There is a lot of waiting involved in having a baby. You wait to see them on the first sonogram, you wait to find out their gender (maybe), and you wait… and wait, and wait, until the day finally comes when she says, “It’s time to go to the hospital.”

But for me, one of the worst parts of waiting for the baby was when my wife was in surgery having a C-Section. That is one of the hardest things I have ever had to do, to sit out in a hallway, or in a hospital waiting room, just waiting for someone to come and tell me if my wife and baby are okay.

I was anxious, impatient, worried, and excited all at once. I paced up and down the hallway for what seemed like hours, which was actually only about 20 minutes or so, and with every person who came out the doors. And finally, when I thought no one was ever going to come, the surgeon finally came through the doors. The feeling of relief when he told me that everybody was okay, and I could come watch my baby being born was surreal.

That’s where the disciples were at when we get to Acts 2. They were told by Jesus to go to Jerusalem and wait for the coming of the Holy Spirit. And so, they waited.

These men who had walked with Jesus for three years, had watched Jesus ascend into heaven, and as amazing as that experience must have been, I wonder what kind of worry, what kind of grief they felt when they realized that they no longer had their teacher and rabbi next to them to lead and guide them as they had for so long.

They were waiting for this big event, the coming of the Holy Spirit, but they had no idea what to expect. They had no clue what they were about to experience, and they didn’t know when it was coming. Then it finally happened.

**Acts 2:1–4 ESV — 1** When the day of Pentecost arrived, they were all together in one place. **2** And suddenly there came from heaven a sound like a mighty rushing wind, and it filled the entire house where they were sitting. **3** And divided tongues as of fire appeared to them and rested on each one of them. **4** And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other tongues as the Spirit gave them utterance.

Pentecost is the Greek name for the Jewish Feast of Weeks, which was a celebration of the end of barley harvest. This was fifty days after the celebration of Passover, when Jesus had been crucified.

Eventually, Pentecost became a time when the Jews around the time of the New Testament would celebrate the giving of the law at Mt. Sinai. This was the day the Jews celebrated the beginning of the first covenant, and that was the day on which the church of the new covenant began.

The word that Luke uses when he says the day of Pentecost arrived or came is the word συμπληρόω (sumplero-o), which means to fulfill. So, Luke is not just looking at this as an event that happened to take place on Pentecost, but that this was the fulfillment of God’s plan for the beginning of the church. This was a special day.

Luke doesn’t tell us where they were gathered here in Acts 2, he just tells us they were together in one place. But if we go back to the last words of the Gospel of Luke, we find a possible answer to that question. Remember, the book of Acts is also written by Luke, and is basically Volume 2, continuing the same story.

**Luke 24:50–53 ESV — 50** And he led them out as far as Bethany, and lifting up his hands he blessed them. **51** While he blessed them, he parted from them and was carried up into heaven. **52** And they worshiped him and returned to Jerusalem with great joy, **53** and were continually in the temple blessing God.

Everyone in the church up to this point were Jews, and they didn’t just give up everything in their heritage when they put their faith in Jesus. They continued to pray in the Temple, they continued to worship the one true God together.

So, there are two views on this. One is that they were gathered in the upper room, just like we saw in Acts 1, and that is the house where the Spirit came, and then they moved out into the streets later on.

The other view is that because they were continually in the Temple, and because it was 9am, a time of daily prayer in the Temple, they were gathered at the Temple, and that’s where the Spirit came, and there was a huge crowd of people already there. The word ‘house’ here could just as easily mean the Temple, because they often talked about the Temple as ‘the house’.

Ultimately, the place they were at really doesn’t matter. The thing that matters is that they were gathered together, waiting for the Holy Spirit to come. Luke says that there came a sound like a mighty rushing wind. The Greek here actually means a violent driving wind, a wind that could move you from one place to another.

I don’t know if you’ve ever experienced that kind of wind before. I experienced it on a lake in Northern Minnesota in a canoe. We had about nine miles to go to get back to the outfitter, and we were paddling against a 20 mph headwind. There were 18-inch whitecap waves, which don’t sound too bad, until they are coming over the side of your canoe. The wind was so strong that if you missed one stroke, you were sitting still, if you missed two, the wind was driving you backwards. When I think of a violent driving wind, that’s the first thing that comes to mind for me.

The Holy Spirit is often compared to a wind, or a breathe. In fact, the Greek word for Spirit, πνεθμα (pneuma), is a word that literally means air in motion, breathing, or blowing. We see very clearly here that connection between the Holy Spirit and wind or air.

We also see the other physical thing that is often associated with the presence of God or the Spirit of God: fire. Luke tells us that tongues as of fire appeared to them and rested on each one of them. Luke was doing his best here to describe something supernatural in terms that humans could understand, and fire was the closest thing. But what happened to the disciples that day was unprecedented and unique. God was giving his disciples a visible mark of what was happening to them spiritually.

God could have given the disciples his Spirit without the blowing wind and the tongues of fire. In fact, we’ll see him do exactly that in Acts 10. But God gave the disciples, and the people around them an experience of his Holy Spirit they would never forget. As incredible as this must have been to watch happen, the miracles were not over yet.

The disciples didn’t just have a tongue as of fire over their head, they were filled with the Holy Spirit. The things they saw and heard were amazing. But what happened in them because of it was the real miracle here.

Jesus had told his disciples back in **Acts 1:8 ESV — 8** But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you, and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth.” That day had finally come, and now, for the first time, the disciples experienced what it was like to be filled with the Holy Spirit.

They had walked with Jesus for three years, but now they had his Spirit living and working inside them. They received power, just like Jesus told them they would. They began to speak in tongues that they never knew, because of the power of the Holy Spirit. The disciples were able to do incredible things that day, and it wasn’t because of their own power or who they were. They were only able to do what they did by the power of the Holy Spirit.

Speaking in tongues after this became a pretty controversial thing. Paul talked about it a lot as one of the spiritual gifts, and he instructed the Corinthians on the proper way to use it. There are different segments of people today who have very different ideas about speaking in tongues, and it can be a divisive issue.

But what we think of today is not what happened at Pentecost. There was no babbling going on, there was nothing unintelligible happening. The disciples were speaking about Jesus, proclaiming the wonders of what God had done, and people from all over the world were hearing them speak in their own languages.

**Acts 2:5–12 ESV — 5** Now there were dwelling in Jerusalem Jews, devout men from every nation under heaven. **6** And at this sound the multitude came together, and they were bewildered, because each one was hearing them speak in his own language. **7** And they were amazed and astonished, saying, “Are not all these who are speaking Galileans? **8** And how is it that we hear, each of us in his own native language? **9** Parthians and Medes and Elamites and residents of Mesopotamia, Judea and Cappadocia, Pontus and Asia, **10** Phrygia and Pamphylia, Egypt and the parts of Libya belonging to Cyrene, and visitors from Rome, **11** both Jews and proselytes, Cretans and Arabians—we hear them telling in our own tongues the mighty works of God.” **12** And all were amazed and perplexed, saying to one another, “What does this mean?”

You will never find an instance in Scripture where someone spoke in tongues when there wasn’t someone else present to hear the language they were speaking. God gave them this ability to speak in other languages so that these men from all over the world would hear about the Gospel in a language they understood.

We have made this our year of external focus, and that’s a big part of why Rod and I are preaching through the book of Acts. The external focus of the early church began with the founding of the church itself. The very first act of the disciples is to spread the Gospel to people from all over the world.

When Luke says that there were men there from all over the world, he meant it. He names off 15 different countries or regions that encompass all the known world at that time.

Luke tells us these were devout Jews, people from all over the world who were living in Jerusalem during this time. This is the beginning of the spread of the Gospel. These folks who heard about the Gospel took it home with them, and many of them continued to spread the Gospel from there.

Ben Witherington says, “[This] is clearly a critical event which sets in motion all that follows. Without the coming of the Spirit there would be no prophecy, no preaching, no mission, no conversions, and no worldwide Christian movement.” It was the Holy Spirit, not the apostles, that drove the movement and the growth of the church. The growth of the church was in God’s hands, and it still is today. All we need to do is let the Spirit guide us, and follow his leading.

There will always be some who mock what God is doing, and it was no different then.

**Acts 2:13–21 ESV — 13** But others mocking said, “They are filled with new wine.” **14** But Peter, standing with the eleven, lifted up his voice and addressed them: “Men of Judea and all who dwell in Jerusalem, let this be known to you, and give ear to my words. **15** For these people are not drunk, as you suppose, since it is only the third hour of the day. **16** But this is what was uttered through the prophet Joel: **17** “ ‘And in the last days it shall be, God declares, that I will pour out my Spirit on all flesh, and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, and your young men shall see visions, and your old men shall dream dreams; **18** even on my male servants and female servants in those days I will pour out my Spirit, and they shall prophesy. **19** And I will show wonders in the heavens above and signs on the earth below, blood, and fire, and vapor of smoke; **20** the sun shall be turned to darkness and the moon to blood, before the day of the Lord comes, the great and magnificent day. **21** And it shall come to pass that everyone who calls upon the name of the Lord shall be saved.’

Peter didn’t stand up and yell at these people, he stood up and began using Scripture to explain what was happening. They weren’t drunk, but they were experiencing something that God said would come hundreds of years before Jesus came. What Peter quotes here is from Joel 2, which was a prophecy about when God would pour out his Holy Spirit on not just the Israelites, but on all people.

Peter immediately recognized that what had just happened to them was a fulfillment of prophecy. The Israelites had been looking forward to this time when the Messiah would come and usher in the New Covenant.

Joel’s prophecy spoke of a time when the Holy Spirit would be poured out on all people, and that everyone who called upon the name of the Lord would be saved. That word Lord is an important one. It’s the word κύριος (kyrios) and it means one who is in authority because he is the owner. That’s what Joel called God in his prophecy, and Peter echoed that.

And then, Peter launched into the second part of his sermon, and he explained who this Lord was that was speaking of.

**Acts 2:22–36 ESV — 22** “Men of Israel, hear these words: Jesus of Nazareth, a man attested to you by God with mighty works and wonders and signs that God did through him in your midst, as you yourselves know— **23** this Jesus, delivered up according to the definite plan and foreknowledge of God, you crucified and killed by the hands of lawless men. **24** God raised him up, loosing the pangs of death, because it was not possible for him to be held by it. **25** For David says concerning him, “ ‘I saw the Lord always before me, for he is at my right hand that I may not be shaken; **26** therefore my heart was glad, and my tongue rejoiced; my flesh also will dwell in hope. **27** For you will not abandon my soul to Hades, or let your Holy One see corruption. **28** You have made known to me the paths of life; you will make me full of gladness with your presence.’ **29** “Brothers, I may say to you with confidence about the patriarch David that he both died and was buried, and his tomb is with us to this day. **30** Being therefore a prophet, and knowing that God had sworn with an oath to him that he would set one of his descendants on his throne, **31** he foresaw and spoke about the resurrection of the Christ, that he was not abandoned to Hades, nor did his flesh see corruption. **32** This Jesus God raised up, and of that we all are witnesses. **33** Being therefore exalted at the right hand of God, and having received from the Father the promise of the Holy Spirit, he has poured out this that you yourselves are seeing and hearing. **34** For David did not ascend into the heavens, but he himself says, “ ‘The Lord said to my Lord, “Sit at my right hand, **35** until I make your enemies your footstool.” ’ **36** Let all the house of Israel therefore know for certain that God has made him both Lord and Christ, this Jesus whom you crucified.”

Quoting one of the Old Testament prophets was one thing, but it was a whole other thing to publicly proclaim that Jesus is the Lord, and on top of that, call the Jewish leaders out as lawless men who had killed the Son of God. Peter told the story of what happened to Jesus right there in front of everyone who was there that day, and it was a big crowd. We find out later that 3000 people heard and responded to his message.

Peter and the rest of the apostles had still been afraid that the Jewish leaders who killed Jesus were going to come after them next. But at this moment, Peter was bold in proclaiming the Gospel to all those who were there that day. The Jewish leaders certainly heard about what Peter said, and yet he didn’t back down at all.

Peter didn’t pull any punches, he didn’t let anyone off the hook. He told the truth plain and simple, and he made sure that he was understood. Especially with that last verse, **Acts 2:36 ESV — 36** Let all the house of Israel therefore know for certain that God has made him both Lord and Christ, this Jesus whom you crucified.”

That is one of the most powerful verses you will find as you go through the book of Acts. Those words alone were enough to get Peter killed, but he didn’t hesitate for a moment. He boldly proclaimed the truth about who Jesus was. Can we say that we do the same in our lives? Do we boldly proclaim the Gospel to the people that we know? Or do we stay silent, afraid that we might make things awkward?

Peter called Jesus both Lord and Christ. Lord is that same word κύριος (kyrios) again, the one who is in authority because he is the one who owns it all. The name Christ is a name we’re used to hearing, but the name Christ, or χριστός (christos) was the Greek name for the Messiah, the one who would fulfill all the Israelite prophecies and be their deliverer.

We’re generally pretty comfortable with Jesus being the Messiah, the Deliverer, our Savior. But think about what it means for Jesus to be Lord. It means that he is in authority, he is in control, he is the one who commands us, not because he rules out of fear, but because all of Creation belongs to him. He is the Creator, he sovereign over everything. That includes us, and our lives, and the decisions that we make on a daily basis.

How often do we let Jesus be in control when we have big decisions to make? How often do we really let him be Lord of our lives? That’s why Jesus asked his disciples, **Luke 6:46 ESV — 46** “Why do you call me ‘Lord, Lord,’ and not do what I tell you? If Jesus is truly our Lord, we will follow after him.

Peter and the rest of the disciples were serious about Jesus being Lord of their lives from this point forward, but they hadn’t always been. An incredible change happened in these men when the Holy Spirit came on them, and I want to make sure you to see just how different these men are from before the Holy Spirit came on them.

These men proved they were not willing to stand boldly for Jesus when he was arrested in the garden, and they scattered. They were afraid, they cut and ran when the going got tough. Peter even denied knowing Jesus to save his own skin. John tells us after Jesus was killed, the disciples were hiding in a locked room in fear of the Jewish leaders. These men were hiding behind locked doors, in fear of their lives. They were afraid they would be the next targets of the Jewish leaders, and they had no idea what to do.

But after the Holy Spirit came on them, they were bold, they stood up in front of people in public, and declared the Gospel in front of the very people they were so afraid of days before. Peter even called them out for murdering the Son of God.

These men were not naturally like this. They proved their cowardice when Jesus was arrested. This newfound boldness could only be the work of the Holy Spirit in their lives, and they didn’t stop there. They continued to speak boldly about Jesus after this, even though they were arrested many times. Eventually, as Rod said last week, most of the Apostles were executed because of their faith in Jesus, and none of them backed down.

Peter publicly declared exactly what the Jewish leaders didn’t want spread, the truth about what had happened to Jesus, that he was alive, that death could not hold him down, and he had risen from the grave. The lies of the Jewish leaders couldn’t hold up to the truth.

These men were changed when the Holy Spirit came on them, they were given Spiritual Gifts that allowed them to do God’s work, and they were given a boldness that did not come from them. Their lives were changed radically because of the work of the Holy Spirit in their lives

Here’s what I want you to take away with you today. The Holy Spirit that fell on the Apostles is the same Holy Spirit that we receive when we accept Jesus Christ as our Savior. We receive spiritual gifts from the same Spirit the disciples did that enable us to do the ministry God has called us to.

And the Spirit that radically changed the lives of the disciples on the day of Pentecost, is not done radically changing lives. He continues to change lives today, he continues to make men and women bold in speaking the truth about Jesus, and he leads us and guides us as we do.

That Spirit comes into our lives when we declare Jesus both Lord and Christ in our lives, commit to following after him, and met him in the waters of baptism. Today, as we do every week, we’re going to offer an opportunity for you to make a decision to do just that if you haven’t already. We’re going to have the worship team come back up, and this next song is your chance to make a decision to do one of three things.

First, if you have never accepted Jesus as your Lord and Savior, that is the absolute most important decision you could ever make. You have an opportunity to do that right now.

Second, if you are a believer in Jesus, but you’ve never been baptized before, we invite you to come and be baptized today. We’ll look a little more next week at what exactly that means, because that’s one of the things Peter will talk about in Acts 2. It’s incredibly important, so if you need to make that decision today, we invite you to do so.

Finally, if you are worshiping with us this morning and you don’t have a church to belong to, we believe every follower of Jesus should belong to a local congregation, and we would love to have you belong here at Agape.

If you are confused, or just need to talk about making one of those decisions, come talk to me, or Rod, or one of our elders, and we’ll help you through that.