

▼ **The Spirit Jump-Starts The Church - Part 9**

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• **Read the Passage: Acts 2:40-47**

With many other words he warned them; and he pleaded with them, “Save yourselves from this corrupt generation.” Those who accepted his message were baptized, and about three thousand were added to their number that day.

They devoted themselves to the apostles’ teaching and to the fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer. Everyone was filled with awe, and many wonders and miraculous signs were done by the apostles. All the believers were together and had everything in common. Selling their possessions and goods, they gave to anyone as he had need. Every day they continued to meet together in the temple courts. They broke bread in their homes and ate together with glad and sincere hearts, praising God and enjoying the favor of all the people. And the Lord added to their number daily those who were being saved.

• **Read the Passage: Acts 3**

One day Peter and John were going up to the temple at the time of prayer — at three in the afternoon. Now a man crippled from birth was being carried to the temple gate called Beautiful, where he was put every day to beg from those going into the temple courts. When he saw Peter and John about to enter, he asked them for money. Peter looked straight at him, as did John. Then Peter said, “Look at us!” So the man gave them his attention, expecting to get something from them.

Then Peter said, “Silver or gold I do not have, but what I have I give you. In the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, walk.” Taking him by the right hand, he helped him up, and instantly the man’s feet and ankles became strong. He jumped to his feet and began to walk. Then he went with them into the temple courts, walking and jumping, and praising God. When all the people saw him walking and praising God, they recognized him as the same man who used to sit begging at the temple gate called Beautiful, and they were filled with wonder and amazement at what had happened to him.

While the beggar held on to Peter and John, all the people were astonished and came running to them in the place called Solomon’s Colonnade. When Peter saw this, he said to them: “Men of Israel, why does this surprise you? Why do you stare at us as if by our own power or godliness we had made this man walk? The God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, the God of our fathers, has glorified his servant Jesus. You handed him over to be killed, and you disowned him before Pilate, though he had decided to let him go. You disowned the Holy and Righteous One and asked that a murderer be released to you. You killed the author of life, but God raised him from the dead. We are witnesses of this. By faith in the name of Jesus, this man whom you see and know was made strong. It is Jesus’ name and the faith that comes through him that has given this complete healing to him, as you can all see.

“Now, brothers, I know that you acted in ignorance, as did your leaders. But this is how God fulfilled what he had foretold through all the prophets, saying that his Christ would suffer. Repent, then, and turn to God, so that your sins may be wiped out, that times of refreshing may come from the Lord, and that he may send the Christ, who has been appointed for you — even Jesus. He must remain in heaven until the time comes for God to restore everything, as he promised long ago through his holy prophets. For Moses said, ‘The Lord your God will raise up for you a prophet like me from among your own people; you must listen to everything he tells you. Anyone who does not listen to him will be completely cut off from among his people.’

“Indeed, all the prophets from Samuel on, as many as have spoken, have foretold these days. And you are heirs of the prophets and of the covenant God made with your fathers. He said to Abraham, ‘Through

your offspring all peoples on earth will be blessed.’ When God raised up his servant, he sent him first to you to bless you by turning each of you from your wicked ways.”

- **Read the Passage: Acts 4**

The priests and the captain of the temple guard and the Sadducees came up to Peter and John while they were speaking to the people. They were greatly disturbed because the apostles were teaching the people and proclaiming in Jesus the resurrection of the dead. They seized Peter and John, and because it was evening, they put them in jail until the next day. But many who heard the message believed, and the number of men grew to about five thousand.

The next day the rulers, elders and teachers of the law met in Jerusalem. Annas the high priest was there, and so were Caiaphas, John, Alexander and the other men of the high priest’s family. They had Peter and John brought before them and began to question them: “By what power or what name did you do this?”

Then Peter, filled with the Holy Spirit, said to them: “Rulers and elders of the people! If we are being called to account today for an act of kindness shown to a cripple and are asked how he was healed, then know this, you and all the people of Israel: It is by the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, whom you crucified but whom God raised from the dead, that this man stands before you healed. He is “the stone you builders rejected, which has become the capstone.’ Salvation is found in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given to men by which we must be saved.”

When they saw the courage of Peter and John and realized that they were unschooled, ordinary men, they were astonished and they took note that these men had been with Jesus. But since they could see the man who had been healed standing there with them, there was nothing they could say. So they ordered them to withdraw from the Sanhedrin and then conferred together. “What are we going to do with these men?” they asked. “Everybody living in Jerusalem knows they have done an outstanding miracle, and we cannot deny it. But to stop this thing from spreading any further among the people, we must warn these men to speak no longer to anyone in this name.”

Then they called them in again and commanded them not to speak or teach at all in the name of Jesus. But Peter and John replied, “Judge for yourselves whether it is right in God’s sight to obey you rather than God. For we cannot help speaking about what we have seen and heard.”

After further threats they let them go. They could not decide how to punish them, because all the people were praising God for what had happened. For the man who was miraculously healed was over forty years old.

On their release, Peter and John went back to their own people and reported all that the chief priests and elders had said to them. When they heard this, they raised their voices together in prayer to God. “Sovereign Lord,” they said, “you made the heaven and the earth and the sea, and everything in them. You spoke by the Holy Spirit through the mouth of your servant, our father David: “Why do the nations rage and the peoples plot in vain? The kings of the earth take their stand and the rulers gather together against the Lord and against his Anointed One.’ Indeed Herod and Pontius Pilate met together with the Gentiles and the people of Israel in this city to conspire against your holy servant Jesus, whom you anointed. They did what your power and will had decided beforehand should happen. Now, Lord, consider their threats and enable your servants to speak your word with great boldness. Stretch out your hand to heal and perform miraculous signs and wonders through the name of your holy servant Jesus.”

After they prayed, the place where they were meeting was shaken. And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and spoke the word of God boldly.

All the believers were one in heart and mind. No one claimed that any of his possessions was his own, but they shared everything they had. With great power the apostles continued to testify to the resurrection of the Lord Jesus, and much grace was upon them all. There were no needy persons among them. For from time to time those who owned lands or houses sold them, brought the money from the sales and put it at the apostles’ feet, and it was distributed to anyone as he had need.

Joseph, a Levite from Cyprus, whom the apostles called Barnabas (which means Son of Encouragement), sold a field he owned and brought the money and put it at the apostles' feet.

▼ **Determine Sermon's Purpose (what listeners should do)**

- Understand Jesus' resurrection as the foundation: Matthew 28; Mark 16; Luke 24:36-53; John 20:19-23
- Understand the continuing flow of events in Acts 2 - 4.
- Understand how signs and wonders grow the Kingdom.
- Understand the elements of the Good News.
- Understand how Jesus fulfills the blessing of Abraham.
- Discover how we can be a blessing to the world.
- Understand and imitate the way the apostles and the rest of the believers spoke about Jesus.

▼ **Understand Jesus' resurrection as the foundation: Matthew 28; Mark 16; Luke 24:36-53; John 20:19-23**

- Jesus was crucified as a false Messiah (King).
- Jesus rises from the dead as Israel's vindicated, true Messiah (King)
- He commands his disciples to pursue his agenda after being empowered by the Holy Spirit.
- We are called to keep pursuing that agenda.
- Acts 2 - 4 demonstrate that the disciples got busy doing just that!

▼ **Understand the continuing flow of events in Acts 2 - 4.**

- Acts 2:43 is an overview. Acts 3 - 4 provides detail.
- Peter heals a lame beggar.
- The healing generates public attention which gives Peter another chance to preach the gospel:
- Peter does not take credit for himself or John.
- Peter gives credit to the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob and testifies to Jesus' death, burial, resurrection, and messiahship.
- Peter calls the people to repent and turn to God in Jesus' name.
- Peter and John are arrested and spend the night in jail.
- Many in the audience believe and the number of men grows to 5,000.
- Peter and John are tried before the Sanhedrin where they continue to testify about Jesus.

- Peter and John refuse to stop proclaiming the name of Jesus. They are ultimately released.
- The believers gather to praise God and pray for boldness. The Lord answers their prayer powerfully.
- The now even larger group of believers continue to share resources and function together as family.

▼ **Understand how signs and wonders grow the Kingdom.**

- Acts 2:43 is an overview. Acts 3 - 4 provides detail.
- Peter heals a lame beggar. We are meant to understand that this is accomplished through the Holy Spirit.
- Signs create an opportunity to announce the message.
- The message has power to produce faith in the hearts of those who hear it (Romans 1:16). We cannot predict ahead of time who will believe.
- Those who respond need to be added to a believing community that will nurture them. They must be taught from scratch.

▼ **Understand the elements of the Good News.**

- Peter does not take credit for himself or John. He give credit to God and the name of Jesus.
- Peter gives credit to the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob - drawing from their historical roots.
- Peter explains that God is glorifying Jesus, whose names means: “Yahweh saves”. This makes the connection between their roots in the past and the recent ministry of Jesus.
- Peter testifies to Jesus’ death (at their hands), burial, and resurrection.
- Peter emphasizes the importance of faith in Jesus’ name and the fact that he is the Christ.
- Peter calls the people to repent and turn to God.

▼ We can see, from Peter’s message, that turning to God involves:

- Their sins will be forgiven (i.e. the barrier separating them from their calling will be removed).
- Jesus is the King appointed for them (i.e. The Christ).
- God is going to restore everything. This would be understood as a reference to resurrection and the coming age.

▼ Jesus is the prophet that Moses promised God would send.

- “The Lord your God will raise up for you a prophet like me . . .” - Deuteronomy 18:9-22

When you enter the land the LORD your God is giving you, do not learn to imitate the detestable ways of the nations there. Let no one be found among you who sacrifices his son or daughter in the fire, who practices divination or sorcery, interprets omens, engages in witchcraft, or casts spells, or who is a medium or spiritist or who consults the dead. Anyone who does these things is detestable to the LORD, and because of these detestable practices the LORD your God will drive out those nations before you. You must be blameless before the LORD your God.

The nations you will dispossess listen to those who practice sorcery or divination. But as for you, the LORD your God has not permitted you to do so. The LORD your God will raise up for you a prophet like me from among your own brothers. You must listen to him. For this is what you asked of the LORD your God at Horeb on the day of the assembly when you said, “Let us not hear the voice of the LORD our God nor see this great fire anymore, or we will die.”

The LORD said to me: “What they say is good. I will raise up for them a prophet like you from among their brothers; I will put my words in his mouth, and he will tell them everything I command him. If anyone does not listen to my words that the prophet speaks in my name, I myself will call him to account. But a prophet who presumes to speak in my name anything I have not commanded him to say, or a prophet who speaks in the name of other gods, must be put to death.”

You may say to yourselves, “How can we know when a message has not been spoken by the LORD?” If what a prophet proclaims in the name of the LORD does not take place or come true, that is a message the LORD has not spoken. That prophet has spoken presumptuously. Do not be afraid of him.

- Covenant faithfulness (i.e. righteousness) means obeying Jesus (the promised prophet).
- Disobeying Jesus means being cut off from Israel (i.e. unrighteousness or covenant unfaithfulness).

▼ **Understand how Jesus fulfills the blessing of Abraham.**

- Peter tells them that they are heirs of the prophets and heirs of the covenant God made with their fathers.
- He then immediately refers to God’s covenant with Abraham: “Through your offspring all peoples on earth will be blessed.”
- He then explains Jesus’ role in re-activating this covenant by turning Israel from their wicked ways.
- This covenant implies a blessing that will come to the gentiles (i.e. the nations), but we won’t understand how that will work until Acts 8-15.
- Covenant faithfulness (i.e. righteousness) means obeying Jesus (the promised prophet).
- Disobeying Jesus means being cut off from Israel (i.e. unrighteousness or covenant unfaithfulness).

- God promised Abraham that through his offspring all nations would be blessed. They are heirs of this promise, but in order for it to be fulfilled Jesus came to them first to turn them from their wicked ways. Thus God's project to reclaim this broken world is back up and running.
- God wants to bless the world through us! What does this mean in the age of Corona?

▼ **Discover how we can be a blessing to the world.**

- Creation waits . . . - Romans 8:12-27

Therefore, brothers, we have an obligation — but it is not to the sinful nature, to live according to it. For if you live according to the sinful nature, you will die; but if by the Spirit you put to death the misdeeds of the body, you will live, because those who are led by the Spirit of God are sons of God. For you did not receive a spirit that makes you a slave again to fear, but you received the Spirit of sonship. And by him we cry, “Abba, Father.” The Spirit himself testifies with our spirit that we are God's children. Now if we are children, then we are heirs — heirs of God and co-heirs with Christ, if indeed we share in his sufferings in order that we may also share in his glory.

I consider that our present sufferings are not worth comparing with the glory that will be revealed in us. The creation waits in eager expectation for the sons of God to be revealed. For the creation was subjected to frustration, not by its own choice, but by the will of the one who subjected it, in hope that the creation itself will be liberated from its bondage to decay and brought into the glorious freedom of the children of God.

We know that the whole creation has been groaning as in the pains of childbirth right up to the present time. Not only so, but we ourselves, who have the firstfruits of the Spirit, groan inwardly as we wait eagerly for our adoption as sons, the redemption of our bodies. For in this hope we were saved. But hope that is seen is no hope at all. Who hopes for what he already has? But if we hope for what we do not yet have, we wait for it patiently.

In the same way, the Spirit helps us in our weakness. We do not know what we ought to pray for, but the Spirit himself intercedes for us with groans that words cannot express. And he who searches our hearts knows the mind of the Spirit, because the Spirit intercedes for the saints in accordance with God's will.

- “What the Early Church Can Teach Us About the Coronavirus”
- Be lovers of the truth!

▼ **Understand and imitate the way the apostles and the rest of the believers spoke about Jesus.**

▼ Note the references to Jesus:

▼ Acts 2

▼ Acts 2:22-40

- Jesus did miracles, signs, and wonders.
- Jesus was crucified.
- Jesus was raised from the dead.
- Jesus was exalted to God's right hand.
- Jesus is Lord and Christ.

- Followers should be baptized in Jesus' name.
- Jesus pours out the Holy Spirit on his followers.
- By following Jesus, we save ourselves from this corrupt generation.
- ▼ Acts 3 - 4
 - ▼ Acts 3:6
 - Healing is proclaimed in Jesus name.
 - ▼ Acts 3:13-15
 - The Jews disowned Jesus and asked to have a murderer released in his stead.
 - God raised Jesus from the dead.
 - ▼ Acts 3:16
 - Jesus' name heals.
 - ▼ Acts 3:17-26
 - Christ's suffering was foretold by the prophets.
 - Repenting will result in wiping out sins and time of refreshing from the Lord.
 - Jesus must remain in heaven until the time comes for God to restore all things.
 - God sent Jesus to turn them from their wicked ways.
 - ▼ Acts 4:2
 - Jesus validates the resurrection of the dead.
 - ▼ Acts 4:8-12
 - Jesus was crucified because of the Jews.
 - God raised Jesus from the dead.
 - Jesus is the only name through which people can be saved.
 - ▼ Acts 4:13
 - The apostles made an impression because they had been with Jesus.
 - ▼ Acts 4:18-20
 - The apostles can't help but talk about Jesus.
 - ▼ Acts 4:27-31
 - Herod, Pilate, the Gentiles and the people of Israel in Jerusalem conspired against Jesus.
 - The apostles asked God to heal and perform miraculous signs and wonders in Jesus' name.
 - ▼ Acts 4:32-33
 - The apostles testified to the resurrection of Jesus.
- The apostles proclaimed the name of Jesus despite persecution.

- The apostles prayed for boldness to keep proclaiming Jesus' name and they received power and grace from God in response.
- Note that neither in Acts 2 nor in Acts 3 - 4 is "going to heaven" mentioned as part of the gospel message!
- Learn to imitate what the apostles and other believers actually said about Jesus.

▼ **Discipleship / Skills Development**

- **For this exercise gather into small groups.**

▼ **Discipleship Questions**

- ▼ We're going to, once again, explore what the apostles said about Jesus publicly so that we can do the same:
 - What audience is being addressed (ethnicity, religion, age, etc.)?
 - Look at the first time Jesus is mentioned in Acts 3. What specifically do the apostles say about him?
 - Look at the second time Jesus is mentioned in Acts 3. What specifically do the apostles say about him?
 - Rinse and repeat for the rest of Acts 3.
 - When heaven is mentioned, what do we learn about it? What does the word "until" suggest about heaven?
- Do these statements raise any questions for you? Discuss.
- How can you retain this so that you can use it to tell others about Jesus?

▼ **Good News**

- Practice presenting the gospel to one another.
- Practice sharing with a partner how you became a follower of Jesus or what you think stands in the way of you becoming one.