06.02.24

Sermon Notes

Pentecost

Acts 2:14-41

Right before Jesus ascended into heaven, he gave his disciples one last set of instructions. In Acts 1:4, he told them to wait in Jerusalem until they received the Father's promise of the Holy Spirit. They listened and waited for ten days. I wonder what those days of waiting were like for them.

When my wife was pregnant with our first child, I often wondered what it would be like when he finally arrived. I imagined what he might look like and how I would feel in that moment. When the time came, it was both unlike anything I had imagined and yet exactly what I had pictured.

I wonder if the disciples felt the same way as they waited, not knowing what to expect or how they would recognize the moment when it arrived. Jesus had told them the Spirit was coming, but how would they know what it would be like?

Thankfully, Pentecost came, and when the Spirit filled the disciples, it was undeniable and very evident.

In order to do something meaningful with Peter’s Pentecost sermon I divided it into two different sections. Though there is so much happening here than just what you’re about to read, I think this is helpful for us within the context of our sermon series. The two sections are…

1. The Prophesied Gift of the Spirit
2. 6 Things We Always Share About Jesus

Let’s take a look…

1. The Prophesied Pouring of the Spirit

After reassuring the crowd that the disciples were not in fact drunk, the first thing that the Spirit inspires Peter to do is to quote from the book of Joel. If you pull out your Bible and head to Joel 2:28-32 you’ll find that Peter is quoting what Joel had prophesied about 800 years earlier.

I want to emphasize the significance of this moment because what Peter does here sets the precedent for all the disciples going forward. Peter delves into the Biblical past, quoting Joel, and establishes that all Old Testament prophecies ultimately find their fulfillment in Jesus. He looks back at what God had already foreseen, and now, with the Holy Spirit's illumination, he understands that Jesus is the culmination of it all. What they are witnessing is the promised fulfillment of what God revealed long ago. This pattern will be a crucial exercise throughout the sermon series and for our understanding of the entire New Testament.

This is what Peter says from Joel…

* Acts 2:17- And in the last days it shall be, God declares, that I will pour out my Spirit on ***all flesh***, and your ***sons and daughters*** shall prophesy, and your ***young men*** shall see visions, and your ***old men*** shall dream dreams; even on my **male servants** and ***female servants*** in those days I will pour out my Spirit, and they shall prophesy.
* We need to pay special attention to the heart of what is being said here. Here is the list of who now has access to the Spirit…
  + ***All flesh***→ At the moment of Pentecost, every person on earth received a measure of access to the Spirit (I’ll explain why I say “a measure of access” below). If we believe that the Spirit is only present among Christians, we overlook a crucial aspect of the Spirit's role. Peter declares that the Spirit was poured out on ALL flesh, signifying a universal interaction. The Spirit engages with all humanity, and here is a general breakdown of what Scripture reveals about this profound truth.
    - *The Spirit Indwells Christians*. He lives within them because he has been invited to do so.
      * Romans 8:9→ The Spirit of God dwells in you.
      * 1 Corinthians 3:16→ Do you not know that you are God’s temple and that God’s Spirit dwells in you?
      * 1 Corinthians 6:19→ Or do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit within you, whom you have from God? You are not your own,...
      * Ephesians 2:22→ In him you also are being built together into a dwelling place for God by the Spirit.
      * The purpose of this indwelling is what we find in John 15, to live in “vital union” with God. Abiding in him and him in us.
    - The Spirit convicts the unbeliever. Jesus says this in John 16:7-11
      * + 7 Nevertheless, I tell you the truth: it is to your advantage that I go away, for if I do not go away, ***the Helper*** (Spirit) will not come to you. But if I go, I will send him to you. 8 And when he comes, ***he will convict the world concerning sin and righteousness and judgment***: 9 concerning sin, because they do not believe in me; 10 concerning righteousness, because I go to the Father, and you will see me no longer; 11 concerning judgment, because the ruler of this world is judged.
    - Note– the Spirit does more than this but this is a general breakdown of our relationship with the Spirit and how believers and nonbelievers differ in relationship to Him. Pentecost opened the door in a new way and now everyone on earth has some access to him.
* Before we move on to the next section, we must once again acknowledge that God is extraordinarily generous. Unlike our human tendency to control others, withhold power, and limit care, the God of the Bible is uniquely generous with Himself. Always drawing all to whats best, Himself. While this ideal might seem appealing and intuitive to a humanist, human behavior often reveals our lack of true altruism. Despite our virtue signaling and politically correct language, we know that our nature inclines us to withhold grace. But God is fundamentally different from us in this regard. He pours Himself out on everyone, breaking down all our barriers and extending His grace to all without exception.
* List of people who Peter says gets access to God…
  + All flesh
    - Believers and nonbelievers alike have access to Him. Every one of “our enemies” has access to the Holy Spirit. The Spirit is currently speaking to the heart of whoever you consider your adversary or opposite. This reality should humble you and prompt serious reflection on how you perceive those you consider your foes, whether religiously, politically, ideologically, or otherwise.
    - This also extends to all racial & ethnic divisions. As I said in the sermon, Jesus is the only Universally Translatable message. There is no division in the world that the gospel cannot bridge and nothing else on earth can claim this.
  + Sons & Daughters
    - Galatians 3:28 is a powerful truth.
      * There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is no male and female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus.
    - God is perfect in how he deals with Men & Women. We are all his sons & daughters and His call on both of us is that we both have the right to prophesy (disclaimer→ as long as it comes from him).
  + Young & Old
    - Both young and old believers have access to the Spirit and have things to say about Jesus. You don’t have to be a certain age to claim the right to be able to say something meaningful about who Jesus is. This is good news for CityLife because not too many churches are as young as we are. You can say something meaningful to anyone of any age as long as what you're saying is true to Jesus.
  + Even with Servants
    - In a world where people are always divided by class, the gospel does not. Jesus is the answer to the poor & the rich. He speaks to both and calls both towards repentance.

Last thing to mention here… I hope you are catching a glimpse of how the Spirit is a much better gift that you may have ever imagined. The Holy Spirit was promised to God’s people for hundreds of years and now we have the immense (that word is too small) privilege of living in the portion of history where He has been poured out! The Spirit is enough for you to pursue the Christian life! 2 Peter 1:3-4 is true…

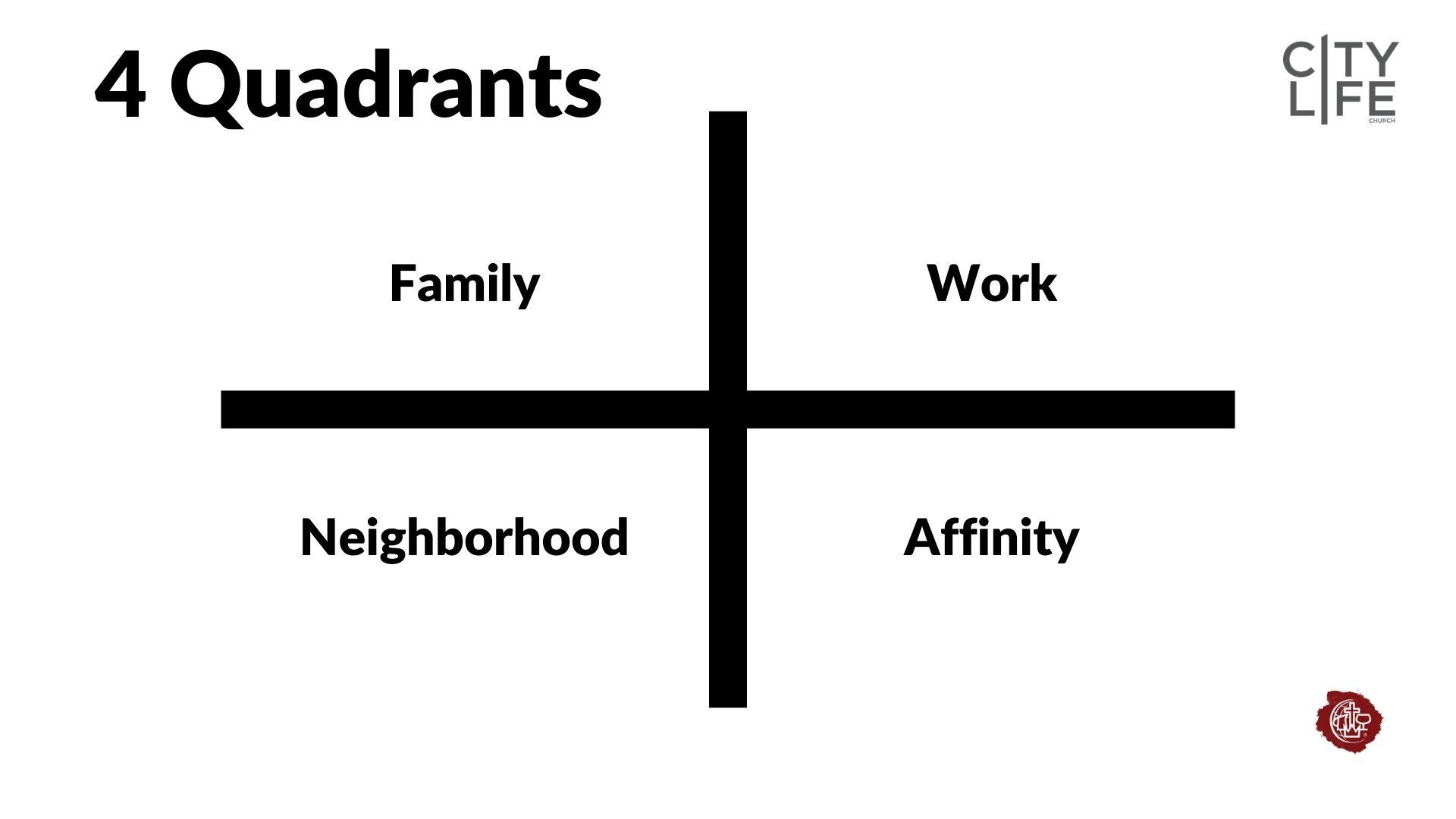
“3 His divine power has granted to us all things that pertain to life and godliness, through the knowledge of him who called us to his own glory and excellence, 4 by which he has granted to us his precious and very great promises, so that through them you may become partakers of the divine nature, having escaped from the corruption that is in the world because of sinful desire.”

2. 6 Things We Always Share About Jesus

It is always good to tell people that…

1. He Was Real & Lived A Real Life
   * Acts 2:22 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—
   * Jesus was known to them. They all knew who he was. Christniaty began with people who all experienced him. He is not a myth but a real man who lived a real physical life on this earth. History knows Jesus and any time someone challenges this they are not dealing with what really happened. Jesus of Nazareth is a real man and his ministry changed the world forever. ***It is always good to tell people that Jesus IS real***.
2. He Died
   * Acts 2:23 …this Jesus, delivered up according to the definite plan and foreknowledge of God, you crucified and killed by the hands of lawless men.
   * Jesus willingly went to the cross because it was always the plan. Jesus experienced a real death. He died for three days and he died in the same way that each of us will experience one day. There is a real price to pay for sin and Jesus paid it. ***It is always good to tell people that Jesus died so that we can live.***
3. He Resurrected
   * Acts 2:24-32 I won’t share all of this section because it’s long but here are some highlights…
     + 24 God raised him up, loosing the pangs of death, because it was not possible for him to be held by it.
     + 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.
   * Though Jesus died, He did not remain in death for long. The Father resurrected Him, sealing the work He accomplished for us. Here, Peter quotes David's writings in the Psalms. Just as he did with Joel, Peter interprets the Psalms through the lens of the Holy Spirit. He concludes that David could not have been referring to himself in Psalms 16:8-11, 98:1-3, and 110:1. Instead, Peter reveals that these passages were prophetic glimpses of Jesus, not reflections on David himself.. ***It is always good to tell people that Jesus resurrected from the dead and is currently ALIVE.***
4. He is Exalted
   * Acts 2:33-36- 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***.”
   * ***It is always good to tell people that Jesus is the universal Lord & Christ.*** I found this very helpful from my favorite Christian commentator John Stott.
     + “Peter’s conclusion is that all Israel should now be assured that this Jesus, whom they had repudiated and crucified, God had made both Lord and Christ. Not of course that Jesus became Lord and Christ only at the time of his ascension, for he was (and claimed to be) both throughout his public ministry. It is rather that now God exalted him to be in reality and power what he already was by right.”
   * We need to be people who rightfully tell the world that Jesus is the King we’ve all been looking for. If His own will not say this then who will?
5. He Saves
   * Acts 2:37-39- 37 Now when they heard this they were cut to the heart, and said to Peter and the rest of the apostles, ***“Brothers, what shall we do?”*** 38 And Peter said to them, “***Repent and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins, and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. 39 For the promise is for you and for your children and for all who are far off, everyone whom the Lord our God calls to himself.”***
   * When the crowd hears Peter’s words they are cut to the heart. It landed and many of them knew that Peter was speaking what was real. They asked a great question and Peter’s response was swift and clear. When people ask you what they need to do with Jesus’ story you lead them to the same conclusion that Peter did.
     + 1 Repent
       1. This means that at the very least they need to change their mind about who Jesus is. This is the starting point.
     + 2 Be Baptized
       1. Because we’re promised that we’ll be forgiven and receive the Spirit.
   * ***It is always good to tell people that Jesus saves because He alone is able to save. He alone paid the price.***
6. He Made the Church
   * Acts 2:40-41- 40 And with many other words he bore witness and continued to exhort them, saying, “Save yourselves from this crooked generation.” 41 So those who received his word were baptized, and ***there were added that day about three thousand souls***.
   * In the day of Pentecost about three thousand people were added to the community of believers. On day 1 of the church’s history we go from 120 believers in Jerusalem to 3,120. The church grows in an astonishing way and it is not due to Peter’s words but the Spirit who was at work through Peter and in those listening. To belong to the church is to belong to Jesus’ bride. The church is clearly not perfect but the real church belongs to Jesus. ***It is always good to tell people that Jesus built and loves the Church.***

Practical Tool for the Week



Prayer Quadrants

* The purpose of this activity is to center our “speaking about Jesus” in prayer. How can we be speaking about Jesus if we are not praying for the people in our lives? Pray for at least these two things…
  1. Opportunities to have spiritual conversations with the people in your life?
  2. For Jesus to be revealing himself to them?
* Here is what you do with the quadrant (it’s very simple but effective).
  + For each section, pray for God to bring people to your mind who do not believe in Jesus.
  + When you think of them write them down and list them.
  + Put that list somewhere you will regularly see and be intentional about praying for them and asking God for spiritual conversations to happen.

I hope that this is helpful to you. If you have any questions please feel free to email me @ pedror@citylifenj.com for to get in touch with me some other way.

Foundational Information about the Heart of this Series…

We Speak About What We Love

It is easy for all people to speak about the things that they love.

Pillars of the Series

1. God Speaks, So we Speak
2. Jesus Told People Who He Is
3. Jesus Charged All Who Follow Him to Speak
4. Speaking & Doing go Hand in Hand
5. Speaking Jesus is Always Right
6. If you can’t Explain it, You Don’t Know it