

# WHO ARE WE REACHING?



## STUDY 1

### Reaching our Communities (Acts 2:14-41)

Prior to Acts 2, the Spirit of God was known to dwell, firstly, in the Israelite tabernacle and then in the temple. In 2:1-13, we read the phenomenal account of when the Holy Spirit first came to fill personal temples (Ephesians 2:19-22, 1 Corinthians 6:19-20), indwelling individual people who followed Jesus.

On the day of Pentecost, when Jerusalem was overflowing with devout Jewish pilgrims who traveled for this festival, the early disciples were gathered in one place. Jesus had told the disciples, in Acts 1, to remain in Jerusalem for the promised gift of the Holy Spirit. They trusted Jesus and remained. And the Holy Spirit came. But the onlookers had no preparation for what occurred and were stunned and confused. This presented an amazing opportunity for those first disciples to bear witness of Jesus to the onlookers. The people in the crowd were their people. Whether they were from Jerusalem or those who had traveled from afar, the crowd of onlookers were all God-fearing Jews.

### Read Together:

**Acts 2:14-41, especially 29-41 (NIV):** *“Fellow Israelites, I can tell you confidently that the patriarch David died and was buried, and his tomb is here to this day. But he was a prophet and knew that God had promised him on oath that he would place one of his descendants on his throne. Seeing what was to come, he spoke of the resurrection of the Messiah, that he was not abandoned to the realm of the dead, nor did his body see decay. God has raised this Jesus to life, and we are all witnesses of it. Exalted to the right hand of God, he has received from the Father the promised Holy Spirit and has poured out what you now see and hear. For David did not ascend to heaven, and yet he said, “The Lord said to my Lord: “Sit at my right hand until I make your enemies a footstool for your feet.”*

*“Therefore let all Israel be assured of this: God has made this Jesus, whom you crucified, both Lord and Messiah.” When the people heard this, they were cut to the heart and said to Peter and the other apostles, “Brothers, what shall we do?” Peter replied, “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. The promise is for you and your children and for all who are far off—for all whom the Lord our God will call.” With many other words he warned them; and he pleaded with them, “Save yourselves from this corrupt generation.” Those who accepted his message were baptized, and about three thousand were added to their number that day.”*

### Explore Together:

**1. Commonality of Background (Acts 2:14-35)** - The onlookers that day were all devout Jews. That impacted how Peter spoke to them. He was able to quote Hebrew scriptures (Joel 2, Psalm 16, Psalm 110) that they knew as well as he did. He could “speak their language” and draw upon truths that were foundational to their lives. Notice, also, that he frequently addressed them as “fellow Israelites”. Peter communicated, with clarity, that the word translated LORD in the Hebrew Scriptures for YHWH, Yahweh, the God of Israel, was the same name he was using for Jesus.

**Discuss:** What can we learn from how Peter shares truths about Jesus by, firstly, establishing common ground? How can we use common ground as a foundation to build a bridge to new truths? Can you recall a time where common ground opened a conversation about your faith?

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**2. Witness of the Resurrection (Acts 2:29-35)** - By using the familiar Hebrew Scriptures, Peter was able to show that the resurrection wasn't a random miracle that God performed out of desperation. It was, instead, the fulfillment of the previous promises that God made through one king, David, about the true king, King Jesus. Jesus was, indeed, the promised Messiah for whom all of the Jewish people had been waiting. The plan was always the resurrected Jesus.

**Discuss:** How are we able to witness to our friends about the risen Christ when we were not eye witnesses of the resurrection?

**3. Message of Repentance (Acts 2:36-40)** - In response to hearing the truths from the witness of Peter, that the crucified and risen Jesus was both Lord and Messiah, the people responded with one question — “What shall we do?” That question has remained the same for over 2000 years. And Peter's answer is our answer — “repent” — turn around, change direction and go in a new direction by following Jesus.

**Discuss:** Can you recall a time you have ‘changed direction’? What did that look like in your life?

Privately and personally, ask yourself, “Am I living a life of repentance? Does my life demonstrate that my salvation in Jesus Christ is not, simply, about going to heaven when I die? Am I inviting others into a life of repentance, a complete directional change?” Spend some time in quiet stillness and prayer. Then, share any revelations from your time of stillness. Pray for each other.

**4. Response of Devotion (Acts 2:41-47)** - N.T. Wright explains that the message is the same then and now, “*Join this movement, allow the death and resurrection of Jesus to become the badge you wear, the sign of your identity, with you and your children sharing in the new life of the baptized community, the life which has the stamp of Jesus upon it, the life which is defined in terms of turn away from the course you were on and embracing Jesus' way instead.*”

**Discuss:** Consider the wording in verse 41 — “added to their number”. That means that 3,000 people became a part of that family of believers. How does that impact how you picture what is described in verses 42-47? In what ways can we better embrace new believers within our campus?

## Pray Together:

*Lord Jesus,*

*We worship You, our King, the Lord of heaven and earth. Thank You for our redemption that is found through repentance. Thank you, God, for your patience as we sometimes don't live like redeemed people.*

*Work in our hearts, Holy Spirit, so that we will be genuine and believable witnesses of the transformation we have found through the risen Christ.*

*Amen.*

## SUGGESTED RESOURCES:

- **Book:** Tom Wright - *Acts for Everyone: Parts 1 and 2*
- **Book:** Timothy Keller - *Every Good Endeavor: Connecting Your Work to God's Plan for the World*
- **Video:** The Bible Project: *Luke-Acts Series Episode 6: Pentecost, Acts 1-7;*  
<https://bibleproject.com/explore/video/gospel-acts-1/>