

# Good News for All

Thomas Robinson, January 16, 2011

## Acts 2:36-47

<sup>36</sup> [Peter concluded,] “*Let all the house of Israel therefore know for certain that **God has made him both Lord and Christ, this Jesus whom you crucified.***”

<sup>37</sup> Now when they heard this they were **cut to the heart**, and said to Peter and the rest of the apostles, “*Brothers, what shall we do?*”

<sup>38</sup> And Peter said to them, “***Repent and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins, and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.*** <sup>39</sup> *For the promise is for you and for your children and for all who are far off, everyone whom the Lord our God calls to himself.*”

<sup>40</sup> And with many other words he bore witness and continued to exhort them, saying, “*Save yourselves from this crooked generation.*”

<sup>41</sup> So those who received his word were baptized, and there were added that day about three thousand souls.

<sup>42</sup> And they devoted themselves to the **apostles’ teaching** and the **fellowship**, to the **breaking of bread** and the **prayers**. <sup>43</sup> And **awe** came upon **every soul**, and many wonders and signs were being done through the apostles. <sup>44</sup> And **all who believed** were together and had **all things in common**. <sup>45</sup> And they were selling their possessions and belongings and distributing the proceeds to all, as any had need.

<sup>46</sup> And **day by day**, attending the **temple together and breaking bread in their homes**, they received their food with **glad and generous hearts**, <sup>47</sup> praising God and having **favor with all the people**. And the Lord added to their number day by day those who were being saved.

## Acts 1:13-14

<sup>13</sup> And when they had entered, they went up to the upper room, where they were staying, Peter and John and James and Andrew, Philip and Thomas, Bartholomew and Matthew, James the son of Alphaeus and Simon the Zealot and Judas the son of James. <sup>14</sup> All these with **one accord** were **devoting themselves to prayer**, together with the women and Mary the mother of Jesus, and his brothers.

## Acts 2:1-4

<sup>1</sup> When the day of **Pentecost** arrived, they were all together in one place. <sup>2</sup> And suddenly there came **from heaven a sound like a mighty rushing wind**, and it filled the entire house where they were sitting. <sup>3</sup> And **divided tongues as of fire** appeared to them and rested on each one of them. <sup>4</sup> And they were all **filled with the Holy Spirit** and began to speak in other tongues as the Spirit gave them utterance.

## Acts 2:16-17

<sup>16</sup> [Peter said,] “But this is what was uttered through the prophet Joel: <sup>17</sup> *‘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.’*”

## The Spirit of God Breaks In

Luke is describing a unique event – the first proclamation of the Gospel. But it is also exemplary, challenging and inspiring God's people in every age. Not intended to raise guilt (3000 baptized!) but to point to the power of the Spirit and the Gospel as good news to transform lives and create a community that embodies and proclaims Jesus.

The Spirit is Central. This is God's work and God alone can do it! The disciples gather and wait. The Spirit brings the presence and power of Jesus for continuing his work.

But the disciples prepare to be used by God by expectant prayer. God works through us humans. We experience the blessing of God's presence. But God's aim is all creation.

## Wide and Inclusive Vision

Pentecost emphasizes the universal importance of Jesus, even though the disciples did not yet understand it. The Spirit is for "all flesh." All races, classes, genders, etc. Every human from the wealthy, powerful, successful to the homeless and impoverished masses is caught in the same alienation from God and brokenness of humanity. No one has life in themselves. Only Jesus breaks the power of death. The Spirit gives life.

We need to see people with a sense of God's reality and inclusive love. Other spiritual paths feel after God, have some truth. Only Jesus brings God's own life into ours.

Knowing Jesus and the Spirit is a treasure to be shared with anyone we care about.

## Deep Personal Penetration by God's Grace

*"They were cut to the heart!"* A wound that brings healing. What Jesus has done is not a game or personal preference or helpful idea. It is death and life. The vibrant character of the early Christians reflects their sense of receiving life, hope, purpose, joy.

We welcome only broken people – everyone. Jesus gives health (forgiveness, salvation) and healing process (transformation, new life). Jesus and his community minister to people at all stages. The process never ends, but the end goal is given at the beginning.

We each share in the story. It is outside of us (universal), but becomes our testimony.

## Authentic and Attractive Community

Luke emphasizes community. Diverse people, backgrounds, touched by one Spirit, one message. Individual hearts/minds changed (repentance), lives committed (baptism). Shared forgiveness, shared Spirit, shared hope create a diverse, united community.

What they are engaged in is joyful/serious business. There's devoted study, learning as minds are renewed. Shared life, learning to be brothers and sisters in one body.

Focus on Jesus' sacrifice in breaking bread. Growing relationship to God in prayer.

There's worship together in big celebration (temple) and in small intimate settings.

What the Spirit creates is a community of joy and generosity that has "favor with all the people." God shines through their lives, words, and deeds, and people are drawn to God. No one was alone in reaching out to others. They did it together. They invited and welcomed people to share in this amazing community of love, forgiveness, and healing, focused on the things that matter most in life. God did his work in and through them.