

I. My Notes ... WWC message 10/18

II. Series: A Disciples Life – Our Daily Journey

- Title: From Communication to Revival
- Text: Acts 2:37-4:31
- Quote: “I believe there are too many practitioners in the church who are not believers.”- C. S. Lewis (Theologian, Author)

III. Introduction

- Honest communication cuts through to the heart of the matter. This is what we have been laying a foundation for over the last few weeks. There are moments when the Word of God doesn't just inform — it pierces. It cuts through our defenses, our distractions, our doubts. That's what happened on the day of Pentecost. Peter stood up, filled with the Holy Spirit, and preached a message which didn't just land — it landed with the power that resembled a fire. And the people were cut to the heart.
- But the Spirit doesn't stop at conviction. He moves us from brokenness to boldness, from repentance to renewal, from fear to fearless proclamation. The portion of Luke's letter that we are jumping into today is not just the story of the early church — it's the blueprint for Spirit-empowered living today.

In this passage, we witness the birth of a community marked by devotion, generosity, and joy. We see healing that opens doors to testify of the power and grace of the Lord. We hear bold voices that refuse to be silent. And we watch a church that doesn't pray for safety — it prays for courage. So today, we're going to walk through this Spirit-saturated stretch of scripture and ask: What does it look like to be cut to the heart — and then rise with courage?

- Because the same Spirit who moved then is moving now. And He's not just calling us to believe — He's calling us to live boldly.

#### IV. Picking Up Where We Left Off

- **Acts 2:37-41 NLT**

*37 Peter's words pierced their hearts, and they said to him and to the other apostles, "Brothers, what should we do?"*

*38 Peter replied, "Each of you must repent of your sins and turn to God, and be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins. Then you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. 39 This promise is to you, to your children, and to those far away—all who have been called by the Lord our God." 40 Then Peter continued preaching for a long time, strongly urging all his listeners, "Save yourselves from this crooked generation!"*

*41 Those who believed what Peter said were baptized and added to the church that day—about 3,000 in all.*

- The sermon that Peter preached cut right through all the mocking and misunderstanding. It brought those that heard Peter's words (inspired by the Holy Spirit) face to face with the truth of who Jesus was and is.
- Like so much else in Scripture, there is a lesson for us here. The leading and inspiration of the Holy Spirit helped Peter speak (communicate, preach) the truth to those who were listening. They had to make a choice when confronted with this truth of who Jesus was – what would they do with Him?
- It's the same thing we can see with today ... we get to live and speak of Jesus being Lord of our lives. Those around us, watching, being involved in our lives, listening get to hear the sermon we live each day. Our choice, what are you going to do with Jesus?
- Peter called these people that were attending the Pentecost celebration to repent. There isn't enough said about repentance today. So, I'm about to speak for a minute. You may have heard it said that repentance is about turning away or changing direction. It goes deeper than this. Regret and remorse often accompany the recognition that we need a Savior. To repent is to turn away from all that God has said is wrong – it is a lifestyle

alteration. Let me try to clarify this with a well-known example of regret. Judas betrayed Jesus, most know this event. Judas had his reasons, but it became obvious that he felt remorse when he threw the coins back into the Temple (Matthew 27:5). He felt horrible about what he had done. But Judas stopped short of repentance and finding forgiveness because he hanged himself in despair.

- Peter confronted those at the celebration with their sin and told them “each of you must repent of your sins and turn to God...” (Acts 2:38). This reveals the individual nature of salvation. No one else can save us. It is between each person and Jesus. When confronted with their sins (shortcomings, missing the mark), many repented and sought to be baptized. On that day, the church grew by 3000.

#### V. The Church in Action

- **Acts 2:42-47 NLT**

*42 All the believers devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching, and to fellowship, and to sharing in meals (including the Lord's Supper), and to prayer.*

*43 A deep sense of awe came over them all, and the apostles performed many miraculous signs and wonders. 44 And all the believers met together in one place and shared everything they had. 45 They sold their property and possessions and shared the money with those in need. 46 They worshiped together at the Temple each day, met in homes for the Lord's Supper, and shared their meals with great joy and generosity—47 all the while praising God and enjoying the goodwill of all the people. And each day the Lord added to their fellowship those who were being saved.*

- Reading this passage points out some big differences in the initial way of the church and the way that church is today. The NT church (The Way) was born out of simplicity, by the leading of the Holy Spirit, having a group identity and culture. They ate together, they served together, they prayed together. The cultural norm today is based on individualism and privacy. It

has been formed by “my choice, my way” ... My way is driven by self-sufficiency, spiritual apathy, and consumerism. By now you must be thinking, “Rick, you must not like the church all that much.” Not true at all. I love the church ... we have become a bit confused. Gathering in one another’s homes, sharing what you have, had given way to budget meeting – institutionalism – structure. I get it, there must be organization, there must be structure. But because of this spontaneity (like Peter’s sermon) has been lost. Staff and scheduling have become the norm. Perhaps it is time to take a step back and just love your neighbor.

#### VI. Keep Pointing to Jesus

- Acts chapter 3 sees the Apostles pointing to Jesus once again. Peter and John were heading to the Temple for a normal time of prayer, and they had an encounter. The lame beggar on the path was asking for help. His idea for help came from his perception of the circumstances he faced. God had other plans.
- **Acts 3:3-6 NLT**  
*3 When he saw Peter and John about to enter, he asked them for some money.  
4 Peter and John looked at him intently, and Peter said, “Look at us!”  
5 The lame man looked at them eagerly, expecting some money. 6 But Peter said, “I don’t have any silver or gold for you. But I’ll give you what I have. In the name of Jesus Christ the Nazarene, get up and walk!”*
- This lame beggar is like many of us today. Facing a life problem and only thinking of relief from the pressing circumstance. Peter and John knew that results, that life would be different with Jesus at the center. This understanding would lead John to write in one of his letters, *“This is the confidence we have before him: If we ask anything according to his will, he hears us.” (1 John 5:14 CSB).*
- Because of this confidence, this understanding, they could tell this beggar that they had something more impactful than money (imagine that). They

pointed him to Jesus. Peter and John lived seeing Jesus meet every need. They had learned through the challenges and struggles of the ministry that Jesus had while on earth, needs were met, through Jesus Christ prophecies were fulfilled.

- **Isaiah 61:1-3 NLT**

*The Spirit of the Sovereign Lord is upon me, for the Lord has anointed me to bring good news to the poor. He has sent me to comfort the brokenhearted and to proclaim that captives will be released and prisoners will be freed.<sup>2</sup> He has sent me to tell those who mourn that the time of the Lord's favor has come, and with it, the day of God's anger against their enemies. <sup>3</sup> To all who mourn in Israel, he will give a crown of beauty for ashes, a joyous blessing instead of mourning, festive praise instead of despair. In their righteousness, they will be like great oaks that the Lord has planted for his own glory.*

- This is the One that the Apostles pointed others to while building the church. This was done to the honor of glory of our Lord and Savior. A miracle happened in this moment – the lame walked, rejoiced, and glorified God.
- Peter stepped forward again and pointed to Jesus.
- Acts 3:12-13 NLT  
*12 Peter saw his opportunity and addressed the crowd. "People of Israel," he said, "what is so surprising about this? And why stare at us as though we had made this man walk by our own power or godliness? <sup>13</sup> For it is the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob—the God of all our ancestors—who has brought glory to his servant Jesus by doing this. This is the same Jesus whom you handed over and rejected before Pilate, despite Pilate's decision to release him.*
- Once again, we see the simple and straight-forward truth. It's all about Jesus. What are you going to do with Him?
- But this message brought a different result than the previous one. It still didn't change the message or the Apostles confidence in their Lord.

## VII. Revival

- Have you ever done all the “right” things and still had a result that you didn’t expect or deserve? This is what happened to Peter and John. This was part of the forming of the NT church.

- **Acts 4:1-4 NLT**

*While Peter and John were speaking to the people, they were confronted by the priests, the captain of the Temple guard, and some of the Sadducees. 2 These leaders were very disturbed that Peter and John were teaching the people that through Jesus there is a resurrection of the dead. 3 They arrested them and, since it was already evening, put them in jail until morning. 4 But many of the people who heard their message believed it, so the number of men who believed now totaled about 5,000.*

- Jailed for speaking the truth. I’m sure that no one has ever heard that happening before – punished for communicating with sincerity and honesty. Yet, even in this situation the church grew. The Gospel message wins out over anyone who attempts to silence it.
- There is concern today that Christianity is falling by the wayside. That other ideas and beliefs are taking the place of foundational faith. Revival is born out of unrest, out of the recognition that what is taking place is a result of our own shortcomings. Growing up during the last spiritual awakening our country experienced (The Jesus Movement, 1960-1980) you could sense the unrest and the need for change. During this time that we are studying in the book of Acts, society was out of balance, people were looking for answers – for the truth. It came through the message that Jesus brought. God loves you, not your selfish actions ... it is about Him and if you seek a relationship with Him, you will find it. Along with all those things that are necessary in life. *“31 “So don’t worry about these things, saying, ‘What will we eat? What will we drink? What will we wear?’ 32 These things dominate the thoughts of unbelievers, but your heavenly Father already knows all your needs. 33 Seek the Kingdom of God above*

all else, and live righteously, and he will give you everything you need.”  
(Matthew 6:31-33 NLT).

- The church was growing; the Gospel message was reaching people that were searching for hope. But the religious leaders weren't happy about it. Religion is about doing life man's way instead of God's way. Religion will tell you that you will find the answers in the system. Jesus says, "Follow me" ... this isn't about a system or organization – it is about a bond, a deeply intimate connection, with the One who says that through Him you will find fulfillment and purpose.
- Today, there is a desperate need for revival. There are places where it is happening. We, as people, need a spiritual awakening. Religion has become a force to tell you what to believe and the right way to do it. People are crying out for truth – the truth and freedom that comes from knowing Jesus, not being associated with an organization.

#### VIII. Last Words (until next time)

- I've been listening to a song from the early 2000's several times a day lately. Some of the words say ... "I bring an offering of worship to my King. No one on earth deserves the praises that I sing. Jesus may You receive the honor that You're due - O Lord I bring an offering to You ..." (Offering, Paul Baloche). Because of His love, we can have confidence in the bond that we have in our relationship with Jesus Christ.
- Peter and John lived with that confidence. When they were arrested and questioned before the religious leaders their response was, "*Whether it's right in the sight of God for us to listen to you rather than to God, you decide; 20 for we are unable to stop speaking about what we have seen and heard.*" (Acts 4:19-20 CSB). They weren't about to let man's way get in the way of what the Lord had done in their lives. In this difficult circumstance, other believers were praying for them. Revival has its foundations in prayer and their unwavering desire to follow the leading of the Holy Spirit.

- Over the last few weeks, we have looked at ordinary people ignited by the filling of the Holy Spirit to speak the truth to others, not being concerned about what it might cost them. This truth, the truth of God's love and mercy, of His sacrifice and resurrection, brought hope and transformation to those who heard the message. It allowed them to rise above the difficulties of daily life and find meaning and purpose. They found community.
- It cut to the heart of the matter and brought renewal to their life. This same truth, this same Spirit, can do the same for each of us today.
- Let's Pray
- Grace First, Grace Always