

Turning Point: From Information to Transformation (Pentecost)

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Acts 2:42-47 (NIV)

⁴² “They devoted themselves to the apostles’ teaching and to fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer.

⁴³ Everyone was filled with awe at the many wonders and signs performed by the apostles.

⁴⁴ All the believers were together and had everything in common.

⁴⁵ They sold property and possessions to give to anyone who had need.

⁴⁶ Every day they continued to meet together in the temple courts. They broke bread in their homes and ate together with glad and sincere hearts,

⁴⁷ praising God and enjoying the favor of all the people. And the Lord added to their number daily those who were being saved.”

Introduction

This morning we are going to touch some bases, in light of Pentecost, through the lens of Acts 2:42.

A young missionary, Herbert Jackson, was given a car to help him in his work. The car was a major asset, but it had one difficulty—it would not start without a push or a jump-start. Jackson devised a system to cope with the car’s inability to start. When he was ready to leave his home, he went to a nearby school and asked permission to bring some of the children out of class to help him push-start his car.

Throughout the day, he was careful to always park on a hill or to leave his engine running when he stopped for short visits. For two years the young missionary used what he believed was an ingenious method to enable him to use the car.

When poor health forced the Jackson family to leave the field, a new missionary arrived to lead the mission. When Jackson explained to the new missionary his methods for starting the car, the young man opened the hood and began inspecting. “Why, Dr. Jackson,” he interrupted, “I believe the only trouble is the loose cable.” He gave the cable a twist, pushed the switch, and the engine roared to life.

For two years, Dr. Jackson had used his own devices and endured needless trouble. The power to start the car was there all the time—it only needed to be connected.

In His Power

Likewise, if you and I are not connected to the Holy Spirit, we are powerless. As Spurgeon said, Without the Spirit of God, we can do nothing. We are as ships without the wind, branches without sap, and like coals without fire, we are useless.”

The Book of Acts is sometimes referred to as “The Acts of the Apostles.” Allow me to throw a stone in the bush, “would it be inaccurate to describe the Book of Acts as ‘the acts of the Holy Spirit through the apostles?’”

Here is my thinking, the Holy Spirit: convicts the world of sin, convicts the world of righteousness and convicts the world of judgment (John 14:26).

The Holy Spirit empowers us, indwells us, guards and guarantees our salvation, helps us in prayer, intercedes for us, regenerates and renews us, comforts us with fellowship, fills us with joy, peace and hope, sanctifies us, gives and distributes His gifts, gives us wisdom by which we can understand God as revealed in Scripture and teaches us according to the Word.

Indeed, Acts 1:8 promises us the empowering of the Holy Spirit as we set out to do God’s work on earth.

Could we say that without the Holy Spirit, the apostles would be powerless in their Godly assignment? Reflect once again on my initial question, “the acts of the Holy Spirit through the apostles.”

Step Forward

Now let us take it a step forward and each ask of ourselves, what evidence is there of the acts of the Holy Spirit through me? What evidence would a stranger find in me of a Christian faith lived out?

Information about the Holy Spirit is not enough! We have to move from information to transformation which takes place in our hearts through the working of the Holy Spirit. This inward transformation then leads to reformation as we – like the early church – determine to live out what we know in our heads and what we believe in our hearts. The Bible is not just a textbook to be studied; it is what God uses to change hearts and lives through the power of the Holy Spirit.

Exposure to God’s Word; His truth, must first inform the head, then transform the heart, and finally reform our hands.

- Getting the Word into your head. The best way to get the Bible into your head is to find ways to be exposed to its truth, in the power of the Holy Spirit. Key, is to read the Bible every day. To get it into our heads, we must get into the Word. Commit to regular Scripture reading, prayer, praise and worship. Expecting to hear from God.
- Getting the Word into your heart. One way to get the Word into your heart is through journaling. Take your Bible and notebook and ask God to impact you through the Holy Spirit, as you are busy with His word. Prayerfully read a passage and then meditate (Psalm 1:2) on it. You can copy it down and pray, or memorize it. It may happen that something stands out that you can use for prayer and reflection. Read different translations etc.
- Live it out with your hands. God didn’t give us the Bible and His Holy Spirit merely to fill our heads and hearts. He wants us to take what He’s written to live it out in the power of the Holy Spirit. As we do, we’ll be known not only as people who honor the Book but also as people who live by the Book. And as we do this, we also witness; we set about His great

commission to us (Matthew 28:18-20). We – like the early church – impact the world around us.

Devoted to Christ

The first Christians were 100% sold-out for Christ, completely committed and ready to make an impact in their world. And the most important commitment they made was to Christ. The apostles' teachings were what Christ taught. They were intently devoted to living a sensible Christ-centered lifestyle, and in this sense, they lived what they believe.

As we know, the Church in 2020 should still be committed to hearing, learning, and applying God's Word, in other words living what we believe.

But we also notice also the words in Acts 2:42, "they devoted themselves." This means two things:

- The apostles were faithful in their responsibility to preach and teach.
- The believers were faithful to continue to learn and keep growing.

They were convinced that the depth of their devotion to the Word would determine their impact in the world around them.

One night, about 50 years ago, a young man was experiencing some doubts about the Bible so he cried out to God in prayer and said this, "Oh, God, I do not understand it all, but I am willing to believe it and willing to obey it."

Billy Graham later wrote: "I discovered the secret that changed my ministry. I stopped trying to prove that the Bible was true. I had settled in my own mind that it was, and this faith was conveyed to the audience. Over and over again I found myself saying, "The Bible says." I felt as though I were merely a voice through which the Holy Spirit was speaking. I found that the Bible became a flame in my hands. That flame melted away unbelief in the hearts of people and moved them to decide for Christ. The Word became like a hammer breaking up stony hearts and shaping them into the likeness of God."

Conclusion

All of us stand exactly at that same spot right now. We can do what Billy Graham did. We can say we believe the Word of God is true even though we don't understand every part of it and we can say that we're willing to obey it.

Reflection

- What would a snapshot of your devotion to Christ look like?
- To what extent do you live what you believe?
- Are you impacting the world around you for Christ?

Take a step forward. Make a commitment with me, hold your Bible in your hand and answer these questions, with an "I will" or a "not yet."

1. Will you receive the Word with eagerness by doing whatever it takes to get it into your head?
2. Will you research the Word with regularity by getting it into your heart?
3. Will you respond to the Word with obedience by living it out with your hands?

God bless you,

Amen.