

Acts 2:1-21
The Church's Power
Acts: HTCWP

Introduction

Happy MLK Weekend. **Acts 2.**

SERIES RECAP

We are in week 2 of a 10-week series on the book of Acts, asking the question - ***what can we learn as a brand new church plant by looking at the story of how the early Church began?***

Last week we looked at Acts 1:1-11, and we saw how in Jesus' final moments He gave His followers a charge and command, and by nature of us being followers of Jesus, gave us too a command - **that we would take the gospel to the nations as witnesses for Christ.**

That's our charge, our marching orders. If you're a follower of Jesus, you're a witness called to go take the good news of Jesus to those right around you and to those on the other side of the world. And we closed by talking about our mission field right around where we meet here on Sundays. We said that **within 5 miles of this building there are 125,000 people** who don't know Jesus. And so, as Jesus says, the harvest is plentiful, but the workers are few.

Now, this is a big task. Some would say, close to impossible. Especially under our own strength and power. **But we looked at how Jesus not only gave the apostles a mission to pursue, he also gave them a promise to believe.** He told them this:

Acts 1:8 - But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you, and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth.

That before they were to take the gospel to the nations, they were to wait in Jerusalem until they were given the Holy Spirit. They were going to be given this power, God living within them, that was going to enable them to do all that Christ had called them to do - preach the gospel of the kingdom of God, plant churches, heal the sick, care for the poor, and much much more.

After this, the apostles are waiting in Jerusalem. They appoint a replacement apostle, Matthias, now that Judas has betrayed Jesus, so they are back to 12. In addition to the twelve apostles, there's about 120 total believers - both men and women - waiting, praying, gathered together in eager anticipation for the arrival of the Holy Spirit.

And that's where our story picks up in Acts 2. Let's look at it together.

Walkthrough of Acts 2:1-21

When the day of Pentecost arrived, they were all together in one place.

The Day of Pentecost was a Jewish feast that celebrated the arrival of the harvest season. It was always 50 days after the Passover was celebrated. There would have been a ton of people who had traveled to

Jerusalem from all over to celebrate this feast. And on this day the 120 early followers of Jesus were gathered together in the city.

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.

These believers are together in a house, waiting and praying. And out of nowhere it's just like BOOM. Here comes the Holy Spirit. And there are specific signs of the Holy Spirit's arrival that Luke makes sure to record that give evidence to the fact that it is the arrival of the H.S. taking place in this scene:

1. **Sound like a mighty rushing wind** - This is not the first time in Scripture that wind and Spirit are used in parallel.
2. **Sight of tongues as of fire resting on them** - This was the arrival of God's presence through His Spirit, and fire throughout the Bible is associated with God's presence (burning bush, wilderness wandering, etc.).
3. **Speaking in different tongues/languages** - Even though it's a bunch of people from Galilee all together, they start speaking in a whole host of other human languages.

All of these are evidences or signs that accompany this arrival of the Holy Spirit. Every single one of them were filled. Not just the 12 apostles, but every follower of Jesus in that room is filled with the Holy Spirit. It happens. The promise of Jesus has been fulfilled. The Holy Spirit, the great helper, has come to God's people.

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? 9 Parthians and Medes and Elamites and residents of Mesopotamia, Judea and Cappadocia, Pontus and Asia, 10 Phrygia and Pamphylia, Egypt and the parts of Libya belonging to Cyrene, and visitors from Rome, 11 both Jews and proselytes, Cretans and Arabians [aka - a lot of people from a lot of different places all near them in their own language...and what are they saying?]-we hear them telling in our own tongues the mighty works of God." 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."

Holy Spirit fills these believers and they start preaching the gospel. Some of the crowd is amazed and shocked. Others are like - "They are filled with new wine." AKA - THEY DRUNK.

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, in typical Peter fashion, gets up and is like "Slow your roll. Listen up. I have stuff to say - these people aren't drunk - it's the third hour of the day. AKA - it's 9am. Too early to be drunk." (I love the Bible!)

So he's going to explain to them what is happening:

16 But this is what was uttered through the prophet Joel: [Now Peter is going to quote Joel 2:28-32]
17 “And in the last days it shall be, God declares, that I will pour out my Spirit on all flesh, and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, and your young men shall see visions, and your old men shall dream dreams; 18 even on my male servants and female servants in those days I will pour out my Spirit, and they shall prophesy. 19 And I will show wonders in the heavens above and signs on the earth below, blood, and fire, and vapor of smoke; 20 the sun shall be turned to darkness and the moon to blood, before the day of the Lord comes, the great and magnificent day. 21 And it shall come to pass that everyone who calls upon the name of the Lord shall be saved.”

We'll get to the rest of Peter's sermon next week - but he tells the crowd - they're not drunk it's 9am. But I'll tell you what has happened:

- A long time ago God told us through his prophet Joel that He would send His Holy Spirit upon all who would trust in Him. Not just prophets or priests or kings, but all followers of Jesus.
- And they would prophesy, and preach, and the gospel would spread.
- And this would be a sign that you're entering into the "last days". This age of the church before Christ returns. That's what Peter's addressing in 19-20. These things that will happen before the 2nd coming of Christ.
- **And all of this is so that more and more people would call upon the name of the Lord and be saved.**

If I could paraphrase everything that happened in Acts 2:1-21 for you it'd be this:

1. God promised the Holy Spirit would come.
2. Now the Holy Spirit is here.
3. The Holy Spirit is about to move in power.
4. A bunch of people are going to be saved.

That's Acts 2:1-21 big picture overview.

Now, the arrival of the Holy Spirit is HUGE. It has CRAZY implications for the early church in Acts 2 and for us here and now.

But before we talk about those implications, I need to give us a little bit of a Holy Spirit 101. I don't know if any member of the Trinity: God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit - is more misunderstood, misrepresented, or even just forgotten about. It seems like if you take a look at the broader Church, people often go one of two routes when it comes to the Holy Spirit - either an unhealthy use and abuse or very little mention and He's kind of just dismissed.

And so I thought it'd be helpful for us today, as we look at this passage in Acts 2, the arrival of the Holy Spirit upon the early church, to get some clarity for us as a church about **who the Holy Spirit is and what the Holy Spirit does.**

Before we talk about why it's such a big deal that He came, I want to make sure we're all on the same page.

Holy Spirit 101

**We're going to move through these fairly quickly. Here we go:

- 1. The Holy Spirit is the third member of the Trinity. He is fully God and equal with God the Father and God the Son.** (Matt 28:19, Luke 3:22)
 - He's not a force, not an "it", He's a person or He has personhood.
 - He's not less-powerful/less-important OR more-powerful/more-important.
- 2. The Holy Spirit's primary task is to manifest the active presence of God in the world and glorify Christ.** (Jn 16:14-15)
 - The Holy Spirit works to see Jesus made much of in the Church and outside the Church. (See more of The Son)
 - He works and moves to bring God's power and presence out into the world. (Acts 2)
- 3. The Holy Spirit helps Christians in many ways, including convicting, comforting, teaching, persevering, sanctifying, and empowering.** (Jn 14:26, Jn 16:7, Rom 8:26)
 - Jesus Himself said it was better that He go away so that the Holy Spirit, the Helper could come.
 - I've heard it said this way - "The Spirit inside of you is better than Jesus beside you."
- 4. The Holy Spirit indwells all believers fully at the time of their conversion, but He will also give filling and power for particular kingdom work.** (1 Cor 12:13, Eph 5:18)
 - There is no Biblical warrant for a "second baptism" or anything of that nature.
 - If you're a Christian, you have the fullness of the Holy Spirit living inside of you.
 - Sometimes, the Spirit might "fill" or empower believers for particular kingdom works - evangelism, preaching, acts of service - really any of the spiritual gifts.
- 5. The Holy Spirit gives spiritual gifts to all believers, in various ways and degrees, for the building up of the Church.** (1 Cor 14, Eph 4:11-16)
 - Every Christian has a gift. There are different gifts to be used in different ways, but we all have a role to play through a Spirit-given gift.
 - Feb 27 - Saturday Seminar on Spiritual Gifts.

Why This Matters

So let's talk about why this matters for the early church, and why this matters for us:

Without the Holy Spirit there is no book of Acts.

Everything we're going to read and talk about over the next few weeks. There's some incredible stuff. Thousands of people getting saved in one day, miracles happening left and right, people being healed, the gospel spreading, churches starting. **That doesn't happen without the power and presence of God through the Holy Spirit.**

Jesus gave His disciples this incredible mission to go pursue, but first He told them to wait for the power of the Holy Spirit. They could not do this alone. This was not something man could just conjure up with some good strategies or strong preaching. This was a Holy Spirit work that needed to take place.

David Platt - **“The day of Pentecost was the installation of God’s new source of blessing and power for the benefit of His people.”**

We can’t miss the power behind this incredible spread of the gospel, this building of the early church, these lives of the believers - The power behind all of it is the Holy Spirit.

We should read ACTS and go → **Look at what God has done!** Look at the power of the Holy Spirit when a people, when the Church, completely surrender themselves to Him - look at what He does in their lives and in the world!

Acts shows us that God has not stopped moving just because Jesus died and rose again. God is still working. His Kingdom is still advancing. This good news, this gospel, of what Jesus has done must now go out and spread to the nations.

I love the way Theologian and Scholar Ben Witherington says it, **“Without the coming of the Spirit there would be no prophecy, no preaching, no mission, no conversions and no worldwide Christian movement.”**

Without the Holy Spirit there is no Peter preaching and 3,000 people getting saved. There are no signs and wonders like Peter says will happen in vs. 17-21. There is no movement of the gospel.

But we read the story of Acts and we see that the Holy Spirit **has** come and He **is** on the move!
Empowering the early church for the glory of God and the spread of the Gospel.

Without the Holy Spirit, there is no book of Acts. But here’s the deal: the same is true for us today, here and now:

Without the Holy Spirit, there is no Citizens Church.

This book is a story not first and foremost about what the early church did, but is **first and foremost about what God does in power through the Holy Spirit.** That means this is more than just some prototype for us to learn from. This is not some 10-step plan to a healthy church.

We need this Acts 2 kind of Holy Spirit power to make it as a church. For us to see anything we want to see happen in this church and in this city:

- To see people pass from death to life through Christ.
- To see the marginalized and hurting in our city loved and served and cared for.
- To see more leaders trained and more churches planted.
- To see believers maturing in their faith, and learning to say “no” to sin and “yes” to God.
- To see marriages restored and kids raised in the faith once for all delivered to the saints.
- To see a family created where people don’t view what they have as their own but sacrifice for the good of those around them.

This won’t happen based on good strategic planning, a well-ordered and large financial budget, a nice meets-all-our-needs permanent facility, dynamite sermons, and the greatest staff team assembled on the face of this earth.

Are those all good things? Absolutely. Let’s not get it twisted, would love all of those. **But none of those matter if the Holy Spirit doesn’t move.**

And I'd rather have a church with none of those things - no large budget, no permanent facility, but the power of God moving through His Spirit, than to have all of these earthly great helpful resources and not have the Spirit of the Lord be upon our church.

We have this same Spirit

[tone + speed shift]

But here's the good news for us in all of this - We have access to this same Holy Spirit we read about in Acts 2. This Holy Spirit who shows up with the sound of wind, and tongues of fire, and crazy revival breaking out is the same Holy Spirit who now lives in you, and in me, and in all who trust in Christ!

Romans 8:11 (NLT), you should commit this verse to memory - **"The Spirit of God, who raised Jesus from the dead, lives in you."**

It's easy to read the book of Acts and think **"that was then, this is now."**

To read these stories and think, "Man, that would be so awesome to experience. I can't believe God worked like that. I can't believe 3,000 people become Christians in one day. I can't believe Paul, PAUL of all people - persecutor of Christians - actually trusted in Jesus. This book is wild."

And miss the fact that the same Spirit who:

- Brought the city of Nineveh to its knees in repentance at the message of Jonah
- Raised up prophets like Ezekiel, Jeremiah, Elijah, and Elisha
- Rested upon David and anointed Him to serve God's people as king
- Came down from heaven at the baptism of Jesus
- Raised Christ from the dead
- Was in Paul and Peter and James and the prophetess Phoebe and all of the early church as they preached the gospel with boldness, even in the midst of persecution and suffering.

THAT SAME SPIRIT NOW LIVES IN YOU!!

If you are a Christian, if you are in Christ, the Holy Spirit lives in you! And His mission is still the same. **To empower God's people for the glory of God and the spread of the Gospel.**

Here's how pastor Sam Storms puts it:

I have read the book of Acts and see operative in the lives of those early believers something that I believe is no less available to us today. There is something that links us to the success of the Early Church and holds forth hope that we can and will emerge from our spiritual lethargy. There is something that can transform good intentions into life-changing actions and abstract theologizing into concrete impact....What the Church needs is truth set aflame by the power of the Holy Spirit."

God is still on the move! He is working. He wants to work in you and through you!

So what do we do? I've got 2 applications for us this evening:

Application

1. Recognize the work of the Holy Spirit

My background. I grew up in the church, my parents became believers shortly before I was born. And for most of my life I was in the “didn’t think much about the Holy Spirit” camp. It’s not that I didn’t think He was important, I had read the book of Acts, I had seen the way the Spirit moved and worked. I knew He was crucial in my salvation. But I just didn’t really operate with an awareness of the Spirit working in my day to day life.

But about 5 years ago I heard someone preach on the Holy Spirit out of a passage we’ll study in a few weeks in Acts, and was just sharing evidence of the Holy Spirit in the church, in His own life, and something in me just clicked.

I started reading as much as I can about the Holy Spirit - who He is, what He does - all of that. And the Lord has been so kind. The prayer I keep asking is to have eyes to see what the pastor was talking about in that sermon. For the Lord to show me more of the work of the Spirit in my life and in the lives of those around me. To have eyes to not see it as just “oh that happened”, but to see it as a work of the Lord.

I want to see the workings of God in my life, in our church, in our world - not simply has happenstance or manmade things or whatever - but I want to have eyes to see the power of the Holy Spirit as He works and moves.

So I think about evidence in my own life and in this church...

- My oldest brother. Who 10 years ago was living in rebellion against God, who’s entire life has been changed and flipped upside down and is now a pastor faithfully preaching and proclaiming the gospel week in and week out.
- People in our church who are going on months or years of sobriety from sexual addiction.
- Times in our worship gathering when it just seems like there’s a unity of worship and a fervency to our seeking of the Lord that just seems like it happens.
- Those moments when you’re reading the Bible alone, and a passage you’ve read a thousand times just hits you like a ton of bricks in a fresh way.
- People in our church who walk through seasons of suffering, and folks just step up out of nowhere to serve them and take care of them.
- Going into a conversation with a church member where I know - I have to lovingly confront them about this sin in their lives and they’re probably gonna get mad and leave - and instead they respond in repentance.

And it’s easy to write those things off. Or to think they happened because of some clever planning, the right musical note, the right words or tone, or some human power.

But church, we need eyes to see the workings of the Spirit!! In what seems like mundane, ordinary, everyday living - He’s working and moving in power.

The Holy Spirit is all over the book of Acts, in some extraordinary and miraculous ways:

- Acts 2:41 - 3,000 people put their faith in Christ in one day
- Acts 4:31 - The early church gets all these threats stop preaching the gospel, they gather together to pray for power and boldness, and they place where they are literally starts shaking
- There’s healings and miracles and more conversions.

But the Holy Spirit is not just working in the extraordinary, but also the ordinary and mundane, which is still no less miraculous:

- Acts 6 - He empowers the very first deacons to live lives of service
- Acts 11:24 - He gives early Christians faith
- Acts 13:52 - He gives early Christians joy

It's easy for us to give the Spirit credit in the big - If we hold some revival and 3,000 people get saved over night - THAT'S THE HOLY SPIRIT. BOOYAH.

But often the working of the Spirit is in the everyday. Do we have eyes to see that?

2. Seek the power of the Holy Spirit

As you begin to see the work of the Holy Spirit all around you, something clicks and you begin to seek more of God's power and God's might and God's working.

Think about the places you feel "stuck" in your walk with Christ right now.

- What sin have you been wrestling with that you need to put to death?
- What friend have you been praying for for years that doesn't know Jesus?
- What brokenness in your story needs redemption?
- What sickness or pain do you need healing from?

I just told you Acts 11 and Acts 13 - HS gives faith and joy. You ever thought about the power of the HS for those things in your life?

- the power of the HS to fight against anxiety? Doubt? Depression?
- The power of the HS to fight against fear in witnessing?

1 Corinthians 4:20

20 For the kingdom of God does not consist in talk but in power.

Let's be a church that does not shrink back or just talks about what the Spirit might do, but actually believes that the Holy Spirit is still living and active and dwelling within all who trust in Him. Let's be a Holy Spirit church. Who seeks His presence, seeks His power, seeks His gifts.

Who reads Acts 2 and goes - that Spirit - that Spirit is alive and working today! And we're desperate for Him to show up in power!

Seek His power in your life and in our church.

Listen, If you're in Christ, you have the Spirit of God living inside of you, so the question is not **IF** you can be used by God in His Kingdom, the question is **WILL YOU** step into it?

The work of ministry is not just a pastor thing or a deacon thing. The work of evangelism is not just a super Christian thing. The work of counseling and care is not just a Community Group leader thing or a professional counselor thing. They facilitate, they lead, they help, no doubt. **But church, you have the Spirit of God in you.** The Bible says that you are the living temple where God's presence dwells. The Bible says the Holy Spirit gives gifts to **ALL** believers for the building up of the church.

Stop thinking you can't help. Stop thinking you can't encourage or love or care for or serve. Stop thinking you don't have what it takes. Stop relying on yourself, stop shrinking back, stop not engaging, and start relying on the Spirit and get in the game.

- If someone in your group is **hurting**, your posture should be "I have the Spirit of God", so I might not have all the answers, but I can still step in and engage and care for them.
- If your **neighbor** or **unbelieving friend** is asking questions, your posture should be "I have the Spirit of God", which is not a spirit of fear but of courage.
- If someone **new** walks into our **Gathering**, doesn't know anyone, your posture should be "I have the Spirit of God", so I'm not waiting for Host Team, I'm going to push through my social anxiety and meet someone new.
- If after last week, you felt overwhelmed by the packing peanuts. That's great! Kind of the point. "I have the Spirit of God", so I'm going to pray and engage.

Conclusion

As we close I want to leave you with this quote I've been chewing on this week. It's from a pastor named J.D. Greear. He wrote a book called "Jesus Continued", would highly recommend it to you.

He said this:

"The apostles understood the church to be a movement birthed by the mighty, rushing wind of the Spirit of God. Is that how you see your church? Most people today see the church as an institution, a place to go to, or something to sit through. How did that happen?...Many Christians, you see, function as deists. They act as if God rules from the heavens and has spoken in His Word, but does not act on earth or move in their souls — at least in any way that they can sense those movements."

Let's not be a church that's simply an institution, or a place to go to on Sundays or something to check off our weekly to-do list so we feel better about ourselves or our relationship to God. God is on the move. God is working and active. The Holy Spirit is empowering and building Christ's Church.

Let's be available and willing and passionate about joining the work of God in the world.

Communion. Pray.