**Round Top Church Christian Fellowship**

**Resurrection Series**

Acts of the Holy Spirit

Peter and John Released – Acts 4:31

July 7th, In the Year of Our Lord 2024

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(All Scripture is from the New American Standard Bible, unless otherwise noted.)

Sermon Audio: roundtopchurch.org / Under Member’s tab

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The historical events recorded in the New Testament book of Acts are foundational to Christianity. We see the result of these historical events today. With this understanding. . . of the transitional time from the Cross, Resurrection, Ascencion and Commissioning to Pentecost and the impact Pentecost had on the followers of Jesus. . .we can clearly see why Christianity rapidly expanded from Jerusalem to throughout the Roman Empire. The numerous language groups present at the Pentecost event (Acts 2:8-12) when the Apostles spoke the Gospel Message to people from all over the dysphoria which they heard in their native tongue. . . jettison the Good News to people in far lands. It is really simple. . . these Jews from Pentecost went home and told someone. Starting from Jerusalem (Luke 24:47) through the regions of North Africa, southern Europe and the Middle East. . . God’s eternal message, that there is an eternal life pledge to those who surrender their hearts to Him. God’s eternal pledge witnessed through Abraham was to all the families of the earth. (Genesis 12:3). Paul sums this up in Romans 1.

**Romans 1**:16 For I am not ashamed of the gospel, for it is the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes, to the Jew first and also to the Greek.

17 For in it the righteousness of God is revealed from faith to faith; as it is written, "BUT THE RIGHTEOUS man SHALL LIVE BY FAITH." (Gen. 15:6)

Then, after the Apostles witness the Good News at Pentecost, Peter gives his first sermon to the Jews, at the Temple (Acts 2), who were part of the mob demanding the blood of Jesus. After preaching for some time, Peter told the Jews that they crucified the Lord Jesus Christ. At that point, Scripture tells us their hearts were pierced, and they called-out to Peter, “What shall we do?” This is the place to where God calls all of us. When we do not have anywhere else to go, we do not have any answer, we don’t have any hope within ourselves. . . we simply have only God to which to turn and say, “What must we do?” We have heard, ‘There is no atheist in a fox hole’, and the dying bed is a place where many find their last breath surrendering to God. The death bed is where pride dies too. . . for those who surrender to the Lord. But do not be mistaken. . . pride’s alive and well and has an eternal resting place separate and distinct from God and His heaven and His people (Revelation 20-22). People choose to be separate from God. God does not force anyone to stay away from Him. God accepts all surrendering hearts.

**Results of Peter and John’s Report to Believers**

**Teaching God’s Word is the Superior Gift.**

**Be Bold under the Spirit’s empowerment.**

**Acts 4:31** And when they had prayed, the place where they had gathered together **was shaken**, and they were **all filled** with the Holy Spirit and began to speak the word of God with boldness.

Notice it did not say they began to speak in tongues. We need to take note

that Paul taught the Corinthian Believers that the superior gift from God is to speak forth the truth of His Word not tongues.

**1 Corinthians 14:**1 Pursue love, yet desire earnestly spiritual gifts, but especially that you may prophesy. . . . 4 One who speaks in a tongue edifies himself; but one who prophesies edifies [***builds up***] the church. 5 Now I wish that you all spoke in tongues, [This means some did not speak in tongues] but even more that you would prophesy; and greater is one who prophesies than one who speaks in tongues, unless he interprets, so that the church may receive edifying. 6 But now, brethren, if I come to you speaking in tongues, what will I profit you unless I speak to you either by way of revelation or of knowledge or of prophecy or of teaching? (See also 1 Corinthians 14:23,24)

The word prophecy, in the context Paul is referring, is to teach or speak forth the truth from God’s Word. Paul is not saying to predict future events. This is why teaching accurately God’s Word is the superior gift. Reading again, Luke’s message from God is that the followers of Jesus had gathered after Peter and John had been released . . . “And when they had prayed, the place where they had gathered together was shaken, and they were **all filled** with the Holy Spirit and began to speak the word of God with boldness.”

This “boldness” is what we Believers are to do today and in all times. . . speak with boldness. This includes *confidence* because we are to know God’s Word. I pray we are availing ourselves, as we come together, and in our quite time with the Lord. . . to seek the additional filling of God’s Holy Spirit in order that we speak with boldness and I say confidence the Word of God. However, I want to emphasize, this does not mean to shout or be aggressive in our witness. . . this means we should not shrink back from taking the opportunity to witness the Good News when the opportunity presents itself and, in a loving manner, not aggressively or demandingly. Jesus presented everyone with a choice. The people with whom He was firm were the religious leaders who should have known better not the “Samaritan woman at the well” (John 4).

**Descriptive not Prescriptive**

**The events Luke chronicles in Acts 4:32-37 are telling us what happened and therefore, *descriptive* of the events, not a mandated way of life.**

Within the narratives of the Bible, we find two different distinct elements concerning the passages of Scripture we should practice and incorporate into our daily lives and other passages inform us of what took place, not that we are to emulate the same actions. God’s moral code for example is to be followed (prescriptive)…we should not murder, steal, covet, lie, worship idols, or abuse drugs. Paul gives a list in Galatians 5:18-21 highlighting the Believer’s life-practices that are not God’s will for our lives. Note that Paul writes that Believers are “led by the Spirit” as in contrast to the Law. Remember, the Law is there to bring awareness to people about their sin. Again, and always remember. . . the Law was never intended to remove the penalty for sin (Hebrews 10).

**Galatians 5:18** But if you are led by the Spirit, you are not under the Law.

19 Now the deeds of the flesh are evident, which are: immorality, impurity, sensuality, 20 idolatry, sorcery, enmities, strife, jealousy, outbursts of anger, disputes, dissensions, factions, 21 envying, drunkenness, carousing, and things like these, of which I forewarn you, just as I have forewarned you, that those who practice such things will not inherit the kingdom of God.

Likewise, Paul also gives the *prescribed* Spirit empowered plan of action to counter and overpower the fallen human desire to pursue these bad behaviors (deeds of the flesh) in Galatians 5:22-25.

22 But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, 23 gentleness, self-control; against such things there is no law. 24 Now those who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires. 25 If we live by the Spirit, let us also walk by the Spirit.

All of this teaching is tied to Jesus’ statement to Nicodemus in John 3. . *. to be born again of Spirit*. I have noted before that God did not and does not ask us to be Christians on our own. God did not commission the Apostles to go out on their own to witness the Good News of the Cross of Christ. As a visual object lesson for us, Jesus breathed His spirit into the Apostles empowering them to accomplish His Great Commission (John 20:22).

Because of God’s Spirit indwelling the Apostles and followers of Jesus, they were all united as only the Lord could unite them. Here is a *descriptive* account of what took place within the Believer’s congregation. This passage of Scripture is not directing all Believers, in all times, to sell all of their possessions and donate the proceeds to the leaders. We are simply given a view to how Believers responded during this time. And, if so, led by God’s Spirit. . . these life-practices, we see here described, are acceptable.

**Acts 4:32-37** And the congregation of those who believed were of one heart and soul;

and not one of them claimed that anything belonging to him was his own,

but all things were common property to them. **33** And with great power the apostles were giving testimony to the resurrection of the Lord Jesus, and abundant grace was upon them all.

**34** For there was not a needy person among them, for all who were owners of land or houses would sell them and bring the proceeds of the sales **35** and lay them at the apostles' feet, and they would be distributed to each as any had need. **36** Now Joseph, a Levite of Cyprian birth, who was also called Barnabas by the apostles (which translated means Son of Encouragement), **37** and who owned a tract of land, sold it and brought the money and laid it at the apostles' feet.

**Summation**

All these successes the Apostles and other Believers experienced were only due to them availing themselves and totally relying upon God’s Spiritual empowerment. And, yes, it is at times we have great reverence and fear because the power that works through us is not ours. . . but the Lord’s. Acts 4:31 tells us the place was shaken where the congregation assembled. So, we Believers, today, and in all times, do not find any power within ourselves to accomplish the Lord’s Great Commission. For it is God who is at work in us, not us. . . Philippians 2:12-13

12 So then, my beloved, just as you have always obeyed, not as in my presence only, but now much more in my absence, work out your salvation with fear and trembling; 13 for it is God who is at work in you, both to will and to work for His good pleasure. **AMEN**