



Pentecost - Hearts Aflame for Christ!

Acts 2:1-47

Sermon given on May 31, 2020

@Hawk Ranch – First in-person service after COVID-19 quarantine



Sunday Morning Service

Pastor Rick Lancaster

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Opening Comments

- Welcome to CCFV's first in-person service in over two months
- We are coming to you live from Hawk Ranch in Murrieta
- Would like to also welcome everyone watching the service live online
- We know that for some people the decision to attend the service in-person was easy
- But that is not true for everyone – for some, staying home and watching the service was the right decision
- We look forward to the day when we can all regather
- Until then, know that we miss you and are praying for God's blessing on you and your family
- If you have your Bible – turn to the book of **Acts**
- Today is Pentecost Sunday – almost 2,000 years ago on the Day of Pentecost the church that Jesus created was born
- We are going to look at that account in Acts 2
- And then, hopefully, see what all that means to us today
- Does that sound good?
- **Pray**

Teaching

- **Pentecost - Hearts Aflame for Christ!**
- The book of Acts, written by Luke – same as the gospel of Luke, picks up where the gospels left off and describe about 30 years following the death and resurrection of Jesus
- Let's start with Christ's last words to His disciples
- **Acts 1:4a**
- All through the New Testament is an emphasis on Christian community, especially the writings of Paul **Romans 12:10-13**
Be kindly affectionate to one another with brotherly love, in honor giving preference to one another; not lagging in diligence, fervent in spirit, serving the Lord; rejoicing in hope, patient in tribulation, continuing steadfastly in prayer; distributing to the needs of the saints, given to hospitality.

- **Acts 1:4-8**
- Jesus predicted what would happen just a few weeks later
- This is also a promise to all who will believe on Christ for forgiveness of sins and salvation – the indwelling of the Holy Spirit
- ‘you shall receive power’ – not so that you can be powerful, but so that you can be a witness of Christ
- Jesus saved you so that you could be with Him
- You were saved so that you can be in an intimate, communion relationship with Almighty Creator God
- But also, so that you could witness of Christ to others
- This is why some Christians are so powerless
- They are saved, their sins are washed clean by the blood of Christ
- But they will not yield their lives to the work of the Holy Spirit so that they can be a witness of Christ in all their relationships
- You don’t need the power of the Holy Spirit if you are unwilling to be a witness of Christ
- Does your marriage reflect the love and respect for one another commanded in the Scriptures?
- Are you raising your children in the fear of the Lord?
- Are you submitting to your employer as unto the Lord?
- Are you relating humbly to the government that God has placed over you?
- Every believer is endowed with the infinite power of the Holy Spirit
- That power is accessed through faith and obedience to God and His Word
- If you want more power in your life – know, believe, and do what God says in His Word – and do it with the goal of being a witness of Christ
- The greatest witness of Christ is someone who will go where the Spirit leads and do what the Word says in the relationships God has put them into
- Acts 1 continues with the ascension of Christ back to His place at the right hand of the Father in heaven – not idly **Hebrews 7:25**
Therefore He is also able to save to the uttermost those who come to God through Him, since He always lives to make intercession for them.

- Whatever your issues are, know that Jesus is talking to your loving Father in Heaven about them – rest in that knowledge
- The second half of chapter one describes the replacement of Judas Iscariot as one of the Twelve
- Then comes the fulfillment of the prophecy we saw in verses 5-8
- **Acts 2:1**
- All of the Jewish festivals pointed to Jesus
- The Passover pointed to Christ's death, burial, and resurrection to save mankind from the death we so richly deserve **Romans 3:25**
...whom God set forth as a propitiation by His blood, through faith, to demonstrate His righteousness, because in His forbearance God had passed over the sins that were previously committed...
- The Pentecost was the celebration of God's grace to provide a harvest
- It points to Christ as the firstfruits of that harvest **1 Corinthians 15:20**
But now Christ is risen from the dead, and has become the firstfruits of those who have fallen asleep.
- The harvest that Jesus is the firstfruit of is the church
- The church is comprised of those who have been 'harvested' out of the world by faith in Christ
- As believers we ought to come to the Day of Pentecost with rejoicing
- Before Christ we were lost, useless, fit only for the fires of hell
- But because of His love for us, God sent Jesus **Colossians 1:13-14**
He has delivered us from the power of darkness and conveyed us into the kingdom of the Son of His love, in whom we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins.
- Pentecost is a day we ought to celebrate what God did for us – forgiving us – saving us from the eternal consequence of our sin – adopting us into His family – promising us eternal life with Him in heaven
- Not only is it a day to celebrate – it is a day of hope
- Pentecost celebrated what God had done, but also looked forward to what He would do – He had promised to give His people more harvests
- Pentecost is a day to celebrate your salvation, but it should also renew your hope for your friends, family, loved ones who are not yet saved
- The harvest is not done yet – Jesus is still saving His lost sheep

- And that is where the church comes in

- Jesus said in **John 4:35-36**

Do you not say, 'There are still four months and *then* comes the harvest'? Behold, I say to you, lift up your eyes and look at the fields, for they are already white for harvest! And he who reaps receives wages, and gathers fruit for eternal life, that both he who sows and he who reaps may rejoice together.

- The church is the vehicle God created to do the work of harvesting

- **Matthew 9:37-38**

Then He said to His disciples, "The harvest truly *is* plentiful, but the laborers *are* few. Therefore pray the Lord of the harvest to send out laborers into His harvest."

- In point of fact, the church cannot save anyone
- A true church is a community of God-believers, Christ-followers who are collectively seeking to be more like Christ and do God's will
- But there is one more thing required before a church can do that
- **Acts 2:2-4**
- This was an audible and visible manifestation of the Holy Spirit
- That is pretty rare in the Scriptures
- This was a special moment – it was the spiritual birth of the church
- Up to this point, the disciples hadn't really done much
- Jesus told them to wait for this moment – to be empowered by the Holy Spirit for the work of the ministry
- And then Peter stands up and preaches the first sermon of the newly born church
- Peter, who usually had a hard time speaking without saying something that didn't get him into trouble
- We don't have time to examine everything he said, but it was a Holy Spirit inspired masterpiece
- Let's pick it up at the end
- **Acts 2:36-41**
- One of the desires, we should as believers should have is to be Spirit-filled witnesses of Jesus
- That is what Peter is doing – The Holy Spirit created an opportunity for him to witness and Peter stepped into it and the Holy Spirit saved three thousand souls
- Two weeks earlier Peter denied three times that he even knew Jesus when asked about it by a servant girl

- Some of us are going to be led by the Holy Spirit to stand in front of thousands to declare the hope we have in Christ, but probably not many
- Most of us are called to simply stand in our marriage, family, workplace and be a Spirit-filled witness of the grace, mercy, love, peace, hope of Jesus
- The question is, ‘Are willing to be available to do that?’
- If you say no, then all you need to do is pray and ask God to make you willing to be Spirit-filled and available to be a witness of Christ
- If you say yes, I want to leave you with three things
- Three things to help you be more available to the Holy Spirit
- First thing – **Learn to Worship**
- The disciples were together in an attitude of worship – Day of Pentecost
- When I say, ‘learn to worship’ - I don’t mean – learn to play the guitar and join the praise team
- Worship is not about music, or singing, or even religious activities – worship is a way of life
- In John 4 when Jesus was talking to the woman at the well – when she thought of worship it focused on the religious things they did
- Jesus said, worship is about so much more than that **John 4:23-24**
But the hour is coming, and now is, when the true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and truth; for the Father is seeking such to worship Him. God is Spirit, and those who worship Him must worship in spirit and truth.”
- True worship encompasses all of life and every activity
- It is about taking every thought into captivity to the obedience of Christ
- It is about seeing every moment of life as something God ordained for His glory, the blessing of others and the growing of faith
- A heart that is focused on worshipping God moment by moment will catch fire for Christ and the Spirit will fill that life to be a witness of Christ
- The second thing we see in this text – **Connected in Community**
- ‘they were all with one accord in one place’

- One of the ways we learn to worship God is through connected community
- That means opening up your life and letting others get close to you
- That's where the Christian life can get messy
- When you get close to other Christians you find out they aren't perfect – they make mistakes – they do foolish, or selfish, or hurtful things
- But it is through these connections that the power of the Holy Spirit flows and changes things and people
- The more connected we are to the community of the church, the more opportunities we get to be filled with the Spirit
- And the last thing – **Wait on the Spirit**
- The disciples were where they were and doing what they were doing because that was what Jesus told them to do
- They weren't being inactive, they were being obedient
- Waiting on the Spirit is not about sitting cross-legged and chanting
- It is about actively seeking direction from Him
- I have learned and am trying to practice a simple habit
- Whenever I get to a point where I have to decide what to do next, I try to ask this question, 'Lord, what would you have me do now?'
- I don't do it perfectly, not even close – but the more I do it, the more Spirit-filled I am
- I ask the question, and then I listen, and then I do what I believe the Spirit is leading me to do – I don't do that perfectly either
- Listen, you don't have to do it perfectly – you can't – you're not perfect
- But the Holy Spirit is, and He can take our imperfections and imbue them with power from on high to change the world around us
- Humble yourself before God and be willing to be filled with the Spirit
- Learn to worship God with every breath, thought, and action
- Connect yourself to like-minded, Spirit-filled Christians
- And then wait on the Spirit and go where He leads
- And all of that is done within the relationships that already exist in your life

- The Spirit may lead you to go somewhere to share the gospel, but He probably won't until we start living it right where we are
- The Holy Spirit is living within each of us and He is waiting to show the world how powerful He is through you and your life!
- That's radical!
- **Pray**