

A POURED OUT PEOPLE**Acts 2:14-41**

Intro: Eric Liddell was the son of Scottish missionaries to China. He was born in China and as he grew he attended boarding schools and eventually the University of Edinburgh. He excelled in sports – especially rugby and track. He competed in the 1924 Summer Olympics in Paris in running events, and if you have seen the movie about him named CHARIOTS OF FIRE you know that his best event was the 100 meter race but he refused to run it because it was held on a Sunday. Instead he competed in the 400 meter event during the week and won the gold medal for it. He could have done anything – but he followed his calling and served as a missionary for the rest of his life in China. He died at age 43 in a Japanese internment camp in February of 1945 – just 6 months before Japan surrendered. Eric Liddell was a man of God, who gave everything for the Good News of the Gospel.

Noah and Mary Zook were married in 1860 and had 11 children. Three of those children died in early childhood. Four others, David, Sara, Eber, and Rhoda, were among the earliest Brethren in Christ missionaries to Africa and India, in the first decade of the 20th century. Of those four, Sara died in Rhodesia and Eber and Rhoda in India, all in a matter of months. Noah, who was an early BIC evangelist preaching the Wesleyan Holiness message saw the Holy Spirit poured out on his children and they gave everything for the Good News of the Gospel.

Last we saw that the Holy Spirit was poured out on the 120 disciples in the upper room and all Jerusalem was amazed. We're going to pick up where we left off then – actually we will begin reading at verse 14 where we left off last week and read to verse 41 of Acts 2. **Read Acts 2:14-41**

Pentecost transformed people

- The same people who hid in terror when Jesus was crucified were transformed into tireless preachers of the resurrected Jesus just 50 days later.
- Such transformation is impossible but for the Holy Spirit. Even the cowardly denier became the boldest preacher as Peter stepped up proclaimed a salvation message that mesmerized the crowd and moved them to the very core of their souls.
- As a Jewish man Peter no doubt had fairly extensive training in the scriptures and he had also spent three years with Jesus. So, it's not like the only thing he was good for was running fish nets in the Galilee. Still, he was a fisherman and not a preacher. But when the Holy Spirit filled him he began preaching using one scripture after another. Peter preached with an urgency and power could only come from one transformed by the Holy Spirit.
- Peter's sermon began by talking about the last days and showed that . . .

Pentecost was the best day because it was the beginning of the last days

- God's perfect plan was perfectly unfolding. This was no accident. This was not a scramble from heaven to salvage the mess what the Jewish leaders and Romans had created on Good Friday. God had this plan in play all along. Peter proves this in his sermon by quoting from Joel 2:28-32 with
*And in the last days it shall be, God declares,
 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;
 even on my male servants and female servants
 in those days I will pour out my Spirit, and they shall prophesy.
 And I will show wonders in the heavens above
 and signs on the earth below,
 blood, and fire, and vapor of smoke;
 the sun shall be turned to darkness
 and the moon to blood,
 before the day of the Lord comes, the great and magnificent day.
 And it shall come to pass that everyone who calls upon the name of the Lord shall be saved. Acts 2:17-21*

- The last days are the best days and we're still in them – we didn't miss out on anything because Pentecost is still happening. Commentator Albert Winn writes, *“The sense of living in the last days marks the whole New Testament. After so many centuries have passed we are apt to conclude that the early Christians were mistaken. Certainly the End did not come as soon as they expected. Yet there is a precious truth here we must not lose. Christians ought not to live as though the death and resurrection of Christ have made no real difference. That Event ushered in a new kind of time—the last days—for us to live in. That the last days have lasted so long does not change their essential nature. These are the days when the powers of the end are already at work. These are the days when the kingdom of God, for which men hoped so long, already exists. These are the days when Christ, having won his victory, already rules. These are the days when whoever calls on the name of the Lord shall be saved—Jew or Gentile. The morning newspaper and the routine of our daily work seemed to deny this. The kingdoms of this world are still very real, and we must play our part in them. **AND LISTEN TO THIS:** But the Christian knows that the backbone of their power was broken long ago and that the real authority belongs to Christ. The great evidence for this is the presence of the Spirit in the church.*
- Whenever we are tempted to feel defeated by the crazy and confusing events of this world we need to remember that the real authority belongs to Jesus who is sitting at the right hand of the Father. Peter quotes David from Psalm 16 and then refers to King David's tomb. He points out that the tomb of David is the key. David's tomb still had David's remains in it. But Jesus's tomb is empty. Winn writes, *“The whole Christian movement could have been stopped by its enemies finally and completely by one simple thing: all they had to do was produce the body of Jesus. They could not. All arguments that the resurrection was only a wishful thinking on the part of Jesus's followers falls right here.”* These are the last days and they are the best days because they still show that . . .

Pentecost brought the pouring out of the Holy Spirit on all flesh

- That is, everyone who calls on his Name. Again, Peter is quoting those final words from Joel's prophesy, *And it shall come to pass that **EVERYONE WHO CALLS UPON THE NAME OF THE LORD SHALL BE SAVED.*** Acts 2:21.
- Peter reminds his listeners of their complicity in Jesus's crucifixion. Listen again, *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—this Jesus, delivered up according to the definite plan and foreknowledge of God, you crucified and killed by the hands of lawless men. God raised him up, loosing the pangs of death, because it was not possible for him to be held by it.* Acts 2:22-24. YOU Crucified! You killed him. You were lawless. But God raised him from the dead. And because of that . . .
- Even those who crucified Jesus were eligible for salvation. Peter tells them, “You just need to ask for it.” FB Meyer writes this: *“There are no exceptions in Peter's great appeal for repentance. Every one of you! he declared:
But I drove the nails into his hands!
Every one of you he insists!
But I pierced his side.
Everyone, says the apostle again.
And from this motley crowd rose the primitive church. Notice that those who had gone deep into sin are not required to serve a long novitiate between forgiveness and the gift of Pentecost. In verse 38 the two are combined. Notice also in verse 39. Not only Jews, but far off Gentiles—nay, as many as God shall call by his inward speech and grace are welcome to receive the fullness of the Spirit. And then Meyer asks, “Have you received it?”*
- No one is beyond the saving power of the risen Christ. I remember, as a young and naïve pastor, my incredulity when an 86 year old man on his deathbed told me he couldn't accept Jesus's forgiveness because he was just too far gone. His words were, “I guess the devil's just got me.” Fortunately he did accept the Lord eventually. In just the past month or so I know of a conversation where an ABCer was presenting the offer of salvation to someone and the response was something like my 86 year old friend – they believed they're just too far gone. I understand that. They feel beyond the reach of salvation – but

truthfully, what makes their sin so special that it's beyond the promise that says that ". . . *everyone who calls upon the name of the Lord shall be saved.*" Acts 2:21? The answer is nothing! Nothing is so bad that the Lord can't forgive it – no matter what we think.

- The Church was founded on the good who had once been the bad and the ugly. Because . . .

Conclusion: Pentecost was the birth of the Church

- Three Thousand Souls!
- By the time Peter finished preaching the same people who thought maybe Peter and his friends were drunk at 8:30 in the morning as he began his sermon *were cut to the heart, and said to Peter and the rest of the apostles, "Brothers, what shall we do?"* Acts 2:37. Peter replied, *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. 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.* Acts 2:38-39.
- There it is again – the promise is for EVERYONE!
- But the key is to REPENT! To repent means to change. Repentance doesn't mean feeling bad about sin and then staying in sin – it means walking away from it. The very definition of the word Church, as I've pointed out countless times over the past 19 years is "Called out ones". By definition from its very inception on that first Day of Pentecost when the Spirit fell, was that the people of God be called out from what the world insists upon. The Church doesn't give in to cultural pressure to conform to its mold. Repentance means the very opposite. If we are going to be Ashland Brethren in Christ CHURCH it means we are Ashland Brethren in Christ Called out Ones – if we are not called out then we are just a club that meets on Sunday morning and looks like the rest of the world. Be we are. We are called out – and that means we are different and we have been transformed and that we believe that we are called to take that good news of transformation to a world that is cut to the heart and asking "Brothers and sisters, what shall we do?"
- And we have the answer. "The promise is for you, and you and you and everyone who calls on the name of the Lord." The Spirit poured out on the Day of Pentecost and the Church began and the last days commenced and the call continues for us to be his poured out people. Amen.