

TAKEAWAY:

God advances His gospel through Spirit-empowered preaching and sovereign salvation.

INTRODUCTION QUESTIONS:

- In what ways have people disappointed you? How are the promises of God encouraging to you?
- Share a time when someone shared their faith with you? Or, share a time when you shared your faith with someone else.

UNDERSTANDING:

Have a few group members read Acts 2:1-41 or give an overview of the chapter.

- How did this sermon help you better understand this passage of scripture? Is there anything that was mentioned during the sermon that stuck out to you?
- What comes to mind when you think about Pentecost? How has this passage been taught or understood in your background?
- How does the Spirit empower believers to share the gospel today?
- Peter's sermon focused entirely on Christ—His death, resurrection, and lordship. Why is this clarity essential? In what ways have you seen Christian "culture" go astray from this example?
- How does Peter use the Old Testament in this chapter? What might this tell us about the value of reading the Old Testament?
- Three thousand people were saved in one day. What does this teach us about who controls evangelistic results?

APPLICATION:

- How should this story of multiple conversions encourage us to "GO" and evangelize each day?
- Pray this week for one specific person to share the gospel with. If that interaction happens, come back to report it to the group next gathering.

GO DEEPER:

The Go Deeper section has two potential functions. It can supplement your small group discussion by providing extra discussion material.

You can also use these sections as short devotionals to carry you through the week until your next group meeting and to deepen your study of our text from this week. Here are two "Going Deeper" discussion prompts that build upon the above provided questions without repeating them:

Living in the "last days": Peter announces that the "last days" have arrived (v. 17; cf. Heb 1:2, 1 Pe 1:20), the time between Jesus' ascension and second coming. Theologians call this viewpoint an

"inaugurated eschatology" – the Kingdom is *already* here and now, but *not yet* fully consummated; believers, as new creations in Christ, *already* experience the first fruits of being born again, but are *not yet* perfect or living in the final, restored new heaven and new earth reality of their eternal existence. During this time, the outpouring of God's Spirit is specifically for the purpose of global witness.

- Christian live in the world but not by its standards (1 John 2:15–17); they too still experience a world full of suffering, sin, and death. How does understanding that we live in the "overlap of the ages" help us manage our expectations for the Christian life? How does it protect us from the twin errors of triumphalism (expecting heaven on earth now) and defeatism (expecting no victory until Jesus returns)? How does it also affect our witness to others? In your answer, consider using Henri Nouwen's idea that Christians are called to be "wounded healers," who from their own personal pain, vulnerabilities, and struggles can empathize with and declare hope to others.
- If the outpouring of God's Spirit is a "down deposit," pledge, or foretaste of heaven (Eph 1:14), in what specific ways should the Christian life look like a "movie trailer" for the coming Kingdom?
- In the "last days" the church should be defined by the universal priesthood of all believers (something Israel failed to do but the church is called to do; Ex 19:5–6; Isa 61:6; Jer 2:13; 1 Pe 2:1–12). In what ways are we relying too heavily on professional clergy to hear from and act for God? How can you/we better exercise ourselves to "be the church" rather than "come to church."
- When you witness to others, do you invite them to church or to similarly experience the reality of what God has done in Christ for you, which, of course, includes not forsaking assembling together as believers? Living in the "last days" means living in the era of amnesty before the final judgment. How does viewing our current moment in life as a limited-time window of mercy change the urgency of your prayers for non-believers?
- The Spirit of God now indwells all who trust what God did in Christ for them—individually and collectively as the body of Christ (1 Cor 3:16–16; 6:19). What does this mean practically that both *you* and the *church*, are the place where God's Spirit dwells (instead of the Temple), the location where heaven and earth now intersect?
- Consider reading *Resident Aliens: Life in the Christian Colony* and/or *God's Empowering Presence: Paul, the Spirit, and the People of God*.

Quotes:

- "For the Spirit who came down at Pentecost is the very Spirit of the Son, who through Him makes us partakers of God, illuminating and sanctifying the Church to declare His lordship." Athanasius of Alexandria
- "For the Holy Spirit came down on the day of Pentecost... and they spoke with the tongues of all nations. What does this mean, except that the Church, which was to be spread through all nations, would speak the languages of all?" Augustine of Hippo
- "Baptism [is] an outward sign of repentance and remission of sins... a visible sign by which... [repentant believers] were publicly incorporated into the Spirit-baptized fellowship of the new people of God.... The first descent of the Spirit... should be studied as types and models of what all subsequent occasions should be." F. F. Bruce
- "The coming of the Spirit is God's promise fulfilled: his presence returned to his people.... his empowering presence.... The Spirit is the '*sine qua non*' of all Christian life and experience.... God is not simply saving diverse individuals... rather he is creating a people for his name." Gordon Fee

PRAYER:

Pray for confidence in Christ's reign, boldness in mission, and awareness of the Spirit's empowerment in daily life.