

Acts 18:24-19:10

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[0 : 00] Good morning, friends. We are looking at Acts chapter 18 this morning. If you'd turn there with me, that's page 927 in the Pew Bible.

We're going to look at Acts 18, verse 23 through chapter 19, verse 7 today. Let me pray for us before we read God's word.

Lord Jesus, indeed we have no other king, and to you all glory belongs. So as we come now to your word, Lord Jesus, would you by your spirit instruct us and teach us.

And Lord, we pray that you would renew us in your grace. Acts 18, verse 23.

After spending some time there, Paul departed and went from one place to the next through the region of Galatia and Phrygia, strengthening all the disciples. Now, a Jew named Apollos, a native of Alexandria, came to Ephesus.

[1 : 23] He was an eloquent man, competent in the scriptures. He had been instructed in the way of the Lord, and being fervent in spirit, he spoke and taught accurately the things concerning Jesus.

Though, he knew only the baptism of John. He began to speak boldly in the synagogue. But when Priscilla and Aquila heard him, they took him and explained to him the way of God more accurately. And when he wished to cross to Achaia, the brothers encouraged him and wrote to the disciples to welcome him. When he arrived, he greatly helped those who through grace had believed.

For he powerfully refuted the Jews in public, showing by the scriptures that the Christ was Jesus. And it happened that while Apollos was at Corinth, Paul passed through the inland country and came to Ephesus.

There he found some disciples. And he said to them, did you receive the Holy Spirit when you believed? And they said, no, we've not even heard that there is a Holy Spirit.

[2 : 28] And he said, into what then were you baptized? They said, into John's baptism. And Paul said, John baptized with a baptism of repentance, telling the people to believe in the one who was to come after him.

That is, Jesus. On hearing this, they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus. And when Paul had laid his hands on them, the Holy Spirit came on them. And they began speaking in tongues and prophesying.

There were about twelve men in all. Well, this Sunday, as Matt mentioned earlier, is traditionally known as Pentecost Sunday. It's the Sunday when we remember what Jesus did on the day of Pentecost 2,000 years ago when he gave the gift of the Spirit to the church.

It's hard for us today to imagine how much of a launch forward, how much of a new day that that was in the history of redemption. And it's hard for us to remember how incredible it is to live this side of what Jesus did at Pentecost.

And as we've been marching through the book of Acts this summer, lo and behold, we come to a passage that's kind of all about the Holy Spirit. I remember the first time I actually saw a mobile phone.

[3 : 47] It was actually a car phone. Anybody remember those? Yeah. It was gray and plastic and about the size of a small brick.

And it was wonderful. You could flip open the little receiver and there were nine plastic buttons that actually lit up when you pushed them. And you could pull out this thin black antenna and you could get reception about 50% of the time.

And we thought that it was awesome. But of course today we live in a whole new age, don't we? The age of the smartphone.

An age when we can call and text and message. When we can watch movies and make movies right in the palm of our hand. Where we can be interrupted and distracted pretty much any time, any

place, anywhere, right?

Compared to my parents' 1990s car phone, it's like we live in a whole new age. But imagine what it would be like if you were having lunch with a friend. And suddenly you hear not the gentle or clever ring of an iPhone.

[4 : 56] But some kind of obnoxious buzzing. Like an alarm clock meets an old school Atari game. And out of your friend's purse comes not that sleek, shiny wonder of technology we've all come to expect.

But a gray hunk of plastic the size of a small shoe. With an extendable antenna and a flip open receiver. And at first you might think that your friend's trying to be a bit ironic. Maybe trying to make a statement. Ah, good one you think. Way to stick it to the man. But then she starts yelling into the receiver. Can you speak up?

I think I'm getting some bad coverage. And suddenly you realize that no. That really is her cell phone. Appalled that your friend is stuck in a technological time warp from the 1990s.

You resolve to get her up to date. It is time for her to enter the new age. And promptly you march her off to the Apple store on Broadway. Or something like that. Depending on your brand of choice.

[5 : 59] What we have in our passage this morning. Are actually two related episodes. Of people who need to be brought up to date.

As it were. Not in terms of technology of course. But in terms of God's plan of salvation. They need to be brought up to date. In terms of the history of redemption. They need to know where they live. In light of what God's doing in the world. You see what Luke has been trying to show us. In Acts. As we've been following his story. These many weeks. Is that with Jesus Christ.

Something new. Has been launched upon the world. The very. In breaking. Of the kingdom of God. That.

He's been trying to show us. That the great quantum leap. Forward. Has happened. And that we all. Each and every one of us.

[7 : 02] Need to get with the times. More to the point. What Luke's going to show us here in our text. Is that the fullness of what God has done for us. In Jesus Christ. This new thing. This inauguration of the kingdom.

Is something that even the most intelligent. Have to learn. And something that even the most religious. Have to receive. That's what we're going to consider this morning.

So first. This new thing. That's broken into the world in Jesus. Is something that even the most intelligent. Have to learn. We see this in verses 23 through 28.

In verse 23. Paul launches out on his so-called. Third missionary journey. And the focus of this. Third and last sort of major missionary journey. In Acts. That stretches from this point. In chapter 18. All the way through the end of chapter 20.

Is the great ancient city of Ephesus. Now we're going to look at the city of Ephesus. In a little more detail next week. But for now. Luke is concerned. To introduce us.

[7 : 56] To a man named. Apollos. In verse 24. And as you read. The description of Apollos. In verses 24 and 25. You know. You have to admit.

That this guy. Is exactly the kind of guy. That you want on your team. I mean. If we're picking. Spiritual all-star teams. If we're ready to go. Sort of. Charge.

A new work. For the kingdom. You know. This guy's definitely going to go. One or two. You're picking him first. Maybe second. This is the guy you want. I mean. Look at a little closer. At Luke's description. Verse 24.

We're told that he's a native. Of Alexandria. Egypt. This was one of the most. Learned cities. In the ancient world. Second. And probably only to Athens. In reputation. Alexandria. Had one of the largest. And most renowned.

Libraries. In the world. At the time. And was a seedbed. For scholars. And for deep thinking. The Jewish philosopher. Philo. If that name rings any bells. For you. Is from Alexandria. And in the coming years.

[8 : 53] The great Christian thinkers. Clement. And Origen. Would also rise up. From this same city. So that's Apollos' hometown. And it seems. As Luke gives us his description. That he embodied.

The best aspects. Of his native soil. For on the one hand. Luke tells us. That he was an eloquent man. In other words. He knowed. He knew.

How to hold. An audience. Captive. He could weave. A spell. With his words. But he wasn't just. Some shallow. Rhetorician.

No. Luke says. He was also competent. In the scriptures. He had depth. He had substance. Actually. A better translation. Of that phrase. Would be powerful. Or mighty. In the scriptures. This is what. Charles Spurgeon. Once said. Of John Bunyan. Spurgeon wrote. If you read anything. Of Bunyan. You will see. That it is almost like.

[9 : 49] The reading. Of the bible itself. Bunyan. Had read it. Till his very soul. Was saturated. With scripture. And though his writings. Are charmingly. Full of poetry. Yet he cannot give us.

His pilgrim's progress. That sweetest of all prose poems. Without continually. Making us feel. And say. Why this. Man. Is a living. Bible. Prick him.

Anywhere. His blood. Is bibline. The very essence. Of the bible. Flows from him. I was Spurgeon. Talking about.

John Bunyan. One wonders. Whether Luke. Would have said. The same thing. About Apollos. This young man. From Alexandria. And notice.

While we're thinking about it. The rare combination. Of these first. Two traits. On the one hand. Apollos is eloquent. He's well read. He's rhetorically fluid. He's a man of his age.

[10 : 44] And on the other hand. He's richly steeped. In the bible. You know. For some reason. Today. We think. That those two things. Can't go together. Strangely. And yet. Here was Apollos. Able to do both.

And the next two things. That Luke tells us. About Apollos. Also form a rare combination. Look at verse 25. We're told first. That Apollos. Had been instructed. In the way of the Lord. And that he spoke.

And taught accurately. About Jesus. So. Apollos was this. Sharp. Theological thinker. He cared about doctrine. He was careful. And precise. In his language. But. This wasn't just some.

Dry. Dusty. Head knowledge. No. Because the second thing. We're told in this verse. Is that he was. Fervent in spirit. There was passion. In Apollos.

He didn't just talk. About the things of God. He felt them. Deeply in his soul. They moved his very being. The great 20th century preacher.

[11 : 39] Martin Lloyd-Jones. Used to describe. Real. Biblical. Preaching. As logic. On fire. I think that's the coolest thing.

Almost anyone has ever said. And that was Apollos. Logic. On fire. But then Luke.

Adds one more detail. Up to this point. You'd think that Apollos. Is like the early church's. MVP.

Right. He's the one. Who's going to bring the house down. He's smart. He's talented. He's passionate.

He's even from a really cool city. Come on. We love that today. Right. He's got like 4 million followers. On Twitter. And all the Christian book publishers. Are trying to get him to sign contracts. He is the rising star.

That nobody can touch. But then Luke. Adds one more detail. At the end of verse 25. He knew only. The baptism. Of John.

[12 : 36] Somehow. Someway. When Apollos. Became a Christian. In Alexandria. Or wherever he became a Christian. He hadn't learned. The clear teaching of Jesus.

Post resurrection. That believers are now to be baptized. In his name. In Jesus's name. Apollos. Somehow. Had only heard about John's baptism. And Luke tells us.

That Apollos. Got nearly everything else. About Jesus. Right. That seems to be what Luke is saying. In verse 25. Except. This one. Pretty important thing. Now.

I think it's most likely. The case. That Luke. Wants us to see. Apollos. As a genuine believer. In Jesus. Many commentators. Will point out. It's likely. That the phrase. Fervent in spirit. Is probably fervent.

With the Holy Spirit. And as for Luke. As for the rest. Of the early church. It's unthinkable. That someone would have. The Holy Spirit. Apart from saving faith. In Jesus. But.

[13 : 32] In this one. Critical area. In his understanding. About baptism. Apollos. Was behind. The times. He only knew.

Of John the Baptist. Baptism. Of repentance. Which was a preparation. For the Messiah. Under the old covenant. He didn't know. About that great.

New covenant sign. That Jesus had given. His followers. To be baptized now. In his name. As a sign. Of our union.

With Jesus. In his death. And resurrection. Made possible. By the Holy Spirit. Through faith. Faith. You can imagine. Priscilla. And Aquila.

Sitting there. In the Jewish synagogue. Listening to Apollos. For the first time. Here is this young. Winsome man. Who's just arrived. From Alexandria.

[14:29] And on the Sabbath. He stands up to speak. And suddenly. As Apollos. Really. Gets to hitting. His stride. As he's. Full of passionate.

And eloquent. Wisdom. Coming forth. And everyone in the room. Is hanging on his words.

Suddenly. To Priscilla. And Aquila's surprise. He starts talking.

About Jesus. And they sort of. Look at each other. Across the synagogue floor. With that look in their eyes. It says. Oh my goodness. Can you believe it?

This guy's actually. A Christian. Praise God. You know. This would have been like. A newly hired. Sort of. Hot shot. Full tenured professor. The one who packs out.

The lecture halls. The one that everyone's talking about. Coming to campus. And suddenly. You discover. After his first few days in town. That he's actually. A believer in Christ. Well.

[15:24] Priscilla and Aquila. Are pretty excited. Sitting there in the synagogue. He seems to be teaching. Everything about Jesus. Accurately. But then. As Apollos. Gets to the end. Of his stirring message.

There's something missing. There's nothing about baptism. In Jesus's name. And Priscilla and Aquila. Think to themselves. Well. That's kind of weird. Well. Let's see what he says next week. Maybe he's just sort of. Getting us ready. But the next week comes. And again. Nothing. Now you might be thinking.

Well. Come on. What's the big deal? If he gets Jesus right. Who cares about something like baptism. Right? Well. The reality is. That to be a believer in Jesus.

Without being baptized. Is kind of like being married. Without wearing a wedding ring. Now I know that not every culture. Has the practice of wearing wedding rings.

[16:19] But in those that do. It would be really odd. To be married. And not to wear one. Right? It'd be odd. To not have that public. Visible sign. That you now belong to another.

That very visible. Tangible seal. That you've been united. To someone else for life. In an unbreakable bond. And friends.

That's exactly what baptism says. It's the public. Visible sign. And seal. That marks you off. From the rest of the world.

And says that now. You belong to another. That you're a member of his body. For life. Forever. And so everyone can see. Because you see friends.

In Jesus. Something new. Has come. A new. Family. Created by the Holy Spirit.

[17:17] Through faith. And publicly identified. By baptism in Jesus' name. A whole new community. Is sprouting up. In the midst of the old. That exists.

To glorify God. And to serve him. In the new way of the spirit. A community where. The unrighteous are welcome. Through faith in Jesus.

A community where. Young. And old. And male. And female. And Jew. And Gentile. And slave. And free. All find their place. At the table of grace.

Jesus. You see. To be baptized. In Jesus' name. Is an utterly. Radical. Thing.

It's a way to say. That your whole. Identity now. Is wrapped up in Christ. Paul will actually say. In the letter to Galatians. As many of you. As were baptized. Into Christ. Have actually. Put. On.

[18:14] Christ. Christ. Your whole. Self. Is now. Wrapped up. Into him. So you see. When Apollos. Preached. Jesus.

Accurately. But missed the part. About baptism. He was actually. Missing. A really. Important thing. And he needed.

Someone. To teach him. Yes. Even. Apollos. The rock star. Preacher. From Alexandria. When it came. To getting. The full picture. Of what Jesus. Had accomplished. Even he.

Needed someone. To teach him. And here's. A really great thing. That we see. In this paragraph. Is that he was. Teachable. He was actually.

Humble. And teachable. He didn't let. His natural. Gifts. His eloquence. And intelligence. Or his. Or his theological. Training. Puff him up. With pride. No. It seems.

[19 : 10] That Apollos. Even if he had. His wires crossed. About baptism. It seems. That he actually. Really. Really. Understood. The gospel. That we're saved.

By grace. And that no matter. How brilliant. Our minds. Or how impressive. Our skills. That before the cross. We're all. Equals.

That we're sinners. Saved by sheer grace. After all. Who is it. That instructs. Instructs. Apollos. This wonder kid. From this famous city. Who is it. That instructs him.

None other. Than Priscilla. And Aquila. A couple of tent makers. From the marketplace. You see. Beneath the cross. Friends.

That class. Distinction. And the pride. That might have kept. Apollos. From being taught. Not just by a couple of tent makers. But also by a woman.

[20 : 10] Something rarely heard of. In that culture. And the fear. That might have kept. Priscilla and Aquila. From pulling him aside. After all. Who are we?

To correct him. Right? You see. All those things. Beneath the cross. Are torn down. And the proud. Are made humble.

And the humble. Are made bold. Two points of application. And then we'll move on. First. Friends. Are you teachable? There are a lot of Apollos types. Here at Trinity. Bright. Gifted. Young. But none of that.

Will do you any good. In the kingdom. Without humility. Apollos goes on. In verses 27 and 28. Have a very fruitful ministry. In Corinth. It's pretty exciting.

[21 : 08] But none of that. Would have been the case. Had Apollos not been. Humble enough. To be taught. By Priscilla. And Aquila. And Ephesus. Intellectual. Or spiritual pride.

Would have made a shipwreck. Of his faith. So maybe this morning. You need to repent. You need to repent. Of a lack. Of a teachable spirit. Ask God.

To soften your heart. So that you might. Listen to others. And receive. Their correction. And instruction. For your own good. After all.

Friends. The only real. All star. In the church. Is Jesus. That's the big idea. Of Acts. If we were to sum up. The book. Jesus is building. His church. And nothing will stop it.

Paul will later. Write about his. And Apollos' ministry. In Corinth. I planted. Apollos watered. But God gave the growth. God's not lucky. To have us. But he's willing.

[22 : 05] To use us. If we humble. Ourselves. Before him. Second point of application. Priscilla and Aquila.

Man. Aren't they great? This is the kind of figure. In the Bible. That you want to name. A whole ministry. Training strategy. After. Right? That's a joke. That's what we're doing. Here at Trinity. We've named.

A whole ministry. Training strategy. After Priscilla and Aquila. And if you haven't been. Going to Matt's class. Go. Look at this couple. And in particular. Here's what I want us. To notice. About Priscilla and Aquila here.

Look at how they go. About correcting. Apollos. Look at how they do it. There is a lesson for us. Notice what they don't do. They don't grandstand him.

Before everyone else. And they don't shame him. In front of the synagogue. And make a scene. And they don't embarrass him. By pointing out his shortcomings. In public. Or even in front of his other friends. No. They take him aside.

[23 : 01] Privately. The NIV even translates it. They invited him. Into their home. Maybe they fed him. A meal. They loved him. They encouraged him.

No doubt. They had been praying. A lot for him. And then. In that context. Of love. And affirmation. And of brotherly. And sisterly.

Fellowship. Then. They explain the way of God. More clearly to him. So friends. If you notice something. In your brother or sister.

That perhaps isn't quite right. Maybe it's a behavior. That needs to be changed. Or a truth. They don't seem to understand. This is how we should do it. This is how we should speak the truth in love.

With much prayer. Much patience. Taking them aside. Privately. Affirming. Your care for them. And then. Speaking clearly. Not with pride.

[23 : 55] Or with superiority. But just. Pointing out the way of God. More accurately. Secondly. So in this paragraph. We see that God uses. Priscilla and Aquila.

To bring Apollos. Into a deeper knowledge. Of the newness of the kingdom. That is broken into the world. Through Jesus. And Apollos. His faulty understanding. Of baptism. Is brought up today. And because of his teachability. And Priscilla and Aquila's. Tactful and loving instruction. The kingdom advances. And that brings us. To the second part of our text.

Christ. With the inbreaking. Of God's new day. In Christ. Not only do the most intelligent. Have something they need to learn. But even the most religious. Have something they must receive. We see this in chapter 19. Verses 1 through 7. Paul. Finally arrives in Ephesus. You'll remember. Way back in chapter 16. That God had actually directed him. Another way. But now finally. He gets to come through.

[24 : 51] And land in this great city. And when he arrives in Ephesus. He meets 12 or so men. That at first glance. Seem to be disciples. But as Paul gets to know them.

He begins to realize. That something's not quite right. They look like disciples. On the outside. But they don't seem to have. The substance. On the inside.

Now we can't say for sure. What Paul noticed in them. Or didn't notice in them. That prompted his line of questioning. In verses 2 and 3. Luke just doesn't say. But let's speculate. Maybe it was something in their beliefs.

Right? Maybe Paul began to realize. Through what they were saying. In conversation with them. That they were missing. Some pretty important parts. Of the Christian message. Or maybe it was something in their behavior.

Some of their actions. Maybe they were still clinging. Pretty tightly. To the ceremonial laws of the Old Testament. Or maybe there was some sin. That was going unchecked. In their midst. But maybe if it wasn't an issue of belief.

[25 : 50] Or behavior. Maybe still. It was something in their. In their mood. Maybe they lacked. The joy. And peace.

That comes. With knowing. The utter and complete. Forgiveness of sins in Christ. Maybe their prayers. Showed no signs.

Of that vital intimacy. That comes from knowing. That in Christ. You're an adopted child of the Father. With. Unhindered access to him. Maybe they had no sense.

Of the thrill. And the passion. Of the mission. To make Christ known. Whatever it was. They had a certain.

Appearance. Of being disciples. But no real substance. So Paul asks. Did you receive the Holy Spirit.

[26 : 48] When you believed. And they said. No. We've not even heard. There is a Holy Spirit. That seems strange to Paul. And he follows up.

Well into what then. Were you baptized? And they replied. Into John's baptism. And then you can. And then you can. Almost see. The light bulb.

Go off. Over Paul's head. As he thinks to himself. Oh. Now I get it. Somehow. Someway. These twelve or so men. Had heard.

John the Baptist message. They had heard the message. To get ready. For the Messiah to come. The message. To repent. And to turn back to God. And the message. To get baptized. As a sign of that repentance.

They had heard the message. And they believed it. But they hadn't heard the good news. That John's message. Had actually now been fulfilled. That the Messiah.

[27 : 43] Had come. And that his name is Jesus. Paul explains all this. In verse four. No doubt. A sort of truncated. Account from Luke.

And then we find. That these men hear. They believe. They're baptized. In the name of Jesus. And while Paul is praying. For them. The Holy Spirit. Demonstrates. His presence. In their lives.

In a powerful. And visible way. They start speaking in tongues. And prophesying. Right there on the spot. Which that actually.

Happens a few times. In Acts. Actually. Someone sort of. Becoming a Christian. And then immediately. Speaking in tongues. And prophesying. There's the day of Pentecost.

Of course. When Jesus. Pours out the Holy Spirit. On the church. When the Spirit's. New covenant ministry. Begins once and for all. Happens then. But after that. It only seems to happen. At really important points.

[28 : 38] In the progress of the gospel. Like when the Samaritans. First believed. Or when the Gentiles. First believed. So here it seems. That in God's mercy.

It seems that God. Wanted to give. These 12 new believers. In Ephesus. A special. A special. Undeniable. Sign. That they were now.

A part of Jesus's. One worldwide. Spirit filled. Family. The church. This is certainly. Not the normal thing. That happens upon. Conversion. But here in Ephesus.

It does. But you know. Luke's point here. Isn't really. About the miraculous. Gifts. That sort of. Displayed. And gave evidence. To their reception.

Of the spirit. Through faith in Jesus. So we shouldn't get. Too distracted. About that. Rather you see. What this text. Presents us with. Are 12.

[29 : 34] Or so. Seemingly. Earnest. Men. Who on the surface. Were devout. And serious. About religious things. They had a good.

Lineage. They could claim. Even to have been. Baptized. With John the Baptist. Baptism. That's pretty legit. And who knows. Maybe they had actually. Been with Jonathan Jordan.

And early on. Had made their way. To Ephesus. From Judea. That's not actually. That implausible. And you know. This group of 12 or so. They probably formed. Their own sort of. Quasi subgroup. In the local synagogue.

That in addition. To worship on. On the Sabbath. They probably met. Regularly in their homes. For prayer. And fasting. And study of the scriptures. Through the week. You see friends. These 12 or so.

Seeming disciples. Were good. Religious. Earnest. Devout. Men. But for all that. They had no. Substance. They were all.

[30 : 29] Each one of them. Lost. In preparing. I was reminded. Of the story. Of John Wesley.

The founder. Of the Methodist movement. And one of the great preachers. Of the evangelical renewal movement. In the 18th century. You see. John Wesley's father. Was a minister. So Wesley grew up.

In the church. Hearing the message. Of Christ preached. And he went to college. At Oxford. And studied theology. And pastoral ministry. And he was ordained.

As a priest. And served. In his father's church. As a pastor. And after a year or so. He returned. To Oxford. And while there. He led. A small student club.

That some of the other students. Mockingly called. The holy club. Because they would meet daily. To pray for hours. And study the scriptures. And encourage one another. To pursue.

[31 : 26] A devout. Moral Christian life. And then in 1735. Wesley even became. A missionary. To the new world. To Georgia. And after two years.

He returned to England. But he didn't return. In the manner. That we would think. For someone with that sort. Of great religious resume. He came back to England.

Feeling like a total failure. Though Wesley had done everything. Religiously speaking. Someone could do. He realized.

In that moment. That he didn't have. The substance. Of real. Spiritual. Life. And it wasn't until. May 24th.

Actually. 1738. Exactly. 277 years ago. Today. At a Moravian meeting. In Aldersgate Street.

[32 : 22] London. Wasn't until that day. That things changed. For Wesley. They were sitting in a room. And someone was reading. Out loud. Martin Luther's preface.

To the epistle. Of the Romans. And as he sat there. Hearing about. The free. Utterly. Free. Grace. Of God. In Christ.

Through his own words. He said. I felt my heart. Strangely. Warmed. And he would look back. On that moment.

As his genuine. Conversion. And his life. Was never the same. And England. Was never the same. And the United States. Was never the same. And some people. Would argue. That the whole modern era.

In some sense. Was shaped. In profound ways. By this one man. And his radical conversion. To Christ. Friends.

[33 : 16] How about us? How about you? Do you see yourself. In these 12 men. From Ephesus? Do you see yourself. In the story. Of John Wesley? Maybe you've grown up. In the church.

Or if not. Maybe you've. Tried to live. A really good life. Maybe on the outside. People would casually say. Oh yeah. He's a Christian. She's a Christian. Or she's a good person. He's a good person. But friend.

Don't you see. No amount. Of external. Religion. Or religious. Works. No amount. Of that. No matter how. Diligently pursued. Will give you.

New life with God. Will bring you. Into Jesus's. New kingdom. You can have all that. And still be lost.

You see. Just like you can't. Give yourself. Physical life. You can't. Give yourself. Spiritual life. And this morning.

[34 : 13] Maybe you realize. That you've been running. On the treadmill. Of duty. And religion. And you realize. That it's just not working. New life with God.

Is not something. We can never earn. Or merit. We can only. Receive it. And that receiving. Involves two things. We see him here.

In our passage. Actually. Repentance. And faith. That is. We need to abandon. Our trust. In what we can do. Ourselves. And we need to turn.

And trust. Personally. The one. Who is completely. Sufficient. And perfect. The lamb. Of God. Who takes away. The sin. Of the world. That's how. John the Baptist. Described Jesus. You see. Jesus is the only one. Who can give you. Spiritual substance.

[35 : 10] Because he. He's the only one. Who died. To take away. The penalty. Of your sin. And the only one. Who rose again. To give you. Resurrection life. Through his spirit. When you look.

At your life. Do you see. Only. External. Religion. If. If. If that's you. Then. Turn. And trust in him. And cast. Your life. Upon him. Now. Maybe. As you look. At your life. You're pretty sure. You are a Christian. But maybe. You don't see. Much evidence.

Of the holy spirit's work. And you might be asking. How do I get that. That. That spark. To become a growing fire. Again. How can I see more.

Of the holy spirit's. Vital work. In my life. And the answer. Actually. Is really the same. Behold. The lamb of God.

[36 : 06] Who takes away. The sin of the world. Behold him. And as the cross. Of Christ. Fills your gaze. And as you worship. Jesus. Crucified. And risen.

And as you. Obey him. And submit to him. And trust. As you turn. From sins. And from your selfishness. Daily. As you seek him. In prayer. And confession. As you put Jesus. More and more. In the center. Of your life. Not as a sort of. Thing you have to do. But as a person. With whom you commune. You'll find that the holy spirit's.

Work starts to burn. Brighter. And hotter. Friends. This is the sort of church. Our text is calling us to be.

A church that's living. In the fullness. Of what Jesus has done. And walking. In the newness. Of his kingdom. Some of us. Like Apollos. May need. Some correction. So don't let.

[37 : 01] Intellectual pride. Get in the way. Of this new thing. That God is doing. And some of us. Like these 12 men. May actually need. Genuine. Conversion.

Friend. Don't let. Religious. Or self-righteous. Pride. Get in the way. Of entering. Into the fullness. Of what God gives you. In Christ.

Instead. Be glad. That the new day. Has dawned. And that you can. Actually put away. Your old. Outdated life. And step into his kingdom. Where even the most.

Intelligent. Have to learn. And even the most. Religious. Have to receive. But. Where he pours out. The spirit. On all who come. Friends.

Let's pray. Lord Jesus.

[38 : 01] As we. Pause. Before your word. This morning. We want to. Confess. Ways. In which. Our hearts.

Have been. Cold. To the warmth. Of your. Love. And grace. God. And. We pray.

That you would. Pour out your spirit. Afresh. On us. And make the glory. Of the work. That you've done. For us. More real. And shine.

More brightly. In our lives. Father. Some of us. This morning. Are perhaps. Realizing. That like. These twelve men.

Or like. John Wesley. That. There's all surface. And no substance. Father. That their relationship. With Jesus.

[38 : 53] Is just an idea. And not a vital reality. God. Would you open up. Their hearts. And their minds. To place their trust.

In Jesus. And to walk with him. Personally. In repentance. And faith. And Lord. Would you fill us. As a church. As we remember. Pentecost. So many years ago. We thank you. For the gift. Of your spirit. That he is in our midst. Making us holy. That he is in our midst. Equipping us. For ministry. That he is in. Our midst. Causing us to be. One in you. Jesus. And most of all. That he is. In our midst. Making much of you. Lord. Making much. Of your person. And work. And glorious reign. Oh God. Draw our hearts. Out to you. More and more. Until.

[39 : 49] Into the fullness. Of your kingdom. Where you will be. All in all. Amen.