



The Gathering message notes

re|ACTS - Week 3 - September 23, 2012 / Paul Jenkins

THE BIG IDEA: Never _____ what is
meant to _____ you.

1. The _____ for the gift

2. The _____ of the gift

3. The _____ to the gift

The Take-Off

Currently we're on a journey through the first days of the early church, and just like a road trip is better when you go with a van-full of your best friends, we're glad to have you with us today!

The great thing about this trip is that you don't have to know anything other than we're all on it together, and most of us are learning things that we kind of feel we should have maybe known already, but at least we're glad to be learning them together!

Now, if ever there was a day we needed to recap what we've learned to this point, it's today.

Two weeks ago we found out that often Jesus' approach in our lives is that He asks us to do things before we fully understand them. We all agreed that, while that may seem strange to our Western way of learning and then doing, it really isn't that different from what all of us have learned as parents. It's why we all swore we wouldn't say - but inevitably did say - "because I said so."

And last week Phil did a great job explaining that at the end of the day, doing before knowing really boils down to trusting.

As we continue our journey through Acts today, we're going to see how critical both of those weeks have been. In fact, this next passage is one of those that reminds me of how my mother reacted as we drove home from the DMV on my 16th birthday. In the middle of a blind curve, she screamed: "Slow down!"

Acts chapter 2 is like that first curve after I got my license: I wanted to fly around it to prove to my mom what a great driver I was, and in the process I almost killed us both.

Sometimes, no matter how smart we might think we are, it's good to recognize that slowing down is a pretty good call. So, we're not going to rush this curve. We're going to take the time to make sure we come out on the other side not only still on the road, but still enjoying the journey.

So, here we go...

First and foremost, when you read chapter 2, you need to understand that it's all about the gift of the Holy Spirit. Here's 3 things to know about that gift:

1. The reason for the gift

Why was the church given the gift of the Holy Spirit?

Acts 1:8 - to give the church power

Power for what?

John 15:26 - power to testify about Jesus

It's a lot like what happened with my family last night

We got family pictures made

Not like those cheesy old Olan Mills family pictures, either. We had a photographer follow us around snapping pictures while we did things like sit on benches, couches, eat ice cream.

At one point, someone even asked the photographer what we were taking pictures for.

Pardon the pun, but that is a perfect picture of the reason for the Holy Spirit. He gives us power to point people to Jesus. We become the photographer whose lives are 100% pointed to and focused on Jesus, and as a result people start wanting to know about Him.

2. The result of the gift

Now, admittedly, this is where people can get a little weird in what they think happened in Acts 2, so my job today is to try and take some of the spooky out of it.

So, before we really even get to the result of the gift, let's walk through what happened when they received it (kind of a "2a" in your notes)

1. They were together in one place - we cannot expect the power of God to be poured out on the people of God until we're one in God
2. They heard a blowing wind - doesn't say there was wind, just the sound of it (I think of this as God getting their attention)
3. They saw fire on top of each person's head - yes, I think it was actual fire, and this was to verify to them that what was happening was indeed the promise Jesus had mentioned in Acts 1:8 - when the HS comes ON you. They would have seen the flames and said "Hey! Something's on you!" Will we have fire on our heads? No, because we have the Scriptures explaining what happens with the Holy Spirit. The fire was more than likely a one-time deal.

4. They spoke in other tongues - this is where we're all going to have a bunch of question, which is why I'm going to go into a lot more depth about it next week. For today, let's just settle on what was said. Verse 6 says they spoke known languages, just not known by them, and verse 11 gives the translation of what they were saying in other languages: the wonders of God!

Now, we can start to see the result of the gift, can't we?

Men from many countries heard the praise of God in their own language. The photographer (the Holy Spirit) waited until the perfect time (Pentecost when many foreign visitors would be in Jerusalem) to start pointing people to Jesus.

And please don't miss what a miracle this was: a crowded area filled with noise and on top of that 120 people talking at once and still somehow "each one" (v. 6) heard what was said in their own language. If we all talked right now for 30 seconds in one language that we all know, my guess is that no one would hear much more than a jumbled mess.

But the gift of the Holy Spirit not only enabled the speaking, but also the hearing, because He is all about people seeing Jesus!

The result of the power of the Holy Spirit is always, always, always people pointing to Jesus, because that's what the Holy Spirit's job is.

The minute we become the model in the photo shoot is the minute we've missed the point.

3. The reaction to the gift

So, we've got 120 people with fire on their heads and Spanish coming out of their mouths and a bunch of foreigners hearing the wonders of God in their own languages.

Let's close out today by talking about the reaction people had to the gift.

On the disciples' side, I'd think they were somewhat excited. If I'm them and suddenly I'm speaking the language of the Medes, I'm not passive. I'm a little involved! (like these people in an older DQ commercial!)

But what was the reaction of those around them to the gift of the Holy Spirit?

Verse 7 tells us: in the KJV, it says that "they were all amazed and marveled"

The NIV uses the phrase "utterly amazed"

Let's break that phrase down, then we'll wrap today up with the Big Idea.

The 2 words mean very different things:

- "amazed" means to be "thrown out of position, displaced" Basically, they got their panties in a wad
- but "marveled" means "to wonder, to admire" and basically means they observed to learn more

So here's the question: if the disciples had tried to play down the awkwardness of the gift, then they would have kept the power on the down-low and the "outsiders" would never have gotten to the observation step

Here's what I want you to get today: the same power that infuses us (energizes us) will often confuse others, and we're going to have to learn to be okay with that if we are going to take Jesus to the world with any kind of power.

But when we understand the value of what we've been given, we won't worry about what others think anymore.

The Landing

Let me try to wrap it up this way:

If I gave you 5 dollars, you'd be thankful for it, but you wouldn't be jumping up and down and running around.

Why not? Because 5 dollars doesn't really change your financial condition.

But look what happens when people receive something that actually changes their condition (Price is Right clip)

The greater the gift, the greater the reaction, and we've been given a gift in the Holy Spirit that not only empowers our lives, but sets us apart so that people can observe us and ask us what makes us different.

The Holy Spirit sets us apart so that others can ask us why we're set apart and that opens the door for us to tell them about Jesus, just like the photographer yesterday standing apart snapping pictures caused bystanders to ask why she was taking pictures of...us!

So here's the Big Idea: **Never extinguish what is meant to distinguish you.**

Just like the gift of the Holy Spirit marked the early church as different and opened the door for them to point at them as they pointed to Jesus, when we live with the power of the Holy Spirit, we may find ourselves gawked at initially, but if we don't hide what makes us different, ultimately they'll see us pointing them to salvation in Christ.

Let's pray.