**Unstoppable - wk 4 – The Spirit Filled Church**

**Acts is Jesus: The Sequel -picks up right after the resurrection**

**A continuation of Luke's gospel - A narrative – to Theophilus**

**Acts 1:8 (sums up Acts) But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth.”**

**10 days later it happened on holiday of Pentecost…**

**HS fell, and the church was launched. (Match was lit)**

**Acts 2:2-13 mighty rushing wind came from heaven, filled the room – and they began to praise God in other languages enabled by the HS!**

**Those nearby were amazed, and some thought they are drunk.**

**Peter preached 1st Christian sermon - life, death, resurrection!**

**Acts 2:14-41 - This is the promise of God that salvation through Jesus is for all nations – “for those who the Lord has called.”**

**(Verses that follow give a glimpse of the life of the early church. The dream church. A time capsule.) Acts 2:42 They devoted themselves to the apostles’ teaching and to fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer. 43 Everyone was filled with awe at the many wonders and signs performed by the apostles. 44 All the believers were together and had everything in common. (commune living - descriptive not prescriptive) 45 They sold property and possessions to give to anyone who had need. 46 Every day they continued to meet together in the temple courts. They broke bread in their homes and ate together with glad and sincere hearts, 47 praising God and enjoying the favor of all the people. And the Lord added to their number daily those who were being saved.**

**Jesus gave the Spirit of God and from that point on everything changed - nothing more valuable than living life for Jesus!**

**Before the lightbulb – the invention of the oil lamp – gave the world a new life. The difference was the oil. Much like the HS in our life.**

**Living under the influence of the HS - influenced every aspect of their life- spiritual life, home life, how they ate, who they hung out with, wallet, time, serving, worship, their purpose. They were a true Spirit Filled Church = grew.**

**What is absent in the rest of Acts is an emphasis on tongues in the daily life of a Christian or the church. Only 2 X in 30 yrs mentioned.**

**We unpacked the purpose for miraculous “languages” (tongues)**

* **A miraculous declaration of praise**
* **A miraculous confirmation of God’s purpose**

**(1 Cor 12-14) not for everyone - and - not to be sought after**

**I want to talk a little about how this unique event 2000 yrs later turned into Pentecostal and charismatic groups and “spirit filled” churches?**

**Then we are going to unpack evidence of the truly Spirit filled church.**

**A brief story of speaking in tongues – how did Acts 2 get to today**

**Just to be clear - I am not a Cessationist – explain. But tongues have been redefined and given a revisionist theology.**

**1st century - Gnostics invaded early church – trances/ new prophecy**

**References to speaking in tongues by early church fathers are rare.**

**Most Pentecostal theologians point to Montanism, 2nd to 5th century. Christian group that practiced strange babbling, trances and prophecy.**

**Called the New Prophecy group- contemporary’s denounced as heresy and false prophets: 2 prophetesses & a prophet - left their spouses. Their woman prophet went crazy and committed suicide.**

**God told them Phrygia was New Jerusalem of Revelation, the leaders spoke as God, superseding the apostles, had power to forgive sins, many denied the trinity. Denounced as heretics.**

**4th century Donatist, claimed to speak in tongues and prophecies**

**Taught sinless perfection, and they are the only true Christians and must speak in tongues. Augustine publicly denounced as heretics.**

**Over the centuries speaking in untaught known languages (tongues) is mentioned occasionally – but not frequently. It was not common.**

**Tongues pop up in cult groups like Quakers & Shakers - 1600’s. deny trinity, God is female & male, communicate w/ dead, tongues from the Mother God. Mother Ann (Shakers) 2nd coming of Christ.**

**Mormons - 1800’s – practice tongues, prophecy, healing services.**

**John and Charles Wesley – 1700’s Church of England minister who had a “second blessing” experience. Empowering holiness.**

**Eventuality became different US holiness movements. 1800’s- rise of Holiness & Fire movement. (3rd blessing) taught sinless perfection, experienced heat and fire, visions, prophecy and tongues. Denounced.**

**1901 Charles F. Parham's- considered father of modern Pentecostalism**

**Holiness church Bethel Bible School, Topeka, Kansas. Said God talked directedly to him, denied Hell, white people descendants of true Israel. A mentors, Frank Sanford- faith healer, child abuser, murderer - cult.**

**\*Student (Agnes Ozman) - “wrote /spoke” in "Chinese" tongue 3 days. (Verified false) Tongues the restored end times evidence of true Christians. 1905 - moved to Houston, TX - began school for tongues for missions (later verified false languages). A KKK supporter – he segregated Black students. A student listening outside…. W. Seymour.**

**1906 - William Seymour - moved to LA, CA and started the**

**Apostolic Faith Gospel Mission on Azusa Street. Ignited a national movement and interest in speaking in new tongues. 1000’s of holiness pastors traveled to Azusa Street to experience this third blessing.**

**Cults and mystics came too by the thousands. It quickly spread across the world. Parham and Seymore became public rivals.**

**Proven languages were not known; Seymour began to teach they were unknown angelic personal prayer languages given for the last days empowerment. The sign of true salvation for every Christian.**

**Modern day Pentecostal / charismatics are from Parham and Seymore. Opinion - a sign of confirmation had become an unintended destination The flesh and experiences became false evidences of the Holy Spirit.**

* **What is the evidence of Spirit filled church? We just read it in Acts.**

**A car started but would not move - would not get it in gear. Check the fluid dipstick, turned out the clutch fluid low - needed to get it filled - This passage is the Church Dip Stick - The gauge of a healthy church.**

**Signs of a Healthy Spirit Filled Church**

**Ask yourself? What does a Spirit filled church look like?**

**v42 They devoted themselves (persisted perseverance) to the apostles’ teaching**

**\*\* Committed to sound Biblical teaching – not fads and feelings**

**Ask - Is there a focus on the authority of the Word of God?**

**Not just any book, religion, or teacher. What we believe and where we get it are important. Apostle’s teaching is the unique authority that we now know and have as the New Testament.**

**1st domino to fall of deconstruction is the authority of the Bible.**

**They were devoted to growing in their faith – in the Word of God.**

**Do you come to grow or grade - to be nudged or to judge - to nitpick or notice areas of change in your life?**

**Do you read your Bible / take notes / Are you ready to listen?**

**If you feel stagnant and dry... start here - commit to growing.**

**Acts 2:42 They devoted themselves… to fellowship…**

**\*\* Committed to fellowship with the body of Christ**

**Ask - Is there a love for the local church?**

**koinonia: community, knit, family commitment to each other**

**Gathered together daily and in diff ways = accountability.**

**They were committed (steadfast) to meet together and growing together – even in the midst of govt. opposition and threats.**

**It was not a weekly check in or spectating fling - but a participating thing - in each others journey.**

**You can tell a lot about someone's walk with God on how they view the local church.**

**(V46) They met publicly - (like a theater) and house to house (small groups)**

**Some today meet in pubs, theaters, schools, homes, venues. Around the world – in secret basements, rooftops, back rooms – anywhere.**

**It’s more than a steeple. Church is not a building it’s wherever the people of God meet to lift up Jesus!**

**Acts 2:42 They devoted themselves… to the breaking of bread..**

**\*\* Committed to the breaking or bread (not just the act of communion)**

**Ask - Is there a commitment to the message of the cross**

**Lord’s supper was a Love feast – fellowship and communion.**

**2 purposes: Communion w/ God and Communion w/ each other.**

**Through the one sacrifice of Christ, we are one together.**

**More than a shot of grape juice and wafer. This is relationship bonded together thru Jesus’ blood. Don’t forget the price that was paid.**

**This is a unifying of the body – an equalizing. We are the same body eating he same bread – we are one in Christ thru the cross.**

**Acts 2:42 They devoted themselves… to prayer.**

**\*\* Committed to prayer**

**Ask - Is there an emphasis on the reliance of God?**

**Seeking the Lord’s face – we pray Sunday’s, in youth, Zone, Bible studies, men’s, ladies’ group, monthly we gather together to pray.**

**This is about a trusting and reliance on God.**

**43 Everyone was filled with awe at the many wonders and signs performed by the apostles.**

**Some claim that wonders and signs should be the norm.**

**Notice “by the apostles” - confirmed their authority - for others it happened but was random & uncommon - not the norm**

**44 All the believers were together and had everything in common. 45 They sold property and possessions to give to anyone who had need. (Communal living)**

**\*\* Committed to generous living**

**Ask - Is there a freedom from earthly possessions?**

**This is not about prosperity (which focuses on how to get more in this life) this is about having a kingdom approach to what you have been stewarded with. Hold loosely and give freely.**

**Looking out for each other to the best of our ability. We won’t always get it right – but we never stop trying.**

**They gave freely to each other and to kingdom work**

**How do you view and use your possessions? Let me tell you something- the Holy Spirit in us changes how we view our possessions**

**Possessions became a means to reach & help others**

**You can tell a lot about someone's spiritual maturity on how they view their wallet – and on how they give or don't give.**

**In Acts - they started living as a commune out of necessity (descriptive not prescriptive) Other NT churches did not do this.**

**The Spirit was influencing them to be generous and not married to money (you might need a financial divorce)**

**Acts 2:46 Every day they continued to meet together in the temple courts. (Committed to growing together) They broke bread in their homes (unity in the sacrifice of Jesus) and ate together with glad and sincere hearts, (authentic consistent relationships- did not swing in and swing out- mega church dilemma) 47 praising God and enjoying the favor of all the people. And the Lord added to their number daily those who were being saved.**

**\*\* Committed to sharing the good news with others**

**Ask - Is there a heart for the hurting and an active pursuit of the lost?**

**They were committed telling and leading others to Christ**

**Every Christian - our purpose is to know Him & make Him known**

**How do you view your role in the mission of God?**

**We are rescued from sin and shame to be rescuers of others!**

**With a clear mission, to tell the world - through words *and* deeds**

**Lord added as they lived it and shared it. It was not osmosis; people did not just show up. They were told by other disciples.**

**Why is the church of Jesus not making ground? Not sound and better lights, bigger buildings and better illustrations, not professional music and more style – not supposed signs and wonders… What keeps the true church from revival are disciples who are not sharing the gospel.**

**Jesus empowered his church with the HS to live this out (Light match) - then unleash it on the world. (Light match from another)**

**Too many leave it to church ministries to attract people with cool programs and new experiences. It draws numbers at times, but often fails in making true disciples who make other disciples.**

**The Signs of a Spirit Filled Church**

**\*\* Committed to sound Biblical teaching (Authority of scripture)**

**\*\* Committed to fellowship with the body of Christ (Church life)**

**\*\* Committed to the breaking or bread (Message of the cross)**

**\*\* Committed to prayer (Reliance on God)**

**\*\* Committed to generous living (Kingdom minded)**

**\*\* Committed to sharing the good news with others (Active witnesses)**

**God I pray, lead us to be a true spirit filled church. Making disciples and taking the gospel to those around us.**