

## Past the Red Line

(Acts 2:1-13)

### Introduction

1. Accelerate: Jesus accelerates us by the power of the Holy Spirit to a transformative, relational, missional life in Christ.
2. Redline: Maximum speed that an internal combustion engine is designed to operate without causing damage.
  - a. We fear moving past our human red line, which might cause irreparable damage to ourselves.
  - b. What if God can move us past our red line to do amazing, impossible things for Jesus?

### Wait on the presence of God's Spirit [Acts 2:1-4a]

1. [2:1] 120 followers of Jesus gather in Jerusalem during Pentecost, waiting.
  - a. Pentecost: 50 days after Passover, a God-ordained celebration of the 2<sup>nd</sup> annual harvest
    - i. 1 of 3 pilgrimages feasts to Jerusalem to remember what God has done for His people.
    - ii. Celebrating the Feast of Weeks (Deut 16:9-12) and Day of First-fruits (Deut 26:1-10).
    - iii. Everyone (including the landless children, slaves, priests, outsiders, poor/outcast) remember when they were landless slaves in Egypt, but set free & given a Promised Land full of harvest.
  - b. Point: A celebration of God's provision of harvest.
    - i. They respond to God by giving thanks & giving back to Him with the "first-fruits" of their harvest.
  - c. The disciples are being prepared by Jesus for His great spiritual harvest (cf. 1:8), waiting for the power & presence of the Holy Spirit to accelerate/empower them to reap it.
2. [2:2-3] The Holy Spirit's arrival as sovereign God.
  - a. [2a] A sound like a powerful, roaring wind
    - i. Greek: *Echos*; like roar of seas/waves (Luke 21:25) or trumpet blast (Heb 12:19)
    - ii. Coming from Heaven: Supernatural; of God.
  - b. [2b] What are all the followers doing? Sitting.
    - i. They are not rushing around engaged in activity/busyness of ministry; they're at rest, waiting.
    - ii. They obey Jesus' command (cf. 1:4-5) to not depart, & wait for the Father's promise.
  - c. [3] The Holy Spirit manifests as tongue-shaped flames, alighting on each person's head.
  - d. The wind & fire are a theophany: Appearance of God's presence
    - i. He does not always manifest this way (cf. 1 Kgs 19:11-13).
  - e. The disciples do not choose when/how the Spirit will fill them; God alone sovereignly chooses.
3. [2:4a] God's Spirit fills them, fulfilling the Father's promise (cf. Luke 3:16; 24:49; Acts 1:4-5).
  - a. God fills each & everyone of them.
    - i. All (not just those "closest to Jesus") are intimately filled with the very presence of God.
    - ii. We no longer meet with God at a temple in Jerusalem for festivals because the coming of the Spirit makes you the temple (cf. 1 Cor 6:19-20).
  - b. God fills them generously: [Greek] *Pimpremi*; fill to overflowing, so much so that something swells up.
  - c. In obedience, they waited for the Holy Spirit's presence.
    - i. He comes at the best time, to bring about the best ends by the best means for the most people.
    - ii. His plans, timing & method are perfect as sovereign God.
4. Application: Are you willing to trust the Sovereign God & wait on His timing? He's faithful & delivers on His promises.
  - a. How do you need to surrender your time table for life & ministry?
  - b. Pray, seek & await God's presence & timing; allow the Spirit to fill, lead & move.

## **Allow the Spirit's power to accomplish the impossible [Acts 2:4b-11a]**

1. [2:4b] God's Spirit empowers them
  - a. The tongues of fire empower them to speak in other tongues.
    - i. Different than the phenomenon described in 1 Cor 14, where 2 steps are required (utterance & interpretation) for human understanding.
    - ii. Here, one-step: The Spirit literally directs the syllables from their mouths to speak foreign languages.
    - iii. It was not something they had to force or manufacture on their own.
  - b. Now, followers get up & go out to a public place to allow the Spirit to do something amazing.
    - i. Possibly the Temple grounds, the only open space large enough for thousands to gather.
2. [2:5-11a] The scope of the Holy Spirit's influence
  - a. [5] Jewish people scattered throughout the Roman Empire/known world, since the Babylonian exile.
    - i. They return to Jerusalem for pilgrimage feasts; many end up staying there.
    - ii. Many were devoted to God (though do not know Jesus as Savior & King yet).
  - b. [6] They hear the disciples' uproar & pour on to the street wondering: What in the world is happening?
    - i. They freak out hearing the disciples speak in their native tongues.
  - c. [7-8] They recognize rural, uneducated Galileans (not multi-cultural travelers) & wonder: How can this be?
    - i. Peter will explain in the next passage.
  - d. [9-11a] Highlight of key communities where the Diaspora Jewish people come from.
    - i. Around the Caspian Sea, locally (Judea), Asia Minor, North Africa, Rome, etc.
    - ii. Includes Jews & Gentiles who've converted to believe & follow the one, true God.
    - iii. Significance: Points to the universal scope & global implications of the gospel mission.
  - e. When God's Spirit is present, He doesn't just do the improbable, He accomplishes the impossible!
3. Application: We need to give room to the Holy Spirit's power to do the impossible.
  - a. As Jesus calls you to experience, obey, love & serve Him, where is the red line in your life right now?
  - b. Backwards: We come up with a game plan & ask God to bless it, when we should ask the sovereign God what is His plan & wait for His leading & empowerment of the Spirit.
  - c. Are you willing to surrender your way of getting things done? To listen to the prompting & power of the Holy Spirit? To risk trusting & following His way?

## **Respond to the Spirit's filling [2:11b]**

1. [2:11b] "Telling... the mighty works of God."
  - a. Normative response: When filled with the Spirit, we declare what God has done in Jesus (cf. Luke 19:37-38).
  - b. Biblical connection between being filled by the Spirit & praising/prophesying about God:
    - i. Old Testament examples: 70 elders filled with the Spirit prophesy (Num 11:25).
    - ii. When filled with the Spirit, Elizabeth praises (Luke 1:41-42) & Zechariah prophesies (Luke 1:67).
    - iii. Described in Acts 2:17-18; multiple occurrences throughout Acts.
  - c. When filled by the Spirit, we worship & proclaim Jesus.
    - i. When filled by the Spirit, the power is in the message, not us as the messenger (Rom 1:16).
  - d. Evidence of the Spirit's filling: Disciples cannot help but give praise/worship to God, testifying to the mighty things Jesus has done.
2. Serving, ministry & evangelism don't have to be hard; as we stay connected with Jesus & His Spirit, it leads to those.
  - a. Application: 360° Living (see website) is not a religious gimmick, but an opportunity to connect/be filled by the Spirit so that we worship/proclaim Jesus.
  - b. As you're filled by the Spirit, are you willing to speak as He directs your mind/heart about the mighty things Jesus has done in your life?

## **Conclusion**

1. [2:12-13] The response of the crowd.
  - a. [12] All were amazed, curious & unsure; some will respond by following Jesus (cf. 2:41)
  - b. [13] Some mock: Foreign languages sound like drunken gibberish to them.
    - i. When God works in supernatural ways, some cannot grasp what they say & explain it away with sarcasm or criticism.
  - c. When confronted with the truth about Jesus & the work of the Spirit, there are only these 2 directions.

- i. Which direction do you go? Amazement that leads to trust/worship/follow Jesus, or skepticism & rejection, regardless of the evidence?
2. Receive the power of God's Spirit, in His perfect time/way, to move past the red line & accomplish impossible things, so that we can experience & tell others about the goodness of Jesus.