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Ascension/Pentecost (Turn to acts 1)

We had such a great time last Sunday. We were celebrating the Resurrection of Jesus Christ and I wanted to tell you that a young man came down to the front at the end of service for prayer. We were praying with him about some things in his life. –We love to see people praying and reaching out to God.

After service he came up to me very excited and was flopping his hand back and forth at the wrist. I thought he was waving hello in a strange way. He told me that while we were praying for him that God had healed his wrist. He had a great deal of pain in his wrist and it limited his mobility, but a very alive Jesus healed this young man.

Clap your hands if you believe that God still heals!

Before today is over we are going to invite you to talk to God. We would love to pray with you, and if you want that, then just come into the first 2 feet of the stage and one of our staff will pray for you. I believe God is not done doing miracles!

Thank you for worshipping with us today at Redemption Church in Plano Tx. My name is Chris Fluitt and I want to greet everyone here in the room as well as our online watchers and listeners. We believe that Jesus is alive and well and will change your life today if you will just say yes.

We are in the 2nd week of our Vantage Point series. Last week we looked at the characters who experienced first-hand the

resurrection of Jesus Christ. The position of these characters, like the soldiers, Mary Magdalene, & the disciples, effected their viewpoint.

Your position effects your viewpoint. This is what a Vantage point is

Vantage Point - a place or position affording a good view of something.

To get a better view, we need a better position. Let's position ourselves today to see the Ascension of Jesus and the arrival of God's Holy Spirit.

Turn with me to Acts chapter 1.

Acts 1:3 (NIV2011) After his suffering, he presented himself to them and gave many convincing proofs that he was alive. He appeared to them over a period of forty days and spoke about the kingdom of God.

Redemption Church, who is the verse speaking of? Jesus!
"After his suffering" is talking about the cross – Christ's death & burial. After Jesus rose from the dead he presented himself to them and gave many convincing proofs and appeared to them for how many days?

40 days

40 days. Get that in your head. The Jesus that died on the cross resurrected and walked around, hung out with, taught, and more for 40 days. Jesus spoke to the disciples about the Kingdom of God.

Acts 1:4 (NIV2011) On one occasion, while he was eating with them, he gave them this command: "Do not leave

Jerusalem, but wait for the gift my Father promised, which you have heard me speak about.

There is a gift coming. We will talk about this gift later.

Acts 1:5 (NIV2011) For John baptized with water, but in a few days you will be baptized with the Holy Spirit.”

Acts 1:6 (NIV2011) Then they gathered around him and asked him, “Lord, are you at this time going to restore the kingdom to Israel?”

Jesus had been teaching the disciples about the Kingdom of God, and they weren't quite getting it. “Ok Jesus, it is really cool hearing about spirit stuff, and a gift from the Father.. but let's talk about something really important. Are you at this time going to restore the kingdom to Israel?”

Israel was under the control of Rome and they thought the real important question was “is this the moment you kick those Romans out of Israel and we actually have a Israelite king sitting on the throne like the good old days?”

Positioned in front of importance, but focused on things of less importance.

Jesus was teaching the disciples of something that was IMMENSELY important, but they were distracted by things of less importance. Is it possible that we do the same thing?

Is it possible that God wants to reveal to you supernatural wisdom & power, but you are asking him questions like “Jesus when are you going to give me a cooler car?”

Even as we are looking at the Word of God, we are often distracted by thoughts of less importance. “I wonder if I got that new hairstyle, if so and so would like it.” “Will we have

enough time to go to the grocery store after service?” “I wonder what is going to happen on The Walking Dead?”

The disciples are POSITIONED in front of Jesus. They are POSITIONED in front of supernatural revelation. These disciples are POSITIONED in front of the one who is revealing their purpose and calling, yet they trying to POSITION the conversation to a lesser topic.

They needed **a better vantage point.**

Acts 1:7 (NIV2011) He said to them: “It is not for you to know the times or dates the Father has set by his own authority.

Jesus says this knowledge is not for you, but here is some knowledge that is for you.

Acts 1:8 (NIV2011) 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.”

And then get this...

Acts 1:9 (NIV2011) After he said this, he was taken up before their very eyes, and a cloud hid him from their sight.

I want you to imagine this moment. Imagine their vantage point. These disciple had just gotten used to the idea of Jesus died and was buried but now He is alive again. They had just gotten used to this thought.

They are thinking about Jesus defeating the nation of Rome and sitting on the throne of Israel. They are probably thinking that Jesus is sticking around, when all of a sudden.

Jesus Ascended

Jesus floats away and they lose sight of him behind a cloud. They were just talking to the guy and asking questions and then “poof” Jesus is gone.

What do you think they were feeling in that moment?

Acts 1:10 (NIV2011) They were looking intently up into the sky as he was going, when suddenly two men dressed in white stood beside them.

So get this picture of 11 disciples staring up into the sky. Perhaps they are still trying to see Jesus? They are so focused on staring into the sky they probably don't notice two men dressed in white standing beside them.

Acts 1:11 (NIV2011) “Men of Galilee,” they said, “why do you stand here looking into the sky? This same Jesus, who has been taken from you into heaven, will come back in the same way you have seen him go into heaven.”

I think it is obvious that these 2 men are angels. Perhaps these angels felt the need to speak up. Maybe they felt that if they didn't speak up these disciples would just stare up into the sky forever? These angels give us a great promise that Jesus will return, and that Jesus will return in the same way He left. COME BACK NEXT WEEK BECAUSE THAT IS WHAT WE WILL BE TALKING ABOUT.

Jesus Ascended

The disciples had work to do. They needed to do more than just stand around and stare into the sky. Jesus had left their field of vision, but His teaching and instruction still remained with them.

Jesus had told them to wait in Jerusalem for a gift from the father. (Acts 1:8) This gift is the Holy Spirit.

Acts 1:12 (NIV2011) Then the apostles returned to Jerusalem from the hill called the Mount of Olives, a Sabbath day's walk from the city.

Acts 1:13 (NIV2011) When they arrived, they went upstairs to the room where they were staying. Those present were Peter, John, James and Andrew; Philip and Thomas, Bartholomew and Matthew; James son of Alphaeus and Simon the Zealot, and Judas son of James.

Acts 1:14 (NIV2011) They all joined together constantly in prayer, along with the women and Mary the mother of Jesus, and with his brothers.

They waited

Jesus told them to stay in Jerusalem and to wait for the promise of the Father. They waited together. They prayed together. There were 120 people simply waiting for what was next. There were women there. It was not men only. Mary the Mother of Jesus was also waiting.

They waited not knowing what would exactly happen.

Acts 2:1 (NIV2011) When the day of Pentecost came, they were all together in one place.

Do you know what the word Pentecost means?

Pentecost

The word Pentecost means 50 as in 50 days after Passover. Passover was the day that Jesus went to the cross so what happens in Acts 2 was 50 days after Jesus hung on the cross on Calvary.

Acts 2:2 (NIV2011) Suddenly a sound like the blowing of a violent wind came from heaven and filled the whole house where they were sitting.

Acts 2:3 (NIV2011) They saw what seemed to be tongues (flames) of fire that separated and came to rest on each of them.

Acts 2:4 (NIV2011) All of them were filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other tongues as the Spirit enabled them.

Imagine this moment where people are filled with the Holy Spirit for the first time. This was unlike anything that had ever happened before. This is what they had been waiting for.

What did the disciples think when this Spirit blew in the room? Was there a moment they were perhaps a little nervous? Could there have been a moment of hesitance?

Does God have permission to let the Spirit blow in Redemption Church? Will you let God's Spirit flow Redemption? Would we be nervous if God gave us an Acts 2 experience?

Let's not resist the promised gift of the Spirit. Let's desire it!

The Crowd

The Spirit did not stop with 120 believers in the upper room. It spread to the crowded street.

Acts 2:5 (NIV2011) Now there were staying in Jerusalem God-fearing Jews from every nation under heaven.

Acts 2:6 (NIV2011) When they heard this sound, a crowd came together in bewilderment, because each one heard their own language being spoken.

Acts 2:7 (NIV2011) Utterly amazed, they asked: “Aren’t all these who are speaking Galileans?”

Acts 2:8 (NIV2011) Then how is it that each of us hears them in our native language?

Acts 2:9 (NIV2011) Parthians, Medes and Elamites; residents of Mesopotamia, Judea and Cappadocia, Pontus and Asia,

Acts 2:10 (NIV2011) Phrygia and Pamphylia, Egypt and the parts of Libya near Cyrene; visitors from Rome

Acts 2:11 (NIV2011) (both Jews and converts to Judaism); Cretans and Arabs—we hear them declaring the wonders of God in our own tongues!”

The Crowd

There were all kinds of nationalities present in Jerusalem. They had gathered in Jerusalem for the feast of Pentecost.

They hear this sound. The Holy Spirit can be loud, but it wasn't just noise. The Spirit was supernaturally speaking through the believers in an understandable language.

These Galileans were speaking as the Spirit gave them utterance. It was not meaningless sounds. The crowd understood that they were declaring wonders of God in their own language.

Acts 2:12 (NIV2011) Amazed and perplexed, they asked one another, “What does this mean?”

Acts 2:13 (NIV2011) Some, however, made fun of them and said, “They have had too much wine.”

Some people were amazed and wanted to know more, and some people made fun of them. Different people can have the same vantage point and see something different. This group of people on the street all saw the same supernatural demonstration of the Spirit, yet they had different responses.

Too often we as Christians are so worried about being made fun of that we refuse the move of God's Spirit. But while some may not receive your testimony, someone will receive it.

Acts 2:14 (NIV2011) Then Peter stood up with the Eleven, raised his voice and addressed the crowd: "Fellow Jews and all of you who live in Jerusalem, let me explain this to you; listen carefully to what I say.

Acts 2:15 (NIV2011) These people are not drunk, as you suppose. It's only nine in the morning!

Acts 2:16 (NIV2011) No, this is what was spoken by the prophet Joel:

Acts 2:17 (NIV2011) "In the last days, God says, I will pour out my Spirit on all people. Your sons and daughters will prophesy, your young men will see visions, your old men will dream dreams.

Peter stands up & speaks up

The same Peter who denied Christ and was nowhere to be found at the crucifixion is now filled with the Holy Spirit Power. Instead of running away like before, now Peter boldly proclaims the Word of God.

This isn't drunkenness! This is from God and it fulfills what the Prophet Joel said.

Then Peter declares Jesus!

Acts 2:22 (NIV2011) “Fellow Israelites, listen to this: Jesus of Nazareth was a man accredited by God to you by miracles, wonders and signs, which God did among you through him, as you yourselves know.

Acts 2:23 (NIV2011) This man was handed over to you by God’s deliberate plan and foreknowledge; and you, with the help of wicked men, put him to death by nailing him to the cross.

Acts 2:24 (NIV2011) But God raised him from the dead, freeing him from the agony of death, because it was impossible for death to keep its hold on him.

Peter stands up & speaks up

What should you do when people make fun of your faith? Peter declared Christ and the reason had hope in Christ. Peter put the crowd in a position to receive Jesus. Are you putting Jesus in the vantage point of others?

Acts 2:36 (NIV2011) “Therefore let all Israel be assured of this: God has made this Jesus, whom you crucified, both Lord and Messiah.”

Acts 2:37 (NIV2011) When the people heard this, they were cut to the heart and said to Peter and the other apostles, “Brothers, what shall we do?”

Think about their position. They just realized that Jesus is the messiah... but that they rejected & killed Jesus. Is there any hope for them? Is there any way they can be saved?

Acts 2:38 (NIV2011) Peter replied, “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.

This day 3000 souls were added to the church. They started with 120 and in one message about Jesus 3000 souls were added.

Have you been added? I am asking you if you have ever repented & been baptized in Jesus name? Have you received the gift of the Holy Spirit?

There are some who may think that this outpouring of the Holy Spirit in Acts Chapter 2 was just for the early church. Position yourself for the next verse.

Acts 2:39 (NIV2011) The promise is for you and your children and for all who are far off—for all whom the Lord our God will call.”

Do you believe this? Do you believe that God still moves like He did in Acts 2? Do you believe that you can receive the Gift of the Holy Spirit?

Musician

Jesus ascended so that the gift of the Spirit can fill us.

John 16:7 (NIV2011) But very truly I tell you, it is for your good that I am going away. Unless I go away, the Advocate will not come to you; but if I go, I will send him to you.

Do you understand that the ascension of Jesus is important? The Ascension is not important because Jesus floated away. Jesus' Ascension is important because the Holy Spirit would be sent.

What a tragedy it is for a Christian to not have received the baptism of the Holy Spirit!

Positioned in front of importance, but focused on things of less importance.

Where are you in this story?

Sometimes we are like the disciples who stood around staring in the air.

Are you one of those in the crowd that wondered about the Holy Spirit?

Maybe you are one who doesn't yet believe and have made fun of faith.

Perhaps you are the one who is asking what can be done?

Have you received the Holy Spirit?

Acts 2:38 (NIV2011) Peter replied, "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."