



**ACTS - SMALL GROUP SERIES
LESSON 2**

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Lesson 2

Bible: “And all the believers met together in one place and shared everything they had. They sold their property and possessions and shared the money with those in need.

They worshiped together at the Temple each day, met in homes for the Lord’s Supper, and shared their meals with great joy and generosity” Acts 2:44-46 (NLT)

Bottom Line: When followers of Jesus live the way the Holy Spirit leads (which is radically different than the ways of the world) amazing things happen: people find a new sense of identity, a place to belong, and a purpose for their lives.

LESSON 1 SUMMARY

Today we are in week two of the four-part series on the Book of Acts.

While we cannot fully detail all that Acts chronicles in just four weeks, we will look at some of the key events that impacted the start and growth of the early church and the movement of Jesus Christ.

In week 1, we learned that the Book of Acts is the sequel or companion to the Gospel of Luke. Both books were written by Luke and to Theophilus.

Luke was not an apostle of Jesus Christ, but he was a Gentile (non-Jewish) follower of Christ and a partner with Paul on his missionary journey (**Colossians 4:10-14**).

He is the only person known to have written part of the New Testament who was not Jewish.

In Acts chapter 1, we learned of the promise and instructions Jesus left the disciples just before He ascended to heaven.

The promise they received then is the same promise that we as believers have today.

We have the promise of the Holy Spirit once we have accepted Jesus as our Savior.

We also have the instructions to spread the gospel throughout the world Acts 1:8 and **Matthew 28:18-20**.

This week, we will pick up Acts chapter 2.

We will see what happened next with the disciples and how the following of Jesus grew when the Holy Spirit came.

To get some context for this week, we will close the gap by summarizing the remainder of chapter 1.

In verses 12-23 of Acts 1, we find the account of the disciples choosing Matthias as Judas' s replacement.

Once the disciples are a complete set of 12 again, they begin the mission Jesus left them with and it began in Jerusalem.

LESSON

Luke wastes no time in chapter 2 describing the events that took place on the day of Pentecost.

Read Acts 2:1-4:

1 On the day of Pentecost all the believers were meeting together in one place.

2 Suddenly, there was a sound from heaven like the roaring of a mighty windstorm, and it filled the house where they were sitting.

3 Then, what looked like flames or tongues of fire appeared and settled on each of them.

4 And everyone present was filled with the Holy Spirit and began speaking in other languages, as the Holy Spirit gave them this ability.

The Day of Pentecost was a Jewish festival also known as the Feast of Weeks.

It was one of three major festivals celebrated by the Jewish people. The day of Pentecost took place 50 days after the Passover feast.

It was a celebration of the completion of the grain harvest. The festival brought people from all over the Roman Empire to Jerusalem for the festival.

This verse is another reminder of the instructions Jesus left them and shows their obedience to His instructions.

Not only did they follow instructions, but they were unified.

They shared the same willingness to be obedient, the same trust that God would keep His promise, and the same mission to carry on the work of Christ.

Verses 2-4 go on to describe the events that took place.

There was a loud sound from heaven like a windstorm that filled the room where they were accompanied by a large wind.

Here we see again Luke refers to the Old Testament the same way he did in describing the ascension of Christ.

There are many references to the Spirit of God represented as the wind in Old Testament scriptures.

They saw tongues of fire descending from heaven, which rested upon the disciples.

Another symbolic description is used to paint a vivid picture of how the presence of the Holy Spirit came upon the disciples.

The tongues of fire tells us a lot in a few words.

- John preached that one was coming who would baptize with the “Holy Spirit and fire” (**Luke 3:16**).
- Fire also indicated the purifying presence of God (**Isaiah 6:5-7**).
- The presence of God was also seen as a pillar of fire to the children of Israel (**Exodus 13:21-22**).

At that moment, each believer began speaking in different tongues (languages) as the Spirit enabled them.

The Promised One had come, just as Jesus told the disciples He would.

NOTE: While the ability to speak in tongues is a gift empowered by the Holy Spirit, it does not mean that a person has not received the Holy Spirit if they do not have this gift. We see this in Paul’s teaching when he tells us we receive the Holy Spirit the moment we accept Jesus Christ as our Savior. 1 Corinthians 12:13 says, “For we were all baptized by one Spirit into one body—whether Jews or Greeks, slave or free—and we were all given the one Spirit to drink.”

Discussion Questions

1. Waiting is not an easy process, especially when we are eager for what we are waiting on. It is not easy for some people to pass the time, often we grow anxious and sometimes move ahead instead of waiting until the appointed time.

Think about the last time you were supposed to wait to do something but didn’t. How did the situation turn out? What would the benefits have been if you waited as instructed?

2. It is clear from the verses that the disciples did not lose focus on Jesus and what He told them after He ascended to heaven. They stayed together and showed

unity in what they believed.

What is the connection between unity in the church and focus on Jesus?

3. Think about the events of your life. Have you ever experienced something or witnessed something that you know only happened because of the power of God? Share that experience with the group.

Read Acts 2:5-13:

5 At that time there were devout Jews from every nation living in Jerusalem.

6 When they heard the loud noise, everyone came running, and they were bewildered to hear their own languages being spoken by the believers.

7 They were completely amazed. "How can this be?" they exclaimed. "These people are all from Galilee, 8 and yet we hear them speaking in our own native languages!"

9 Here we are—Parthians, Medes, Elamites, people from Mesopotamia, Judea, Cappadocia, Pontus, the province of Asia, 10 Phrygia, Pamphylia, Egypt, and the areas of Libya around Cyrene, visitors from Rome 11 (both Jews and converts to Judaism), Cretans, and Arabs. And we all hear these people speaking in our own languages about the wonderful things God has done!"

12 They stood there amazed and perplexed. "What can this mean?" they asked each other.

13 But others in the crowd ridiculed them, saying, "They're just drunk, that's all!"

Verses 5-12 go on to explain that at that time there were several God-fearing Jews from every nation under heaven staying in Jerusalem.

Each one heard the believers in the upper room speaking in his or her own language.

The crowd was amazed by what they were witnessing because the disciples would not have known these tongues except that they had been empowered by the Holy Spirit.

When we have the power of the Holy Spirit, we can do things we could not do in our own strength or ability.

We also may be met with speculation, questions, and even false accusations like the disciples were about to face.

In verse 13, some of the people accused the apostles of being drunk because of what they were seeing.

This leads Peter to boldly preach a spontaneous, spirit-filled sermon to the crowd.

The sermon was not one he had prepared for ahead of time like most pastors do today.

Peter was moving in the Spirit.

In contrast to how he was at the time of Christ's crucifixion, where he denied he knew Him, Peter stood courageously and proclaimed the gospel.

That's good news for us today!

The Spirit of God will give us the power to operate in our purpose.

Peter preached a powerful sermon in verses 14-41, explaining to the crowd what had just taken place.

Verse 41 says, "Those who believed what Peter said were baptized and added to the church that day—about 3,000 in all."

In week 1, we learned that the moment in history of Jesus's death, burial, and resurrection was the start of a movement.

At the time the church began, they were only about 120 followers of Christ.

As a result of the gospel that was preached, about 3000 were added to the body of Christ on the day of Pentecost.

We see here at Pentecost after the disciples received power through the Holy Spirit, growth took place instantly.

Peter did just what he was commissioned to do in **Acts 1:8**.

He witnessed in Jerusalem and preached repentance and salvation in Jesus Christ.

We have access to that same Pentecost power today. There is no limit to what God can do through His people empowered by the Holy Spirit.

Discussion Questions

1. What character traits do you see a change in Peter after the Holy Spirit came upon him?

2. We see in these verses that the Holy Spirit came with power. Why do you think so many Christians today live a powerless life if we've all received the holy spirit once we accepted Christ?
3. Discuss what you know or have learned growing up about the Holy Spirit. Is what you knew or thought you knew different from what you've learned in today's lesson? Explain

Read Acts 2:42-47:

42 All the believers devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching, and to fellowship, and sharing in meals (including the Lord's Supper), and prayer.

43 A deep sense of awe came over them all, and the apostles performed many miraculous signs and wonders.

44 And all the believers met together in one place and shared everything they had.

45 They sold their property and possessions and shared the money with those in need.

46 They worshiped together at the Temple each day, met in homes for the Lord's Supper, and shared their meals with great joy and generosity.

47 all the while praising God and enjoying the goodwill of all the people. And each day the Lord added to their fellowship those who were being saved.

After chapter 2 we see what it looks like when followers of Christ live together in a community as led by the Holy Spirit.

Verse 42 says that they continued in the apostles' teachings. The word "they" refers to the believers who have just been converted to Christianity.

What takes place in these verses displays the heart of God's work and His desire for His people—community.

First, the people were committed to being taught the truth about who Jesus was.

They did not stray away from what they were taught but remained faithful, not only to the teaching of the gospel, but to fellowship and prayer.

Our commitment to Christ should mirror that of the early church.

Jesus wants followers who are committed to growing spiritually, live in community with one another, and prayer.

The Greek word for fellowship used in this verse is *koinonia*.

The idea of communion, fellowship, and participation reflects they shared the same thing.

In this case, they were joined by their shared faith in Jesus Christ.

As Christians, we are meant to do life together and share in the experiences of life—the good and the bad.

They also did not neglect communion and prayer.

Even though the crucifixion and resurrection had recently occurred, they did not neglect to remember what He had done on the cross and prayer consonantly.

Luke provides us with a model for what our churches today should look like.

God is not seeking a perfect church but a church filled with His presence.

Verses 43 through 45 show how their sense of community leads them to take care of one another. They made sure that each person's needs were met. They did not act out of selfishness but out of selflessness.

Their commitment to Christ and His teachings was an inward change but that change was demonstrated in outward ways.

To meet the needs of others, they would sell their possessions or their property to help other believers.

As Christians today, we could learn a lot from the early church.

In a society that has a “me and mine” mentality, the body of Christ should reflect the principles of Christ.

Christ gave His life freely to meet our need for salvation; as His followers, we are to give freely of ourselves to carry out His mission and meet people's needs.

We may not be called to sell the things that we have, but we should have the same willingness in spirit to help our fellow man as the early Christians did.

Because of the devotion and commitment to Christ and one another, verse 47 says the Lord added to them daily.

The church experienced growth in numbers and spirit. Those who came to Christ came because they were drawn by other believers in Christ.

They weren't coming to be counted in attendance; they were connecting to a community of believers who had a common faith in Jesus Christ.

Discussion Questions

1. Name the activities the early believers were devoted to in their daily lives. How does focusing on these activities promote unity among the church?
2. Many things divide our world today. We are divided by race and culture, gender, financial status, etc.

Christ came to unify mankind, not divide it. As His church, what are some ways the body of Christ can help bring healing and unity to the world?

3. How does being connected to other believers help you to be spiritually healthy? What are the dangers that can happen when we isolate ourselves from others?