

6/5/22 - Acts 2:1-13 - "The Sight and Sound of Salvation"

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- [0 : 00] It says, 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.
- And divided tongues, as of fire, appeared to them and rested on each of them. And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in tongues as the Spirit gave them utterance.
- Now, there were dwelling in Jerusalem Jews, devout men from every nation under heaven.
- And at this sound, the multitude came together. And they were bewildered because each one was hearing them speak in his own language.
- And they were amazed and astonished, saying, are not all these who are speaking Galileans? And how is it that we hear each of us in his own native language?
- [1 : 09] Parthians and Medes and Elamites and residents of Mesopotamia, Judea and Cappadocia, Pontus and Asia.
- Phrygia and Pamphania, Egypt and parts of Libya belonging to Cyrene and visitors from Rome.
- Both Jews and proselytes, Cretes and Arabians. We hear them telling in our own tongues the mighty works of God.
- And all were amazed and perplexed, saying to one another, what does this mean? But others mocking said, they are filled with new wine.
- This is God's word for us today. Verse 12, what does this mean?
- [2 : 13] This is the very last inquiry of the passage. And upon this question rests the entire emphasis of this entire narrative. What does this mean?
- Investigating such a question would be the best use of our time here today. With the scope of Luke's motive of the book in mind.
- Because such a question has split many Christians into different factions of denominations and divisions of what this means. Speaking with a friend earlier this week over lunch, we began talking about significant experiences that life can often bring.
- And God being involved in them. And maybe it being more of us being involved in it. I have my own list of various things that have happened and occurred in my life.
- But my perspective without a rooting and a foundation, it would lead me to a subjective conclusion that may contradict the objective truth of God's word.
- [3 : 15] And so what we have here within these splits and denominations and things like that. They approach a text. They see some experiential implication in the text.

And then they run with it and take it away as if that's what the doctor has prescribed for us today. That's what the doctor ordered. Four verses to start an entire denomination. Missing the forest for the tree.

And this passage consists of an objective experience. An objective that God has been working out through the ages.

Simply to say, God is not done yet. It's the objectivity of the gospel that unites.

And the objectivity of this passage is worth submitting our lives to today. And for that reason, the question will loom throughout our time, reoccurring many times.

[4 : 16] What does this mean? What does this mean to them at this time period? And what does this mean to us today?

Let's dive into this Pentecost narrative and see the powerful working of God unfold uniquely at this time period.

And so we see the title of the sermon today being a sight and sound of salvation. A sight and sound of salvation. And how I'm going to do this, just real quick, I'm going to break this up into two sections as the passage is broken up into, according to Luke.

And so we see the first section of the passage, a new birth narrative. And that's between verse 1 through 4. And verse 1 says, He describes who is assembled at this time, where they're assembled.

The 120 people previously spoken about last week are still assembled in this one place. And the setting of this whole thing is occurring about 50 days after Passover, which would be the Feast of Weeks.

[6 : 06] Not like the feast that I'm privy to, the Feast for Weeks. That would be a great feast, a feast that lasts for weeks. This is the Feast of Weeks. And this is a feast that's known as a dedication of grain to God.

It's the wheat harvest. So it's a harvest festival. And then later in Jewish history, it became somewhat of a remembrance of the covenant that God made with Noah and God made with Moses.

And so this is significant details within the underlying of the passage. And you'll see that by the end of our time, I believe. So at this time, at this place, with these people, all those details that are laid out, a sound is heard.

The sound that came from heaven. This is a remarkable, unimaginable time. This sound split the air and created wind that you could hear.

As I was actually writing my sermon and studying this week, a baseball flew right past my head with two boys. That's a very common occurrence. It's better me than a window. And better than my computer, too.

[7 : 24] But the sound that came past, it's not the wind that's necessarily that creates its own sound. It is the ball, the object going through the air of which you can hear that sound.

And the sound filled the house of all who were assembled. The sound of this time. Not only that, the sight. Divided tongues as of fire appeared to them and rested on each of them.

And verse 4. They were filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other tongues, known as other languages, as the Spirit gave them utterance.

Wind. Fire. This is alluding back to how the presence of God was experienced in the Old Testament.

This brings illusions of Mount Sinai. This brings illusions of the burning bush, of the wilderness journey, and the pillar of fire by night.

[8 : 32] This brings about even the tabernacle. A phenomenon that Luke tries to describe is like a rushing wind. He doesn't know exactly what it was like.

Imagine trying to explain this to your folks when you get home. It was like a rushing wind. And tongues as of fire. I don't know.

That's what it looked like. And Luke will continue to explain that next week in the passage as well. Imagine, church. Imagine this phenomenon. I mean, holy moly.

This would be a bad day to get the wrong address. Walking into that room like, okay, I'll just leave it at the door. Right?

But the question is, what does this mean? While it's difficult to comprehend of what this means, it definitely doesn't take much effort to see something important.

[9 : 36] That there has been a promise that has come that was detailed by Jesus' own words, as recorded by Luke in Acts 1, 5.

That says, for John baptized with water, but you will be baptized with the Holy Spirit not many days from now. It is important to understand that these 120, they were followers of Jesus Christ.

They were believers in the gospel. So what kind of filling is occurring here? Does that mean that there's a delayed filling of the Holy Spirit, like a second baptism?

I would argue, no, not the slightest bit. And we know that because of the words that Luke actually uses in this passage. Because we know that at the moment of our conversion, at the moment we place our faith in Jesus Christ, according to the gospel and according to scripture, is that the spirit regenerates us.

It seals us. It gives us a new status, a new nature in order to serve and to follow God. So what filling is happening here? And I believe the verb that Luke uses for filled is important.

[10 : 49] It indicates this short outburst, this short power, this short experience of inspiration. So what I'm trying to say here, it's unnecessary to build a denomination based on the filling here.

We don't need to do regenerated baptism because that's what happened here, right? This overwhelming experience compelled and given by the Holy Spirit allowed these 120 folks in this room to speak other languages.

Unlearned languages. There was no Rosetta Stone that was available to them at this time. There were no classes.

The resources were not there. Unknown to them, they were speaking other languages.

What does this mean? Three observations in the text and I'll wrap it up towards the end of this section. The first observation is thinking about our natural tendency of how we often think that we have a better plan than God.

[12 : 10] I mean, if we want to be honest, you could probably shake your head, but you probably don't want to be embarrassed. But I'll just shake my head that I am in the same boat thinking that, ah, we got this all down.

I talked about it last week. We got it all laid out. All the points and the plan, the execution, the people involved. And we just need God to sign on the line for us. Now, we have it all worked out.

You see, what is occurring here is another birth narrative. You can't forget the first birth narrative of Jesus Christ, right?

Often we think about that silent night, that holy night, the stillness of that night when Jesus Christ came. And how if we were in charge of the writing on the page, we would have probably been like, this Messiah came like a flame and he destroyed everyone who was trying to seek out.

He killed that Pharaoh. He took him out. Justice and vengeance, right? If we would have control of writing the narrative, it would have appeared a lot different.

[13 : 21] Think about what's happening here. Just as the promise of the coming Messiah occurred without this grandeur of public witness, so the second occurrence of a promise of the spirit occurred in a similar stillness and privacy within the confines of a building.

Right? If we would have wrote this narrative, man, that fire would have fell on everyone. It would have burned up all the sin. And glory to God, we're going to heaven, right?

As if we know what we're doing better than God. And you see, that's the point. Often God does work his mightiest, his mightiest when the lights are off, when the cameras are off.

Regardless of what that preacher said last night at three o'clock in the morning on TBN, whatever he said, forget it. God often works his mightiest and sometimes more mightily within a conversation between two people, a sinner and a Christian.

And what a power he works within the heart of a sinner to regenerate them by the message of the gospel. This is a humbling reality that forces us to remind ourselves that God is God and we are not.

[14 : 44] We see a second observation in this first section is that God's mission to the church is multicultural. His mission to the church is multi-ethnic. We see Revelation 7, 9 through 10.

After this, John wrote, And behold, a great multitude that no one could number from every nation, from all tribes and peoples and languages, standing before the throne and before the Lamb and crying out with a loud voice, Salvation belongs to our God who sits on the throne and to the Lamb.

It's a challenge to us, I believe. To have the confidence that we have the power to break cultural barriers.

Let's be honest. Can we be honest today? This Western Christianity that we cling to has created an idol of comfort.

Being in our own buildings, in our own groups, in our own people and people we know. Comfort in our nation has become an idol.

[16 : 02] But God breaks down our comfort. And he's the one who equips us to break those cultural barriers with the gospel.

It's his task after all. And he's going to accomplish his task through us. It's never up to us. He is God. We are not. And we see a third point here.

Look at the verse structure. We got four verses here. Four verses. In recording this wild house party going on with the wind and fire.

As God is stirring up his followers. If it were up to me. If I were in charge of writing this.

I would be laying out all the details. There would probably be four chapters regarding what was going on. It's it's it's I'd be recording when the neighbors came over saying what is going on.

[17 : 06] Quiet it down trying to sleep. Or when the fire trucks come. Which I'm very experienced with fire trucks coming to my location. If you're you've been part of the church for a while. That's common.

Welcome to Steel Valley Church. If you're new. Expect fire trucks. I mean if we were up to us we'd be detailing all this. But Luke said four verses of this accounts.

And if structure equals emphasis. We see something being emphasized here. Just as the glorious birth of Jesus Christ began with the end in mind.

This little baby. Frail baby. In a manger. Was destined to die upon a cross. So to this time period.

The details that Luke details here. Is significant. It's not about the glory of the church's beginning. But rather her mission. That the church is to accomplish.

[18 : 07] That it's not just about the beginning of the little cute baby in a manger. Laying there. No it's the the lamb of God who is going to get slaughtered. And that's the very purpose of which that baby came.

And so too we see a parallel with the birth of the church. That it's not about this birth narrative. No we can lay that aside. And stop making these denominations and distinctions.

But let's look at the mission of the church. Of which begins in the verses following. You see if we consider the three aspects that we see in this passage. That we just talked about.

Meaning the propensity for us to become God. To do things our own way. Or to allow comfort to give us an excuse not to engage in multicultural.

Multi-ethnic. Ethnic. Evangelism. Or even. You know not thinking about the end in mind. We look at all those.

[19 : 10] They all share in common a similar problem with our pride. Our pride wants to win the day and make excuses. To do things our own way. To do things counter to how God has laid them out.

And this is what we grapple with. Is our pride. We must not overemphasize the gift of God. Lest we find ourselves reducing its very purpose. In this passage. The very purpose of the Holy Spirit filling the church.

Serves as the means of which the church is to embark. On its mission to the world. A mission of proclamation. A mission of perseverance. And we have that in the passage.

So what does it mean? What does this mean? It means the church has been born. It means the church's mission is at hand.

Welcome to the birth narrative of the church. But not only that. I want to put a little bit of a twist on this as well. I want you to see something largely unfolding within the redemptive history of the church too.

[20 : 15] And we see a new dispersion narrative. Verse 5 starts talking about who's dwelling in Jerusalem.

The crowd now. It's going from the house to the public square. It's going from this little room that has walls to open doors out into the courtyard.

And it says in verse 5. Now there were dwelling in Jerusalem Jews. What Jews? Devout men from every nation under heaven.

And at this sound the multitude came together. And they were bewildered. Because each one was hearing them speak in his own language. They were amazed and astonished.

They asked questions. These Galileans. What's going on here? And we can hear them speaking in our own native language. And look. Luke goes to great extent of listing every region.

[21 : 18] Every city that's gathered here. That should make us look and wonder. What does this mean? And in that question we will find it. The mission of the church didn't take long to hit the streets, church.

The previous private encounter became public. A public encounter. And many questions were stirred up. Look at that. No walls.

No walls. Amen. We meet the crowd. The crowd was dwelling there in Jerusalem. And they were devout men from every nation.

These were men that were reverent. They had the robes, man. You know. Like, you know, the serious reverent robes. They had the robes. I haven't got my robe yet.

Little hint for the elders. These were God-fearers. They weren't just from over across the pond.

[22 : 19] They were from every nation under heaven. Look at this map. Let me try this one here. That's Jerusalem, that red dot.

Those are all the locations that are referenced in this passage. This is the order in which they were revealed and listed. It's as if Luke is saying something is going on that is encompassing, counterclockwise, the entire lands here.

All these lands and these locations are images of who is gathered in Jerusalem at this time.

And so, as we consider the scope of what we see assembling here, what do they hear? They hear a sound.

They see a sight as well. It's not a sound of the wind as the Holy Spirit personally entered into history. But this sound was the very words being articulated from the mouth of these apostles.

[23 : 22] They were hearing not the mighty winds of God. They were hearing the mighty works of God, according to Luke. What did they see?

Well, it wasn't a fire of the Holy Spirit resting upon their head. It was the identity of who was speaking. Devout Jewish men, I would imagine, were wondering, are you authorized?

To do this? We're the studied ones. You're Galileans. Galileans shouldn't know more than two languages, Jewish and Aramaic. Maybe some know Greek.

But they shouldn't know all of this. What's going on here? What does this mean? Well, Luke makes a comprehensive list of all those cities, as we just saw.

And those cities surrounding the center of the world, as it was known back then, the city of Jerusalem. Which literally highlights the universal scope of the church's mission.

[24 : 27] And guess what? A second promise from the lips of Jesus Christ unfolding here. Acts 1.8, as we saw a couple weeks ago. 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. But something is happening here.

If structure equals emphasis. I know, I don't want to bore you with these details. But these details are significant in connecting the dots. If you caught the sermon last week.

That if that map could represent something. That map would represent a dispersion going on.

This refers to a very dark period in Jewish life. Of when God dispersed the Jews in 2 Kings. Scattering them in the land.

[25 : 28] Without a central location. This was a huge moment. A huge moment to the point where even Jewish literature, the Old Testament, is split from pre-exilic books to post-exilic books.

It split time for them. It was significant. But now, the Jews that were once dispersed have assembled in Jerusalem.

I'm getting goosebumps about this. They have come into Jerusalem now. It's like a reversal of the dispersion. And guess what?

The Jews are assembled. And God is preparing to disperse them with the promise of the gospel. To the end of the earth. It's like the thing about the feast of weeks.

That just as it's a time where Jewish people would observe and be reminded about God's covenant that he made with Moses and Noah.

[26 : 32] How fitting that God chose this time to reaffirm his covenant with his people. By the power of the gospel dispersing from Jerusalem.

Reaffirming that covenant. A covenant that is going to spread like wildfire. Starting in Jerusalem. But might that have been God's plan all along?

To use a bad situation for good. Could it be that when we read about the dispersion in 2 Kings. That when God providentially was laying out his plans and knows all things.

He has this moment in mind. As he is disciplining the nation of Israel. That he had this end in mind.

Could it be that the moment when ancient Israel was disciplined in 2 Kings. Just like when Adam and Eve disobeyed God's command in the garden. That he used that moment to make a promise.

[27 : 40] That he's going to right every wrong. He's going to send a skull crusher. To restore that which the fall has broken. And so too at this time we see the dispersion.

The purpose of the dispersion occurring vividly here. Might our view of what God is doing in this time frame be broadened.

And our faith become more robust. More robust knowing that even in our discipline. God is working out great plans for his church.

There will be seasons of lament. There will be very trying seasons of our faith. Many are walking through them right now. There will be more pandemics.

More issues going on in life. There will be seasons of mourning. But none of that defines God's promise that is true to his people.

[28 : 48] Amen. What does this mean? It means that God will never leave you. Nor forsake you. Might we connect the dots today.

If you are in Christ or not in Christ. Might something be a little more clear. That regardless of your experience. That may make you predisposed to a rejection of the good news of the gospel.

Whether it's a season of hurt in a church. Possibly sexual abuse in a church. Or physical abuse in a church. Or whatever may have hindered you from actually receiving the good news of the gospel.

That you have always had this rejection. Might you be able to see those moments in a light. That casts a bright light into your darkness. That you see that God's promise still remains for you in Jesus Christ.

That just as the darkest period. Arguably the darkest period in history. Being Adam and Eve in the fall of mankind in Genesis 3. Casted a light through history as saying God will fix all the wrongs.

[29 : 54] And he will make them right. He will restore. He will rebuild that which is broken. Might that be true today for your life. Come unhinged to the cross.

And find forgiveness for your sins. Find purpose of his plan all along. God will never leave you nor forsake you. It also means that we ought to not redefine our message as well.

Don't we see that through the chatter of the audience here. The crowd going on. The questions that they're asking. Their response of amazement and astonishment.

Discontentment. I think we live in a culture of discontentment. Where we as human beings have this pull to desire a creative edge.

In order to keep our interest in things. This discontentment can run through what car you drive. What house you have. Even intrudes upon marriages that causes divorce in life.

[31 : 01] Rather than working through problems. Just saying. Maybe she won't have the same problem as you. Or maybe he won't. This is the world that we live in. We live in a world that stirs up our discontent.

That in order to keep us engaged in something. It has to have a creative edge. We're reminded here. That it means that we ought not to redefine our message.

The mission of the church is a proclamation that God has returned. To redeem and revive the world. To restore that which is broken. And a message that centers upon the mighty works of God.

As Luke details. Which is Jesus Christ. It's a Christ-centric reality. And the powerful proclamation and perseverance of the church. Never rests upon our creative adaptations.

Of a historic message proclaimed in our new era. We don't need new tactics. In other words. The message of the Bible doesn't need an upgrade. It doesn't need my hands to make it more interesting.

[32 : 09] It is interesting. All sufficiently interesting. And authoritative in our lives today. And we lose sight of that. We don't change the message based upon the itching ears of our hearts.

And our heads. If anything. The Bible actually warns us about such people. Especially the ones who provide the itching.

And the scratching of such itchy ears. We see the responses. Right? Look with me in the Bible. See in this passage. The response of the mighty works of God being proclaimed.

They were amazed. They were astonished. They were perplexed. They were curious. And skeptical. Skeptical. You're saying to me Brent.

That the Holy Spirit. Was in full bore. At this moment. Proclaiming the mighty works of God. And there were still some. Who were skeptical. Don't take my word for it.

[33 : 13] Take the Bible's word for it. Yes. That is very possible. In that. We can rest assured. That the fruit of our labor.

Belongs to the power. And working of the Holy Spirit. In our lives. And if the Holy Spirit. If it belongs to the Holy Spirit. It belongs to God. In a Trinitarian. Understanding.

The power begins with the Holy Spirit. It ends with the Holy Spirit. The mixed. Response of the crowd. Indicates the providential hand. Of God. In the church's witnessing.

Think. Even when the church. Is doing. Everything. Full bore. Holy Spirit. Movement. Full bore. Even in all of that. In the mighty hand of God.

Working. Unregenerated hearts. Cannot. Regenerate. Themselves. No matter how creative. A delivery. No matter how interesting.

[34 : 08] You make it to people. To try to persuade them. It rests not in the. The tools of man. But the tools of God. To get within.

Your heart. And to begin the chiseling project. That we so dearly need. In that we find our greatest tranquility. Amid our witnessing. Don't we?

The greatest tranquility. In our witnessing. That God's word. Will never return void. If it returns void. It was destined. To be void. Through the Holy Spirit.

He will accomplish. His purpose. To the sinner. And within the sinner. It's all. A work. Of God. And you too. Have you forgotten church? The moment.

Of your salvation? Have we forgotten? How we have been redeemed. As well. I got a hand to you. It hasn't been by your own power. By grace.

[35 : 05] You have been saved. Through your faith. Lest any of us. Have a reason to boast. It's all a working of God. Amen. The message of the gospel.

Doesn't need an upgrade. Nor. Does it need. Creative methods. In witnessing. People need. The gospel. And it's up to the Holy Spirit. To draw.

And so you see. As we. Start to close our time. We're running out of time. You see. Pentecost is not merely. About. These four verses.

Of the arrival. Of this mighty winds. Of God. But actually. It's the proclamation. Of the mighty works. Of God. Luke tells us. Here. What it's all about.

It's all about. Jesus Christ. It's not about. Unintelligible. Tongue babble. It's not about. Incoherent. Syllables. That people utter.

[36 : 05] In emotional frenzies. It's about. The message of the gospel. Going forth. In a language. To every tribe. To every tongue. To redeem. Those of which. It will redeem.

It's about. Salvation. Church. Do I got to hit. The pulpit. To wake us up. This morning. It's about. Salvation. Amen. It's about.

The life. The death. And the resurrection. Of Jesus Christ. And we'll see that. All. In the apostle. Peter's. Sermon. Next week. And the promises. Of the prophets. Of the old testament.

John the baptist. And Jesus himself. Are fulfilled. Here at. Pentecost. It's not just. About four verses. About what God. Has been. Doing.

And undoing. Throughout. History. And think. It's the harvest festival. And God. Saw it fit. To reveal. This. Here and now.

[37 : 00] At this time period. A time. When. Man. Was. Dedicating. The harvest. To God. God. Was. Dedicating. Man. To.

The harvest. Amen. You see that. Don't miss this. The birth. The birth. The church. Is a dedication. To the mission.

Of the harvest. It's not just. About the birth narrative. It's about the mission. And yes. God could work. In a thousand other ways. And we could probably. Give some advice.

To God. Right? Like. Oh. Well. Here. Do it this way. God. And think about. How much bang. For your buck. You're going to get. If you send all these people. Here. At this location.

Right? It's just like. Paul's conversion. He. He'd rather. Be with his people. Why are you going to send me. To these people. That I don't know. Right? So.

[37 : 53] He could have worked. A thousand other ways. But he chose. Unlearned. Galileans. Then. And guess what? I wish I had a mirror today. He's choosing.

Each one of you. So we must. Lay down. Our pride. We must. Lay down. Our propensity. To. Basque. And just.

Marinate. In the comforts. Of our western. Christianity. With our white picket fences. And our nice little. Bible study groups.

We need to get. Out. Into. The world. Pentecost calls. The church. To evangelism. Like never before. With a message.

That needs to be heard. Of the mighty works. Of God. But the question is. And I'll leave it with you. To. Work out. Between you.

[38 : 47] And the Holy Spirit. This morning. Will you. Be obedient. To that call. Or remain. Obstinate. To that call.

Let's pray. Amen.

Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen.