

Movement Gains Traction
Week 3: What does this mean?
Acts 2:14-41

Intro to series...

- Jesus has risen from the grave and has been teaching his followers.
- He gives them what we now call the great commission.
- Then he tells them to stay in Jerusalem and wait for power and the Holy Spirit.
- He ascends into heaven.

So how does this group of uneducated fishermen and people from backwater Galilee become a worldwide movement? It's here at the beginning that it has to gain traction so that it can for outward.

Last week, we read the first part of chapter 2 where the Holy Spirit falls on the disciples in an amazing way.

- Fire...tongues...crowds.

This is where we see this movement that Jesus has set up start to gain traction. **The great commission is a flawless plan of disciples making disciples** of those they introduce to Jesus, but even that would go nowhere without the power of the Holy Spirit.

This week we pick up at the end of last week's section with the reaction of this crowd who hears a bunch of Galileans shouts praise to God in their languages.

And all were amazed and perplexed, saying to one another, "What does this mean?" ¹³ But others mocking said, "They are filled with new wine." Acts 2:12

A "what does this mean" moment. A paradigm shifting moment. What I know about life doesn't have a category for what I have just experienced. In every other situation in life you can find a category for each experience. But then something happened and nothing you know or have to this point experienced helps you explain it.

Something in your mind, in your perspective on life, has to change or you won't know what to do with this experience.

Maybe you've heard of **Ann Atwater and C.P. Ellis.**

She was a black civil rights activist and he was the head of the local chapter of the KKK in Durham, North Carolina in 1971. This was a time when Durham schools were still segregated. The black school, where Ann's daughter goes, is damaged and made unusable for the rest of the school year by a fire. It is not clear whether it was because the wiring was substandard or if it was purposefully set.

A man named **Bill Riddick** is charged to get the community together to figure out what to do. Obviously

the black community wants to see integration. Much of the white community wants things to remain as they are, particularly C.P. and the Klan. A **charrette** is set up to allow the community to decide what to do about this problem. They are to work for two weeks on a set of proposals to solve the problem and then a randomly chosen group of voters, half black and half white, will vote on each part of the proposal. Their decision is binding.

Ann and C.P. are chosen by the leader as **co-chairs!** Yes, the leader of the KKK and a black woman, who is a civil rights activist. Sets are assigned for lunch with Ann and C.P. sharing a table with their chairs facing one another.

Ann sees how helpless he feels with trying to care for his son.

Ann is visited by C.P.'s wife and she finds common ground as mothers who love their kids

Ann is experiencing something that didn't fit. It was a "what does this mean" moment.

Gospel music and Klan display...**C.P. sees Ann scold** some boys for messing up the clans' table display.

She helps him with his autistic child, who he is struggling to afford care for, and **helps him get a private room.**

These things that C.P. was experiencing didn't have a category. She was black and inferior to him. She could not be his friend. It didn't fit his worldview. **This was his, "what does this mean" moment.**

It's a **paradigm shift**. This is where the **underlying assumptions** are challenged.

Experiences like this demand that we make space for them so that our perspective changes and broadens. That's what the Holy Spirit does.

Have you been at one of those moments when you ask, **What does this mean?**

The great news is that it is at these moments when the Holy Spirit's transforming power is at its most powerful. Talk about traction. This is where the Kingdom is about to explode.

This morning, the section we are covering is **Peter's response** to this question. **He stands up in this room of over 100 of Jesus' faithful followers** and gives what you might call a sermon to the crowd that has gathered. **It's too long to read** the whole thing but I hope you will read it word for word.

Story verses 14-21

- Peter stands with the eleven and addresses the crowd.
- These men are **not drunk**.
- **Quotes the prophet, Joel**, who prophesied about this very event when God would pour out his spirit on people and they would prophesy.

Let's pick up on verse 22.

"Men of Israel, hear these words: Jesus of Nazareth, a man attested to you by God with mighty works and wonders and signs that God did through him in your midst, as you yourselves know—²³ this Jesus, delivered up according to the definite plan and foreknowledge of God, you crucified and killed by the hands of lawless men. ²⁴ God raised him up, loosing the pangs of death, because it was not possible for him to be held by it. Acts 2:22-24

It's only been seven weeks since Passover and it was at that time that Jesus was arrested and crucified.

- Jesus has been popping up alive.
- People are talking.
- **The Jewish authorities** have already begun their conspiracy theories to deny his resurrection.

So what is the answer to their question? **Answer...It begins and ends with Jesus!**

All of this is about Jesus!

- The wind.
- The fire.
- The hearing in other languages.
- The fact that it's Pentecost.
- The fact that we are a bunch of nobody's.

It's all about Jesus!

"You remember that man that you saw crucified unjustly. The one you heard rumors was alive. He did all of this as he promised." It begins and ends with Jesus.

Later in his sermon Peter sums Jesus up this way.

Let all the house of Israel therefore know for certain that God has made him both Lord and Christ, this Jesus whom you crucified." Acts 2:36

This is a bombshell. Not that telling them they were guilty of his crucifixion was soft but there is one word that echoed in that room hitting like a sledgehammer. Peter said... **He is Lord**

"Lord" in the O.T. is most often used to mean the God of Israel who created everything. It is also a way of saying someone has **complete authority**.

Actually he's said this several times already. Here he is quoting the prophet Joel. **And it shall come to pass that everyone who calls upon the name of the Lord shall be saved.'** Acts 2:21

But maybe at this point in the sermon they don't quite get that Lord now equals Jesus.

Then he quotes King David who is prophesying about Jesus. **For David did not ascend into the heavens, but he himself says, "The Lord said to my Lord, "Sit at my right hand, ³⁵ until I make your enemies your footstool."** Acts 2:34-35

This is the answer to the question the disciples had about when Jesus will restore the kingdom of Israel.

- He will not simply restore Israel he will restore everything.

Being Lord means he is the object of their faith. To have faith in God means you must have faith in Jesus.

This thing you are seeing begins and ends with Jesus, who is Lord, God. And... **He is the promised deliverer.**

This is the "Christ" part of who Jesus is .

- Interchangeable with **Messiah**.

He is addressing people who are Jews, or non-Jews who believe, serve, and worship the God of Israel. They have been waiting for the promised messiah to come and deliver them from their enemies. In this case that is primarily Rome.

When you are actually Lord and your rule or authority is over all things, then you look at things in a larger scope. Does delivering mean you will focus on one small nation in Palestine? Was that his goal?

- "Yep, I did all of this in order to get Rome out of Israel."

No, you go to the root of the problem. What is the cause of all death and decay? Sin. What is the root of all evil and injustice? Sin.

Ultimately the proof to both of these claims is that he is alive and that he has now sent His Holy Spirit, which is what you are seeing in action.

This is what this means. It's all about Jesus, who is both Lord and Christ.

So how is the congregation responding to this Galilean fisherman thundering on about this Jesus who, only seven weeks earlier, was crucified?

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?" Acts 2:37

The message hit home. It was no longer theory. It was no longer about politics, or religion or what it means to be a Jew. It was about those people who were listening. They asked the next Question, "Brothers, what shall we do?" I think what they were really saying was... **I am guilty, now how do I put things right?**

That's what cut to the heart means. This is about me. I did this. My sin caused him to be crucified.

- Peter, who is giving the sermon, came to this very conclusion when he denied Christ and he heard that rooster crow.

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. ³⁹ 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." Acts 2:38-39

That's the answer to their question. **Answer...Repent, commit and be filled**

It's been put right by Jesus, just trust in him. Just fess up to being a part of the problem. They were guilty of putting Jesus on the cross. And they were in need of his forgiveness. That is no different. I'm complicit in putting Jesus on the cross and I'm in need of forgiveness.

Repent...change your mind or about face.

Baptism...that's the commit part. To be baptized is to pledge loyalty to Jesus. The old person who thought he was a free agent has died and is buried and a new one who is bonded to Jesus. This new person finds her identity in Jesus. She has put him on like a new set of clothes. She now belongs to him and will live as if her purpose is to have him live his life through her. That's what it means to commit.

But no one can do that. No one has the capacity to have Jesus live his life through him. We don't have the capacity. We need to be filled by the Holy Spirit, which is the source of the presence and power of the risen Jesus.

"They had murdered God's Son; he was offering them his Spirit. They had crucified the second person of the Trinity; he was offering them the third. They had

thrown God's Son out of the vineyard in the hope of inheriting the vineyard themselves; now he was inviting them to receive God's Spirit not just into their vineyard but into their very hearts, to be their undying life, to be the earnest guarantee of an infinite and imperishable inheritance." Pg. 106

And here is how the sermon, the answer to their question, ended. **And with many other words he bore witness and continued to exhort them, saying, "Save yourselves from this crooked generation." So those who received his word were baptized, and there were added that day about three thousand souls.**

This all started with something that didn't have a category, an experience of God that didn't fit into their view of how life works. They didn't know what to do with what they saw and that's where it began. For us it's the same. Sometimes it takes something that we just can't easily file away into a nice neat category that suits me. It's God being disruptive. That's Jesus' way. He enters into people's lives and disrupts things so that they can see that what they are doing isn't working. That day 3000 people experience the disruptive presence and power of Jesus.

⁴² And they devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and the fellowship, to the breaking of bread and the prayers. ⁴³ And awe came upon every soul, and many wonders and signs were being done through the apostles. Acts 2:40-43

A launching point for this moment has been established.
This is where the movement gains the traction to become
what Jesus designed it to be.