

A GREATER OUTPOURING OF THE SPIRIT: ACTS 4-5

I. INTRODUCTION

- A. Acts 4-5 is meant to parallel Acts 2 in that the church prays, the Spirit is poured out, God's power breaks out, people get saved, and the church community grows together in sacrificial unity. Acts 4-5 lists all of the same dynamics but with more detail and greater intensity.
- B. The key points of these chapters are: unified corporate prayer for revival, sacrificial community living, holiness, fear of the Lord, and a vision for signs and wonders to where ALL get healed and delivered in our presence.
- C. People believe Acts 3-5 happened 1-2 years after Acts 2.

II. UNIFIED CORPORATE PRAYER AND THE OUTPOURING OF THE SPIRIT

23 And being let go, they went to their own companions and reported all that the chief priests and elders had said to them. 24 So when they heard that, they raised their voice to God with one accord and said: "Lord, You are God, who made heaven and earth and the sea, and all that is in them, 25 who by the mouth of Your servant David have said: 'Why did the nations rage, And the people plot vain things?'

- A. After being persecuted, John and Peter went back to their friends to tell them of the threats not to preach the name of Jesus. Some versions say "companions" or "their own" meaning their family. It has an emphasis on their level of friendship and camaraderie.
- B. Persecution has the amazing potential to cause us to lean into friendships and to awaken prayer. Out of the overflow of their friendship in the Lord, a prayer was awakened spontaneously in the group. They raised "their voice to God with one accord," meaning their voices were collectively one voice, not separate voices. This emphasis is stronger than the unified prayer in Acts 1:14 or 2:46. Either one person prayed out and they all agreed in with him, or they all prayed out together in the spirit of prayer.
- C. They prayed out of Psalm 2, which is an end-time prophecy about the nations raging against Jesus, Christians, and unbelieving Jews. This story foreshadows an end-time prayer movement responding to an end-time global raging.

29 Now, Lord, look on their threats, and grant to Your servants that with all boldness they may speak Your word, 30 by stretching out Your hand to heal, and that signs and wonders may be done through the name of Your holy Servant Jesus.”31 And when they had prayed, the place where they were assembled together was shaken; and they were all filled with the Holy Spirit, and they spoke the word of God with boldness.

- D. Their corporate prayer was for the corporate mission, not just personal needs. They were deeply connected to their mission together, even in the midst of the pressures.
- E. Within confidence in God’s involvement, awareness, and power, they cried out for greater levels of His manifest power. They did not consider it a lack of faith to ask for more of the Spirit’s power, even though the fullness seemed to be poured out in Acts 2. I believe they pulled on the promises of Joel 2 and Acts 2 (spirit of prophecy and signs and wonders) and didn’t see it fully manifesting until Acts 4-5.
- F. God answered with a resounding yes from heaven, shook the building with supernatural power, and filled them with the Spirit. They experienced another Pentecost moment that launched them into greater manifestations as a church. What did it look like and feel like to be filled with the Spirit again? How long did it last? What were all the stories of each person in that building?
- G.
- H. God is looking for people who look to Acts 2 as a promise to pray into with persistence in deep friendship with those in their churches UNTIL He shakes their buildings and fills them with the Spirit. There is a holy, fiery boldness that will come upon the church in the face of threats and martyrdom in the days to come.

III. SACRIFICIAL COMMUNITY LIVING

32 Now the multitude of those who believed were of one heart and one soul; neither did anyone say that any of the things he possessed was his own, but they had all things in common.

- A. As in Acts 2, there’s an outpouring of the Spirit and then a summary of how the church lived life together in the aftermath. Corporate infillings should lead to sacrificial friendships. They probably had more financial needs in the church due to financial backlash Christians felt in a Jewish community and because many of Jesus’ disciples were from Galilee (northern Israel) and seemed to have moved to Jerusalem (southern Israel) and needed to be supported.

33 And with great power the apostles gave witness to the resurrection of the Lord Jesus. And great grace was upon them all.

- B. This verse could be turned into chapters of dramatic stories. “Great” power and “great” grace was upon the leaders and the people. Midway through Acts 5, we see that these

power demonstrations were happening so frequently and so powerfully that everyone was hearing about them. In Acts 5, they all come to Jerusalem to be healed and delivered.

34 Nor was there anyone among them who lacked; for all who were possessors of lands or houses sold them, and brought the proceeds of the things that were sold, 35 and laid them at the apostles' feet; and they distributed to each as anyone had need. 36 And Joses, who was also named Barnabas by the apostles (which is translated Son of Encouragement), a Levite of the country of Cyprus, 37 having land, sold it, and brought the money and laid it at the apostles' feet.

- C. The church was so given to friendships that they were progressively selling houses and land to provide for others. They honored the church leadership by submitting their finances “at their feet.” These were life-changing financial decisions! Barnabas is introduced here and becomes an apostle later in Acts.

IV. GOD’S COMMITMENT TO COMMUNITY AND FEAR OF THE LORD

But a certain man named Ananias, with Sapphira his wife, sold a possession. 2 And he kept back part of the proceeds, his wife also being aware of it, and brought a certain part and laid it at the apostles' feet. 3 But Peter said, “Ananias, why has Satan filled your heart to lie to the Holy Spirit and keep back part of the price of the land for yourself? 4 While it remained, was it not your own? And after it was sold, was it not in your own control? Why have you conceived this thing in your heart? You have not lied to men but to God.”

- A. This giving story is purposely contrasted with the previous verses to show that some in the church were not saying yes to community and honesty to the same level as the others. Satan attacks the foundations of church community as a way of ending revivals. This story also highlights God’s zeal to confront Satan’s and people’s attempts to disrupt committed friendships in the church.
- B. One foundation of church relationships is the fear of the Lord, knowing that God sees every thought, word, deed, and motivation. We “submit to each other in the fear of the Lord” (Ephesians 5:21). It’s good and healthy for leaders to discern and challenge things that disrupt church relationships.

11 So great fear came upon all the church and upon all who heard these things.

- C. The Holy Spirit released the fear of the Lord as an experience upon the church and the unbelievers that heard these stories. “Great” fear came upon the people. What does that mean, and what impact did it have on the church?

V. HIGH VISION FOR CITY-WIDE AND REGIONAL REVIVAL

12 And through the hands of the apostles many signs and wonders were done among the people. And they were all with one accord in Solomon's Porch. 13 Yet none of the rest dared join them, but the people esteemed them highly. 14 And believers were increasingly added to the Lord, multitudes of both men and women.

- A. Joel 2 promised signs and wonders on the earth and in the sky. Signs and wonders include many categories of supernatural works such as multiplying food, prophesying with supernatural confirmations in the sky, and Moses and Elijah type wonders.
- B. The church met regularly in homes but also in the temple. This means that the church was not afraid of the threats of the Jewish leaders or Political leaders and were willing to suffer for their open preaching.
- C. The fear of the Lord, the signs and wonders, and the commitment to community caused many unbelievers to highly esteem the church. They had to count the cost before they gave their lives to Jesus and entered into the church community. Initially, they “dared not join them” out of the fear of the Lord. But then many of them end up joining.

15 So that they brought the sick out into the streets and laid them on beds and couches, that at least the shadow of Peter passing by might fall on some of them. 16 Also a multitude gathered from the surrounding cities to Jerusalem, bringing sick people and those who were tormented by unclean spirits, and they were all healed.

- D. We are not told what multitudes means in this section, but in Jesus' day it meant thousands or tens of thousands. People would travel from all over the country to see Him, be healed, and follow Him for days. When Jesus was walking in power, people were invading His house from the ceiling, crowding around the house, pulling on His robe in the masses, or waiting there until they got touched. The testimonies of power from Acts 4-5 went out so quickly that people traveled with their sick and demonized family members to another city just to be around the Apostles.
- E. This sounds like a stretched out, chaotic healing parade in the streets of Jerusalem. How many came at a time? How long did they stay? How did Peter and the others minister to them? How long did it take? What would it look for 500 tormented people to be by each other and then delivered from demons one after another? What was the chaos like as they were all healed and delivered and praising God, running around, crying on their mom's shoulder?
- F. “All” were healed and delivered! We are believing for this magnitude of power to break out in Sioux Falls, the Midwest, and America. We can “waste” our time in prayer, fasting, and community because one week under this anointing will be more fruitful than 20 years without it.