

The Church (That's Us)

THE STORY: How the Bible Explains Everything #11 - Pastor Jonathan Minter - April 12, 2026 - Acts 2:1-11; 46-47

INTRO: Good morning, church! We're continuing our series, "THE STORY: How the Bible Explains Everything." This is a 12-week journey through the meta-narrative of Scripture, where we see that the Bible is not a collection of disconnected stories, but one great story of a holy God rescuing His broken world through Jesus Christ.

Over the last several weeks, we've watched God, the Author, carry His purpose through creation, covenants, and even captivities. All while mankind, His image bearers, repeatedly rejected and disobeyed Him. Then last week, the story reached its climax: the Author wrote Himself in. Jesus became the sacrificial hero.

Now this week... we turn to the Church.

So let's step into the story for a moment. Imagine spending years walking with Jesus: hearing His teaching, watching His miracles. Then you travel with Him to Jerusalem for Passover. But instead of celebration, you watch in horror as your friend is betrayed, beaten, mocked, and crucified.

Now you're afraid. If they killed Him ... are you next? Sit in that feeling. Then three days later, the tomb is empty. You're confused. And while you're hiding, Jesus suddenly stands in the room. At first, you're terrified, but then you realize ... He's alive. And that changes everything.

For 40 days, He's with you. Teaching you. Encouraging you. And you start thinking, this is it... we've made it. But then Jesus repeats something unexpected: "It is to your advantage that I go away..." (John 16:7) And after those 40 days, you watch Him ascend into heaven. And now you're left asking ... now what?

Jesus said you would receive power and be His witnesses. So you gather together, and for 10 days, you pray and wait. And that's where our story picks up today. Christ has died, Christ is risen, Christ has ascended. Now what?

Need: That's not just their question—it's ours. What do we do with the fact that Jesus has died for our sins, risen from the grave, and is now seated at the right hand of the Father, interceding for us? That is incredible news ... but what comes next?

I love this part of the story. Because God doesn't just rescue us, He recruits us. He doesn't just write Himself into the story ... He breaks the 4th wall and invites us onto the stage. He gives us His power and calls us into His purpose. And deep down, that's something we've always longed for.

To step into the story ... to fight alongside the hero ... to be part of something bigger than ourselves. Whether it's sailing with Odysseus, walking with the Fellowship of the Ring, rolling out with Optimus Prime or standing beside heroes we grew up with... we all want in.

Trans: But this Story is far better. Because it's real, its eternal, and it's God's church ...

BODY: In the book of Acts, Luke recorded that God established His Church as His means to accomplish His purpose of rescuing all nations. We can receive His invitation to be the Church that fulfills His purpose. How do we become the Church that God has established? The text gives us three defining marks of the Church that God established.

Read text: Acts 2:1-11; 46-47 (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. 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

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mighty works of God.” 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.

HOW WE CAN BECOME THE CHURCH THAT GOD HAS ESTABLISHED:

1. Receive His Holy Spirit.

EXP: (1-4) Catch up on where we are in the story:

- The Place: somewhere in Jerusalem, probably in the temple area.
- The Occasion: **Pentecost** (1) The second of the three great Jewish feasts, celebrated at Jerusalem yearly, the seventh week after the Passover, in grateful recognition of the completed harvest.
- The Time: 50 days after Jesus was crucified, 10 days after he ascended into heaven
- The People: The 12 (minus Judas, plus Matthias) + about a hundred others, including Mary, the mother of Jesus and the other women.
- The Situation: Jesus is gone. They are waiting for the promised Holy Spirit. They are in limbo.

“**Came from heaven**” (2) (οὐρανός, *ouranos*) - the region above the sidereal heavens, the seat of order of things eternal and consummately perfect where God dwells and other heavenly beings

“**Might rushing wind**” (2) (πνοή, *pnōē*) - breath, breath of life, wind. The choice of this Greek word is clearly meant to point to the Spirit as Ellicott wrote, “The Greek word for “wind” is not that commonly so translated (*anemos*), but one from the same root as the Greek for “Spirit” (*Pnoē* and *Pneuma*—both from *Pneō*, “I breathe”).”

“**Divided tongues as of fire**” (3) (διαμερίζω, *diamerizō*) - to be divided into opposing parts, to be at variance, in dissension, to distribute.

“**Rested on each one of them**” (3) (καθίζω, *kathizō*) - to seat down, set (figuratively, appoint); intransitively, to sit (down); figuratively, to settle (hover, dwell)

“**Filled with the Holy Spirit**” (4) (πίμπλημι, *pimplēmi*) - to “fill” (literally or figuratively (imbue, influence, supply)); to fulfill

“**Spirit gave them utterance**” (4) (ἀποφθέγγομαι, *apophthengomai*) - to speak out, speak forth, pronounce; not a word of everyday speech but one “belonging to dignified and elevated discourse” (like a prepared speech).

The Bible is a unified story. So if you’ve been following the story up until now - if you know your scriptures - there should be a couple things resonating in your mind right now as you think about the wind and fire.

- Remember God’s covenant with Abraham? The blood path? How did God appear to him in his vision as he walked the path for both sides of the covenant? “a smoking fire pot and a flaming torch passed between these pieces”
- Remember when God gave the law at Sinai? God descended on the mountain as a thunderstorm cloud with thunder and lightning and smoke and fire.
- How did God lead them through the wilderness? A pillar of fire by night and cloud by day.
- How did Israel know that the glory of the Lord descended on the tabernacle (the wilderness tent) or Solomon’s temple when they were commissioned? Fire and cloud.

By this point in the story, when you see wind and fire, you should automatically think, “this is the presence and the Glory of the Creator of the Universe.”

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Remember a couple weeks ago Pastor Gary mentioned that after the Babylonians destroyed that temple, and then Cyrus allowed them to go back and rebuild it, the glory of the Lord never descended on it again? In fact, Ezekiel saw a vision of the glory of the Lord leaving the temple and waiting on the Mount of Olives, standing at the exit to see if the people would repent. Later in Ezekiel, he sees a vision of a new temple that would be built, and he sees the glory of the Lord return from the Mount of Olives back to the temple through the East Gate.

Here we are, in Jerusalem, most likely in the temple area in Jerusalem and right here in Acts 2, the glory of the Lord returns. But it doesn't descend on His building - this time it descends on His people. The Spirit of God, the wind and fire we've seen throughout the whole Bible, is now resting on each individual person, ready to go where they go, divided, enough for each person, ready to empower them to do the work he has called them to do.

ARG: Jesus told them many times that He would send the Holy Spirit to guide and empower them:

Luke 24:49 (ESV) And behold, I am sending the promise of my Father upon you. But stay in the city until you are clothed with power from on high.

Acts 1:8 (ESV) "But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you, and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth."

1 Peter 2:4-5 (ESV) As you come to him, a living stone rejected by men but in the sight of God chosen and precious, you yourselves like living stones are being built up as a spiritual house, to be a holy priesthood, to offer spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ.

The Holy Spirit comes to all those who believe in Jesus as Lord and Savior:

John 7:38-39 (ESV) "Whoever believes in me, as the Scripture has said, 'Out of his heart will flow rivers of living water.'" Now this he said about the Spirit, whom those who believed in him were to receive, for as yet the Spirit had not been given, because Jesus was not yet glorified.

ILL: **It's like moving day:** For years, everything you own is in one place. That address defines where you live. But then moving day comes. The furniture is packed up. The boxes are loaded. The house is empty. And suddenly, it feels strange there. Because everything that made it "home" has moved somewhere else.

That's what happens in Acts 2. For generations, God's presence "lived" in the temple. But now, He's moved out. Not because He's gone... but because He's chosen a new dwelling place. **You.**

APP: Friend, will you be the dwelling place for the Holy Spirit of God, will you yield to His presence in your life? Sadly, we have a tendency to pray very little and then work out of our own strength. But the disciples prayed for 10 days and preached for 10 minutes and miracles happened. Start with considerable time with the Lord and be filled with the Holy Spirit.

2. Focus on His Mission.

EXP: (5-11) We see the story move from the arrival of the Spirit to now this massive gathering that the arrival of the Spirit caused. Scripture is careful to state that "every nation under heaven" was represented. God is fulfilling His purpose, all the way back in Genesis, to bless the nations and ultimately rescue them all.

"Every nation under heaven" (5) (ἔθνος, *ethnos*) - a tribe, nation, people group; in the OT, foreign nations not worshipping the true God, pagans, Gentiles

Genesis 12:2-3 (ESV) ² And I will make of you a great nation, and I will bless you and make your name great, so that you will be a blessing. ³ I will bless those who bless you, and him who dishonors you I will curse, and in you all the families of the earth shall be blessed.

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“**At this sound**” (6) (φωνή, *phōnē*) - a sound, a tone; speech: of a language, tongue

“**They were bewildered**” (6) (συγχέω, *sugcheō*) - to disturb the mind of one, to stir up to tumult or outbreak; to confound or bewilder

“**Speak in his own language**” (6) (διάλεκτος, *dialektos*) - own conversation, speech, discourse, language; the tongue or language peculiar to any people

“**They were amazed**” (7) (ἐξίστημι, *existēmi*) - to amaze, to astonish, throw into wonderment; to be out of one's mind, besides one's self, insane

“**These who are speaking Galileans?**” (7) - Barnes notes this “Galileans: (1) They were ignorant, rude, and uncivilized, John 1:46. Hence, the term Galilean was used as an expression of the deepest reproach and contempt, Mark 14:70; John 7:52. (2) Their dialect was proverbially barbarous and corrupt, Mark 14:70; Matthew 26:73.”

“**Own native language**” (8) (γεννάω, *gennaō*) - of birth, begotten. They are speaking like they are from where we are from. They have matched our home language.

“**Parthians ... Arabians**” (9-11) - 16 nations/regions mentioned. This is not random, it's a deliberate sweep of the known world. Luke is showing that from the very beginning, the gospel is not local, but global. The mission starts with God gathering before God sending. Many of these were Jewish pilgrims or converts who would return home. The gospel doesn't just spread by the apostles, it spreads by ordinary people returning home with extraordinary news.



Acts 11:20-21 (ESV) ²⁰ But there were some of them, men of Cyprus and Cyrene, who on coming to Antioch spoke to the Hellenists also, preaching the Lord Jesus. ²¹ And the hand of the Lord was with them, and a great number who believed turned to the Lord.

Also, God is showing that He is redeeming the table of nations as seen in Genesis 10. God is bringing restoration to the sons of Noah and even those who became enemies of Israel like Egypt. God is also establishing a reversal of the Tower of Babel. Babel: languages divided, nations scattered. Pentecost: languages understood, nations united. But not one language restored ... many languages redeemed.

“**Proselytes**” (11) (προσήλυτος, *prosēlutos*) - a newcomer; a stranger, alien, a proselyte: one who has come over from a Gentile religion to Judaism.

“**Mighty works of God**” (11) (μεγαλειος, *megalēios*) - magnificent, excellent, splendid, wonderful. “The great things of God; that is, the great things that God had done in the gift of his Son; in raising him from the dead; in his miracles, ascension” — Barnes

ARG: Jesus gave us His Mission statement:

Luke 19:10 (ESV) [Jesus speaking] “For the Son of Man came to seek and to save the lost.”

Jesus also gave us our Mission statement:

Matthew 28:19-20 (ESV) ¹⁹ Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in[b] the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, ²⁰ teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age.”

ILL: If people are the mission, then people can never be interruptions to the mission. This has been one of the hardest things for me to keep centered around. It is so easy for me to be project minded over people minded. I am the kind of person who wants a room to be clean and tidy for people, but also be frustrated when those same people I prepared for make it messy. I unknowingly make the room my mission, not the people that fill it.

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APP: If God's Spirit now lives in you, then you don't just attend church, you are the Church wherever you go. That means every conversation, every workplace, every ordinary moment becomes an opportunity to carry His presence and represent Him well.

3. Participate in His Community.

EXP: (46-47) They prayed together, received the Spirit together and they stayed together. The mission of God goes out in community not isolation.

"Day by day" (46) (προσκατερέω, *proskartereō*) - to be steadfastly attentive unto, to give unremitting care to a thing, to continue all the time in a place, to persevere and not to faint. These Christians did this not occasionally, not when it was convenient, but with consistency and intentionality, they kept showing up in each other's lives.

"Attending the temple together" (46) (ὁμοθυμαδόν, *homothumadon*) - with one mind, with one accord, with one passion. Literally one heart or one passion. They had one heartbeat and it was the Gospel.

"Lord added to their number" (47) (ἐκκλησία, *ekklesia*) - in the KJV it says He added to the "church." An assembly of Christians gathered for worship in a religious meeting. They worshiped together, they ate together, they shared life together. And as they did... God kept adding to their number.

Don't miss this: The mission of God doesn't move forward through isolated individuals—it moves forward through a committed community.

ARG: **The unity of the Church is tied directly to the credibility of the Gospel:**

John 17:20-21 (NLT) [Jesus speaking] "I am praying not only for these disciples but also for all who will ever believe in me through their message. I pray that they will all be one, just as you and I are one—as you are in me, Father, and I am in you. And may they be in us so that the world will believe you sent me."

Spiritual growth requires proximity to other believers:

Hebrews 10:24-25 (ESV) And let us consider how to stir up one another to love and good works, not neglecting to meet together, as is the habit of some, but encouraging one another, and all the more as you see the Day drawing near.

ILL: **Think about a single coal pulled out of a fire.** When it's in the fire, it burns hot, bright, and strong. But the moment you pull it out and set it by itself and it begins to cool...fade...and eventually go dark. Now put it back in the fire and it comes alive again. That's what biblical community does. It keeps your faith burning.

APP: You were never meant to follow Jesus alone. If you isolate yourself, your faith will slowly grow cold, but when you commit to biblical community, your passion for Christ is strengthened and sustained. So don't just attend occasionally, plant yourself in the life of the Church and pursue Christ with His people.

CONCLUSION: So now what? Christ has died for us. Christ is risen. Christ has ascended. Now what do we do? Acts 2 gives us the answer. We don't just admire the story... we step into it. We become the Church that God has established. So ...

- Will you yield to His Spirit?
- Will you live for His mission?
- Will you commit to His people?

Because this story is still being written. And by the grace of God you get to be part of it. Let's pray.