

Text: Acts 2:1-13

Title: “A Most Unusual Day”

Before I get started let me remind you that this Friday night is FXLive ... a great family event with a life-changing message. We'll have food trucks parked on our campus for you to enjoy with your family. But it's also a great way to introduce your friends to our church. Stop by the CMC to pick up tickets for your family and your friends. Two weeks from today is Harvest Day, a very important day each year in the life of our church. In preparation, don't just think about what you will give; ask God what you should give. If you think about what you should give you will ask, “What do I want to give or what can I afford to give?” But when you pray you ask God, “What do You want me to give?” So when you give what He shows you, you are stepping out on faith that God will meet your needs and the needs of our church.

Now open your Bibles to Acts 2. I've entitled this series “Unstoppable: Living in the Irrepressible Power of the Holy Spirit.” The book of Acts shows us where everything started for the church. We're reading about our spiritual roots. It's not just what God used to do; it's what God still wants to do through people who yield to the power of His Spirit. Read Acts 2:1-6.

Remember it's important to see what happens here in the first part of Acts connected to the death, resurrection and ascension of Jesus. Just like Jesus predicted His death and His resurrection, He also predicted the coming of the Holy Spirit.

John 7:37 - On the last and greatest day of the Feast, Jesus stood and said in a loud voice, “If anyone is thirsty, let him come to me and drink.

John 7:38 - Whoever believes in me, as the Scripture has said, streams of living water will flow from within him.”

John 7:39 - By this he meant the Spirit, whom those who believed in him were later to receive. Up to that time the Spirit had not been given, since Jesus had not yet been glorified.

ILLUSTRATION – Think about it this way. Suppose you are working on a team of microbiologists who discover a cure for the deadly Ebola virus that is in the news today. What great news that would be! Prior to this discovery just about everyone who gets this disease dies. But now there is hope; a cure has been discovered. But for this to truly be good news the cure that has been *developed* has to be *delivered*. If the cure is only discovered but never delivered to dying patients, what's the use? So the cure is packaged in some kind of serum or a pill. It is put on a plane and rushed to West Africa where the medicine is quickly carried to the hospitals and given to Ebola patients. The cure is delivered and lives are saved.

The same thing is true for the Atonement. The cure for the deadly disease of sin was developed in the providence and love of God through the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. But how will that cure be delivered to all of us who are suffering from this sin disease. Pentecost was important because it demonstrated that what Jesus did through the Cross and Resurrection to give us new life is actually delivered to people.

You see, our redemption has to be applied to us for it to make a real difference in our condition. Yes, it is a *transaction*. Christ's righteousness is applied to my sin debt so in the eyes of God I am justified and forgiven. But it is not just a transaction; it is also a *transfusion* of the life of Christ coming to live in me by the Holy Spirit, giving me victory over sin and enabling me to truly be righteous. That's why we need the Holy Spirit. That's why Jesus, before He ascended back to the Father in heaven, told His disciples in Acts 1 to go back to Jerusalem to wait for the gift of the Holy Spirit. He said in Acts 1:8, "You will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes upon you and you will be my witnesses starting at Ground Zero and spreading to the ends of the earth. You'll be unstoppable."

This was a most unusual day. Let's see ...

1. WHAT HAPPENED AROUND THEM (Acts 2:1-3)

Acts 2:1 - When the day of Pentecost came, they were all together in one place.

Pentecost was one of the most important festivals for the Jewish nation. There was Passover which celebrated Israel's deliverance from Egypt. It was during the Passover that Jesus was crucified as the Lamb of God. Fifty days after Passover was Pentecost (the word means "the fiftieth"). Pentecost was a harvest celebration, and we'll see a great spiritual harvest as 3000 people are saved at the end of this day. At Pentecost the Jews celebrated the giving of the Law (the Ten Commandments) to Moses on Mt. Sinai. So we'll see that on the day they commemorated the giving of the Law they witnessed the giving of the Holy Spirit. Scholars tell us that Pentecost was the best-attended of all of the festivals; thousands and thousands of pilgrims came from all over the world. We'll see in a moment why that is important.

Acts 2:2 - Suddenly a sound like the blowing of a violent wind came from heaven and filled the whole house where they were sitting.

Suddenly something strange occurred. The disciples knew Jesus had promised to send the Holy Spirit, but they didn't know when or how, only that He told them to go and wait for it. Three phenomena occurred which were associated with the activity of God in other parts of the Bible. First, it was "like" a hurricane-force wind from heaven filled the house. The word for "wind" is also the word for "spirit," as in the Holy "Spirit." Jesus said in John 3 that the Holy Spirit is like the wind; you can't see the wind, but you can see things being moved by the wind.

Acts 2:3 - They saw what seemed to be tongues of fire that separated and came to rest on each of them.

The second phenomenon was something like "tongues of fire." In the OT fire is often associated with the activity of God. When God led the Israelites through the wilderness He led them with a pillar of fire during the night. Apparently what happens here, as best as Luke can describe it, was like a giant flame coming into the room that then separated out into a number of smaller tongue-shaped flames hovering over each person's head. So something happened to them as individuals. But then there was a third miraculous thing that happened...

Acts 2:4 - All of them were filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other tongues as the Spirit enabled them.

We're going to see that this is a miracle of people being able to speak a foreign language that they had never learned. It's like you could suddenly speak Chinese without any lessons. And we'll see in a moment why they were given this ability. So why is God setting off these supernatural fireworks? God was doing a new thing. The Holy Spirit was coming to take up residence in the lives of believers for the very first time. God was starting the very first church. A new age is dawning, so it must be noticed.

ILLUSTRATION – It's like when there is an election and we have a new president. It could just happen that one man moves out of the White House and another man moves into the White House, and it's done. No, it's such a big deal, such a huge change, that there needs to be something public to demonstrate the change. So they have a huge celebration called the Inauguration. That's what's happening at Pentecost. This is the inauguration of a new age, the age of the Holy Spirit that began at Pentecost.

But also on this most unusual day notice...

2. WHAT HAPPENED IN THEM (Acts 2:4)

Acts 2:4a - All of them were filled with the Holy Spirit...

The life to which Jesus calls His followers is impossible without the help of the Spirit. Jesus said, "I have come that you might have life." We are dead inside until the life-giving Spirit of God comes to live in us. We have no understanding without the Spirit of truth living in us. We have no holiness without the Holy Spirit dwelling in us. We have no effectiveness in our witness without the power of the Holy Spirit. We have no connection with other believers without the unity given by the Holy Spirit.

Remember when Jesus talked about this new life He said that the Spirit had been with them, but soon He would be in them. That's what's happening here. Almighty God coming to dwell within people by His Spirit. And it happened for all of them, not just a super-spiritual few. And all this happened to show that from that point on whenever a person is saved they are given the Holy Spirit. At the same time they were given the Spirit they were also filled with the Spirit. And there is the one-time gift of the Holy Spirit that happens when we are saved. But following that there are repeated fillings of the Holy Spirit yield each day to the Lordship of Jesus Christ.

So something happened around them and in them but notice...

3. WHAT HAPPENED THROUGH THEM (Acts 2:4-13)

Acts 2:4 - All of them were filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other tongues as the Spirit enabled them.

So they were enabled to do something by the power of the Holy Spirit. Ordinary people were suddenly able to extraordinary things. This is signaling to us that one of the reasons the Holy Spirit comes to live in us is to enable us to serve and witness in a supernatural way. We need the enabling of the Holy Spirit to be effective in our witness and in our service. This is exactly what Jesus said would happen:

Acts 1:8 - But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth."

Remember God is on an unstoppable quest to get the Gospel to the nations, and it is apparent from the very beginning that this is what God has in mind when He fills the followers of Jesus with the Holy Spirit. Remember it's the day of Pentecost so...

Acts 2:5 - Now there were staying in Jerusalem God-fearing Jews from every nation under heaven.

So thousands and thousands of pilgrims had filled Jerusalem, having traveled from all parts of the world of their day.

Acts 2:6 - When they heard this sound, a crowd came together in bewilderment, because each one heard them speaking in his own language.

So God orchestrated this phenomenal event. At the same time that God has filled these believers with His Spirit and power, He has drawn together a great crowd of people from all over the world who need to hear what these believers have to say. But wait, there's a language barrier. No problem, God just gave the believers the ability to speak their language.

Acts 2:7 - Utterly amazed, they asked: "Are not all these men who are speaking Galileans?"

In v.6 it says they were bewildered. In v.7 it says they were amazed. And down in v.12 it says they were "perplexed." They didn't know what to think of this. Here were ordinary people who have been enabled to do something extraordinary for the glory of God. That's the reason the Holy Spirit came upon them and upon us.

Acts 2:8 - Then how is it that each of us hears them in his own native language?

And in vv.9-11 there is a roll call of the nations that are represented in Jerusalem. Jews had come from all over the known world for Pentecost. Remember God is on an unstoppable quest to take the Gospel to the nations. And He will start by bring the nations to Jerusalem. And the people were stunned...

Acts 2:11b- we hear them declaring the wonders of God in our own tongues!"

Question: Every time someone is saved and receives the Holy Spirit do they speak in different languages like this? No, this is something unusual that God did at Pentecost. But what is supposed to happen when a person is saved and given the Holy Spirit is that they are to be bold in their witness.

Again, here are ordinary people who have been enabled to do something extraordinary for the glory of God. Again, it's about the mission. God is forming a church because He has a mission to declare His glory among the nations. And He is signaling that here.

Acts 2:12 - Amazed and perplexed, they asked one another, "What does this mean?"

Some of those in Jerusalem that day thought the believers were drunk. Nonbelievers don't always understand. So some asked, "What does this mean?" That's a good way for us to wrap up. What does this mean for us? It means...

- **A new presence in us** – This is the Spirit of God coming to live in us. Where you go He goes. You are never alone. Jesus is living out His life in you and through you.
- **A new power with us** – When Jesus comes to live in us by His Spirit we are enabled to live a life we couldn't live without His power ... a life of love and holiness.
- **A new purpose for us** – Remember that the Holy Spirit is not just given for our *enjoyment*; it is given for our *employment* in the mission of God. His purpose now becomes our purpose.
- **New partners beside us** – When the Holy Spirit comes to live in us He establishes a network connection between all believers. There's a connection between you and the person sitting next to you. We become part of His body.

This is the story of the Church and the unstoppable life we are called to live out. If Acts is Volume 1 (from the first century), we are Volume 21 of the continued acts of Jesus Christ through people who are clothed with His power.