

“The Mighty Works of God” (Acts 2)

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Acts 2:1-4 (ESV)

¹ When the day of Pentecost arrived, they were all together in one place. ² And suddenly there came from heaven a sound like a mighty rushing wind, and it filled the entire house where they were sitting. ³ And divided tongues as of fire appeared to them and rested on each one of them. ⁴ And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other tongues as the Spirit gave them utterance.¹

It’s not a controversial thing to say you believe in God. Most Americans believe in God. According to the Pew Research Group’s 2014 Religious Landscape Survey, 89 percent of Americans believe in God.² That was down from the 2007 Religious Landscape Survey, which said that 92 percent of Americans believe in God.³ Of the people who said they didn’t believe in God, only 3.1 percent of them (in 2014) identified themselves as atheists.

What’s more controversial is talking about who God is, what he’s like (or if he’s even a “he”), what he’s done in history, how we can have a relationship with him, and what he demands from us. In that 2007 Religious Landscape Survey, 60 percent of Americans said they believe in a personal God, while 25 percent believe that God is an impersonal force. And in that survey, most people believed that many different religions can lead to eternal life.⁴ Once we start talking about what God is like, and how we can have a relationship with God, people start to have different ideas.

Personally, I have found that many believe in a “god,” but most people’s “god talk” is rather vague. It seems that a lot of people don’t know what he is really like.

And all of this should raise questions. How could we know what God is like? How could we know what he has done in history? How could we know what he demands from us? It’s clear that we don’t see God. He is a spirit. He’s immaterial. He’s not another part of the creation that we can observe. The Bible makes it clear that we can know God exists and that he has “eternal

¹ Unless otherwise noted, all Scripture quotations are taken from the English Standard Version (ESV).

² “Belief in God,” Pew Research Center, <http://www.pewforum.org/religious-landscape-study/belief-in-god> (accessed February 20, 2016).

³ “Summary of Key Findings,” Pew Forum on Religion and Public Life, <http://www.pewforum.org/files/2008/06/report2religious-landscape-study-key-findings.pdf> (accessed February 16, 2016).

⁴ *Ibid.* This survey says that 70 percent of American adults affiliated with a religion believe that agree that many religions can lead to eternal life.

power” just by living in the world that he has made (Rom. 1:20). But that doesn’t mean we can know specifics about God just by living in his world. If we’re to know God, he has to show us who he is. And God has done that at various times through his mighty works, through miracles, through “signs and wonders.” We need God to reveal himself through his actions and his words so that we can know him.

As we continue to look at the book of Acts, we’re going to see that God made it clear that a new day in history had dawned when Jesus was born a man, walked the earth, died on the cross, and was raised from the grave. A new day dawned when Jesus poured out the Holy Spirit on his followers. And God let everyone know that this new era in history began through “his mighty works,” through miracles that weren’t arbitrary exercises of power, but were signs pointing to what God was doing.

Last week, we looked at chapter 1 of Acts and saw that Jesus had told his apostles that they were witnesses. They were going to restore God’s people by telling others about Jesus. And they would do that through the power of the Holy Spirit, which Jesus promised he would send them. This week, we see what happens when the Holy Spirit comes.

So let’s begin to look at chapter 2. About fifty days after Jesus had risen from the grave, Jesus’ followers were gathered together in Jerusalem. At that time, a number of Jews who lived in different parts of the world had come to Jerusalem to observe Pentecost, which is also known as the Feast of Weeks. This was one of three major festivals in Judaism that brought Jewish pilgrims back to Jerusalem to worship at the temple.

So let’s read the first four verses of Acts 2 to see what happened:

¹ When the day of Pentecost arrived, they were all together in one place. ² And suddenly there came from heaven a sound like a mighty rushing wind, and it filled the entire house where they were sitting. ³ And divided tongues as of fire appeared to them and rested on each one of them. ⁴ And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other tongues as the Spirit gave them utterance.

“They” refers to the people mentioned at the end of the previous chapter, the 120 followers of Jesus. At some point later, when they were gathered, the Holy Spirit came upon them. It’s interesting how this experience is described. We’re not told exactly what it sounded like, but it was “like a mighty rushing wind.” Something appeared that looked like tongues “as of fire.” This experience seems strange, and it probably was to everyone who was there, which was why it’s hard to describe it apart from using analogies.

Here's something that interesting: I think we're supposed to see a parallel between this experience and what happened when the Israelites came to Mount Sinai in the book of Exodus. Here in Acts 2, it's Pentecost, or the Feast of Weeks, which celebrated the harvest. And this festival was celebrated seven weeks after Passover. This means this is happening about seven weeks after Jesus' death, which happened at Passover. In Jewish tradition, the giving of the law at Mount Sinai was associated with the Feast of Weeks.⁵ So the festival commemorated the giving of the law. And here, at that very festival, there is the giving of the Spirit. Another indication that these events are parallel is that at Sinai, in Exodus 19, there were loud sounds of thunder and a trumpet blast, and there was fire. Here, there is a loud sound like a mighty rushing wind, and there's fire. But the whole point is that this scene is greater. It is the fulfillment of Pentecost, which celebrated the firstfruits of the harvest. Now, we see the first of a multitude of people putting their faith in Jesus. That's why a literal translation of verse 1 is: "When the day of Pentecost was being fulfilled."⁶ This is the fulfillment of Pentecost.

We know the Holy Spirit has come not just because of the loud sound and the fire, but also because the disciples were speaking "other tongues," or foreign languages that they most likely didn't know. They were speaking languages that the Jews who were visiting Jerusalem knew. Let's read about that in verses 5-11:

⁵ Now there were dwelling in Jerusalem Jews, devout men from every nation under heaven. ⁶ And at this sound the multitude came together, and they were bewildered, because each one was hearing them speak in his own language. ⁷ And they were amazed and astonished, saying, "Are not all these who are speaking Galileans?" ⁸ And how is it that we hear, each of us in his own native language? ⁹ Parthians and Medes and Elamites and residents of Mesopotamia, Judea and Cappadocia, Pontus and Asia, ¹⁰ Phrygia and Pamphylia, Egypt and the parts of Libya belonging to Cyrene, and visitors from Rome, ¹¹ both Jews and proselytes, Cretans and Arabians—we hear them telling in our own tongues the mighty works of God."

At this time, there were many Jewish people who had come from different parts of the known world. It's possible that these people came to Jerusalem for the express purpose of attending the festival. It's also possible that they had lived in other places and had moved to Jerusalem

⁵ "It is possible, but not certain, that as early as this time this festival was associated with the giving of the Law on Sinai." Ben Witherington III, *The Acts of the Apostles: A Socio-Rhetorical Commentary* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1998), 131.

⁶ David G. Peterson, *The Acts of the Apostles, The Pillar New Testament Commentary* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2009), 131.

permanently. At any rate, Jews had been spread out to different parts of the world over the previous centuries, and here they were in Jerusalem. And they heard their own languages being spoken by the disciples. They were amazed by this, because they realized that the speakers were from Galilee. Galileans had their own distinctive accent, and no one expected that they would know all these languages.

Some people see this as a reversal of what happened at the tower of Babel in Genesis 11. Remember that God had told Adam and Eve to be fruitful and multiply and fill the earth (Gen. 1:28). And this command was repeated to Noah and his family (Gen. 9:1). Instead of doing this, the people in Babel built a tower to make their name great. They said, “Come, let us build ourselves a city and a tower with its top in the heavens, and let us make a name for ourselves, lest we be dispersed over the face of the whole earth” (Gen. 11:4). They were not obeying God. Instead, they were glorifying themselves. So in response, this is what God did:

⁶ And the LORD said, “Behold, they are one people, and they have all one language, and this is only the beginning of what they will do. And nothing that they propose to do will now be impossible for them. ⁷ Come, let us go down and there confuse their language, so that they may not understand one another’s speech.” ⁸ So the LORD dispersed them from there over the face of all the earth, and they left off building the city. ⁹ Therefore its name was called Babel, because there the LORD confused the language of all the earth. And from there the LORD dispersed them over the face of all the earth.

God gave these people many languages so that they could no longer communicate easily and work together against God. And they then spread out over the earth.

Greg Beale, a biblical scholar, makes a very strong case that Pentecost is the reversal of Babel. He writes, “God causes representatives from the same scattered nations to unite in Jerusalem in order that they might receive the blessing of understanding different languages as if all these languages were one.”⁷ The point is that sin brings division and confusion. But the Spirit unites people. God is creating a people for himself from all nations and languages.

Greg Beale also makes a great case for this event being the moment when the church becomes the temple of God. Just as God’s glory filled the tabernacle and the temple (Exod. 40:34; 1 Kgs. 8:10-11), the Holy Spirit fills the church.⁸

⁷ G. K. Beale, *The Temple and the Church’s Mission*, New Studies in Biblical Theology (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2004), 202.

⁸ *Ibid.*, 201-216.

But the people who heard all these languages didn't understand what was happening. We see that in verses 12-13:

¹² And all were amazed and perplexed, saying to one another, "What does this mean?" ¹³ But others mocking said, "They are filled with new wine."

Everyone said, "What does this mean?" There were some who mocked, and suggested that the disciples weren't filled with the Holy Spirit, but were filled with wine.⁹

Peter, the leader of the disciples, then steps up to explain what is happening. First, he says they aren't drunk, since it's only 9 a.m. Instead, what is happening is a fulfillment of Old Testament promises. This is what we read in verses 14-21:

¹⁴ But Peter, standing with the eleven, lifted up his voice and addressed them: "Men of Judea and all who dwell in Jerusalem, let this be known to you, and give ear to my words. ¹⁵ For these people are not drunk, as you suppose, since it is only the third hour of the day. ¹⁶ But this is what was uttered through the prophet Joel:

¹⁷ " 'And in the last days it shall be, God declares,
that I will pour out my Spirit on all flesh,
and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy,
and your young men shall see visions,
and your old men shall dream dreams;
¹⁸ even on my male servants and female servants
in those days I will pour out my Spirit, and they shall prophesy.
¹⁹ And I will show wonders in the heavens above
and signs on the earth below,
blood, and fire, and vapor of smoke;
²⁰ the sun shall be turned to darkness
and the moon to blood,
before the day of the Lord comes, the great and magnificent day.
²¹ And it shall come to pass that everyone who calls upon the name of the
Lord shall be saved.'

Peter says, "Hey, it's too early for us to be drunk. But what's really happening is something that God promised through the prophet Joel." (Notice that it's implied that God spoke *through* Joel—another clue that the Bible is God's word.) Then he recites Joel 2:28-32.

When God spoke through the prophet Joel, he promised that one day he would pour out the Holy Spirit on all flesh. He didn't mean every single person. But he meant that the Spirit wouldn't just come on kings or prophets or judges, which is what happened in the Old Testament. Instead, the Holy Spirit would be poured out on men and women, young and old, rich

⁹ It's interesting to compare this to Eph. 5:18.

and poor, Jew and Gentile. These people would prophesy. It seems that this means they would call people to turn to the Lord. They would tell everyone that whoever calls upon the name of the Lord shall be saved.

What's interesting is that Peter makes a slight change in the Joel passage. In the Old Testament, Joel 2:28 begins with these words: "And it shall come to pass afterward." But Peter says, "And in the last days it shall be." Peter is saying that we are now in the end times. Since Jesus died and rose from the grave and ascended into heaven, and since the Holy Spirit has been poured out, we are in the end times. In the Old Testament, it was promised that the Holy Spirit would come in the future.¹⁰ These promises often seemed as if God would pour out the Spirit when he restored his people, when he started to make the wilderness of the earth into a garden (Isa. 32:15). But this passage says that now is the time when God is restoring his people.

The pouring out of the Spirit is an earth-shattering event. God empowers people to be his people through the Spirit. In Ezekiel 36, God said, "And I will put my Spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my statutes and be careful to obey my rules" (v. 27). In Ezekiel 37, the Spirit is the one who gives life and who causes God's people to be reunited. This is such a big deal that the language used to describe the coming of the Spirit is the language used to describe the overturning of political kingdoms. When we see language about the sun becoming dark and the moon turning to blood, it signals the end of one kingdom and the beginning of another. With the death and resurrection of Jesus and the coming of the Spirit, the old covenant is over and a new covenant has been inaugurated.

That's why this shift is accompanied by miracles. Miracles are often the sign that God is doing something new in history. When God rescued Israel out of Egypt, he did it with "signs and wonders." When he gave them the law and made them a people for himself, he was doing something new. That's why there were so many miracles then. When God was calling disobedient and idolatrous Israel back to himself, he did through prophets like Elijah and Elisha, who also performed miracles. And in the time of Jesus and the apostles, God was doing something new. That's why there were so many miracles. They were signs that God was doing something important.

After Peter explains what is happening, he starts to preach about Jesus. Let's read verses 22-36:

¹⁰ Isa. 32:15; 44:3; Ezek. 36:26-27; 37:14.

²² “Men of Israel, hear these words: Jesus of Nazareth, a man attested to you by God with mighty works and wonders and signs that God did through him in your midst, as you yourselves know— ²³ this Jesus, delivered up according to the definite plan and foreknowledge of God, you crucified and killed by the hands of lawless men. ²⁴ God raised him up, loosing the pangs of death, because it was not possible for him to be held by it. ²⁵ For David says concerning him,

“I saw the Lord always before me,
for he is at my right hand that I may not be shaken;
²⁶ therefore my heart was glad, and my tongue rejoiced;
my flesh also will dwell in hope.
²⁷ For you will not abandon my soul to Hades,
or let your Holy One see corruption.
²⁸ You have made known to me the paths of life;
you will make me full of gladness with your presence.’

²⁹ “Brothers, I may say to you with confidence about the patriarch David that he both died and was buried, and his tomb is with us to this day. ³⁰ Being therefore a prophet, and knowing that God had sworn with an oath to him that he would set one of his descendants on his throne, ³¹ he foresaw and spoke about the resurrection of the Christ, that he was not abandoned to Hades, nor did his flesh see corruption. ³² This Jesus God raised up, and of that we all are witnesses. ³³ Being therefore exalted at the right hand of God, and having received from the Father the promise of the Holy Spirit, he has poured out this that you yourselves are seeing and hearing. ³⁴ For David did not ascend into the heavens, but he himself says,

“ ‘The Lord said to my Lord,
“Sit at my right hand,
³⁵ until I make your enemies your footstool.” ’

³⁶ Let all the house of Israel therefore know for certain that God has made him both Lord and Christ, this Jesus whom you crucified.”

Peter explains that Jesus is the Christ, the anointed one, the Messiah. He was the one who the Old Testament promised would come to be king of his people. And there are four reasons why we know that Jesus is the Christ, according to Peter. The first reason is that Jesus performed “mighty works” and “wonders and signs.” In fact, God did these miracles through Jesus. Jesus healed people to show that he can heal us of sin. He fed people to show he can sustain us both physically and spiritually. He brought people back from the dead to show he can give us life. And these people in Jerusalem should have known this. Remember, Jesus hadn’t been crucified even two months before this time.

Peter speaks boldly. He even says that these people crucified Jesus. He means that the failure of the Jews to recognize that Jesus is the Messiah resulted in his death. But Peter isn't just blaming the Jews and he certainly isn't being anti-Semitic. After all, he and all the earliest Christians were Jews. Jesus was also killed by the hands of lawless men—by Romans, who were not under the law of the Old Covenant. Of course, we also know that Satan, working through Judas, was responsible for killing Jesus. We can even say it was necessary for Jesus to die because we all have sinned. But at the same time, Jesus was “delivered up according to the definite plan and foreknowledge of God.” This was God's plan all along to save his people from their sin.

Another proof that Jesus is the Christ is that he was raised from the dead. Peter says, “God raised him up, loosing the pangs of death, because it was not possible for him to be held by it” (v. 24). Jesus couldn't be held down by death, no more than Superman could be held down by Lex Luthor. Death is no match for Jesus. Peter says, “This Jesus God raised up, and of that we all are witnesses” (v. 32). The apostles witnessed the risen Jesus. Paul says Jesus appeared to over five hundred people (1 Cor. 15:3-9). A number of people could witness to seeing the risen Christ. It wasn't as though one person, or a handful of people, saw him.

The third proof that Jesus is the Christ is that David, among many other Old Testament writers, wrote about him long before he walked the earth. First, Peter cites Psalm 16. In that Psalm, David said to God, “you will not abandon my soul to Hades, or let your Holy One see corruption.” Hades is not hell, but the realm of the dead. Peter's point is that David couldn't be writing about himself, because David died and the location of his tomb was known in Jerusalem. David didn't rise from the grave, so these words couldn't be about himself. But God swore to David that one of his descendants would sit on his throne (2 Sam. 7:12-13; Ps. 132:11), and these words therefore had to be about that descendant. We know that descendant is Jesus.

Peter also quotes another one of David's Psalms. This time, it's Psalm 110:1: “The Lord said to my Lord . . .” Peter says that David didn't ascend to heaven to be at the Father's right hand. David was not the one to pour out the Holy Spirit. In fact, David wrote a Psalm about the Lord—that first “Lord” refers to the Father—saying to David's own “Lord,” the Son of David, the Messiah, “sit at my right hand, until I make your enemies your footstool.” David's Lord obviously isn't David himself; it's Jesus.

The last proof is what these people were experiencing: Jesus poured out the Holy Spirit from heaven. That, too, is proof that he is the Christ.

Then David ends by saying, “Let all the house of Israel therefore know for certain that God has made him both Lord and Christ, this Jesus whom you crucified.” He means that the Father has declared that Jesus is Lord and Christ. All of these things make it clear that Jesus is the hope of Israel and the hope of the world.

Notice that Peter offers reasons for why Jesus is their only hope. He gives evidence: Jesus performed miracles, people witnessed his resurrection, the Old Testament points to Jesus, and the Holy Spirit’s activity proves Jesus is the Christ. Notice that Peter is bold: he convicts his audience of sin. He says twice that they crucified Jesus. Peter doesn’t pull any punches. It’s no surprise, then, that his audience responds the way they do. This is what happens in verses 37-41:

³⁷ Now when they heard this they were cut to the heart, and said to Peter and the rest of the apostles, “Brothers, what shall we do?” ³⁸ And Peter said to them, “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. ³⁹ For the promise is for you and for your children and for all who are far off, everyone whom the Lord our God calls to himself.” ⁴⁰ And with many other words he bore witness and continued to exhort them, saying, “Save yourselves from this crooked generation.” ⁴¹ So those who received his word were baptized, and there were added that day about three thousand souls.

The Jews who hear this message ask, “what shall we do?” They were cut to the heart. They now realize that they are responsible, at least in part, for killing the Messiah. He was supposed to be their hope. What do you do when you have killed your only hope? What do you when you’ve cut your own lifeline? What’s amazing is that even though they were responsible—at least in part—for Jesus’ crucifixion, they weren’t hopeless. Peter tells them that the one they killed is able to forgive them. He tells them to repent and be baptized. They are able to receive the Holy Spirit, if only they would call on the name of the Lord.

What’s interesting is what Peter doesn’t say. He doesn’t say, “God loves you and has a wonderful plan for your life.” He doesn’t tell these people to say a rote prayer. He doesn’t tell them to walk up an aisle. He actually doesn’t even say “believe in Jesus.” Now, at other times in Acts we hear of both repentance and faith (Acts 20:21, for example). Really, you can’t have one without the other. They are two sides of the same coin. To turn to Jesus in faith is to turn away from your selfish and sinful agenda. So Peter really means “repent and put your trust in Jesus.”

And he also says they should be baptized. In fact, the very act of baptism would show that they had put their trust in Jesus. Remember that these were Jews. It was somewhat common for Jewish people to believe they were the people of God. Baptism was an act for people who were proselytes: Gentiles who became Jews. But John the Baptist offered a baptism for the repentance of sins. The act of baptism doesn't save anyone from God's judgment. But if someone realizes they have sinned against a holy and perfect God, and they put their faith in Jesus and turn away from their old way of living, they gladly get baptized. The act of baptism is a way of publicly declaring that you have been washed of your sins and that your old life has died and you have risen to new life in Christ.

The way that Luke reports these sermons and speeches in Acts shows that he doesn't intend to write a theology of conversion. Sometimes he presents people believing and then receiving the Holy Spirit. Sometimes people believe, and then hands are laid on them and they receive the Spirit. Luke is concerned with writing history, and he even indicates here that the sermons and speeches he records are just summaries. In other words, he doesn't record the full sermons and speeches. Notice how he writes in verse 40, "And with many other words he bore witness and continued to exhort them, saying, 'Save yourselves from this crooked generation.'" Peter probably explained everything at much greater length.

What we find in Acts isn't always normative. But now, the pattern is that at the time of faith, Christians receive the Holy Spirit (Eph. 1:13). In fact, it would seem that the Holy Spirit is the one who causes us to have faith in Jesus (John 3:3-8; 1 Cor. 12:3). And when we have faith in Jesus and repent, we are children of God. We should follow up by being baptized and becoming part of a local church. But the act of going into the water, by itself, doesn't save anyone.

Notice that Peter says, in verse 39, "For the promise is for you and for your children and for all who are far off, everyone whom the Lord our God calls to himself." People who believe in infant baptism believe that since children were included in the old covenant, they should be included in the new covenant, too. So they use this verse as proof that children of believers should be baptized. But I think that's a misreading of this verse. I think Peter is saying, "The promise of forgiveness and the Holy Spirit is for everyone who calls on the name of the Lord (just like Joel promised!). It's for you. That is, it's for anyone who hears this today. It's for your

children. That is, it's for your descendants. It's for all who are far off. That is, it's for Gentiles, too. It's for everyone who calls on the name of the Lord." And that promise remains today, too.

I want to point out that three thousand people believed this message. I think that is an important number. After the giving of the law at Mount Sinai, almost immediately the Israelites worshiped the golden calf. They committed idolatry right after God told them how to live. That shows that the law doesn't give us the power to change. The law doesn't change our hearts. No set of commandments can take people who are spiritually dead and make them come to life. And after the golden calf incident, three thousand Israelites were killed (Exod. 32:28). This was part of God's judgment. But here, when the Spirit is given, three thousand people are saved. This shows that the Spirit gives life, though the law does not. The apostle Paul calls the law "the ministry of death" (2 Cor. 3:7). But he says,

¹⁷ Now the Lord is the Spirit, and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is freedom.

¹⁸ And we all, with unveiled face, beholding the glory of the Lord, are being transformed into the same image from one degree of glory to another. For this comes from the Lord who is the Spirit (2 Cor. 3:17-18).

When the Spirit came at Pentecost, he brought new life to Jewish people from all over. He was gathering them together to be God's people. And what did these people do next? Let's look at the last few verses in chapter 2, beginning with verse 42.

⁴² And they devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and the fellowship, to the breaking of bread and the prayers. ⁴³ And awe came upon every soul, and many wonders and signs were being done through the apostles. ⁴⁴ And all who believed were together and had all things in common. ⁴⁵ And they were selling their possessions and belongings and distributing the proceeds to all, as any had need. ⁴⁶ And day by day, attending the temple together and breaking bread in their homes, they received their food with glad and generous hearts, ⁴⁷ praising God and having favor with all the people. And the Lord added to their number day by day those who were being saved.

They devoted themselves to the teaching of the apostles. That shows that teaching is a central part of the life of the church. And they devoted themselves to the fellowship, which can mean communion or participation. What Luke probably means is they participated in "the breaking of bread" and prayer together. It's possible that "breaking of bread" means more than just eating together. It might be a reference to the Lord's Supper. And these people experienced "wonders and signs" that "were being done through the apostles." I don't think this is something that we should expect. Again, most miracles in the Bible are found in three distinct periods: the time of

the exodus and the entrance into the Promised Land; the time of the prophets (Elijah and Elisha primarily); and time of Jesus and the apostles. The miracles showed that this community of believers was indeed God's temple.

We also see these people were sharing their belongings. They were meeting each other's needs. This isn't socialism or communism. This wasn't government-enforced. There were no laws that compelled these people to give. No, it was voluntary and done out of love. And this devotion to each other was another sign of what God had done. It gave the disciples "favor with all people."

Now, we must ask the question: So what? What does this have to do with us? Let's start with the idea of "signs and wonders." Miracles are strange, and some people have a hard time believing in them. But they don't happen all the time. Some of what we read in Acts isn't normative. It's not an indication of what will always happen in the church. This is a special period in history. The miracles of Jesus and the apostles indicated that a shift in history had taken place. A new era had begun.

People who become Christians receive the Spirit at the time of faith, but this doesn't mean they will see "signs and wonders" or talk in tongues. However, every time someone puts their trust in Jesus and repents of their sins, it is a mighty work of God. The fact that you and I are here is evidence that Jesus is Lord and Christ. If our lives have been changed by Jesus and the Holy Spirit, we are proof of God's power.

I think we can learn from the example of Peter's sermon. People may think we're crazy, if not drunk, when we talk about Jesus. People may mock us. So how do we respond? How do we prove that Jesus is who the Bible says he is? Can you explain what you believe and why you believe it? In some ways, it was easier for Peter. He was talking to Jews who knew of Jesus. Again, this was less than two months after Jesus was crucified. And Peter was able to convince them using the Old Testament, because they knew it. That was their common ground. For us, we can use Scripture, but we may need to offer other proofs as well. However we witness, we must pray that the Holy Spirit will give us the power to tell others about Jesus.

If you're here today and you're not a Christian, you may think about the message that Peter proclaimed. All of us have rejected God. And Jesus died for sinners. So there's a real sense that all of us are responsible for his death. And he is the only King who lived a perfect life, died, and came back to life, never to die again. I don't have time to explain the evidence for the

resurrection, but it's compelling. I would be happy to discuss this with you.¹¹ At the end of the day, our only hope is turning from living life our way and turning to Jesus. Our only hope is calling on him to save us from a life of hopelessness, despair, and death.

Finally, I want us to think about what this passage says about the church. We're told that these early Christians were devoted to apostles' teaching. They were devoted to worshiping together. And they were devoted to each other. They shared their lives together and their possessions together. I want to say this very clearly, because I don't think I've said this before: If you have any financial needs, please let us know. We have a deacons' fund that can help. We must make sure that everyone in the church has his or her basic needs met.

In fact, our love for one another is another proof that Jesus is real. Jesus told his followers: "By this all people will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another" (John 13:35).¹²

¹¹ See "Evidence for the Resurrection of Jesus," <http://wbcommunity.org/resurrection>.

¹² See also Matt. 5:16; 1 Pet. 2:12.