

Amity Bible Church

“Knowing God and Making Him Known”

Sunday Bible Study

Series: Preparing the Church to Leave the Building

September 17, 2017

Text: Acts 2:1-13

Sermon Title: Because of Pentecost...

Central Message:

The central message in this lesson is that Pentecost opened the door to intimate relationship with God and to supernatural power in our lives and in our ministries.

General Observations...

Pentecost occurred fifty days after the Passover, thus the name. Pentecost means fifty. It was one of the three pilgrimage feasts for Jews, the other two being the Feast of Tabernacles and Passover. It was also called the Feast of Weeks and the Feast of First Fruits.

Lesson #1: Because of Pentecost, we are able to experience a more intimate relationship with God and others. (Acts 2:1-3)

Those waiting in the Upper Room witnessed a supernatural event. The coming of the Holy Spirit was accompanied by a sound like a rushing, mighty wind and tongues of fire that separated and rested upon each of the believers. Not only did they hear a powerful sound and witness a powerful sight, but they also spoke a powerful sign. Each of those who were filled

with the Holy Spirit spoke in a foreign language that they had never learned.

The wind and the fire were symbolic of God's presence and God's power. When Ezekiel was in the valley of dry bones, the wind came and put breath and life into the bones. (Ezek. 37) In Exodus 3, God appeared to Moses in a bush that burned with fire and God went before His people as a pillar of fire at night (Ex. 13:21-22).

The coming of the Holy Spirit ushered in a new dynamic in the relationship of believers to God. Under the Old Covenant, God dealt with the nation of Israel as a corporate entity, but with the coming of the Spirit, each believer was able to have an intimate and personal relationship with God. Prayer changes things but it does not always change our circumstances. More often than not, the change is *in* us. God wants to do something through us, but first He has to do something *in* us. Prayer is one of His tools.

Lesson #2: Because of Pentecost, we are able to exhibit supernatural power in our ministry to others. (Acts 2:2)

When the Holy Spirit came, accompanied by a powerful sound and the sight of tongues of fire resting on each believer, they spontaneously began to speak God's word in a language that they had never learned.

These believers were moved by God's spirit to speak. God had poured out His Spirit into their hearts, their hearts overflowed with joy and they responded by speaking God's word with joy. Believers everywhere long for a subjective response to God's word. When we have a powerful experience in the presence of God, himself, that revelation demands a response.

We must be careful not to get so addicted to praise that we lose our appetite for the truth of God's word. We must not trade our experience for His objective truth.

Lesson #3: Because of Pentecost, we are compelled to eliminate the barriers that separate us from other people. (Acts 2:5-12)

One of the most amazing things about the coming of the Spirit on the Day of Pentecost is that He was poured out on Galileans. Galileans were considered to be a backward people without any real social standing in the community. This was partially due to the dialect that they spoke. The fact that God chose to pour out His Spirit on this disparate group of people spoke volumes about the significance of the Pentecostal event. God is not a respecter of persons. Not only did He pour out His Spirit on an unlikely group of people, He did an even more unlikely thing by causing them to speak to the gathered crowd of people in their own language. This is the model approach to achieve ethnic diversity in the church.

No culture wants to feel that it is being dominated by another culture, and yet that is how we typically approach achieving diversity in the church. We want people to “assimilate”...to become a part of the existing culture. This did not happen at Pentecost. By speaking to people in their own language, the believers sent a clear message to those who listened to the gospel...they said in unambiguous language, your culture matters...your values matter...you matter. Churches today might be more successful at diversity if we showed that other cultures really matter.

Lesson #4: Because of Pentecost, we should expect that some people will reject the message of the gospel. (Acts 2:13)

Despite the fact that there was a clear demonstration of God’s power on the Day of Pentecost, we should not be surprised that the message of the gospel was mocked. Rejection of the gospel is a common theme throughout the entire book of Acts. It began with the defection of Judas and goes all the way through the book. If we are to do effective ministry in a hostile world, it is important for us to anticipate rejection and not be disillusioned when it

happens. If everyone is pleased with what we are doing, we are probably not being faithful to Christ. According to the Apostle, Paul, to some the gospel will be the “smell of death” and to others it will be the “aroma of life”. (2 Cor. 2:16)