

Mission #3

Acts 2:1-7 ESV

(1) 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?"

Culture should never dictate the role of church in society or the role of Christ in your life.

Your faith in Christ and your local church is the God given vehicle designed to transform the world around you

Is this the case today?

Is this what we see when we look out across the Christian world?

In many cases in our nation...No

But just because something has moved away from the original, model, does not mean that the model is wrong, just that we have lost sight of it in its purest form.

So what we are attempting to do is uncover the real church and the real passions of the early Christians and look at the sorts of people

they were in our attempt to become like them....a group of people so given to the cause of Christ that have changed our world in their day

Last week when we looked at the Word we concluded that:

Christianity is not a dead religion.

Christianity is not what the media says it is.
Christianity is not good works accomplished by great men.
Christianity is not a day of the week, an obligation that we feel to Sunday because that is how we were raised.
Christianity is not a building, a ritual or a form
Christianity is alive, it is passion, it is burden, it is hands lifted and hearts open wide passionately surrendered to Christ

Christianity is not the worship of an unknown God.

We have to stop allowing the influences of our day to define our world for us, just like the influences of the ancient world defined theirs. Do not take your view of Christ from Christians, but from Christ Himself.

Our God is a God of Action

“All that Jesus began to do and to teach.” – that is all that Jesus **began.**

All He has **done** and All that He shall **do.**

God is a God of Action.

Our God is a God of Action, life and movement

So here we are in Acts 2:1 and what we are seeing here is the birth of the early church

That's right, the church proper starts right here, right in this account. There is so much here in these first verses

1. There was a sense of single focus to their mission.

Acts 2:1

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

They were all there in one place, with one vision, with one purpose.

There were from different backgrounds.

Different experiences.

Different cultures.

Different giftings.

But there was one purpose.

Why are you at church?

Why do you come to church?

Is it for the fellowship?

Is it for the friendship?

Is it the Word or Worship?

All of these are great out comes but I don't know if they should be the primary reason.

You see when these people gathered they gathered with the single purpose

They were obeying Christ.

They wanted to do the will of God.

They wanted an encounter with God.

They wanted to be used of God.

It was not what they could get from the gathering, but what they could give to Christ through the gathering.

Early in our Christian walk, our coming to church, our gathering is about what we can get from it.

The touch, the experience, the encounter,

But there comes a time when it must move to the mission. The mission of saving souls and making disciples.

You see if you are coming for the experience, the sensation, then if things get a little tense with another church member. If you are confronted or challenged with things in your own life, you will pack up your bags and go in search of a different experience, a different sensation. Something that will persuade you not change you!

The people of the early church, couldn't go down the road to another church...they WERE the church. They had to stay and sort it out...a bit like family.

How much stronger do you think the body of Christ would be today if we were determined to stay and work out our differences instead of going down the road at the first sign of hurt feelings.

2. "They were all together...."

The Word says that they were all together.

The NKJV translates that verse

Acts 2:1

"1 when the Day of Pentecost had fully come, they were all with one accord in one place."

One Accord or in the ESV, together - was a unique Greek Word used 10 of its 12 times in the bible in the book of Acts alone

It means with one mind, with one accord, with one passion

James Strong in his concordance says, "it is a compound of two words meaning to "rush along" and "in unison". The image is almost musical; a number of notes are sounded which, while different, harmonies in pitch and tone. As the instruments of a great concert under the direction of a concertmaster, so the Holy Spirit blends together the lives of members of Christ's church.

If I were to ask you what are you prepared to give up for Jesus, you, more than likely and with good intentions you would say something like...I would give up everything

But then let me put it this way...what are you not giving up for Christ?

What are you holding on to?

What are the things in your life that you value more than your walk with Christ and in deed your walk with another Christian?

Are you prepared to give up being petty?

Being selfish?

Being critical?

Being negative?

Being judgmental?

Being lazy?

Being bitter?

Because these people in the upper room were all in one accord

Some of the biggest things to personal and spiritual growth as individuals and as bodies is not what we are prepared to give up, but what we are not prepared to give up

Lets remember that true spiritually is not what we bring to church on Sunday, but what we take from Church and use on Monday

This faith of ours must be lived out loud daily.

It must scream to the world He is alive or it is no faith at all.

3. The early church was of Christ; the early church was for Christ.

They were all together in one place

The early church had one mission; it had one vision, bringing the Jesus that they knew to the people that did not yet know Him.

When the mission is the focus, when the goal is the aim, human beings have a tendency to let the petty issues of life fall behind them.

They were in one place.
Not only of one accord, but in one place.

Adam Clark in his commentary says of this verse:

With one accord, omoyumadon; this word is very expressive: it signifies that all their minds, affections, desires, and wishes, were concentrated in one object, every man having the same end in view; and, having but one desire, they had but one prayer to God, and every heart uttered it. There was no person uninterested-none unconcerned-none lukewarm; all were in earnest; and the Spirit of God came down to meet their united faith and prayer.

When any assembly of God's people meet in the same spirit they may expect every blessing they need.

John Gill in his work looking at this verse says:

And though there were so many of them together, they were very unanimous and peaceable; there were no jars nor contentions among them; they were of the same mind and judgment in faith and practice, and of one heart and soul, and had a cordial affection for one another; and were all in one place,

I want you on your bulletin, or in your journal there

I want you to write down three things

I want you to write down three people or three incidents or three obstacles that YOU allowed to stand between you and either

- a) Christ
- b) Church
- c) You personal development as a Christian

So many people justify why they don't go to church
Why they don't read their bible
Why they stop fellowshiping

Surely your walk with God is stronger than your personal differences from someone sitting across the aisle

Surely you could find a way around a 20-cent per gallon increase if Church and Christ was really important to you

Now I want you to think about this for just a moment

There were 120 in the upper room...but how many could there have been?

Josh McDowell and Lee Stroble say that over 500 saw Him first hand after his resurrection

500

So there were thousands of followers
All knew He had been crucified and buried

At least 500 saw Him personally after his resurrection

Now we come to the upper room and there, out of the possible thousands who knew of Him, who had seen Him, heard Him. Out of

the hundreds who had seen Him resurrected and even ascend into Glory, there are only 120 doing that they were asked to do...waiting to be endured with power from on high

A little over 20% made it from seeing Christ risen from the dead to the upper room

I wonder what excuses they had?

Jesus told us there would always be people who found an excuse to stay the same, instead of a reason to change.

Was it:

A wedding?

A funeral?

A feast?

A football game?

The needed a sleep in, because they were out late with friends

Fuel prices?

I just had thanksgiving and Christmas off; I need another week to recover

They hurt my feelings

They sat in my chair

They didn't have enough pizza for my son in kid's church

The pastor told my child to take his muddy feet of the chairs

Come on...we have all at different times come up with the lamest excuses at times to get ticked off, or our noses out of joint, or to justify our laziness

And maybe that is what happened to the 80%

You know I think that ratio is about right

80% Of people who talk a good game

And 20% of people will actually get on the field to play the game

There are 80% of people who say they will

And 20% of people who do

When your vision is yourself it is all about you, when your vision is on Christ, it is all about Him!

4. The church is something that Only God can build

When the day of Pentecost arrived, they were all together in one place. And suddenly there came from heaven a sound like a mighty rushing wind, and it filled the entire house where they were sitting.

3 years they walked with Him and believed in Him

Then He was crucified,

They were devastated, they were distraught,

Then He came back again

They probably thought this is it.

He is going to stay

He is going to lead us

For 40 days they were told about something coming

He was telling them to wait

All of Jerusalem would have been in an up roar

Someone had stolen this body

Where are those fanatics – lets kill them

Where are those crazy followers of the Galilean now?

Family would have scoffed

Friends would have ridiculed

Loved ones would have beg them to give up this foolishness, this sect, this cult

Then suddenly....

When Christ left, His last parting words to His disciples were not...
'I want you to form a lobby group.'
'I want you to start a soup kitchen.'

No, His last words were, "I want you, I need you to wait.

Friend I believe that a Christian is someone who spends his or her entire life passionately waiting.

Passionately preparing for what will come.
Passionately preparing for an encounter

And then living it out

Actively waiting for God to do it.

No amount of programming, marketing, pleading or begging was going to start this church He had promised, what they needed was a divine, supernatural act of God.

It was true at the start
It is true today

You see, a program is an obligation, waiting is a burden.

All down through time men have wanted to supplant a burden for prayer and a command to wait on God with an obligation to a program.

We love the study of religion but we stumble at the waiting of faith.

"Suddenly" is God's responsibility
Waiting is our responsibility.

Some people say...well I read my bible and nothing happens
I pray and nothing happens

Welcome to the big league

If you spent enough time reading, enough time praying, you don't need the miracle any more, as Corrie Ten Boom puts it...you become the miracle

Can I tell you what the hardest thing I do in my life as a leader, in my life as a pastor is?

You know me. I am driven, I am focused, I am the sort of person who makes something happen, I don't let it happen to me.

The hardest thing I have ever done for the cause of Christ and the Kingdom...is wait.

I look outside and I see millions of people going to hell – and I have to wait

I want to make Church happen
I want to drag people in here
I want them to meet you, so they know you can go to church and meet people who are sincere, authentic and passionate

So you know what I do...I passionately wait

I passionately prepare – because marketing cannot build a church, only a visitation of the Holy Ghost can

5. The early church was supernatural in origin.

Acts 2:2-4

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.

To deny the supernatural is to deny the very start of the church.

To take something whose origins are supernatural and try and substitute human methods and means is religion at best and anti-Christ at worst.

Salvation is a supernatural experience.

The church is supposed to be a collection of people who have had a supernatural experience with a supernatural God.

There are whole groups who say that the supernatural manifestation of God stopped with the early church.

That is ridiculous.

If the supernatural works of God stopped with the death of Christ then that claim would be valid.

But they did not.

In fact the majority of the supernatural works of the early church did not start until Christ was no longer **on** the earth.

Then there is another group that says that the Apostles were the only people who did miracles, it all died out with them.

If that was the case, then why did Paul tell Timothy that you call for the elders to lay hands on the sick so people recovered?

Paul was not one of the original Apostles?
Matthias was the one who replace Judas.

Yet Paul did miracles

AHHHH say some, but Jesus appeared to him supernatural...Jesus appeared to over 500 people supernaturally.

We need Jesus to do miracles today for the same reason Jesus did them back then.

So the people can see that our God is bigger than your God.

6. The early Christians could not be the early Christians with an encounter with the Holy Ghost

4 And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other tongues as the Spirit gave them utterance.

Christ had to leave so the Holy Ghost could come and the church could begin.

That's right.

We could never of had the church if Jesus was still here today.

We would have had a group of people following the teachings of a great philosopher and nothing more.

It was not the death of Christ that made Him the Messiah, but His resurrection.

It is not the teachings of Christ that make a church, but the power of God.

It is not the philosophy of Jesus that will save your soul but being born again by the Spirit of God.

Church has to be more then a Sunday morning obligation it has to be a Sunday night experience!

America goes to church on a Sunday morning.

The Jews in the New Testament went to the temple every Sabbath.

But that will not save your soul.

That will not grow the church

We all need a Sunday night experience.

We all need the "suddenly's" of God.

You need an encounter with power from another world.

We touched on this last week

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.”

Witness – a martyr, a record, an example

Witness – you need evidence.

Evidence: a token, a sign

Mark 16:15-18 ESV

(15) And he said to them, "Go into all the world and proclaim the gospel to the whole creation.

(16) Whoever believes and is baptized will be saved, but whoever does not believe will be condemned.

(17) And these signs will accompany those who believe: in my name they will cast out demons; they will speak in new tongues;

(18) They will pick up serpents with their hands; and if they drink any deadly poison, it will not hurt them; they will lay their hands on the sick, and they will recover."

The Christians have stopped being witnesses because they have no evidence

They cannot be witnesses because they have no power

The church started supernaturally

And was always supposed to continue supernaturally

It is the evidence, the token, the sign that Jesus is Who he says He is and can do what he says he can do!

7. It always started with God touching them and ending with them touching others.

Acts 2:4-11

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? 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—we hear them telling in our own tongues the mighty works of God."

This was not based on feelings or a gift or career at the time, this was a command based upon Salvation.

If you are saved,
If you call Jesus Lord – the same obligation for service applies to you.

Obligation for service.
Not suggestion.

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."

The early Christians never lost their vision because the mission was never a choice.

It was never an option.

It was not their ministry – it was their command.

Being a witness for Christ.

Being a servant of God.

Moving in the power of God.

Telling others about Christ.

Meeting together and waiting for God.

Taking Jesus to the world.

None of these are options all of them are expectations based upon your Salvation experience.

The nominal Christian who lives their life with no obligation to the cross, I believe, has had no encounter with Christ.

Because you cannot be touched by Him and have no desire to serve Him and change the world for Him!