

Acts 1:12-2:13

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- [0 : 0 0] Good evening. Tonight we are going to continue our series in the book of Acts and I'm pretty excited about what God has to say to us tonight.
- Let me pray for us as we look at God's word together. Lord, thank you for your word. Lord, thank you that you have given it to us that we might know you.
- Lord, that we don't have to worry about whether it's vain speculation or just our own ideas, but Lord, you have revealed yourself to us. Lord, I pray tonight for my mind and my lips that they might be clear.
- Lord, to speak your words and your thoughts. Lord, I pray for all of our hearts that we would be willing to sit under your word, willing to hear, Lord, your word.
- Tonight. Lord, be with us as we look. I pray in Jesus' name. Amen. For those of you who don't know me, my name is Matt and I'm one of the new co-pastors here at Trinity.
- [1 : 2 1] And one of the things that's been a transition for me is that now as I come into the office every day, I get wonderful surprises in my mailbox. I have gotten on the mailing list of lots of Christian organizations that have sent me their promotional materials.
- And I am sure that many of these ministries are great ministries, have a heart to help people come to know Jesus and help people grow in their understanding of who Jesus is.
- But I have to admit that I sometimes get the sense that there's this little underlying subtext that says something like this.
- Use our programs. Use our materials. Come to our conferences. Follow our strategies. And we will build your church.
- And you know, as I've started out in this new role as a pastor, sometimes I'm tempted to think that if here at Trinity Baptist we had just the right worship structure, just the right small groups, just the right strategies, just the right programs, if we all went to just the right conference, man, we could build a great church.
- [2 : 4 5] But is that really the case? Is that really how God builds his church? We've intentionally named, called this series that we're looking at in the book of Acts, when God builds his church.
- As we look at what God did in the first century, we want to see what God is doing to build his church. And tonight, what I want you to see, as we look at our section in scripture tonight, what I want you to see is this, that as God builds his church, calling his church to be witnesses for Jesus Christ, he graciously gives us his means to accomplish this mission.
- Specifically tonight, we're going to see that God has given us his word and his spirit as the primary means by which he will build his church.
- If you want to grab your Bibles, and they're in the pews in front of you, you can turn to page 770. We're going to look at the book of Acts, starting in chapter 1, verse 15.
- And as you're turning there, let me just give you a little bit of context, so we know we're in this sort of conglomeration of Luke and Acts. We're all written by one guy, and he wrote this whole story about what Jesus did during his life, his death, and resurrection.

[4 : 14] And then we come to the book of Acts, which is really about what Jesus did after he ascended. And if you were here last week, Nick preached about how Jesus was with his disciples after the resurrection for 40 days.

He taught them. He told them that God was going to bring them this promise of the Holy Spirit. He gave them his commission to be witnesses for him in Judea, Samaria, in Jerusalem, Judea, Samaria, to the ends of the earth.

And then he disappeared up into the sky. And the disciples are sitting, standing there looking up, and the angels appear, and they're like, what are you looking at? Get on with it.

And so these disciples, they return to Jerusalem, and they gather together. It says in verse 15, or in verse 14, excuse me, that they devoted themselves.

They were all together in one accord, and they devoted themselves to prayer. Why was this? Because I don't know. They're probably thinking, oh my goodness, God has given us this incredible mission.

[5 : 21] How in the world are we going to do this? And so they have returned to Jerusalem in obedience to the commands, and they are seeking God. They're saying, God, what are you going to do to build your church?

What are you going to do to make this happen? And this is the question that I want us to look at tonight. What did God do? And in fact, we're going to go through a series of questions as we look through two stories tonight.

In each story, we're going to look at four questions. And these are the questions. If you're taking notes, you can sort of hang this message on these. The first thing is, what did God do? What did he actually do?

What happened during the narrative? The second question is, why? Why did God do what he did? The third question is, what is God still doing in his church today that's connected to what he did in the book of Acts in the first century?

And then the last question is, how are we to respond to what God is doing today in his church? So what did God do? Why did he do it? What is he still doing today?

[6 : 31] And what about us? What is our response? What ought our response be to that? So if you have your Bibles, look with me. We're going to start in verse 15 and read to the end of chapter 1.

This is our first narrative section. In those days, Peter stood up among the believers, a group numbering about 120. And he said, Brothers, the scriptures had to be fulfilled, which the Holy Spirit spoke long ago through the mouth of David concerning Judas, who served as a guide for those who arrested Jesus.

He was one of our number, and he shared in this ministry. And with the reward he got for his wickedness, Judas bought a field. There he fell headlong, his body burst open, and all his intestines spilled out.

Everyone in Jerusalem heard about this. So they called the field, in their language, a keldama, that is, field of blood. For, said Peter, it is written in the book of Psalms, may his place be deserted, let there be no one to dwell in it, and may another take his place of leadership.

Therefore, it is necessary to choose one of the men who have been with us the whole time the Lord Jesus went in and out among us, beginning from John's baptism to the time when Jesus was taken up from us.

[7 : 54] For one of these must become a witness with us, of his resurrection. So they proposed two men, Joseph, called Barsabbas, also known as Justice, and Matthias.

And then they, then they prayed, Lord, you know everyone's heart. Show us which of these two you have chosen to take over this apostolic ministry, which Judas left to go where he belongs.

Then they cast lots, and the lot fell to Matthias. So he was added to the eleven apostles. My thesis for this section, what I want you to see is that in this section, we see God building his church by graciously establishing the apostolic witness concerning Jesus.

God builds his church by graciously establishing the apostolic witness concerning Jesus. What does that mean? What did God do?

That's our first question. Well, Peter, the disciples are gathered, and Peter stands up and he says, brothers, we have got to get a replacement for Judas. He was one of the original twelve that Jesus himself had appointed and called to follow him and to be the disciples, and he was the one who had forsaken that place among the twelve.

[9 : 20] He said, I don't believe this. He rejected Jesus and he forsook his place by his wicked betrayal of Jesus Christ.

So Peter says, we've got to do this. In verses 21 and 22, he sets some criteria. Whoever could replace Judas must be someone who has been there the whole time.

Someone who has seen Jesus, from John's baptism all the way through to his life, his death, his resurrection, and his ascension. It's essential for these men, that these men be able to say, I was there.

I saw Jesus heal this man. I heard Jesus speak these words. This is what it means to be a trustworthy eyewitness is someone who is actually there.

And for Peter, it was an essential characteristic of any replacement apostle. The other thing you see is that the apostles, having thought through that criteria and picked a couple of guys who met this criteria, they sought the Lord.

[10 : 24] They said, Lord, will you choose this person, this office, this role is so essential that God, we need you to choose this man.

And so, by the surprising means of casting lots, which as an aside, I do not think is a normal means for us to make decisions about how to do things in our daily lives.

You can ask me about that afterwards. I don't think this is meant to be a paradigm, but God used casting lots to say, Matthias, he is the one. So that's what God did.

God replaced Judas with Matthias as one of the 12 apostles. Now, for the last five minutes, some of you have been sitting there just like I did for a significantly more time this week thinking to myself, so what?

Why was this important? Why did God have to replace Judas? Why is this such a big deal? Why? Peter says, we must replace him.

[11 : 33] We must have someone to play this role. It's repeated multiple times. Why must? Let me give you two thoughts that I've had about this.

First is that there were probably some in the first century who wondered if the good news of the gospel is so great, if God is such a great God and he has given us Jesus to be the Savior of the world.

What happened with this guy Judas? How did he sort of, how did he get in to be one of the 12 in the first place and then turn around and betray Jesus?

That doesn't give me a lot of confidence that either God knew what he was doing or Jesus knew what he was doing. Well, in fact, I think the replacement of Judas is meant to counteract that by saying, oh, friends, brothers and sisters, God knew exactly what he was doing.

In fact, God had foretold long ago in the Old Testament that there would be one who would play this role. That Judas, through his wickedness, chose to betray Jesus, but God was not taken off guard.

[12 : 48] And God had a plan and God was going to fulfill that plan and he even used Judas to do that. God's plan is not in question because of Judas' betrayal and the replacement of him is an essential affirmation that God is still in control and God is still accomplishing his plan in the world.

But then, you might still ask, well, yeah, but why did there have to be 12? Well, we gain a little bit of insight from the Psalms that Peter quotes in verse 20.

Peter quotes from two Psalms in the Old Testament that are both Psalms of the King David and during David's time, it was sort of the high point of God's kingdom in the Old Testament when the 12 tribes of Israel were unified in one kingdom and where the worship of God was great and he was glorified.

And these quotes are about David calling down God's judgment or calling down for consequences to happen on those who opposed David and who opposed the kingdom of God, those 12 unified tribes.

And here, I think, is the key that these 12 tribes were symbolic of God's kingdom and what he was building. And in the Old Testament, it was primarily through this nation of Israel.

[14 : 20] But as God brings this promise forward, this promise that God would call a people to himself, it becomes expanded and we'll see more of this later. But the 12 tribes upon which God wanted to bring his people together transition into the 12 apostles and their witness about who Jesus was and what he did is the foundation of the work that God does from there on forward.

That their witness is the foundation of God building his church. 11 would have been incomplete. And this is why it was so important as it says in verse 26 that Matthias must be numbered with the 11 apostles.

The work was complete. God had fulfilled his plan and established his apostolic witness concerning Jesus. Okay, so that's what God did and maybe some ideas about why.

What about today? What is God still doing? And this is a much bigger question, isn't it, as we read the book of Acts? We're going to ask this every week we study this. What things that we read in the book of Acts are meant for today and are meant to be paradigms or models of how we're supposed to live and how we're supposed to expect God to work?

And how much of the book of Acts is God uniquely working in history, particularly at this time, post-Jesus resurrection and ascension as the church is beginning to be built, as God is beginning to build his church and spread it throughout the world?

[16 : 03] What is unique and special to that time and isn't meant to be a paradigm, isn't meant to be a model? It's a question we're going to keep asking over and over again and we have to ask it in light of this one.

Let's start by saying the obvious thing. No one can be an eyewitness to Jesus' life, death, and resurrection today. So it is impossible for us to appoint apostles in the same way that they did.

No one could take their place among the twelve. And in fact, the scriptures themselves tell us this. In Acts 12, James, one of the other apostles, dies, and they do not replace him.

There's no record of any continuation of trying to replace the twelve. And so, whatever God is doing, he doesn't mean for us to continue to have apostles the way these twelve men were apostles.

apostles. So, what is God doing? The point of this passage is that God was building, as God was building his church, he pointed these twelve men to bear witness to what they had seen about Jesus Christ.

[17 : 13] And their testimony was a great gift to early believers who were trying to understand, how do I carry out this mission that God has given us? It was the testimony of these apostles that became the content of the message that the early church proclaimed.

And this is something that is still true today. What those twelve men said about who Jesus was, what he did, and what they saw him do, we have a record of it.

That's what this is. This wonderful book is God writing down and preserving for us the eyewitness testimony of who Jesus was and what people saw him do and be.

We don't have to wonder what Jesus was like. We have an account of it from people who were there. And this apostolic witness is still for us today.

So if that's true, what do we do about that? How do we respond? I want to give you three specific, three specific challenges about how to respond to God giving us this word, the record of Jesus.

[18 : 40] I want to encourage you tonight. I want you to trust it. I want you to treasure it. And I want you to trumpet it.

I know it alliterates. It's kind of cute, isn't it? So maybe you'll remember it a little better. But so trust it. I want you to trust this word. Some of you tonight are at the universities in town and I'm sure you're hearing all sorts of things about the Bible.

If you take a religion course or that sort of thing, you're going to hear all sorts of things. Some of you tonight may be here because in fact you're wondering. I'm kind of curious about knowing God but I don't know how to do that.

What I hope you've heard me say tonight is that God cared that the record about his son Jesus Christ be recorded by people who were actually there.

Who could say I saw Jesus do this. I heard him say this. And that's what we have in this book. I know it's not that simple for some of you and we would love to engage Pastor Nick Pastor Greg and I and others we would love to engage with you about why we think that God has preserved this word and this testimony about Jesus for us.

[20 : 00] But I want to encourage you tonight trust it. I think God has preserved it for us. Trust it. Not only trust it but treasure it.

God saw that this apostolic witness was so important that he made sure he made sure there were twelve and he made sure that these men and their testimony was written down for us.

He saw it as essential and precious for his church going forward. Brothers and sisters do you see this as essential and precious in your life in your knowledge of God tonight?

how might you treasure it? Let me give you a couple of really quick ideas. One read it. That may sound really simple but read it.

Treasure it by opening it every day and reading a part of it and actually spending some time thinking about what it says. Maybe you'd even want to memorize it.

[21 : 12] Spend some time not just reading it and then moving on and forgetting about it but reading it and meditating upon it until it becomes a part of your thought process where you can say I know what God's word says because you've spent time memorizing it and get immersed in it.

Finally particularly for those of you who are students I want to say this. Spend time studying the word of God as much as you do studying your molecular biology your Roman history your 16th century French literature whatever you spend time reading whatever you spend hours in the library pouring over I hope that you make this as worth studying as anything else that you spend your intellect and your time engaging in while you're in academia so trust it treasure it and finally trumpet it in the early church one of the remarkable things is it wasn't just the professionals it wasn't just the 12 apostles but every believer proclaimed the good news they praised

God for his mighty works they were telling this glorious message that Jesus did not just die but he was raised from the dead that forgiveness of sins new birth and life with God hope of eternity all of these are possible through faith in Christ this message brought joy to their hearts and it moved their lips to speak of this great truth if we are convinced of this friends trumpet it don't be ashamed don't be afraid it is frightening sometimes to be a witness people ask you questions you might not know the answers to people will throw things at you that you had never thought of but God has preserved an eyewitness account of who Jesus was for us not just for our benefit but to tell others about it as well so trust it treasure it trumpet it

God's word God's word his gift to his church his means by which he will build his church in the world and having seen that God builds his church by establishing the apostolic witness now we move on to the second gift that God gives to his church for their mission being witnesses to the ends of the earth and in chapter two we're going to read it in just a second chapter two we're going to see that as God builds his church he graciously gives his holy spirit so that they may declare his mighty works pick up your bibles again let's look at it together starting in chapter two verse one when the day of Pentecost came they were all together in one place suddenly a sound like a blowing of violent wind came from heaven and filled the whole house where they were sitting they saw what seemed to be tongues of fire that separated and came to rest on each of them all of them were filled with the Holy

Spirit and began to speak in other tongues as the Spirit enabled them now there were staying in Jerusalem God-fearing Jews from every nation under heaven when they heard this sound a crowd came together in bewilderment because each one heard them speaking in his own language utterly amazed they asked are not all these men who are speaking Galileans how then how is it each of us hears them in his own native language Parthians Medes and Elamites residents of Mesopotamia Judea and Cappadocia Pontus and Asia Phrygia and Pamphylia Egypt and the parts of Libya near Cyrene visitors from Rome both Jews and converts to Judaism Cretans and Arabs we hear them declaring the wonders of God in our own tongue amazed and perplexed they asked one another what does this mean some however made fun of them and said they've had too much wine just so you know the next part of Acts right after this is a whole sermon where the apostle Peter explains the answer to their question what does this mean and come back in two weeks

[26 : 24] Pastor Greg's gonna explain that sermon to you and explain what does it all mean so we're gonna narrow our focus a little bit tonight just to look at this narrative to say okay just this story of what God did how do we understand it and how do we make sense of it so our four questions again the first one is what did God do well the narrative is pretty simple it's the day of Pentecost Pentecost means 50 days after the last Sabbath of the Passover so in today's day it would be 50 days after Easter so to speak is when this happened and this was a festival it was one of the three great harvest festivals in the Jewish world and people would come back to Jerusalem from all over the world to worship in the temple and what you see is that the disciples the believers of Jesus were together and God showed up and you know it's remarkable when you read this story because Luke is a very careful historian he wants to give you specific eyewitness accounts he wants to give you as detailed accounts as he can of what happened and you read through the rest of the book of

Acts and there are lots of very specific details about this happened and that happened and this is how it happened and that sort of thing but when Luke is trying to explain what happened on this day in this narrative in verses 1-4 he can't do it he can't give specifics look in verse 2 verse 2 it says that there was a sound that was like the blowing of a violent wind it's not that there was a violent wind blowing it was just there was a sound and the only thing he can think of is yeah it was kind of like this in verse 3 it says there were tongues as of fire they weren't tongues of fire he can only compare what people saw and experienced to something else because there are no words for it because what God did on this day was so wonderful and so awe-inspiring and so outside of normal experience so yay supernatural that there are no words to describe it there's no vocabulary to make clear what happened but that

God showed up in an incredibly powerful way and verse 4 is the one place where we see clarity the disciples were filled with the Holy Spirit and they began to speak in various languages and God showed up in such a way in this group of people that it caused a stir in the city not quite sure exactly how this all worked but it seems that the disciples were so excited about what God had done they sort of spilled out into the street because it's hard to imagine that there was a building big enough for the 3,000 plus people who congregated around these disciples saying what in the world is going on Jerusalem would have been full of pilgrims who had returned to Jerusalem for this festival and people from all over the world who would have spoken all these different languages and they hear this great commotion they show up and here's this group of people and they're from backwater

Galilee but they're looking like the Rosetta Stone in person they're speaking all of these different languages proclaiming the mighty acts of God and they were alternatively if you look through verse 6 they were bewildered verse 7 and 8 they were amazed and astonished verse 12 they were amazed and perplexed they were watching God do something that people didn't have any categories for and they couldn't wrap their minds around it so that's what God did and I want you to see two things particularly in Luke's account the way he writes it because I think these things show points of emphasis that are really important look at verses 1 through 4 again there is an incredible emphasis that the Holy Spirit fell on all believers verse 1 they were all together verse 2 the whole house was filled filled verse 3 the tongues fell on each one of them and verse 4 and all of them were filled it was not just the apostles it was not just the men but it was all the believers who were there and the

Spirit was given in a new way to everyone secondly in verses 5 through 12 you see an incredible emphasis on the diversity of people who heard the witness of these early disciples in verse 5 from every nation in verse 6 each one heard in their own language in verse 8 they said to each other each of us hears them in our native language verses 9 through 11 if we could put up a map for you of where all these places are you probably don't know where Phrygia is I'm not sure off the top of my head I could tell you where Phrygia is but if I could show you a map of the ancient Middle Eastern world with Jerusalem in the center of the map what you would see is that these people came 360 degrees from every direction it was like a catalog of the whole known world at that time we see a beginning of the fulfillment of what

[32 : 26] Jesus promised in Luke Acts in Acts 1 verse 8 you will be my witnesses to the ends of the world even here in Jerusalem God had brought people from the ends of the earth and they were hearing people in their own heart language saying look at how great God is so that's what God did why why did God do it I have two answers to this the first one is sort of big picture in the Bible one of the things that God is doing in giving the Holy Spirit in the way he did it in Acts 2 is he is reversing one of the effects of the curse of sin on humanity if you go back to Genesis 11 you read the story of the Tower of Babel what you see there is that in their wickedness men conspired together in rebellion against

God and God comes down and he mercifully judges them dividing them by language and nationality so that they cannot work together in their sinfulness and increase their sin God created that day languages and the diversity of the world that we live in today but it was a way it was out of the out of the it was a response to the curse of human sinfulness and the separation was a part of God's merciful judgment on that sin but here in Acts you start to see that God is doing something of bringing all of these nations back together and if you look ahead to the very end of the Bible in Revelation 7 9 what you see is that there are people from every tribe and every tongue and every nation language that's used expressly here in chapter 2 of

Acts worshipping around the throne and around Jesus the Lamb of God declaring his praises God God God God God God God did this is to begin to reverse that curse and to begin to broaden out what God is doing in the world so that at the end of days there will be people from every tribe and tongue and nation people from Vienna Austria who speak Turkish and who speak speech I think is what it's called and right there you go and Hebrew and Aramaic and Swahili and Cantonese and all these people are going to worship God together and this what

God did at Pentecost was the beginning of a reversal of that but secondly there's a very clear and obvious purpose God poured out his Holy Spirit and enabled people to speak in these languages so that they could proclaim the wonders of God to people in their own language he enabled these people these 120 people from backwater Galilee to be witnesses to all these people where they could not speak a common language normally or where they would not hear the words of witness in their own heart language this is God's calling this is God's gracious gifting to produce God's purpose in his church okay so that's what God did and that's why he did it what about us today and as we dive into Acts 2 with this question

I will say this is probably one of the most debated passages in the scriptures about what is applicable today and what is not and there are brothers and sisters who I know and love who will disagree with me on what I'm going to share with you but I want to give you a brief explanation of how I understand it and talk about the significance of the giving of the spirit for our church today and briefly what I want you to see what I'm going to point out is I think there are two things that God did that are specific to that time and not meant to be models and there are three things that God did that I think are meant to be ongoing things that we ought to expect as a part of God's church today the two things that I think are clearly unique and that we ought not to expect are this the experiential phenomena the sound and the tongues the tongues of fire tongues like fire and the giving of the ability to speak languages that you wouldn't otherwise be able to speak or the giving of tongues those two things I think were unique the phenomena here seems to be connected with the start of a new era you can read through even the rest of the book of Acts and people come to faith in Jesus people hear testimonies about

[37 : 53] Jesus they repent and believe and you know what there's no great commotion there's no record of these phenomena happening consistently it seems to me that what happened at Pentecost was a unique time kind of like what you see sometimes in the temple in the Old Testament or maybe on Mount Sinai when it's when God wants to say I am here in a very pronounced way but it's not necessary God can do that in lots of different ways so I think that it's not that God can't do that today or wouldn't do that and in fact if you talk to brothers and sisters around the world you would know that in fact God at times is still working like this and you might experience these things we might experience them here in New Haven but I don't believe there is a biblical basis for an expectation or a requirement that these things must happen no matter how much our human nature might really crave God being like that sometimes we really want that right God why don't you just show me something so crazy that I give up okay I get it but God doesn't work that way he doesn't work on our demands and in fact Jesus warns us to be careful of that craving because in fact it's not actually true that even if we see people rise from the dead we won't believe in Jesus so God gives a phenomena but

I think it's special and similarly I think in this context the speaking in tongues is something special I think it was specifically for that time and that place that these men and women were suddenly able to speak a different language were suddenly able to speak in a tongue that they didn't know otherwise and I know that there are brothers and sisters out there who would say that speaking in tongues is a necessary is a required experience of receiving the Holy Spirit and I'd simply humbly submit that I think if you read 1 Corinthians 12 it says clearly that speaking in tongues may be a gift for some and in fact is a gift for some but it is not a universal gift it is not for everyone in the church when you read the argument of that of that chapter in 1 Corinthians 12 you'll see that's that's exactly the point that God gives a diversity of gifts so that we will need to depend on one another and be blessed by one another's gifts and it cannot be a requirement for all people to receive the Spirit to speak in tongues it is rather a historical account of how God chose to empower these people in this context so that they could be witnesses for Jesus to the people around them so those are the things that I think are not paradigms not models not ongoing things that we ought to expect from God what are the things that we ought to expect I think there are three things they are the universal giving of the Spirit to every believer the noticeable effects of the

Spirit in the life of the believer and the empowering by the Spirit to help the church fulfill its mission to bear witness to Jesus around the world first you see that the Spirit is given to all believers and this is a remarkable shift from the pattern we see in the Old Testament where the Spirit comes on individuals for particular tasks you can think of some of the people where it says this explicitly the Spirit is given to Samson or to King Saul or to David or to Ezekiel for particular roles or particular tasks that God has for them but even in that list two of them Samson and Saul God then later withdrew his Spirit from them the Old Testament goes on and it says and it sort of confirms that this is how the Spirit worked in the Old Testament by saying there is a day coming in Jeremiah 31 I will put my Spirit in your heart in Ezekiel 36

I will put my Spirit in you this promise that there will be a day that will come when God will put his Spirit to dwell in each of his children in every believer and in fact this is what we see in Ephesians 1:13 that the Holy Spirit seals us the Holy Spirit comes and dwells in us to mark us like an old wax seal this is mine God says this is mine this man this woman they are mine the Holy Spirit is given in the New Testament is not given to a few and not just for a task but to all believers to permanently dwell within them so that's the first thing we ought to expect today is that all believers have the Holy Spirit the second thing is that though we ought not to expect the sound like a mighty rushing wind or tongues like fire falling upon us we ought to expect that the Holy Spirit makes a difference a noticeable difference in our lives in John 3

Jesus describes a man born of the Spirit as being like the wind you can't see the wind but you see its effects you know it's there because of the effects the leaves and the trees move you feel the wind on your face that's the way the Spirit is supposed to be with us how does that what does this look like?

[44 : 05] well in Galatians 5 we see that the Spirit is given as a fruit bearing power in our lives it is meant to create in us a character that is more and more increasingly like Christ that we have an increase of love joy peace patience goodness kindness gentleness faithfulness self-control that God will give us these things in increasing measure not perfection but more than we would have had without the Spirit in our lives and not only does the Spirit give us this fruit this is the Spirit this fruit bearing power but it is also a gift giving power that is the Spirit gives us gifts to serve to build up His church and for the building of His kingdom and the spread of His kingdom throughout the world and you see that these gifts may or may not be spectacular they might be speaking in tongues but they might be in having mercy they might be in words of prophecy but they might be in gifts of administration they might be a gift of teaching but they might be generosity and giving whatever it is we ought to expect that the Spirit makes a difference in our lives that we can see and you know it's really hard to see it in our own lives

I'll just be honest it's much easier to see but we ought to be able to see for one another that the Spirit is at work in our lives fruit bearing gift giving life transforming finally God has given to all who believe in Christ His Spirit to empower us to be witnesses to speak of that which we have seen and heard if you tonight are here because you have already placed your faith in Jesus Christ you know what God has done in your life you've seen Him you've heard the words about Jesus and you know that somehow God took hold of you through that and made you His own and you have a story to tell about that and God's Spirit is given to loosen your lips even someone like the Apostle Paul in Colossians 4 says will you pray for me pray that God will open doors give me opportunities so that I may speak the gospel pray that I'll have the boldness to take advantage of those opportunities when they come and that I'll speak clearly even the Apostle Paul says please pray for me how does God answer a prayer about like that through His Spirit at work in us

His Spirit's enabling power for us to open our lips to use our stammering uncertain mouths to declare the greatness of God and what He has done so these three things I think God is still doing today in our church He's giving the Spirit to all believers He's giving the Spirit in a way that changes us and makes a difference and He's giving us a Spirit to make us witnesses of what we've seen and heard about Jesus what a precious gift He has given us in His Spirit God hasn't left us to muddle through trying to be the best Christian we can or build the best church that we can in our own power in our own wisdom through our own strategies or plans He doesn't reserve the Spirit for a select few but He's given the Spirit to all of us who have placed their faith in Jesus Christ alone for their salvation friends do we receive this gladly do we seek as we're commanded in Ephesians 5 18 to be filled with the Spirit to let this indwelling Spirit actually empower us and take our take a controlling place in our lives do we confess our dependence and our need for God to do these things in our lives that we cannot do on our own to empower us for service to transform us into Christ likeness to open our mouths to be witnesses things that we cannot do in our own strength and power

I don't so often I take on my day and my own strength and wisdom I may acknowledge thankfulness to God for saving me through Jesus Christ and making me his but you know in essence I say thanks God for doing that but I can take it from here I got it but how antithetical this is to the very gospel that we have believed God in his grace has saved us in Christ because we could not save ourselves in our slavery to sin in our spiritual deadness we could do nothing but God came he took hold of us he breathed new life in us he gave us faith to believe this is God's graciousness to us as individuals and to us as a church it is not that God saves us and then leaves us to figure out how to do it on our own how to build itself up remember

God is building his church Jesus is building his church and the gates of hell will not stand against it he has graciously given us these two gifts the apostolic deposit his word and his spirit as the means by which he will build up his church both individually and corporately by his grace he calls it we would simply cling to these trust in these take hold of these not our own plans our own strategies and our own energy to build his church Trinity do we believe this do we really think that this is God's means to do what God wants to do in building his church you know as we embark on this new season in our church I want to invite you to join me in seeking God that he would build this church for his glory that he would use this church to be witnesses to Jesus

[51 : 08] Christ here in New Haven and to the ends of the earth and specifically I want to ask that you would join with me in prayer that you would join with me in praying 10 minutes a day for the next 40 days that God would pour out his spirit on this church in a special way that God would use his word in this church in a special way for his glory for the building of his church for the witness of Christ to New Haven and to the ends of the earth will you join me in this let's pray Lord thank you that you have given us your word and your spirit thank you that you have given us your means to accomplish your mission that you have given to us Lord we pray you would build your church for your glory Lord we pray that you would use us

Lord make us people who see your word and your spirit as precious gifts that we would treasure them depend upon them Lord that you would bear much fruit in us through them and we pray these things in Jesus name Amen