.

Jesus is in the business of restoring. And we see the fire in Peter's heart. When you look at Peter here, but Peter standing with the 11th, verse 14, lifted up his voice and addressed the men of Judea and all who dwell in Jerusalem.

[22 : 44] Let this be known to you and give ear to my words. Fifty, fifty-three days earlier. Peter could never, or fifty-two, fifty-three days earlier.

Peter could never, ever, ever, ever have imagined him doing that. That night, Peter went out a broken man. Broken-hearted. His heart burst.

Weeping. Because of what he had done to Jesus. And here he is, these days later. And he's standing up at the forefront, addressing everybody with power, with authority.

How? Why? Because of the Holy Spirit that has come upon him. The empowering of the Lord. And Peter preaches fearlessly. And, of course, he goes through and he's highlighting from the prophet Joel to explain what has happened at Pentecost.

And he's moving through here. And then Peter finishes with these wonderful words in verse 21. Where he says, Everyone who calls upon the name of the Lord shall be saved.

[23 : 55] And even Peter at that moment, although he declared that, didn't understand it. Because Peter himself still had the problem of getting past the Jew.

Peter had to learn from the Lord. Peter had lessons to learn. And he didn't understand that when God said everyone, he meant everyone. Everyone who calls upon the name of the Lord shall be saved.

Calls upon the name of the Lord. And that name, of course, tells us who he is and what he has done. Who is he? His name is Jesus.

What did he do? His name shall be called Jesus because he shall save his people from their sins. That's what he's done. That's who Jesus is. And then we see the extent of the offer.

Everyone. This is God's grace. See the largeness of it. Everyone. Couldn't be greater than that. Everyone.

[24 : 58] But you see, there's one qualification. No, Satan. Satan will come to your heart and he'll say, Ah, there's conditions and clauses and this. No, there's not. There's one condition. One. Everyone who calls upon the name of the Lord.

That's it. Everyone who calls. That's all you're asked to do. To call by faith. To come to the Lord and say, Lord, I need you.

I want you. I want you to be my Lord and my Savior. Will you do that? Or are you saying to yourself, no, I'm not going to do that.

I pray that there's nobody in here tonight who's making that decision quietly in their heart and saying, no, I'm not going to do that. That's an awful thing to do. And maybe people are saying that in their own heart and they're saying, you know what?

I'm not against religion. I'm not against the Christian faith. But I'm afraid that if I get Jesus tonight, that my life will be mucked up and I won't know what to do.

[26 : 08] I will have plans for life. I want to do this and I want to do that. You know, before I leave this world, I want to get it sorted before myself and God. But not now.

That is a pit talking. Let me tell you, that is from the pit. You need to get right with God now. Not just with regard to what you will have in the future, but what you will have now.

It's the biggest mistake that people make. They somehow think that a Christian is miserable.

That a Christian loses out in life. That when a person becomes a Christian, that somehow they're waving goodbye to happiness and life.

No, my friend, that is not true. It brings you in to where life really is.

[27 : 09] Jesus says that. And I want you tonight to hear what God's word says. Not what your own heart says. Not what Satan says. Not what other people say.

