

Pentecost
Preparation for Pentecost

Introduction: As we move into the second part of Acts 1 and part two of the Pentecost series—we will discover the **Preparation for Pentecost**

- Last week we discovered the PROMISE of Pentecost (Acts 1:8) power to be witnesses and carry the Gospel to the ends of the earth
- After “the Holy Spirit has come upon you”
- Told to tarry in Jerusalem until the promise of the Father comes—the promise of the Spirit’s outpouring

Today—the Preparation for Pentecost

Three preparatory acts that had to take place before the coming of the Spirit on the Apostles and Church at Pentecost

I. The Enthroned Position of Christ

“Now when He had spoken these things, while they watched, He was taken up, and a cloud received Him out of their sight. And while they looked steadfastly toward heaven as He went up, behold, two men stood by them in white apparel, who also said, “Men of Galilee, why do you stand gazing up into heaven? This same Jesus, who was taken up from you into heaven, will so come in like manner as you saw Him go into heaven.” Acts 1:9-11 NKJV

- A. After making clear to them their mission, Jesus disappeared from their sight and there would be no further resurrection appearances
 1. Had experienced several already during the past 40 days
 2. The resurrection and ascension seem to be one continuous movement—both together constituting His exaltation
 3. His ascension was not the first time He had vanished

NOTE: The Emmaus travelers

“Now it came to pass, as He sat at the table with them, that He took bread, blessed and broke it, and gave it to them. Then their eyes were opened and they knew Him; and He vanished from their sight.” Luke 24:30-31 NKJV

NOTE ALSO: The Thomas event was kind of the opposite

“Now Thomas, called the Twin, one of the twelve, was not with them when Jesus came. The other disciples therefore said to him, “We have seen the Lord.” So he said to them, “Unless I see in His hands the print of the nails, and put my finger into the print of the nails, and put my hand into His side, I will not believe.” 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 20:24-28 NKJV

4. His exaltation was not postponed for 40 days after His resurrection and He was not in some intermediate state
 - a. Resurrection experiences when He appeared to the disciples was Him accommodating Himself to the earthly and temporal state of the disciples
 - b. He even ate with them
 - c. His visitations were from heaven (the eternal order) to which His body of glory now belonged

B. The inner circle had seen the heavenly glory before (Transfiguration) and this would be the same glory in which He would return. (Matthew 17, Mark 13—now Acts 1)

1. Taken up in a cloud (nephele)—Mt. 17
2. Son of Man coming in the clouds (nephele)-Mark 13
3. Caught up in clouds (nephele)-Acts 1

C. Two white robed-men witness to this same Jesus that will return

“And it happened, as they were greatly perplexed about this, that behold, two men stood by them in shining garments.” Luke 24:4 NKJV

“One witness shall not rise against a man concerning any iniquity or any sin that he commits; by the mouth of two or three witnesses the matter shall be established.” Deuteronomy 19:15 NKJV

D. They had seen Jesus come in power and glory and He would return that way but there was to be an interval in between His exaltation and His coming where the Spirit would keep people living in a living union with Him.

“But now I go away to Him who sent Me, and none of you asks Me, ‘Where are You going?’ But because I have said these things to you, sorrow has filled your heart. Nevertheless I tell you the truth. It is to your advantage that I go away; for if I do not go away, the Helper will not come to you; but if I depart, I will send Him to you.” John 16:5-7 NKJV

E. Christ is ascended but His abiding presence and energy fill the whole book of Acts and indeed He ascended so that His presence might fill the earth through His Church, filled with the Holy Spirit!

“He who descended is the very one who ascended higher than all the heavens, in order to fill the whole universe.” Ephesians 4:10 NIV

“And God placed all things under his feet and appointed him to be head over everything for the church, which is his body, the fullness of him who fills everything in every way.” Ephesians 1:22-23 NIV

(ILL) Once upon a time there was a famous house builder and painter. After designing the homes, he would then build and paint them. As a painter, he was such an amazing artist that he didn't even need drop cloths. He had a steady hand, and he was finicky about using good brushes and quality paint, so there were no drips, just tight trim lines.

This craftsman always designed, built and painted the homes all by himself—with his own hands ... but then one day he had remarkable idea. As he was standing by one of his houses, he saw a bunch of kids walking home from the local elementary school. They were minding their own business, laughing and carrying their backpacks, until he shouted, "Hey, kids." When they looked up, startled and awestruck (because everyone in town knew about his amazing skills), he asked them a surprising question: "How would you like to do some painting?"

"What do you mean?"

"I'll tell you what," he said, "I'll give each of you a bucket of paint and a brush, and you can paint my new house. Do you want to give it a try?"

"For real?" they squealed with delight.

The painter nodded as he said, "Yep, for real."

"Cool!" the kids said.

He opened up the back of his truck and pulled out a load of brushes and paint cans and then pried open the paint cans. They started splashing paint on his garage door. They got paint on the sidewalk, too, and some on each other. But they also got a lot of paint on the house—all different colors, especially on the parts of the house that were under 4 feet high.

As other kids came by on the sidewalk, they asked, "Can we do that, too?" And they joined in. In about an hour most of the first floor was now covered with paint.

The house painter's neighbors came over after dinner and took it all in. "What is going on?" they asked. Another blurted out, "Look, I gotta be honest, your house looks like a tornado ripped through Sherwin-Williams. What were you thinking?"

"Well," the house painter said, "of course I could have painted this house all by myself, but I've always built and painted houses in order to bring joy to others. So based on that goal, this is the most beautiful house I've ever made. Then dozens of their friends will want to come to this house. They'll bring their friends to show what they've painted. And each one will say, "This is the home of the master painter and builder, but it's also our house."

In the same way, when God the Father, the master creator and painter of the world, pours out his Holy Spirit on his followers, he hands every single one of us a can of paint and a brush, and he says, "Go to work. Use your gifts and let's paint a beautiful house for the world."

How are you displaying the Master Painter?

Jesus ascended to His enthroned position so that He could fill us with His presence and Spirit so we could display His glory and fill "everything in every way."

Enthroned Position of Christ was Necessary for the Coming of the Spirit at Pentecost

II. The Unified Purpose of the Disciples

Key to the coming of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost was the ascension and enthronement of Jesus but it was also important that the disciples be in unity for the Spirit to be fully manifest.

"Then they returned to Jerusalem from the mount called Olivet, which is near Jerusalem, a Sabbath day's journey. And when they had entered, they went up into the upper room where they were staying: Peter, James, John, and Andrew; Philip and Thomas; Bartholomew and Matthew; James the son of Alphaeus and Simon the Zealot; and Judas the son of James. These all continued with one accord in prayer and supplication, with the women and Mary the mother of Jesus, and with His brothers." Acts 1:12-14 NKJV

A. The immediate duty of the disciples was plain—to wait in Jerusalem until the heavenly power came that would enable them to carry the Gospel to the ends of the earth.

"And being assembled together with them, He commanded them not to depart from Jerusalem, but to wait for the Promise of the Father, "which," He said, "you have heard from Me;" Acts 1:4 NKJV

1. A Sabbath's day's journey (Olivet to Jerusalem was about 2000 cubits or 1 kilometer)-this was their tradition that they were only allowed this far to travel on the Sabbath
2. They went back to the Upper Room (probably the place where they ate the Passover)-likely the home of Mary, the mother of John Mark
3. The disciples and the women who had traveled alongside Jesus were there

B. They engaged in united, persistent prayer.

1. Their command was to wait but watching Jesus they had learned that with waiting, prayer was crucial.
2. But it was united type of prayer
3. It was persistent prayer (they continued in one accord)
4. Their devotion to prayer was until God answered them from heaven

AT Pierson-“There has never been a revival in any country that has not begun in united prayer, and no revival has ever continued beyond the duration of those prayer meetings.”

For the coming of Pentecost power-unified prayer was key...and still true today.

— Jim Cymbala (Brooklyn Tabernacle) *“the church was birthed not in a clever sermon but in a prayer meeting.”*

In 1949, George Roy and Elizabeth Wood, an American missionary couple serving in northwest China and Tibet, were forced to leave the area. A local leader named Pastor Mung took over the church of 200 people. The Woods returned to America and by 1985 both of them had passed away without ever knowing what had happened to the church they started.

In 1988 the Wood's son George returned to China and met with Pastor Mung and his wife, who were now in their 80's. For 28 years the Communist government had done their best to extinguish the church. Pastor Mung wasn't allowed to preach and he spent nine of those years in prison for his faith. It was illegal to baptize or "indoctrinate" anyone under 18. When the government finally allowed Pastor Mung to reopen the church in 1983 there were only 30 (mostly older) people in attendance.

Assuming that the church was on its last leg, George Wood asked, "Pastor Mung, how many believers do you have today?" Pastor Mung's wife brought them a cardboard roll held together by yarn. The first page was filled with writing—five columns: name, age, gender, address, occupation. There were around 20 names. George Wood continued turning over page after page with the names of the baptized. Finally he asked the Mungs, "How many believers do you have now?" He said, "One thousand five hundred baptized believers." In disbelief George Wood asked, "How did this happen?"

Pastor Mung smiled as he shared his secret for church growth. It wasn't a technique or a program. He simply said, "Oh! Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, today, and forever. And we pray a lot!" Then he went on to describe what the Lord had done.

Pastor Mung died in 2006 at the age of 96. But when he passed, the number of baptized believers stood at over 15,000!

The Power of a Unified Purpose

- GT 5 minutes of prayer
- Family nights of prayer
- Reach3 Prayer

- Enthroned Position of Christ was Necessary for the Coming of the Spirit at Pentecost
- Unified Purpose of the Disciples was Necessary for the Coming of the Spirit at Pentecost

III. The Holy Integrity of the Church Restored

- This too was necessary for the Coming of the Spirit at Pentecost

A. The need of replacing Judas is explained by Peter

"And in those days Peter stood up in the midst of the disciples (altogether the number of names was about a hundred and twenty), and said, "Men and brethren, this Scripture had to be fulfilled, which the Holy Spirit spoke before by the mouth of David concerning Judas, who became a guide to those who arrested Jesus; for he was numbered with us and obtained a part in this ministry." (Now this man purchased a field with the wages of iniquity; and falling headlong, he burst open in the middle and all his entrails gushed out. And it became known to all those dwelling in Jerusalem; so that field is called in their own language, Akel Dama, that is, Field of Blood.) "For it is written in the Book of Psalms: 'Let his dwelling place be desolate, And let no one live in it'; and, 'Let another take his office.'" Acts 1:15-20 NKJV

1. The number had been 12 (corresponding with the tribes of Israel)
2. Jesus had also promised 12 thrones in response to Peter

"Then Peter answered and said to Him, "See, we have left all and followed You. Therefore what shall we have?" So Jesus said to them, "Assuredly I say to you, that in the regeneration, when the Son of Man sits on the throne of His glory, you who have followed Me will also sit on twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel." Matthew 19:27-28 NKJV

3. Because of Judas' betrayal and death his position (office) must be filled
4. Judas bought a field with his shameful act but did not live to enjoy its fruit

B. The qualifications for the successor to Judas

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“Therefore, of these men who have accompanied us all the time that the Lord Jesus went in and out among us, beginning from the baptism of John to that day when He was taken up from us, one of these must become a witness with us of His resurrection.” Acts 1:21-22 NKJV

1. Been with Jesus since He was baptized
2. Saw the resurrected Christ

C. Two candidates

“And they proposed two: Joseph called Barsabas, who was surnamed Justus, and Matthias. Acts 1:23 NKJV

1. Barsabbus (son of sabbath maybe born on Sabbath)
2. Matthias (became a missionary to the Ethiopians)

D. The selection

“And they prayed and said, “You, O Lord, who know the hearts of all, show which of these two You have chosen to take part in this ministry and apostleship from which Judas by transgression fell, that he might go to his own place.” And they cast their lots, and the lot fell on Matthias. And he was numbered with the eleven apostles.” Acts 1:24-26 NKJV

1. Prayed and cast lots

- Hebrews had a long history of this as a means of selection
- Believed it to be the Lord

“The lot is cast into the lap, But its every decision is from the LORD.” Proverbs 16:33 NKJV

2. They did not replace him because He died (did not replace James because he did not defect and could reign in eternity) but Judas defected—note the focus on Judas’ transgression.
3. The ranks of leadership had to be restored to full strength and spiritual integrity
 1. This was key to revival
 2. Whenever sin has created a breach and a compromise the church’s integrity, discipline, repentance, and restoration must be pursued.
 3. Revival is impossible outside of the confession of sin

IMPORTANT: True integrity does not cover up sin and failure.

Chuck Swindoll—*“If we have integrity, we don't hide our stumble; we don't act like we didn't.”*

- The Apostles recognized the breach and compromise and they dealt with it
- There is a necessity of preparation for the coming of the Spirit of God into our lives

(ILL) Author Doug Mendenhall shares a brief parable that should cause all of us to pause and reflect:

Jesus called the other day to say he was passing through and [wondered if] he could spend a day or two with us. I said, "Sure. Love to see you. When will you hit town?" I mean, it's Jesus, you know, and it's not every day you get the chance to visit with him. It's not like it's your in-laws and you have to stop and decide whether the advantages outweigh your having to move to the sleeper sofa. That's when Jesus told me he was actually at a convenience store out by the interstate. I must have gotten that Bambi-in-headlights look, because my wife hissed, "What is it? What's wrong? Who is that?" So I covered the receiver and told her Jesus was going to arrive in eight minutes, and she ran out of the room and started giving guidance to the kids—in that effective way that Marine drill instructors give guidance to recruits...

My mind was already racing with what needed to be done in the next eight—no seven—minutes so Jesus wouldn't think we were reprobate loser slobs. I turned off the TV in the den, which was blaring some weird scary movie I'd been half watching. But I could still hear screams from our bedroom, so I turned off the reality show it was tuned to. Plus, I turned off the kids' set out on the sun porch, because I didn't want to have to explain Jon & Kate Plus Eight to Jesus, either, six minutes from now.

My wife had already thinned out the magazines that had been accumulating on the coffee table. She put Christianity Today on top for a good first impression. Five minutes to go. I looked out the front window, but the yard actually looked great thanks to my long, hard work, so I let it go. What could I improve in four minutes anyway?

I did notice the mail had come, so I ran out to grab it. Mostly it was Netflix envelopes and a bunch of catalogs tied into recent purchases, so I stuffed it back in the box. Jesus doesn't need to get the wrong idea—three minutes from now—about how much on-line shopping we do. I ran back in and picked up a bunch of shoes left by the door. Tried to stuff them in the front closet, but it was overflowing with heavy coats and work coats and snow coats and pretty coats and raincoats and extra coats. We live in the South; why'd we buy so many coats? I squeezed the shoes in with two minutes to go.

I plumped up sofa pillows, my wife tossed dishes into the sink, I scolded the kids, and she shooed the dog. With one minute left I realized something important: Getting ready for a visit from Jesus is not an eight-minute job. Then the doorbell rang.

Conclusion: Are we prepared for the coming of the Holy Spirit?

- The apostles took 10 days
- They prayed and they restored integrity so that when the Spirit would come they would be ready

Preparing for Pentecost

- Enthroned Position of Christ was Necessary for the Coming of the Spirit at Pentecost
- Unified Purpose of the Disciples was Necessary for the Coming of the Spirit at Pentecost
- Restored integrity of the Church was Necessary for the Coming of the Spirit at Pentecost