

## **Graduation Day**

### **Acts 2:1-21**

**Today is the Festival of Pentecost. For the Jews this was a major annual festival, celebrated every year, much like Passover. Jews from all over the world would come to Jerusalem to join in the religious observances and celebrations.**

**For the followers of Jesus, however, there was no celebrating. Luke tells us in his book, the Acts of the Apostles, that the followers of Jesus were all together in one place. Now, this wasn't all the followers of Jesus. These were probably the hardcore followers of Jesus – what remained of the original 12 disciples, minus, of course, Judas, Matthias, the replacement for Judas, and perhaps 110 or so more. They were all together, being faithful to Jesus' instruction before He ascended to wait in Jerusalem for the gift of the Holy Spirit, whom He would send to them.**

**When we consider the original disciples, we are considering men who had spent 3 – 3 1/2 years with Jesus, watching Him, being instructed by Him both by what He said and what He did, being prepared for the monumental task He would commission them to do. In a similar way, our high schools and colleges spend 3-4 years preparing their students for the vocations they will pursue when they graduate.**

**Jesus has completed His earthly work. He came as one of us; He spent 33 years among us, the last 3 or so teaching,**

performing miracles, and showing Himself to be the promised Messiah. He spent intense time with His chosen disciples, schooling them, explaining things to them and telling them things and showing them things that no one else heard or saw. Finally, He suffered and died on the cross to pay the price for the sins of all people who would ever live, and He rose from the dead, victorious over sin, death, and Satan. He ascended back to heaven and assumed His throne to rule over all of Creation, as the Scripture says, “for the good of the Church.”

But before He ascended, He gave them a commission, a vocation. They were to tell the whole world what He had done and what it meant for all people, beginning in Jerusalem and radiating out to the ends of the world. To that end they were to remain in Jerusalem, and wait for the gift of the Holy Spirit which He would send to them.

Now the time has come. They are all together, possibly in the Temple grounds and the Holy Spirit comes to them in a spectacular way. There is a sound of a powerful wind, little tongues of fire appear on the disciples’ heads, and they discover that they can speak in the languages of other nations and other people, languages they have never learned. As the crowds around them hear their native tongues being spoken they gather around. Initially, some in the crowds say they are drunk, but Peter stands up and explains what has happened, linking the miraculous outpouring of the Holy Spirit to a prophecy of the prophet Joel possibly from the ninth century BC.

**In a sense, this was Graduation Day for the disciples! Their training was complete to begin their task. Now they were beginning their job of making the world know that the Messiah, the Savior had come.**

**Throughout our young people are graduating from high schools and colleges. Here at Grace we celebrate with 5 of our young people who have completed high school or college and are ready to undertake the next chapter of their lives, either on to jobs, or the military, or further education. They have done well; they have completed the requirements for a diploma or degree and they are prepared for that next step.**

**But their education has been cumulative. At each step, they have demonstrated mastery of the subject matter for each year or each course. Each year or course has built upon the accumulated knowledge of the years and courses before them.**

**It was not so with the disciples. In fact, God's Word tells us that throughout their years of training by Jesus, they were actually kept from understanding a good deal of what He was teaching and showing them. This is evidenced by the fact that up to the very end of His earthly ministry, on the very day and at the very moment He ascended back to heaven, they were still expecting Him to establish an earthly kingdom. These were not accomplished scholars who had established a store of wisdom and understanding about Jesus. In a word, they were clueless. They were ignorant, even after 3 ½ years of instruction about who He really was and why He had come. Granted, there were**

**occasional, isolated moments of insight, as when Peter says, “You are the Christ, the Son of God.” But for the most part, they were clueless.**

**Now, however, something miraculous happens. With the coming of the Holy Spirit, everything falls into place. Everything they have seen and heard comes together and makes sense. In a word, they get it. They get who Jesus is and why He has come and they understand what their job is. I wonder, if we had been there, if we would have heard the sound of round pegs falling into place in round holes, and square pegs in square holes?**

**For the promised Holy Spirit has come to them, as Jesus promised, probably in a more spectacular way than they could ever have imagined. And they embrace this knowledge and this mission fully and completely. They immediately begin talking about Him and sharing the good news of salvation with the people of Jerusalem.**

**Think about that for a moment. 3 ½ years with Jesus, and they didn’t understand. One second of the Holy Spirit and they get it.**