

Making Room for “God’s Presence”

(Acts 2:1-4)



THE OUTPOURING CONTEXT

- ◆ There Was Uncertainty
- ◆ There Was Hunger
- ◆ There Was Prayer
- ◆ There Was Expectation

“How much more will your Heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to them that ask Him?” (Luke 11:13)

Bill Kirk

"MAKING ROOM FOR GOD'S PRESENCE"

Text: Acts 2:1-4

Subject: Making More Room for God's Presence (in your life and mine)

Introduction

Fact: Acts 2:1-4 has an incredible backdrop to it. (It's clear in Acts chapter 1)

Question: How does God prepare us (or, what exactly precedes the outpouring in Acts 2)?

In Acts Chapter 1...

◆ There was **Expectation** (In v. 5)

"For John truly baptized with water, but you will be baptized with the Holy Spirit in just a few days." (Or)

Jesus knew we needed to hear about the Holy Spirit, so we could expect to experience the Holy Spirit – Jesus said *"You will be"*.

◆ There was **Obedience** (In v. 4 & 12)

"Do not leave Jerusalem, but wait for the promise of the Father." (And in v. 12) *"Then they returned to Jerusalem and went to the upper room."*

◆ There was **Warning** (v. 6 & 7)

In v. 6, *"Lord, when will you restore again the kingdom of Israel?"*

In v. 7, *"It is not for you to know the times or the seasons."*

(In other words)

"Don't get so preoccupied with the worldly political systems on the earth."

(Or guard against being distracted by temporary attachments.)

◆ There was **Balance** (v. 11)

"Ye men of Galilee, why stand ye gazing up into heaven?"

(In other words)

Don't get all caught up with the date of the Lord's return – no star gazing or date setting!

◆ There was **Unity** (v. 14)

"These all continued with one accord." (Or simply)

The believers were all of the same mind to make room for the Holy Spirit (the words "one accord" mean co-spirited)

◆ There was **Praying** (V. 14)

"These all continued in one accord and in prayer and supplication." (Which means: to continue persevere, endure and stick with it in seeking God).

Question: What is Luke saying here?

Answer: That all believers are to keep praying and make room for the Holy Spirit!!!

The question is...

- ◆ Why did God's Spirit come on the Feast Day of Pentecost (40-50 days after the resurrection)?
- ◆ How did God's Spirit come to a group of humble, ordinary people?
- ◆ Where did God's Spirit come in the context of ordinary life (like yours and mine)?

(Notice two things here)

1. There was a **sound** from heaven as of a rushing mighty wind (v. 2) which means:
 - ◆ God wanted to gather the attention of all who were assembled together.

Question: How many of you will give God your attention?

2. There was a **fire** from heaven (v. 3) which means:
 - ◆ There was a symbol of fire upon each one revealing that God wants to anoint everyone to be a more effective witness in lifestyle and in speech.

Question: How many of you are willing to let God use you for His glory?

(My Acts 2 discoveries)

I. God's Presence Comes "In Times of Uncertainty"

- ◆ There were three great Jewish festivals to which every male Jew was to attend.
- ◆ Every male Jew living within 20 miles of Jerusalem must attend:
 1. The Passover
 2. The Feast of Pentecost
 3. The Feast of Tabernacles
- ◆ The word Pentecost means "fiftieth" because it fell on the fiftieth day after Passover.
- ◆ Passover fell in the middle of April, so Pentecost fell at the beginning of June.
- ◆ At the Pentecost Feast two loaves were offered up to God in gratitude for the ingathered harvest.
- ◆ Never was there a more international crowd in Jerusalem than at the time of Pentecost.
- ◆ It was on this occasion that God began pouring out His Spirit upon all believers.

Question: What is unique about God's Presence here?

Answer: His Presence comes in a **time of uncertainty**.

1. The Lord had just ascended and the disciples were all **alone**.

2. Rome was breathing out **threats** because the message of the resurrection was being preached.
3. Peter had **gone back** to his old occupation for a time.
4. Nobody knew exactly **when** the promise of the Spirit would be fulfilled.

Maybe you are here this morning and...

- ◆ You **feel alone** like the disciples felt alone.
- ◆ Maybe you've **encountered opposition** of some kind like the early church did.
- ◆ Maybe, like Peter, you are considering **dropping out** because things didn't go like you had planned.
- ◆ Maybe you feel like you're "**on hold**" (and patiently waiting) for promises God has given you – that are yet fulfilled.

(It was in this exact context)

- ◆ That God's presence was poured out to strengthen every believer!

II. God's Presence Comes "To Those Who Are Hungry"

Question: What does it mean to be hungry?

Answer: It means to desire more and more of God.

Question: What is it that produces spiritual hunger?

Answer: Genuine humility that knows how much it needs the Lord.

Question: Why is humility so important?

Answer: Because God's Presence comes to ordinary common people from Nazareth.

Abraham Lincoln said:

"God must love ordinary people, because He made so many of them."

Question: Why is Acts 1:15 so meaningful (which says) *"There were about 120 gathered together in prayer"*?

Answer: Because the promise of the Spirit was given to about 500 (so 380 are missing.)

(In other words)

- ◆ It's possible to become "not hungry" and "not desperate" and "not humble".

(In other words)

- ◆ God wants to create a heart in us that is "**primitively dependent upon God**".

It's a Moses heart in Exodus 33:15

◆ *“Lord, if you are not with us, if your Presence doesn’t go with us, don’t send us up there.”*

(In other words)

- ◆ God pours water – on the thirsty! ◆ God fills believers – that are hungry!
- ◆ God draws near – to the desperate! ◆ God’s Presence comes – to those who are hungry!

Billy Graham’s grandson said:

“When the glory of God fills the church, it then spills over to the world.”

(In other words)

- ◆ The ultimate factor in the church’s engagement with the world is the church’s engagement with God!

Question: How many of you are hungry for the Lord to fill your cup to overflowing?

III. God’s Presence Comes “To Overcome Our Weaknesses”

Question: Why would God touch their tongues on the Day of Pentecost? (They all spoke in tongues as the Spirit gave the utterance).

Answer: Because James says in James 3:2;

“If any man offend not in word, the same is a mature person, and able to bridle the whole body.” (In other words)

- ◆ Since we sometimes speak before we think and...
- ◆ Since our greatest challenge is with our tongue,

Then God touching our speech...

- ◆ Is saying to us that if God can control our speech with the help of the Holy Spirit.
- ◆ Then God can overcome our other weaknesses and bring our flesh under His control.

Question: How many of you know that our flesh is weak?

Question: How many of you know that all of us have weaknesses that God’s Spirit can overcome?

Question: Why is it so important to allow God to overcome our weakness and inconsistencies?

Answer: Because of the truth in Acts 5:32;

*“And we are His witnesses of these things, and so is also the Holy Spirit, **whom God has given to them that obey Him**”* (Repeat)

(This means)

- ◆ The measure of the Spirit which a man or a woman can possess – is conditioned by the kind of a man or woman they are (Repeat)

(In other words)

- ◆ The person who is honestly trying to do the will of God, will experience more and more of the presence of the Spirit!!!

(In other words)

- ◆ Obedience draws God's favor; disobedience drives away God's favor

(In other words)

- ◆ A clear conscience increases our capacity for God - sin decreases our capacity for God

(In other words)

- ◆ Transparency sees God overcome our carnal tendencies
- ◆ Covering up keeps God away at a distance!

Question: How does the Holy Spirit overcome our weaknesses?

Answer: Romans 8:2 explains it clearly:

"For the law of the spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law of sin and death."

(Which means)

- ◆ On one hand we all have a nature that wants to sin (that's the law of sin)
- ◆ On the other hand, believers in Christ Jesus have the law of the Spirit that makes it possible to say "no to sin".

(In other words)

- ◆ We all live in a corrupted body, have the stain of sin in our nature and are capable of sin.
- ◆ But we all can live free from the law (or dominion) of sin that seeks to rule our mind and body.

Illustration

- ◆ I can't swim and fall into the water and will drown
- ◆ Why? The law of gravity pulls me downward.
- ◆ Someone can throw me a 3 lb life vest and I will live.
- ◆ Why? Because the law of the vest supersedes the law of gravity!!!

IV. God's Presence Comes "To Give Strength For The Journey"

Question: Is God's presence that important?

Answer: In Acts 1:4 Jesus said, "Don't depart from Jerusalem, but wait for the promise of the Father."

◆ In Acts 1:8 Jesus said, "*You shall receive power after the Holy Spirit is come upon you.*"

◆ In Luke 24:49 Jesus said "*Tarry in the city of Jerusalem until you are clothed with power from on high*".

Question: What is the "Promise of the Father"?

Answer: It is you and me being saturated with the Holy Spirit and energized for Christian living. (This was the normal New Testament Christian experience).

1. In Acts 2:4 – 120 were baptized in the Holy Spirit
2. In Acts 4:31 – People praying were baptized in the Holy Spirit
3. In Acts 8:17 – Samaria believers were baptized in the Holy Spirit
4. In Acts 9:17 – Paul was baptized in the Holy Spirit
5. In Acts 10:44 – Gentiles at Cornelius house were baptized in the Holy Spirit
6. In Acts 19:6 – Disciples at Ephesus were baptized in the Holy Spirit

Question: Why so important?

Answer: Because praying in the Spirit...

1. Allows you to speak directly to God (I. Cor. 14:2)
2. Edifies or strengthens you in prayer (I Cor. 14:4)
3. Enables you to pray better as an intercessor (Romans 8:26)
4. Leads you to more intimate worship (I Cor. 14:15)

(Dr. George Wood has written)

"The purpose of the baptism in the Holy Spirit is to so overwhelm you with the presence of God that you will no longer dwell on your own weaknesses and inadequacies, but instead be filled with assurance and boldness."

V. God's Presence Comes "To Make You A Blessing"

Question: Why is God's Presence so important?

Answer: Because so many people need your help!

Question: What did Jesus say in Acts 1:8?

1. "*You will receive power when the Spirit comes upon you.*" (and)
2. "*You will be witnesses wherever you go.*"

Question: How many of you want to be a blessing?

(Four great symbols of the Spirit prepare us for service)

◆ In Acts 2:2, 3, 17 and I John 2:20 it's clear:

1. "A rushing mighty wind." (or, the **breath** of the Spirit)
2. "Cloven tongues like as of fire." (or, the **fire** of the Spirit)
3. "I will pour out of My Spirit" (or, the **water** of the Spirit)
4. "You have an unction from the Holy One." (or the **anointing** oil of the Spirit)

(There's no escaping this symbolism)

- ◆ **Wind** refers to life giving power and force – that energizes us for service.
- ◆ **Fire** refers to fervor, glowing, kindling and the blaze of enthusiasm – that burns up our coldness and consumes our hardness of heart.
- ◆ **Water** refers to refreshment and how God satisfies our thirst with joy and contentment.
- ◆ **Oil** refers to anointing for service – because God has something for us all to do!

Conclusion

(So here's my question today)

1. Has the **wind** of the Spirit blown itself out in your life?
2. Has the leaping **fire** died down into grey ashes?
3. Has the great river of **water** been swallowed up in all the distractions of your life?
4. Has the **oil** dried up in the cruse of your heart?

ALTAR CALL

Question: How many of you want to make more room for God's Presence in your own life?

(Remember Jesus' words in Luke 11:13)

"How much more will your Heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to them that ask Him?"

Remember Leviticus 6:13

"The fire shall ever be burning upon the altar, it shall never go out."

And never forget Acts 2:4

*"They were **all** filled with the Spirit."* (Which means)

- ◆ God's Presence is not for a select few – but for everybody
- ◆ **All** means **all** and includes **you!**
- ◆ God has designed a plan that includes you being free from sin's power – **and filled with His power!**

Amen!
Bill Kirk