

# 2 – “The Coming of the Spirit and the Birth of the Church” // Acts 2:42–47 // SENT

---

## Announcement:

Before I even start this weekend, let me say that one of the ways you can apply this message is by getting into a small group. We’ve tried to make it really easy for you to get into 1 through our *GroupLink*. Our goal as a church is to make disciples and build community, not just grow an audience, and one of the primary ways we do that here is through small groups. There is so much of the Christian life you’ll miss out on if you’re not in 1, so that’s going to be an easy action step today.

## Introduction:

We’re beginning this fall a new series through the book of Acts... The first week I explained that the church is not a place; it’s a movement... But over the years, that’s been lost. Church has become a place we go to, an event we attend.

- You can see that in the words we use: the original word in Greek for church was *ekklesia* (an assembly); the word we use in English, “church,” comes from the German *kirche*, meaning a place you gathered for religious purposes.

The original church was a movement gathered around a mission.

- *The mission came first*—the mission was given in Acts 1; the church wasn’t formed until Acts 2.
- In fact, I’ve heard it said this way: God doesn’t have a mission for his church; he made a church for his mission.

Which means a church that is not on mission is not really a church; and believers who are not on mission are not really part of the true church.

- *Movements move*, and if you’re not moving you’re not part of the movement!
- Let you sit there for a minute...

In our small group leaders rally a couple of weeks ago Pastor Spence said this: This is the church; this is the steeple; open the doors...

- A cute little heresy. This is a building; this is an outdated architectural symbol.... This is the church.
- For our kids: how do they do it for the Summit Church? This is the warehouse...

Acts 1 shows us two things that propelled the movement: *Being captured by the message; yielded to the Spirit*. Those are 2 things I’ll return to over and over throughout this series.

- *Have you been captured by the message?* Not, do you assent to it, but have you been captured by it?
- *AND... Are you yielded to the Spirit?* Do you know what it means to walk with him, to be filled by him? Do you fellowship with the Spirit; do you move in his power?
  - Is Christianity a set of beliefs to which you consent and a lifestyle you follow, or *is it an interaction with the Spirit of God?*

***One of my prayers and deepest hopes over this series is that we might become more of a Spirit filled church.***

- *And you guys know I don’t mean crazy stuff by that...*
  - We’re not going to get **vans with flames** coming down the sides or the terms **revival, dominion, Holy Ghost, anointed, rain, or Shekinah glory** written on the sides.

- I'm not about to **rename my wife** "Pastor Bishoppette First Lady Veronica";
- She's not about to grow hair out to the size of Texas and do her makeup in a way that makes her look like she lost a paintball gun war with a bunch of middle school students and I'm not going to get a **charis-mullet haircut**.
- We're not going to build **running lanes** around the auditoriums or give out **tambourines with ribbons** to fly during service.
- **But SUMMIT:** I want us to be a Spirit filled church. That's what the whole book of Acts is about. Living and moving and walking in the Spirit.
- We call ourselves: "**Charismatics with a seatbelt.**" I want you to have a wild, roller-coaster ride experience at church, but also to keep your arms and legs inside the car at all times... That's our attempt to be Spirit filled but also to do all things "decently and in order..."

Today, we're going to look at, "*the coming of the Spirit and the birth of the church.*"

## Acts 2:1–11

"When the day of Pentecost arrived, they were all together in one place. [2] And suddenly there came from heaven a sound like a mighty rushing wind, and it filled the entire house where they were sitting. [3] And divided tongues as of fire appeared to them and rested on each one of them. [4] And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other tongues as the Spirit gave them utterance.

[5] Now there were dwelling in Jerusalem Jews, devout men from every nation under heaven. [6] And at this sound the multitude came together, and they were bewildered, because each one was hearing them speak in **his own language**. [7] And they were amazed and astonished, saying, "Are not all these who are speaking Galileans? [8] And how is it that we hear, each of us in his own native language? [11] —we hear them telling in our own tongues the mighty works of God."

- These tongues were other human languages; they were unknown to the speaker, but known to somebody else there.

[12] And all were amazed and perplexed, saying to one another, "What does this mean?" [13] But others mocking said, "They are filled with new wine."

[14] But Peter, standing with the eleven, lifted up his voice and addressed them: "Men of Judea and all who dwell in Jerusalem, let this be known to you, and give ear to my words. [15] For these people are not drunk, as you suppose, since it is only the third hour of the day.

- Peter is like, "It's only 9am; these people are not drunk."
- Maybe Peter should have realized... that doesn't stop everyone. You know who you are. You had your breakfast beer this morning.

[16] But this is what was uttered through the prophet Joel: [17] "And in the last days it shall be, God declares, that I will pour out my Spirit on **all flesh**,

- All flesh: Not just Jews. Up until this point God had moved and worked in the nation of Israel. Now, his work is going out into all nations! Every people of every nation on earth should know and worship Jesus!

...and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, and your young men shall see visions, and your old men shall dream dreams...

- Being filled with the Spirit and prophesying God's word was not just for a few select people anymore; it was for all believers.

- Do you know how in the OT prophets had a book with their name on it, recording their actions and words? It's as if now each of us is a book of the Spirit. That's not to say we are writing Scripture—Scripture is in a special class, all by itself. It's to say that the Spirit is in you, speaking and moving through you.
- *Every single believer should be able to have a book written about them... about all the things the Spirit of God said and did through them.*

Peter goes on and preaches a sermon about who Jesus is... (which I'm going to preach to you next week at Church at the Ballpark), and at the end, people call out, *"What should we do?"* And Peter says, "Repent, receive Jesus as the gift of salvation, and be baptized as a sign of that." And 3000 people respond.

- The number **3000 is significant**. When the law was given, it was given only to Jews and 3000 had died due to the fact they broke it immediately. At coming of the Spirit, 3000 people from nations all over the earth come to life.
- The new believers had little **tongues of fire above their heads**. (They were at the Temple, where the fire of God historically had burned.) It was as if God was saying *"I've moved my house from this one (temple) to this one (believers)."* **Wind.**<sup>1</sup>

Now, here is the description of that first church...

## Acts 2:42–47

<sup>42</sup> And they devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and the fellowship, to the breaking of bread and the prayers.

Devoted: "gave themselves to." Abandoned themselves to these things, unselfishly... They did this in response to the gospel. It was a natural reaction to Jesus' gospel. If you really believe the gospel, you'll do these things.

*They devoted themselves to...*

### 1. The Apostles' Teaching

- Christianity is a word-based religion. God revealed himself to us in books and words.
- Our hearts are not naturally godly. Our sin makes us think wrongly. Distorts us.
  - *The Rock*
  - Memorization
  - Our culture says we find truth from within. *No... never look there!* Deut 6: Put in on your doorframes; hide it in your hearts
  - Allie

### 2. Each other

- They *gave themselves* to each other.
- First of all, you see here what a church is:
  - A group of people who covenant with each other and have officially organized as a church.
  - I podcast and discuss with 2 or 3 guys.
  - Hanging out with my family and enjoy God. Took the whole summer off.
  - I'm not talking to the people in front me—they're here! I'm talking to you!
  - I don't need it. I don't think you realize how much you do. But the focus is not on you, but others.
  - Christians must be a part of a church:

---

<sup>1</sup> Ray Vander Laan in his series of videos on the birth of the church.

- *Are you saying there are not Christians without churches?* Not necessarily, but like people without homes, those who are homeless are not healthy.
- They met in big and small groups.
  - They're together as 3000; but v. 46 says they day by day they went places *together*, broke bread *together* in their homes. The word "together" appears over and over in these verses. Together praising God; together in their homes; together going to the Temple.
  - That's us. We are a big and small group.
    - Big group is like a battalion gathering for marching orders.
    - Small groups are like family where they loved and served each other and *gave themselves* to each other.
- It's amazing to me how many people evaluate small groups by what they get out of it. "Well, small group doesn't really work for me."
  - In a small group you give yourself away...
  - Your problem is that you evaluate every aspect of your life in terms of how to take from it for you. You are the center of your own, selfish little universe. That's why your family life is good—it's what is wrong with your marriage.
  - They devoted themselves to each other...
- And they were diverse...
  - Vs. 5 says there were people from every nation under heaven, with different cultures.
    - And they are together in unity. This was a foretaste of heaven.
    - Whenever I am overseas and I get to be with believers of another culture praising Jesus in their own language, it does something to me. That's because it is giving me a foretaste of heaven.
    - I think the same thing in here, when I see believers of various cultures, races, socioeconomic status or educational background worshipping together.

### 3. God's presence

- See in vs 42 where it says, "*...they were devoted to the breaking of bread.*"
  - The Lord's table was a special time in which Jesus promised to be present in a very special way. He's always present in worship, of course, but he's present in a special way during that time. Paul said in 1 Cor 10:16 that we are participating in the presence of Christ himself when we celebrate it.
- They devoted themselves to that.
- They also believed that the Spirit of God was on each of them... Paul would later explain that each one came to the gatherings ready to be used by the Spirit of God with words and insights for others.

They came to church gatherings expecting to be in God's presence and expecting to be used by God. What do you come to church expecting? Are you expecting to meet with God, or to hear a sermon and some good music? Are you going to your small group full of the Spirit, ready to be used, or are you going to hang out with some friends?

I think we have a severe problem in this church with what we expect when we come to church. We are meeting with God!

- Coming late: *Ram's Club*. We've all got our colors on. Getting revved up; talking about the players and the game. Watching games. Best was when a Duke game was on, and they lost right before it was time to go in... Yay... greatest moment ever... if you're a Carolina fan...
  - Why do we go to things like that with more expectation than you bring to the place where we meet with the Spirit of God?
- People stand with their coffee cups during worship. There are **multiple things** in the Bible people do in the presence of God. *This* (holding coffee cup) is never one of them.

#### <sup>43</sup> And awe came upon every soul,

- When God is present, there is a hushed sense of awe. Not always noisy. *How I know when I'm really preaching...*
- Does a spirit of awe define our church? Does it define your small group?
- Do you come ready to meet with God? To minister with the Spirit of God? Prayed up, with words for others?

#### 4. Prayer

- They seemed to feel, intimately, their dependence on God. They prayed all the time.
  - Someone gets into trouble? (Acts 4; 12) They pray.
  - They have a need? They pray.
  - They're scared? They pray. (Acts 4)
- Jesus had left them in a state of total dependence. Remember, I went over this a few weeks ago... he gave them the Great Commission and told them to do nothing about it except pray until he came as the Holy Spirit.
- For those 10 days they prayed... Then Peter stands up to preach... he preaches for about 10 minutes, and 3000 people were saved. Pray for 10 days; preach for 10 minutes; 3000 people were saved.
- We pray for 10 minutes, preach for 10 days, and 3 people get saved. Our 0's are in the wrong place.

#### ...and many wonders and signs were being done through the apostles.

- Tongues. Fire. Healing. God was attesting to their proclamation of the gospel by signs and wonders.
- Does God still do this today? Yes, but...
- We have to acknowledge that God was doing unique things during this time.
  - Regular tongues of fire don't appear above new believers. If I see fire on your head I'll probably try to put it out!
  - The sound of wind does not routinely blow through our services.
  - Acts 4: the place was shaken. I was talking to a group of people who said that God repeated Acts 4... we were all shaken. You go to their church and they're flopping around a perch on the dock. But it doesn't say the believers were shaking. *The place* (the ground, the beams of the building) were shaken.
  - Peter healed on demand. Didn't pray about or ask God for it. Just, "Be healed." But already by Acts 15 we see this fading.
    - 2 Tim 4:12
  - Hebrews 2:3-4 says that God gave the Apostles unusual abilities for a time to authenticate the fact they were his new message through them. That doesn't mean he doesn't ever do these things anymore—speak through dreams; give tongues; heal people miraculously—he most certainly does—I've experienced some of those things—just that we should not expect them to be as regular or normative as they are in Acts.
- But does that mean God that God doesn't still regularly do miracles?
  - Forgiveness. Love. Unity? Aren't these miraculous evidences of God's Spirit?

<sup>44</sup> And all who believed were together and had all things in common. <sup>45</sup> And they were selling their possessions and belongings and distributing the proceeds to all, as any had need. <sup>46</sup> And day by day, attending the temple together and breaking bread in their homes, they received their food with *glad and generous hearts*,

Let's look at that phrase: "*Glad and generous hearts*"

- Glad here implies "joyful, satisfied."
  - They gave away their money and were happy about it because they had found something better than money.

- This is the exact opposite of where we are as a culture.
  - Germans save 10% a year; Americans save -.5%. We're not talking about giving. More than that, **not only do we not save, we go into debt**, which is like reverse saving.
  - We spend on average \$1.26 for every dollar earned and 71% of all credit card balances in the US have only the minimum monthly payment made.
- The evidence of the gospel has taken root is a glad and generous heart.
- Paul sings in prison; Peter sleeps. These are signs of joy and contentment. They had found something in God that was better than comfort, or money, or even personal freedom!
  - Dad: Do you have all you need? *"I wish I could give away more."* I think it might be my dad's most valuable legacy that he has left me. *Will your kids say that about you?*
- These early Christians found more joy in sharing with each other than they did in possessing stuff.
  - Heard this week about a small group girl who gave away bed to refugees.
- Do you have a glad and generous heart?
  - *30 day fast... A fast is voluntary, but here is the question...*
- *How much joy could you have if you didn't spend anything?*
- *Are you glad and generous in God, or in your stuff?*
- *Many people can't be generous because they worship the very thing they are supposed to be giving away!*

**47** praising God and having favor with all the people. And the Lord added to their number day by day those who were being saved.

*The result: evangelism*

- All these things substantiated the message. When you have a group of people **devoted so much to the message** they'll suffer for it; **no longer live only for themselves**, but give themselves to each other; are **so joyful in Jesus** they don't need money; when they believe so strongly in God that their services are **characterized by prayer and a sense of God's presence**, people believe.
  - **Mark Dever:** Invisible men.
- Jesus is contagious. People just need to see him!

And notice that the number that is being added in vs. 47... that's not coming from the church service. The initial 3000 came from Peter's sermon. The "many being added" in verse 47 are coming from the people meeting house to house.

- They were loving, and praying, and serving, and giving *in the streets*.
- Most of the people who come to Christ should not do so *in here!*
  - I love it when people tell me they were saved in one of my messages. I love it even more when they tell me that you brought them to Christ.
  - Do you know your neighbors?
  - Run the play!

They were devoted. They gave themselves to these things. This was a response to something:

- **The message of the gospel and the coming of the Spirit.** *They were captured by the message and they were yielded to the Spirit.*
  - God had come from earth to rescue and save them, so they devoted themselves to his words as if their life depended on them.
  - God had given himself to them; so they gave themselves to each other.
  - God had given them a joy in the Holy Spirit that was better than the joy of money, so they could give it away.

- God had given them the Holy Spirit and made them promises about how he would use them, so they prayed urgently and expected God's presence and power.

***Are you devoted to this message and these things?*** If you are, these things will be true about you. You'll be devoted to the message; to the church... The measure to which you have given yourself to these things is the measure to which you believe the message...

***Sociologists say we have a non-devoted age... commitment... but is that true?***

- Guy can't hold down a job ... Shows up late, leaves early. His heart is not into it. Takes random days off. You look at that guy and say, "He's got a commitment problem. He's not devoted." Not true. He's just not committed to the job. What he is committed to is whatever is keeping him from work. His personal comforts, his own hobby and interests—playing Madden until 3 a.m.
- Do you believe, yourself, enough in this, to give yourself to this?

**Action step: Grouplink.**

- Small groups are the way to apply all these things.
  - Apostles' teaching: great time to get on board with studying through the book of Acts! Way to get into the word more.
  - Get to know people
  - Discover your spiritual gifts and move in the power of the Spirit (we're too big to just open up the mic and hand it over to people: flypaper for the wrong kinds of people: small groups are a great forum for that).
  - Hold each other accountable for evangelism
  - Pray
- Does your small group do these things? I've given you a way to evaluate your group.

## Bullpen:

- Girls: if you find a guy who won't commit... problem is not that he has trouble with commitment, it's just that he has trouble committing to you. What he's most committed to is his own agenda and freedom... and you interfere with that right now... his commitment to himself KEEPS him from commitment to you. Dropkick the dirtbag and let him enjoy his own selfish, lonely little universe.

One of the best illustrations of this is found in Acts 16

- 3 kinds of people get saved in this chapter.
- Joy in pain

Church: what is a church?

- 2 or 3 guys. Podcast. I'm talking to you. I'm not talking to the people in front me—they're here! I'm talking to you!
- Hanging out with my family. Took the whole summer off.
- I don't need it. I don't think you realize how much you do. But the focus is not on you, but others.

Christians must be a part of a church:

- Rebuttal -- Are you saying there are not Christians without churches?
- Reply -- Not necessarily, but like people without homes, those who are homeless are not healthy.
- **Illus: Astronomers tell us that when we see a star, we're actually seeing light that was generated a long time ago.** The light we're seeing in the present is from another time. The church is like that. It is light in the present from the past (generosity of the cross) and the future (the unity of the Kingdom!) **The church is to be a sign to all the earthly powers that the gospel and its promises are true!** That God is real, that Jesus is Lord, and that the cross and resurrection really happened.
- What's amazing about the togetherness in Acts 2 was that it was a group of people from different cultures. Vs. 5 says there were people from every nation under heaven all who spoke different languages.
  - Babel.
  - Now here, Acts 2, in Jerusalem, people of every nation worshipping Jesus in unity... it is a foretaste of all of redeemed mankind in the New Jerusalem worshipping Jesus.
- The sign, the greatest mystery of the gospel, Acts 2 says. God took all these cultures and was making one new humanity out of them.
- Point: We want diversity in the church, and we want you connected in small groups.

Ray Vander Laan:

- Spirit in Pentecost, 3000 came to life vs. first giving of law where 3K died
- Happened in the temple; people baptized in mikvahs... God saying "I've moved my house from this one (temple) to this one (believers)"
- Lev 19:9-10; they shared with poor (Acts 2:42-45) as in Leviticus 19.



- Devoted themselves to the fellowship... Vs. 44 “they were together,” v. 46, day by day they went to temple *together*, broke bread *together* in their homes.
- Answer to prayer Jesus prayed in John 17
  - Heard about the **guy in NYC with a new BMW**... gets the door torn off when he opened it on the street. “Oh, my BMW, oh, my BMW!” The officer said, “What’s wrong with you? Your left arm got torn off, too!” At which time the guy says, “My Rolex, my Rolex!”
  - Their generosity started inside the church, then outside in concentric circles. *Galatians 6:10*, “*Let us do good to all men, but especially those of the household of faith.*” As a family, they took care of their own, but their generosity overflowed into the streets.

So many people can't be generous because they worship the very thing they are supposed to be giving away!