

The Day of Pentecost

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[0:00] Actually, I've been reading a book recently. I started it. I've only gone through chapter one, so I don't have a lot of authority on the book, but it's called *The Burden is Light*. It's been a great book by one of my favorite pastors called John Tyson. One of the exercises that he does at the beginning of the book is talk about a life planning exercise that him and his wife did.

So he plotted a chart, X and Y axis, plus and minus, and then he basically thought back to the whole of his life and tried to remember the moments in his life that were turning points, where once that moment happened, there was no turning back, for better or for worse.

Those moments in your life that really define who you are right now, you're sat here today. Juju says he doesn't know where he'd be without his mother. He just wouldn't be. But there are moments in our lives that define who we are.

For me, maybe my first one was when I was seven years old, when I was playing football at school and came home and I love football. My favorite football team has not been doing too well. But then my mom says, hey, you need to change sports because you're not tall enough.

Actually, everyone who plays basketball gets tall. So you should play basketball. So she took me to my first ever after school basketball class. And clearly she was right because I am now the tallest in my family.

[1:21] So that was a that was a turning point for me once I touched that basketball. Another one was maybe when I was 11. Growing up in the UK, we came back to Hong Kong to holiday.

And for some reason in the UK, we weren't allowed to wander the streets by ourselves because it's dangerous. Well, even more so now. But in Hong Kong, in Yuen Long, my parents were just like, oh, just go. Just go and buy some food. And as an 11 year old, I went downstairs, walked the streets, decided what I want to do and bought it.

And the freedom that I felt changed my life forever. No turning back after that. My first girlfriend. I won't say what age, but Christina, my first girlfriend.

The moment I met her, there was no turning back. Christina, my last girlfriend. Won't talk about what's in between, but no turning back. 17.

When we were having dinner as a family on Joe's birthday, I've shared this before, and dad passes away and enters into glory. There is no turning back. Going to university.

[2:23] And then becoming a teacher at 23. Teaching in front of high school students. There's no turning back. That's where you sink or you swim. And then at 24, deciding to get married.

There is no turning back. The beginning of the end was when it started. That was the last moment where I still had a head full of hair, and things were just going downhill from there.

Number of years into teaching. By the time I reached 30, feeling the call of God to go into ministry. 2015 was when we quit teaching and working in the hospital, and we started to go into seminaries and training, Christina training counseling.

There was no turning back from that. And then in 2018, we got the call from God to come to Hong Kong. There was no turning back. What's your moment of no turning back?

Well, what are your moments when that happened, you were never the same person before?

Gracie, I know you're about to have one coming up, but think back in the past. What was the turning moment in your life where you're like, that happened, and there's no going back now?

[3:30] Entering in the industry. Entering in the industry. Yeah. A whole other life. A whole other life. The entertainment industry and everything that it demanded of you.

From that moment, it defined who you were in a different way. Yeah. No turning back. Sam, what about you? Was there a moment in your life where that happened and you weren't the same? Brain tumor.

Brain tumor. How old were you? 26. 26. 26. And what impact did that have on your life?

The physical toll and the healing was one part, but mentally, spiritually, personally, that took place after. The physical, the spiritual, the mental toll at 26, having a brain tumor, and the trajectory that sent you on.

There was no turning back. We all have those moments. The people of God had those moments too. If you think about Adam and Eve walking in the garden and then making that decision and turning, and there was no turning back.

[4:31] They couldn't stay in the garden anymore. You fast forward to Genesis 6 and you see Noah being the only family that was righteous, that was considered righteous. And God saying, hey, actually, we have to hit the reset button here.

And so I'm going to choose this one family and they're going to continue humanity. But it was only a couple chapters later, the descendants of Noah in chapter 10, where they start, well, actually, after the flood, God says, go fill the earth.

Go fill the earth with my glory. Go fill it. What do they do? They don't do that. They stop and they say, hey, why don't we just stay? Instead of scattering and filling the earth, why don't we just stay and build our own tower?

And why don't we make a name for ourselves? So only a couple chapters later, you see them falling into the same trap. But God promised not to have a flood again, so tries to spare them. And how does he spare them? The Tower of Babel.

As they tried to build this tower, he said, well, actually, currently, Genesis 11 is where you'll see this. They're all speaking one language, but maybe if I let them all speak different languages, they won't be scheming towards their own self-pride.

[5:31] They won't be heading towards the same destruction that they had. That was a point of no turning back. And that's how languages were born. And then, of course, you've got Abraham.

There was no turning back when he said, when God said, go, leave your country to a place where I'm going to lead you. And then, of course, you've got Isaac. And then you've got Jacob. There was no turning back when he wrestled with God and turned from Jacob into Israel.

And then, of course, you had his sons, the 12 tribes of Israel that they would become. But Joseph, the spoilt younger boy, who ended up getting kicked out by his brothers, ends up going to Pharaoh, going to Egypt.

And somehow, the Israelites end up in Egypt, saved by their little brother. There was no turning back. But then they get trapped in slavery there for hundreds of years. And then there's this boy, Moses, growing up in Pharaoh's house as a prince, the prince of Egypt.

But sees an injustice and lashes out via impulse. There was no turning back for him. He heads into the wilderness himself, becomes a shepherd, and then sees a bush.

[6:39] But this bush is unique. It's different. It's strange. There's fire. It's a burning bush. He meets God. And there is no turning back. He goes back to Egypt.

Says, let my people go. Then his people do get let go. That's the long story short. They go, and they don't really know where they're going. And then they see this pillar of fire at night to follow, to guide. If you saw that, there would be no turning back. If you saw the Red Sea part, there would be no turning back. But they're hard-hearted. They forget. They rebel.

Then Moses has to go up to the mountain, Mount Sinai, Exodus 19, Exodus 20. He goes up to the mountain. God descends on the mountain like fire.

So those at the foot of the mountain see the smoke. He gives Moses two iPads. The tablets with the commandments. Moses comes down.

[7:43] And he sees that the people have stopped worshipping the God who is fire. And is worshipping this gold little cow. There is no turning back. The church.

The church had a moment where they could not turn back anymore. Jesus came. A lot of them followed him for three years. He dies. He resurrects. And then just before he ascends and returns to the Father, he says in Acts 1, this is where Gabe took us through these last two weeks.

He says, go, the Holy Spirit will come upon you and you'll be my witnesses. In Jerusalem, in Judea, to Samaria and to the ends of the earth. And then he goes up and he flies off. And if I'm you, if I'm them, I'm just standing there going, where did he just go?

What's he going to do? And then two angels look at him and look down and go, why are you still standing there? Why are you still staring at this guy? Go. He's going to come back again. 500

people saw him ascent.

500. Twice this room. 380 go home. They see something that they've never seen before. And they decide, oh, well, I guess we, I guess it's Sunday night.

[8:57] I guess we should go home, get ready for work for Monday. And they just continue with their lives. But 120 out of that 500, they say, guys, there's no turning back.

We just saw someone that we followed for years do many miracles, die, come back to life, and fly. There's no turning back.

We can't go home. Do you want to go? I can't go home. I'm changed forever. So they go. Now, history would tell us that the ascension happened around 40 days after the resurrection.

What we're about to read, Pentecost happened 50 days after. So there were 10 days where these 120 who decided there is no turning back were just like, we just have to do something.

We have to go somewhere. So where do they go? They go back to Jerusalem. They go into this upper room about the size of this group here. And they say, we're just going to, we're just going to wait for 10 days.

[9:58] I can imagine the first day. Okay, that was crazy, guys. I'm so gutted that I didn't get my phone out to film him flying up into the sky. Something is up with the world.

And he's going to come back. So let's just go. Who knows when? Maybe it's this afternoon. Maybe you just need to pop up. Maybe Jesus just needed a toilet break. And he's going to come back. And he's going to come to save the world. But let's just go pray.

Is that cool? And so we do it. Day one. Okay, I'm tired, guys. Let's go home. Day two. Day three. Day four. Can you imagine the conviction that these people had saying, we can't go back now? 10 days. Sometimes we wait for God. Say, God, why aren't you speaking to me about this? How long did you pray for? 10 minutes? 10 seconds? 10 days. These people waited. And finally, the moment comes.

Finally, the moment that they've been waiting for. The moment that Jesus had promised them. Jesus said in John 16, hey, I know that you guys quite like me. And you're going to give up your lives for me. And you're going to follow me. But actually, let me tell you something even more crazy.

[10:59] It's actually better for you that I leave. Because someone's going to come and he's going to help you. His power is going to come upon you. And you're going to spread this word to the ends of the earth. So it's better for you that I leave. 10 days later, finally, it happens.

And so we reach Acts chapter 2. Can I invite you to stand for the word of the Lord? Amen. The coming of the Holy Spirit.

When the day of Pentecost arrived, they were all together in one place. And suddenly there came from heaven a sound like a mighty rushing wind. And it filled the entire house where they were sitting. And divided tongues as of fire appeared to them and rested on each of them.

And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other tongues as the Spirit gave them utterance. Now there were dwelling in Jerusalem Jews, devout men from every nation under heaven.

And at this sound the multitude came together and they were bewildered. Because each one was hearing them speak in his own language. And they were amazed and astonished saying, Are not all these who are speaking Galileans?

[12:05] And how is it that we hear each of us in his own native language? Parthians and Medes and Elamites and residents of Mesopotamia, Judea and Cappadocia, Pontus and Asia, Phrygia and Pamphylia and Egypt and the parts of Libya belonging to Cyrene and visitors from Rome.

Both Jews and proselytes, Cretans and Arabians. We hear them telling in our own tongues the mighty works of God. And all were amazed and perplexed saying to one another, What does this mean?

But others mocking said, They are filled with new wine. This is the word of the Lord. Please take a seat. This is the church's birthday.

Pentecost is the church's birthday where you see, And we sang it in the songs, King of Kings, Where the Spirit lit the flame. And now the church begins. There is no turning back from here. You could almost see someone fly into the sky And go back to your everyday life And really act as though nothing happened.

But the moment the Holy Spirit comes, There is really no turning back. And so we're going to go through these verses And see what we learn from here. And it is a fascinating, fascinating story

here That we see that Luke puts an account for.

[13:12] And he says this, When the day of Pentecost arrived, Just to note here, Pentecost didn't start in Acts 2. It's been around for a long time. The Israelites would celebrate Pentecost 50 days after the Passover. And it would be called the Festival of First Fruits.

Of course, these people would rely on a harvest each time, each year. And so a Festival of First Fruits 50 days after Passover Is basically saying to God, Hey, we celebrate the food that you're gifting us. And as tradition went on, Not only would they celebrate the first fruits, They would also celebrate the law.

Because it was also believed That it was about 50 days after Passover That Moses came down from the Mount of Sinai With the law of God. So they would celebrate really these two things. And they would all gather every year. Jews from all around the land, Is what it says here, From every nation under heaven Would come to Jerusalem to celebrate this festival. So that's why other people were outside.

But remember, 120, they were still waiting. 10 days, day 10. They're like, we still cannot ignore what we saw. There's something here, and we must wait.

[14:14] That's what he told us to do. And so that's what we will do. And they were all together in one place. Same upper room. But commentators think, actually, that's not just a place. It's not just the time.

It is these... Can you imagine just 120 people just every day Without any agenda, Without any expectation of what's going to happen. No one has any timeline. They're just waiting. What is that? That is unity.

That is people of one spirit and one mind going, There is something here. We cannot ignore. So there was a unity that comes. And maybe that's the first point that I find interesting, But also a little bit ironic.

When it comes to the Holy Spirit, Holy Spirit brings unity. But ironically, Even the church is constantly debating and discussing What the Holy Spirit is and what the Holy Spirit does. You've got different wings of Christianity, Whether the people on the Pentecostal side, Or the charismatic side, Or the reformed side, Or all these other sides which have different views On who the Holy Spirit is and what the Holy Spirit is doing.

[15:11] Maybe there are people who are perceived as more extreme In their experiences of the Holy Spirit. And so then another group will look at that and go, Well, we don't really want that. We're afraid of that. We don't really know what that is.

You see, the Holy Spirit has an equal role in the Trinity. Yet depending on our own theological method, We may have emphasized one more or one less. So it's ironic here because these people were united.

Together in one place. Waiting for the Spirit to come. And it says this, verse 2, And suddenly there came from heaven a sound Like a mighty rushing wind. Later in verse 3 it says this, And divided tongues as of fire.

So a couple things there. It came from heaven. Which tells me something. That the Holy Spirit, When we're talking about the Holy Spirit, When we're talking about this, We're really not talking about anything natural. We're not talking about anything that can be proven From a scientific, natural place.

That's not what we're talking about. It came from heaven. It came from heaven. And actually we can see that because how Luke describes the Holy Spirit, Or rather how the Apostle John describes his vision in Revelation, It's always like, it's like that.

[16:23] It's as of that. What he's saying is, I don't even have the words to describe what this is. This is from heaven. This is mind-boggling. I don't have the words to describe this. I don't have the mind to understand this.

Which tells me something else about the Holy Spirit, On top of the fact that it really comes through unity, Is that we have to approach it with such humility. I've always said this. I'm not smart enough and experienced enough To be able to tell you what I think the Holy Spirit is, And who he is, And what he does.

But I'm not sure I can confidently believe someone Who says that they do know everything about the Holy Spirit. Someone who doesn't seem to have the humility, And going, well, the Holy Spirit is something that is supernatural.

His thoughts and ways are so much higher. It is mind-boggling. Well, our minds, our limited minds cannot understand this. And I think that's how we should approach anything to do with the Holy Spirit.

That we simply do not know. Because if we did, we would be God. I've made the example before where, Imagine my dog, my toy poodle at home, Walter.

[17:27] Meets fellow canines and goes, Hey, guys, I've been studying the human race. The five humans that have been living in my flat. I think I understand what they're like.

I understand what they do. I know where they go when they open that door and they leave. And they come back eight hours later. I know exactly what they're thinking, what they do. No, he won't. He's a dog. He has no idea.

And yet sometimes us as human beings, I think when we are at fault of approaching issues of the Holy Spirit, issues of the supernatural world, we've got to be careful not to have the pride. That we come and go, Actually, he has revealed himself.

Not just through the word, through experience. Some of you have had experiences with the Holy Spirit where he has spoken to you. And then you align it with the word and you go, That really is truly from God.

But even through all of those things, my prayer is that even if I have those moments, I would present them and I would approach them with humility. Because we're dealing with something that is from heaven. We're dealing with something that we don't actually have the words to truly describe.

[18:33] As of wind. Like wind. As of fire. And of course, he goes into something that's actually very controversial in the church, which I will touch on very lightly here, because I don't think it's the main point of why Luke is sharing this to us, to debate this topic.

And verse three, The Holy Spirit gives the gift of tongues.

What is the gift of tongues? It is speaking in a different language. If you look at 1 Corinthians 13, you see the Apostle Paul talking about the tongues of men and the tongues of angels.

And he says, If I speak in either of these and I don't have love, then it's just a noisy gong. It's worth nothing. But that says that there is the tongues of men, and then there is the tongues of angels. The tongues of angels can be described as glossolalia, where you can, sometimes you'll have heard people speaking in this, maybe during prayer, maybe during worship, where they're speaking in a language that you actually can't understand.

And it's unintelligible, but it's just basically between them and God. And the Spirit is praying through them to God. But then there is another type, which is the tongues of men, which I think is what is happening here in Acts 2, because these people, these 120, they're filled with the Holy Spirit, and then suddenly the Holy Spirit gives them the gift of speaking in tongues, and they speak a different language.

[19:52] A language that they don't understand, and they don't know. I think it's key, it's important here, because if you go into the next bit, you'll see, this is how the church has started. This is how the church has started, because others outside see this, come together and go, what is going on here?

But maybe just a teeny little bit more about speaking in tongues. If you want to find out more about speaking in tongues, read the Bible. Read the Bible first, and then ask people who may have experience with this.

But if you're going to read the Bible, go to 1 Corinthians 12 to 14. 1 Corinthians 12 to 14 will tell you a lot about the spiritual gifts. Paul is talking to the church in Corinth about spiritual gifts. And one thing I want you to know about the gift of tongues is that it is a spiritual gift, but it's also pretty much, in every list that you can see in the Bible, it's always at the bottom.

It's always towards the end. Where somehow in the church, what we've done is we've lifted it up to the top. Anyone who, there are some churches who say, hey, well, if you believe in Jesus, you should start speaking in tongues straight away. And we may be, we're guilty of overemphasizing on what this actually is.

But you see, when Paul talks about it, it's always at the bottom of the list. But it's the one that is actually, that you can take home, it's for personal edification. 1 Corinthians 14 is where it talks about this. So if you're confused, don't be worried.

[21:07] Because this is a topic that is hard. But go to scripture. Go to scripture. And actually you'll see, how Paul talks about it in 1 Corinthians 14 makes a ton of sense. And it is orderly.

And it actually isn't filled with chaos and confusion. And so you see here, it's for personal edification, is what he's saying in 1 Corinthians 14.

It's the one that I've had described to me, is the spiritual gift of tongues is the one that you can take home. It's the one that you can use yourself between you and God. But there are times where in a worship service, in a corporate gathering, someone will speak in tongues, in a language that they may not understand themselves.

But the point there is that someone else in the room will be able to understand. Because when there is a gift of speaking in tongues, there is also the gift of interpretation. And so 1 Corinthians 12 talks about that.

It's actually, and this has happened before, and I've been in gatherings, this has happened before, where someone stands up to speak in a language that they don't understand, but someone else in the room is able to interpret it. What's the purpose of that?

[22:12] I'll tell you what it is not. It's not for those two people, the one who's speaking and the one who's interpreting, to show off and say, look what we can do. We just made up a secret language in real time and none of you know what it's about.

That is not what it's about. Go back to scripture again. 1 Corinthians 14, Paul says, all these gifts, what are they for? To build up the church. Strive to excel in building up the church, edifying the church.

It's all about the common good is what 1 Corinthians 12 talks about. That's what the spiritual gifts are for and that's what even the tongues are for. And you see, this is exactly the way he wants to start off with a bang and it goes from here.

So what happens? That group of 120, they receive this gift and then they spill out into the streets because they don't know what's happening. They're just speaking in this other language that they don't understand.

And so what happens is verse 5, now they were dwelling in Jerusalem, Jews, devout men from every nation under earth, heaven. And at this sound, the multitude came together and they were bewildered because each one was hearing them speak in his own language.

[23:10] Just imagine the scene there. How shocking it would be for people to see what was happening. These Galileans who were known to be of people of just one dialect, of working class people, not educated, not sophisticated, but spilling onto the street and speaking to you in your language.

I'm trying to find a modern day equivalent for this. But those who are the Chinese diaspora who maybe grew up in a different part of the world, maybe Cuban, when he goes to visit France, of course, it's different because Cuban actually speaks French, but imagine Cuban goes to France and there's a French person there who recognizes him and speaks to him in Chinese, in Cantonese.

That's the effect that it would be, what is going on here? Because ironically, Cuban's French is probably better than his Cantonese. But you see the point.

Or you see a German person coming to Hong Kong and visits some Chopin and then sees an uncle on the stall speak to him in German. It would have been mind-boggling.

That's why the words here described would be bewildered. Amazed. Astonished. Something was happening here that no one had ever seen before. And actually, they asked that question.

[24:31] They were like, what is going on? Are these not all Galileans? Commentators think that actually, as these people were speaking in these foreign languages, they probably still had a Galilean twang. Which shows actually that actually when God uses people, he uses even the imperfections.

It doesn't come out as this perfect dialect. It wasn't the Queen's English that came out. It was the Brummie accent that came out as well as the gospel. So God uses people to speak through. And so they're like, what is going on? These Galileans, these working class people. And now each of us are hearing our own language. What does this tell me? If I just take a step back and go, why did Luke introduce the church like this?

I think he's saying, well, the church is for every culture. The church is for every culture, for every type of person, for every tribe and tongue. You see later in Revelation 7 that there is a great multitude.

Every tribe and tongue will be worshipping God. The gospel is not just for one group of people. From the beginning, day zero of the church, it was about unity and not division.

[25:37] And yet we just have to take a pause now and just look at our church now and go, whew, that's how the church started. That was the first mission trip to show the world that it was for every language, for every culture.

And yet now here, Christianity in this day and age can often be used as a weapon for racism, for politics, and you're like, wow, how far have we fallen?

Well, there's another group who maybe associate Christianity with it's a, it's a, it's a Western religion. It's a white work, white middle class religion. Imagine Peter showing up at one of these churches going, whoa, whoa, it is not a Western middle class religion because I am not Western or middle class.

don't we need to hear this as a church that the gospel is for every culture? You go onto the news now and Juju and I, we just, we're on BBC News just a, just a, an hour ago.

You just see all these names pop up. You see India and Pakistan. You see Russia and Ukraine. You see the US and China. And you see how the church not only doesn't rise above those discussions, but it gets sucked into all of them.

[27:00] And yet Luke seems to go out of his way here and lists people from Asia, people from Africa, people from Europe. And he's, this is how the church started. There's another place where you see this kind of list of different countries and cultures.

Let's go back to Genesis 11, the Tower of Babel. Isn't it interesting that mankind started with one language, but because of their pride, because wanting to make a name for themselves, God has to create them and confuse them with all these other languages.

And now what you see here in Pentecost is actually a reversal of that curse. So as a Jew, you would have known this. You would have known the stories of the no turning backs that I just shared with you at the beginning.

And you're like, what is going on here? This is like the Tower of Babel, but in reverse. They were confused because they can understand each other, but yet here, we can understand someone who seemingly should be speaking a different language to us.

One language, same words, try to build a city, make a name for themselves, focuses on their own acclaim. What was that? What was that scene in the Tower of Babel where they say, hey, I know we were told to scatter to fill the earth with God's glory, but let's stay and build this tower and make a name for ourselves and maybe the top of the tower will reach heaven.

[28:25] You know what that is? That's climbing to the top of the tower and giving God the middle finger and saying, God, we don't need you. That's what they were trying to do. And yet, God in his mercy says, look, I won't let you do that because I'd already promised Noah that there won't be a flood.

So my best thing now is to disperse you. If your tendency is to stay, to make a name for yourselves, then I will give you many languages so you have to move.

Growing up in England as an ethnic minority, I understand what that means. Joe and I, we went to a school where we were the only two Chinese kids for primary school.

Secondary school, there were one or two other Chinese kids and I knew every time you walk in the corridor, you see the other Chinese kid, you're like, it's okay, are you safe? Yeah, yeah, I'm safe. Safe, safe, safe, safe.

Why do we have Chinese churches in the UK? Because the British churches don't give good food. So we have to have communities where we have food.

[29:30] I joke, but it's also very true. You see, just ethnic minorities overseas are just trying to gather. Why? Just because there's safety in numbers. But the idol there is that you end up just looking in on yourself.

And this is exactly what was happening with the Jews, with the Israelites. Just before Jesus flew off, what was the question asked to him? What did they ask him just before he ascended?

They're like, well, Jesus, you came, you did all this stuff, you died and then you rose again. When are you going to restore Israel? Well, they say, when are you going to help us? When are you going to help us with our agenda?

Peter, we've suffered too long. Our people have suffered too long. We need to show everyone that we are the best nation. And Jesus says, no, that's not what this is about.

And in Pentecost, he shows us again. So, it is a reversal of the curse of Babylon. Augustine says this, that actually, what happened at the Tower of Babel is basically earthly pride, pursuing earthly

pride.

[30 : 32] But what you see here at Pentecost is a group of people united by the grace of Christ for heavenly devotion. for a city that isn't of their own, but a city that is of God. That, I think, is beautiful.

So, I think a Jew at that time would have appreciated that. I've got a final point here because I want to really throw this ball back onto you guys. Something else that I really picked up on this. And suddenly there came from heaven a sound like a rushing wind and divided tongues as of fire. I think Luke is interesting here where he actually uses the description of fire to describe what was happening here. The Israelites, the Jews, would have known this because what's fire always associated with for them?

God. The burning bush is God showing up in fire. Exodus 20, when he descends on Mount Sinai, there's smoke.

Why? Because God is fire. When they're wandering in the desert, in the wilderness, they see a pillar of fire following after them. And what do they do? They say, hey, Moses, we see it.

[31 : 38] That guy is powerful and we're scared. Can you go meet him instead? So they send Moses up because they're like, we don't want anything to do that. Why? Because they were terrified of this fire.

Elijah, in 1 Kings 18 and 19, when he battles the prophets of Baal, what does he do? Sends down fire. Leviticus 10, actually, because of the issue of the golden calf, Aaron's sons, they actually have to be punished.

So how do they die? Die? Fire. Fire has always been associated with God for the Jews. So Luke here says, hey, something came from heaven as of fire.

But I just want you to have a little thought exercise here. Imagine Moses at Pentecost. Just for a second there. Moses, who was the only one who could see God.

Actually, Moses himself in Exodus 33 to 34 said, God, show me your glory. That's the song that we sang, right? God, show us your glory. And what does God say? God says, you actually can't see my full glory.

[32 : 45] Why? Because if you saw it, you would die. But I hear you, Moses. I know you want to have a connection with me. I do too. That's why we're here. So this is what we're going to do.

You're going to hide in this little club here. I'm going to walk by. And as I walk by, I'm going to cover your eyes with my hand. And then as I pass by, you'll see my back.

And that's all you'll be able to see. Moses spent his life just trying to see God. And of course, mediating on behalf of the people.

Imagine if he was at Pentecost. He'd be like, guys, do you know what just happened with you? Do you know how terrifying it was for me to go up to the mountain alone and to see the fire of God alone?

Did you know I came back from my trip to see God and I was glowing for a while. No one could even look at me. I had to cover my face because I'd spent that time with God.

[33 : 50] Do you realize what is happening? Do you realize that when I was walking in the wilderness, there was a pillar of fire that I had to follow? And now, that fire that I saw Aaron's sons be killed by is living inside you.

I think he would have gone nuts. He'd be like, this is something that I dreamt of. I could only dream of seeing it. You guys now have him living inside you.

I was the only one who could go to that mountain. But now, the mountain has come down to you and each one of you is filled with that fire. I was the only one that saw the burning bush.

But now, each of you sat here are, in essence, burning bushes. Why? Because the Holy Spirit, the fire of God is living inside you. Forget Pentecost.

Imagine if Moses showed up here. People who say we believe in Jesus, who have received the Holy Spirit, declared him as Lord, live with the fire inside us.

[34 : 57] My fear is that he'd be heartbroken. He'd be devastated. You guys have no idea what you have inside you. I tried to catch a glimpse of it and he said I couldn't because I'd die.

And now, you have it living inside you and all you can do is just sit and enjoy your comfy chair. I was the only one who could see God and now all of you have God living inside you.

I went up to the mount to get the law but now the Spirit has come down at Pentecost on all of you. He would have been mind blown.

I don't think we truly grasp what happened at Pentecost. That from that moment the church was born because each believer was filled with the Holy Spirit filled with a fire inside them. I'll tell you something about fire and wind. If you're stood next to fire and wind it changes you. You have no choice. It forces you to move. Wind, it forces you to move. Why do we close everything down in Typhoon 8?

[36:02] Because it's dangerous. Just look at the wildfires in the US and you see the effects of fire and wind.

and yet here we are as recipients of the Holy Spirit as of fire as like wind and yet we sit. We have the fullness of God living inside us and yet we look nothing like Jesus.

I think for Moses it would have been shocking. It's interesting. Just to quickly pop back to Exodus 34. So Moses says I want to see you.

God says you can't see me you'll die but hey this is what we'll do. And finally he walks by he sees his back and then God actually introduces himself. If there's one part of the Bible that tells us about God is when he chooses to describe himself and what he says here Exodus 34 The Lord a God merciful and gracious slow to anger abounding in steadfast love and faithfulness keeping steadfast love for thousands forgiving iniquity and transgression and sin.

It's like Moses you and your people have got me all wrong I am filled with grace and mercy I am abounding in steadfast love I forgive but just in case you think that I'm soft that I'm here just to let things slide he finishes with saying this forgiving iniquity and transgression and sin but who will by no means clear the guilty.

[37:30] So Moses would have come down from the mountain and go guys guys this fire this terrifying fire that you see he is gracious and he is compassionate he is abounding in steadfast love he is slow to anger he will forgive you he will forgive us but it doesn't mean he clears the guilty he would have come down a little bit perplexed I wonder how that works I wonder how God can be both just and loving at the same time you see Moses hadn't seen the future Moses was up there on the mountain by himself but soon many years later he'd be stood on the mountain again with someone who embodied that grace and that truth that God was talking to him about here John 1 says this the word became flesh filled with grace and truth Romans 8 says what God could not do in the law because it was weakened by the flesh now is fulfilled by Jesus right here the one who is gracious and true and just and he would have been like guys you saw him you have his spirit living inside you why aren't you moving this is a moment where you should not be turning back this is a moment that should have changed your life forever and yet you're sat here still the same as you were five years ago it would not have made sense to Moses why does it make sense for us he would have said do you know what happened after the golden calf incident 3,000 people died 3,000 people died because they chose to worship a calf and now at Pentecost what happens if you go into

Acts chapter 2 later what happens when they're filled with the Holy Spirit Peter preaches the sermon people are cut to the heart and how many people are saved 3,000 God is reversing the curse of the Tower of Babel God is reversing the sins of mankind Moses would have been completely astonished back then they were terrified of the fire but now we are empowered by that same fire can you see the parallels can you see the significance of Pentecost well if you can see the significance can this be a moment where you do not turn back where you now truly understand what it means to have the Holy Spirit like wind like fire living inside you you cannot just gather brothers and sisters now we have more comfy chairs you cannot just gather just as the day of Pentecost can we wait for him just as the day of Pentecost can we be filled with the spirit and then cannot help but to spill out into the streets and to show people what we have now just beware here when you're filled with the spirit and he lets you do things that are incredible that causes people to be astonished and amazed and perplexed don't make the same mistake as those in the Tower of Babel where they say let's make a name for ourselves when these people are filled with the spirit and they go out and they speak all kinds of languages the ones that they have no idea of knowing I mean I'm trying so hard to learn Mandarin and it is so hard I mean I can ask questions but I have no idea what they're saying when they answer me and then Joe and I have the same people pleasing issue we go and we go to Shenzhen and we ask and then they'll be like and then Alex and Christina will laugh and just go do you know what you just said yes to like no idea but they weren't amazed that they could speak a new language what were they shouting about Acts chapter 2 verse 12 and all were amazed and perplexed actually sorry verse 11 we hear them telling in our own

tongues the mighty works of God whereas in the Tower of Babel they were talking about finding a name making a name for themselves the reversal is complete because they are not making a name for themselves they're not coming hey look what we can do look what party tricks we can do they're saying have you heard about the amazing works of God the fire that

Moses saw on Mount Sinai has now descended full of grace and truth we have seen his face Jesus Jesus who died for our sins but rose again and will come back again that would have been the message coming out of their mouths can we be people who are similar my prayer is that as we have different turning points in our lives different things that happen to us I pray that this will be one of those moments maybe not exactly today but maybe is today as well maybe you've been sat there too long holding the fullness of God inside you and not unleashing it to the world and I pray that today you'll decide I cannot turn back this changes everything this forces me to not just gather but to scatter imagine look around now this room is filled with people who are basically burning bushes that's what we see here in scripture that's what we are we can't help but go out and spread this see the parallels in Mount

Sinai and Pentecost see the parallels of the Tower of Babel and Pentecost but most of all see the God who has been working from the beginning to the end the one who lives inside you right now and go would you tell of his mighty works we're going to finish with communion and this is a time for all of us just to sit just to evaluate well how much of a burning bush have I been maybe some of you like look I've been trying trying to get this fire started but it's not working well I'll tell you this I'll encourage you here you're in the right place as I look around I can see people that are on fire tell you what I would do if I was you and I have no fire and they have fire what's the best thing about fire it just spreads go sit next to them go hang out with them go have lunch with them go hey tell me how you are so on fire that's what I would do and hope to catch that fire next but if there's something inside us that have completely stopped that then this is now the perfect time for us to take this to God and go

[44 : 39] God I'm so sorry I didn't realize what was inside me I didn't realize what I was denying the power of show me how show me how Jesus you are enough you are the subject of all of our devotion we know the Holy Spirit came to point people to point us to you to tell of the mighty works of God and so we decide today we pray that today would be a turning point where we do not turn back where we decide to follow you wherever you may lead as of Noah as of Abraham as of Isaac as of Jacob as of Moses

Jesus we follow you the great high priest we know that through what you did on the cross through your spirit we all have access to the father now not just Moses and you you Lord have broken down the dividing wall of hostility between nations between friends within families you come and you preach peace and so we follow you Jesus everything we need is in you so would you give us the opportunities this week to be that burning bush would you send people to us that you are desiring to meet and just as Moses was poor with his words we come with our flawed apologetics we come without lofty speech or wisdom but we take comfort in the fact that the power of the cross is enough Lord would you use us would we be your chosen instruments would you burn inside us just as on the day of Pentecost Holy Spirit would you continue to lead us through the night would you continue to refine us to be more like you would you complete what you already started would you allow us empower us to be a part of it thank you Holy Spirit we know that we tread on holy ground because you are here thank you Lord thank you for being with us as we gather would you continue as we scatter in your name we pray amen