

I. Introduction

- A. We are in Acts chapter two, and that is awesome... because Acts chapter two is spooky, and weird, and confusing, and deep. All of that makes it very fun for me to study, and even more fun for me to teach.
- B. Today's sermon is a mash-up.
- C. But we start here, in Acts 2, and then to John 20.
- D. Acts is classified as history — it tells the history of the first generation of Christians after Jesus.
- E. The title of our series is **Our Turn**. Because the author of this book — his name is Luke — specifically says in his opening sentence that he is writing about "all that Jesus began both to do and teach." So this book is what Jesus *began* to do and teach, and that means that's now it's our turn, the church's turn, to keep on doing and teaching what Jesus did and taught. Our Turn.
- F. And specifically here in chapter 2, my talk today is: **It's Our Turn to Be Pentecostal, part 2**, because part 1 was last time.
- G. So if you've ever heard the phrase "speaking in tongues" right here is the source of all of that kind of talk:
 - 1. *"When the Day of Pentecost had fully come, they were all with one accord in one place. And suddenly there came a sound from heaven, as of a rushing mighty wind, and it filled the whole house where they were sitting. Then there appeared to them divided tongues, as of fire, and one sat upon each of them. And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance."* (Acts 2:1-4)
- H. Pentecost was a feast day for the Jews which meant it was a pilgrimage. Jewish men traveled from all the different nations and language groups of the world to be in Jerusalem for Pentecost.
- I. And when the Holy Spirit came upon the disciples, they spoke in tongues. That means they were suddenly able to speak in human languages they had never studied and never knew before.
 - 1. Normally, when people today talk about speaking in tongues, this is NOT what they are talking about.
- J. The modern version of speaking in tongues is not speaking in languages. Instead, today speaking in tongues is what is called ecstatic utterance.
 - 1. Ecstatic utterance means syllables without meaning coming from a person in an altered state.
 - 2. Let's set this aside for now. Because ecstatic utterance is not what happened on the day of Pentecost.
- K. On the Day of Pentecost, the believers had a sudden and miraculous ability to speak in human languages they had never known before. The crowd was amazed.
 - 1. *Now there were Jews living in Jerusalem, devout men from every nation under heaven. And when this sound occurred, the crowd came together, and were bewildered because each one of them was hearing them speak in his own language. They were amazed and astonished, saying, "Why, are not all these who are speaking Galileans? And how is it that we each hear them in our own language to which we were born? Parthians and Medes and Elamites, and residents of Mesopotamia, Judea and Cappadocia, Pontus and Asia, Phrygia and Pamphylia, Egypt and the districts of Libya around Cyrene, and visitors from Rome, both Jews and proselytes, Cretans and Arabs—we hear them in our own tongues speaking of the mighty deeds of God."* (Acts 2:5-12)
- L. So the people who had journeyed to Jerusalem from all over the known world were being spoken to in their own languages, people who five minute earlier couldn't speak their languages.
- M. That's the origin of speaking on tongues.
- N. Now, let's go over to John 20...

II. Doubting Thomas

- A. Here is doubting Thomas. He has heard that Jesus rose from the dead, but he didn't believe. Even after many disciples personally saw the risen Savior, he still didn't believe. Thomas actually announced that unless he sees Jesus personally, and touches the wounds in his hands and side, he will not believe.
- B. So Jesus obliges.
 - 1. *And after eight days His disciples were again inside, and Thomas with them. Jesus came, the doors being shut, and stood in the midst, and said, "Peace to you!" Then He said to Thomas, "Reach your finger here, and look at My hands; and reach your hand here, and put it into My side. Do not be unbelieving, but believing." And Thomas answered and said to Him, "My Lord and my God!"* (John 20:26-28)
- C. In that one moment, all of Thomas's doubts were washed away. Why? Because he had undeniable evidence.
- D. And with that undeniable evidence, Thomas confesses Jesus.
- E. And I understand that. That seems awesome. That's something it's natural to want. We naturally want to see, to touch, to hear, to know that God is real. We want the undeniable evidence of God. The sign. The wonder. The miracle.
- F. But what if that is not the method of God?

III. So, Back to Pentecost

- A. *Then they were all amazed and marveled, saying to one another, "Look, are not all these who speak Galileans [uneducated, unsophisticated]?... we hear them speaking in our own tongues the wonderful works of God."* (Acts 2:7,11)
- B. All these languages from all over the known world. All these uneducated Christians... now speaking fluent languages they have never known before. It's amazing. It's astonishing. It's miraculous. It's unexplainable. Only God.
- C. This miracle is undeniable evidence for the message of God.
- D. The prevailing philosophy of modern American culture goes by the name of materialism. Materialism says that everything can be explained by matter and energy. It goes hand in hand with another prevailing philosophy called naturalism. Naturalism and materialism are basically twins. The laws of nature govern everything, define everything, make up everything, and give whatever meaning and value might happen to exist to everything.
- E. There is nothing above nature, nothing behind nature, nothing within nature. Molecules bouncing in chemical soup like ping pong balls, supercharged with electro-magnetic forces, and there you go.
- F. Thank you Big Bang, for making us.

- G. On the other hand...
- H. Christians are not materialists and we are not naturalists. You cannot account for life, love, or the human moral impulse without something beyond nature and beyond matter.
- I. We believe in God and the devil, heaven and hell, angels and demons, and another kind of material called spirit.
- J. The prevailing mindset of modern American culture is materialism and naturalism, but the prevailing mindset of the child of God is spirituality and supernaturalism.
- K. And that is what we see here on the Day of Pentecost.
- L. So down comes the Holy Spirit of God, and the first great sign of his presence is this speaking in tongues. It is a true-blue, bona fide, unarguable miracle.
- M. This is undeniable of God and of his son, Jesus Christ. Amen?
- N. Not so fast.
- O. Because just when you think that a miracle is undeniable, along come the deniers.
 - 1. *So they were all amazed and perplexed, saying to one another, "Whatever could this mean?" Others mocking said, "They are full of new wine."* (Acts 2:12-13)
- P. So, how do the scoffers explain the sudden ability to speak in so many new languages they never knew before?
- Q. "They're drunk."
- R. That makes me scratch my head, because how does *drunk* explain anything? How does *drunk* suddenly give anybody a PhD in a foreign language? If you're being logical, them being drunk makes the miracle all that more miraculous... *Wow, they can even speak these languages when they're drunk! It's a double miracle!*
- S. Scoffers will be scoffers.

IV. Peter

- A. So the leading disciple at that time, Peter, stands up to explain and to defend what happens on the day of Pentecost. He gives one of the most important, and tightly-reasoned sermons ever in Christian history.
 - 1. *But Peter, standing up with the eleven, raised his voice and said to them, "Men of Judea and all who dwell in Jerusalem, let this be known to you, and heed my words. For these are not drunk, as you suppose, since it is only the third hour of the day. But this is what was spoken by the prophet Joel: 'And it shall come to pass in the last days, says God, that I will pour out of my Spirit on all flesh; your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, your young men shall see visions, your old men shall dream dreams. And on my menservants and on my maidservants I will pour out my spirit in those days; and they shall prophesy. I will show wonders in heaven above and signs in the earth beneath: blood and fire and vapor of smoke. The sun shall be turned into darkness, and the moon into blood, before the coming of the great and awesome Day of the Lord. And it shall come to pass that whoever calls on the name of the Lord shall be saved.'*" (Acts 2:14-21)
- B. The part in italics is Peter quoting the Old Testament. Specifically, he quotes the prophet Joel. Joel wrote 8 centuries before Christ.
- C. He quotes Joel because a) the Jews respected the Old Testament as the Word of God — and we do the same today as Christians.
- D. And he quotes Joel because b) Joel explained and predicted what was happening with the speaking in tongues.
- E. Six things to notice from Joel:
 - 1. **The timing: In the Last Days...** which technically doesn't mean the end times, exactly. What it means in this context is in the days of the Messiah. The Jews were waiting for their Messiah. And he actually came. Jesus was that Savior/Messiah sent to bring back the world to God. The Messiah came and his own people rejected him... The very people standing in front of Peter. By quoting Joel Peter is saying that the people ignored a clear prophecy of the coming Messiah. What's happening at Pentecost is proving their rejection of Jesus wrong. They had made a huge mistake, and Joel says so.
 - 2. **The outpouring: I will pour out of my Spirit...** The Spirit is the Third Person of the Trinity, God the Holy Spirit. The pouring out of the Spirit means an abundant and more-than-usual influence and work of the Holy Spirit in God's people. We'll come back to this.
 - 3. **The blessing: dreams and visions...** The prophecy of Joel includes a blessing and a curse... As Peter quotes it, the blessing is for all flesh — young, old, women, men. The blessing is dreams and visions, which simply means a clearer and clearer revelation of the Word and Plan of God in and through Jesus Christ. The Holy Spirit speaks of Christ. The Holy Spirit uplifts Christ. He testifies of Christ (John 15:26). Of all the things God's Spirit has to say, the Gospel of Jesus is the core. When the Holy Spirit comes in power, as he did at Pentecost, he will be a giant neon flashing arrow pointing at the Savior.
 - a) One of my biggest struggles with the charismatic and Pentecostal and NAR churches is that they overemphasize an experience of Holy Spirit when actually the Holy Spirit came to emphasize the truth of Christ. We should emphasize Christ, not the Spirit and truth not experience.
 - b) That doesn't mean to neglect the Spirit or to forget the filling of the Spirit. But Jesus said of the Holy Spirit, "He will testify of Me" (John 15:26).
 - 4. **The cursing: wonders in heaven above and signs... blood and fire and smoke...** Here, Joel prophesies the doom of those who reject Christ and neglect his salvation. He warns of the coming judgment day of God. This is called the great and awesome Day of the Lord, and it will be holy and merciless and just retribution of sinners. It's pretty scary.
 - 5. **The Savior: whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved.** So here we have it. God the Father pours out God the Holy Spirit to preach and proclaim God the Son and salvation and forgiveness in him... so that sinners can be forgiven and be delivered from condemnation on the great and awesome Day of the Lord.
 - a) All that in Joel. All that preached by Peter in Acts.
 - 6. **Revival: Above all else, Joel's Scripture stands in a long line of biblical promises of revival.** Whenever and wherever God's people turn to him in repentance and faith, God stands ready to pour out his Spirit in great power for the proclamation of Christ, the salvation of sinners, and the transformation of hearts, lives, and culture.

- F. Have you ever called on the name of the Lord? Have you ever turned to Jesus? Have you fled to him for refuge from the Hound of Heaven and Avenger of Blood?
1. That's what Peter does. He makes Pentecost about Christ.
- a) *Men of Israel, hear these words: Jesus of Nazareth, a Man attested by God to you by miracles, wonders, and signs which God did through Him in your midst, as you yourselves also know— Him, being delivered by the determined purpose and foreknowledge of God, you have taken by lawless hands, have crucified, and put to death; whom God raised up, having loosed the pains of death, because it was not possible that He should be held by it.*" (Acts 2:22-24)
- G. Remember what's happening. The Holy Spirit has come in power. He empowers this miracle of speaking in tongues. The disciples proclaim the grace of God in Christ in a dozen foreign languages all at once... People are amazed. Scoffers say they are drunk — as if that explains anything. And now Peter explains it by saying "this is that which was spoken of by the prophet Joel..." and after quoting Joel, he reviews the life of Christ, the crucifixion of Christ, and the resurrection of Christ... And notice...
1. Jesus of Nazareth **a man attested by God to you...**
- H. They *knew* the Messiah was coming. You knew the signs of his coming and his miracles. You saw all of it fulfilled in Jesus. He was **attested** to you by God — proven in a court of law. This gathered crowd actually lived in Jerusalem, where Jesus was killed. Many of them had permanent homes here. They were there when Jesus was there. They were there for all of this. They literally had undeniable evidence of who Jesus was, and they still crucified the Savior.
- I. But...
- J. But God raised him up. And to prove that God raised him up, Peter quotes another Old Testament prophecy, this time from David in the Psalms.
1. *"For David says concerning him: 'I foresaw the Lord always before my face, for he is at my right hand, that I may not be shaken. Therefore my heart rejoiced, and my tongue was glad; moreover my flesh also will rest in hope. For you will not leave my soul in Hades [the dwelling place of the dead], nor will you allow your Holy One to see corruption. You have made known to me the ways of life; you will make me full of joy in your presence.'"* (Acts 2:25-28)
- K. All of this is simply saying that even when Messiah dies, and he will, he will not stay dead because God couldn't let that happen. Christ will rise from the dead. That's actually in the Psalms.
- L. Peter quotes this Scripture.
- M. His listeners hear this Scripture.
- N. And they are cut to the heart.
1. *Now when they heard this, they were cut to the heart, and said to Peter and the rest of the apostles, "Men and brethren, what shall we do?"* (Acts 2:37)
- O. They were cut to the heart. They were pierced. They were deeply moved. Their consciences were awakened and convicted. They had a horrible realization and a burning sense of their urgent need.
1. What shall we do to be saved?
- P. Hold that thought, and let's go back to Doubting Thomas.
- V. Doubting Thomas
- A. Here is Thomas the disciple, heartbroken because Jesus has died. And now refusing to believe the reports of his resurrection... and refusing to even believe the prophecies of the Psalms... until, Jesus comes in and shows himself and invites Thomas to touch him and see that he is real.
- B. And Thomas does and he says, My Lord and My God.
- C. Jesus gave him undeniable evidence, and he believed. But the next thing Jesus says may be the most important thing of all today.
1. *Jesus said to him, "Thomas, because you have seen Me, you have believed. Blessed are those who have not seen and yet have believed."* (John 20:29)
- D. You want your evidence. You demand your proof. You say that if God were real he would show himself to you. If he existed, he would prove himself to you. Where is my proof? Where is my undeniable evidence? Then I'll believe in Jesus. Then I'll believe in God.
1. I would say, Do you want undeniable evidence?
- a) Look within yourself and behold the wonders of a human body, soul, and spirit. There are more synapses in your brain than there are stars in the sky. There's your sign. Undeniable evidence.
- b) Look around yourself and behold the beauties of nature and a world teeming with innumerable forms of life, each one more complicated than anything the brightest minds and most sophisticated technology can imitate.
- c) Look above yourself and see the starry heavens and a cosmos so complex and vast for words... indeed too grand to even begin to explain.
- (1) The undeniable evidence is written all around, and even within, and people still won't believe.
- E. Because we say seeing is believing. But God says believing is seeing. We walk by faith, not by sight.
- F. And this is the lesson of Pentecost.
- G. Let's go back there.
- VI. Undeniable Evidence
- A. Here these scoffers see and hear the miracle of speaking in tongues. To any open minded person, to any truly logical person, it is undeniable evidence.
- B. Yet they still scoff. They're dismissive. Oh, they're just drunk, as if that's actually an argument.
1. Oh, you're just a Christian.
2. You're narrow minded.
3. You're a bigot.

4. You're a hater.
 - C. They refuse to deal with the evidence in plain sight right before their own eyes. They refuse to consider the point and argue the merits. So they are dismissive and condescending and insulting, as if that alone will exonerate them before the throne of blazing Justice.
 - D. It will not, and the human conscience knows so. They are storing up wrath for themselves in that great and awesome Day of the Lord.
 - E. Jesus told a parable of the Rich Man and Lazarus. Both men die. The Rich Man goes to a place of Torment in Hell. And Lazarus goes to a place of comforts in Paradise, along with the believers of ages past, most notably Abraham. The rich man asks for Lazarus to bring him just a drop of water. Abraham says no, this can't happen. Then the rich man asks if Lazarus can be sent back from the dead to warn his brothers to be saved so they don't come to this place of Torment.
 - F. Again, Abraham says no. He says, Your brothers have the Law and the Prophets. They have enough warning right there, in the words of the Bible.
 - G. And then you have this:
 1. *"And he said, 'No, father Abraham; but if one goes to them from the dead, they will repent.' But he said to him, 'If they do not hear Moses and the prophets, neither will they be persuaded though one rise from the dead.'"* (Luke 16:30-31)
 - H. And this is exactly what is fulfilled on the day of Pentecost.
 - I. They see the undeniable evidence of speaking in tongues, yet they deny the undeniable.
 1. People don't deny Christ for lack of evidence. They deny Christ because their heart is sinful and hard and they are hell-bent on going their own way.
 - J. But it's not just speaking in tongues they witnessed.
 - K. Peter stands up and says Jesus rose from the dead... he said that right there in this audience there were eyewitnesses of this fact.
 - L. If Peter wanted to prove that Christ has risen from the dead, he could have called on them to testify.
 - M. But he didn't.
 - N. What did he do instead?
 - O. He quoted Scripture. He put the Word of God itself on the stand, and let that be the testimony. He let that Word speak for itself.
 - P. Because the Word of God is a more powerful testimony than any sign, any wonder, any experience, any logical syllogism, any speaking in tongues, any miracle, any healing, any glory cloud, any gold dust, any tangible anything you could ever imagine.
 1. Because...
 - a) No matter how undeniable the evidence, the fallen human heart will still find a way to deny it.
 - b) But the Word of God bears testimony to Jesus Christ, and when the Spirit of God applies the Word of God to even the hardest heart, you will have what we see on the day of Pentecost.
 - (1) Three thousand people rush to get saved...That's revival.
 - Q. How did Peter prove the Resurrection of Jesus?
 - R. He quoted Moses and the Prophets, the written Word of God, and that Word contained all the explosive power he needed. "If they do not hear Moses and the prophets, neither will they be persuaded though one rise from the dead."
 - S. To Peter, the testimony of the Word of God was more forceful and powerful and effectual than the testimony of eyewitnesses, and the Holy Spirit made it so.
 - T. They were cut to the heart, and they cried out for salvation.
 - U. How?
 1. Not by undeniable evidence of logic or experience.
 2. But by the spiritually radioactive power of the proclamation of a Gospel Centered message of the written Word of God.
 3. Because... faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the Word of God. (Romans 10:17).
- VII. Conclusion
- A. Let me just tie a bow on this and be finished.
 - B. What does it mean to be Pentecostal?
 1. **We have a Pentecostal Message, which is the Gospel of Jesus Christ, the long awaited Savior, crucified and risen again. Believe on him. Call on Him and be saved.**
 2. **We have a Pentecostal Mission, which is to tell every tribe in every tongue in every nation and every neighborhood of the wonderful work of God in salvation, and to open salvation's door, and invite everyone we know to step inside.**
 3. **We have a Pentecostal Method, which is the power of the Spirit coupled with the power of the Word to proclaim the Gospel which is the power of God to everyone who believes.**
 - C. Charles Gabriel wrote this poem in 1912, after moving from San Francisco to Chicago.

Lord, as of old at Pentecost
Thou didst Thy power display,
With cleansing, purifying flame,
Descend on us today.

Lord, send the old time power, the Pentecostal power!
Thy floodgates of blessing on us throw open wide!
Lord, send the old time power, the Pentecostal power,
That sinners be converted and Thy name glorified!