

Luke 2 (Part 2) & Luke 3 (Part 1) • The Ministry of John the Baptist Begins

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Luke chapter 2. Are you there? We're picking it up in verse 41. This is our last study in Luke before we actually get into the earthly ministry of Jesus, and it begins in verse 41 saying,

“Now his parents went to Jerusalem every year at the Feast of the Passover. ⁴² And when he was twelve years old, they went up according to custom. ⁴³ And when the feast was ended, as they were returning, the boy Jesus stayed behind in Jerusalem. His parents did not know it, ⁴⁴ but supposing him to be in the group they went a day's journey, but then they began to search for him among their relatives and acquaintances, ⁴⁵ and when they did not find him, they returned to Jerusalem, searching for him.” (ESV)

Can you imagine being Joseph and Mary at this point? You're looking at each other, you're going, we lost the Messiah. We had one job to do. Anyway.

⁴⁶ “After three days they found him in the temple, sitting among the teachers, listening to them and asking them questions. ⁴⁷ And all who heard him were amazed at his understanding and his answers. ⁴⁸ And when his parents saw him, they were astonished. And his mother said to him, “Son, why have you treated us so? Behold, your father and I have been searching for you in great distress.” ⁴⁹ And he said to them, “Why were you looking for me? Did you not know that I must be in my Father's house?”

⁵⁰ And they did not understand the saying that he spoke to them. ⁵¹ And he went down with them and came to Nazareth and was submissive to them. And his mother treasured up all these things in her heart. ⁵² And Jesus increased in wisdom and in stature and in favor with God and man.”

Let's stop there for now. Let's pray.

Heavenly Father, as always, we come before You when we open your Word to ask You to open our hearts that we might gain a heart of understanding. That we

might learn from the Scripture, and that we might grow from the knowledge of the Word, strengthened by Your Spirit to put into practice what we learn each and every time. Guide us and direct us, illuminate our hearts, fill us with your Spirit. We ask it in Jesus' name, amen.

Concerning the childhood of Jesus, we know nothing except for this short account here in the Gospel according to Luke. I mean, we know the birth that kind of stuff. We know about how Herod tried to kill the babies that were born around that time but concerning his childhood, this is really the only story we have, and this is at the precipice of manhood because Luke tells us here that Jesus was now 12 and you probably know that in the Jewish reckoning of a young man this is when he became a young man.

This is when a boy crossed over from boyhood to manhood, age 12. We look at a 12-year-old and we go, yeah, it's still pretty young, but in the Law, that man, a young boy was considered a man, and he also had some responsibilities related to that position in manhood. One of them was getting to Jerusalem as often as he could to celebrate the Feasts, so Mary and Joseph brought Jesus along on this occasion because it is the time of Passover. Now Passover as a celebration only lasted one day.

You'll remember that Passover was the celebration marking God's deliverance of Israel from their bondage in Egypt, and on that night in Egypt when the very first Passover took place, all of the Israelites were told to take a year-old spotless lamb, sacrifice it, and to take some of the blood of that lamb and to literally paint it on the doorposts of their home. The Lord told them through Moses, that night, an angel would pass through the land, and put to death all who did not have, put to death the firstborn male, excuse me, of all who did not have the blood painted on their doors.

And so, the Israelites went through this experience of the very first Passover and the celebration that Joseph and Mary are attending here is in commemoration of that. It's fascinating to me. Jesus is, we're told in the Scriptures, our Passover Lamb. He is the fulfillment of the Old Testament Passover feast and event, and because what were the Israelites doing on that very first Passover? We've said this many times before. They were sheltering under the blood of the lamb.

They had the blood painted on their doorposts and the destroyer passed over them, unable to touch them, and in Christ, that's what we're doing, isn't it? We're sheltering under the blood of the Lamb and death cannot touch us. Anyway, it's a powerful image that were given from this Old Testament story, but how

interesting that Jesus should be there for the..., you got to want, I'm sure these people, can you imagine being someone in the crowd at that very celebration?

Can you imagine being one of the Israelites who came to Jerusalem and oh we're here to celebrate the Passover. What a wonderful observance, reminding ourselves of God's great deliverance of His people, and we bring a lamb and who knows, they probably carry a lamb toward the temple where it's going to be sacrificed and so forth. And I wonder how many of those people passed by that 12-year-old boy, Jesus, and had absolutely no inkling there he is the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world.

There He is. There's the fulfillment. He's the one all these years of celebration are pointing toward. There He is right there. Blows my mind. Just absolutely crazy.

Now, Passover, as I said, only lasted one day, but right after Passover, the next day, began the Feast of Unleavened Bread, and that lasted for seven days. For eight days, the people came together and celebrated. Luke calls it simply Passover. And it sometimes went by the name Passover, the whole 8 days.

Sometimes they called those 8 days the Feast of Unleavened Bread, but it included Passover. Know that when you're reading your Bible, those things are used synonymously in the Word of God. And Luke tells us, in verse 43 that when the Feast had ended, they were on their way back to Nazareth, and we're told here that the boy Jesus stayed behind, and his parents had no awareness of His not coming with them. And this is an honest mistake because they traveled in groups. Whole towns, family groups friends, acquaintances would travel together.

We've mentioned it before. It was safer to travel in groups, and it was a pretty good hike from Nazareth to Jerusalem so staying in groups was just a great way to go. And the women would go first if they were bringing any small children with them because they moved at a slower pace, and then the men actually left Jerusalem a little bit later, and they would meet the women at a designated spot where they were going to camp for the night and so forth, and it was there at that camp on the end of the first day of travel that Joseph and Mary realized that Jesus was missing and so, they started their way back to Jerusalem.

Verse 46 in your Bible tells us that, *“After three days (or in other words, on the third day) they found him in the temple, sitting among the teachers, listening to them and asking them questions.”*

We're told in verse 47, *"And all who heard him were amazed at his understanding and his answers."*

By the way, these conversations were very common during feast times. The members of the Sanhedrin, the religious leaders, teachers of the Law would gather in areas in the temple, and they would just hold open air discussions, questions and answers, talk about God, talk about theology, talk about the Scripture and so forth. It was probably fun. Here's Jesus. Once again, you remember Jesus's other name? The Word of God. Right?

John 1.1. *"In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God."* He was with God in the beginning. Here is the Word of God manifest in the flesh, talking theology with these adults, and they're amazed. Wow, that kid brought up a good point. Never really thought about that before. How old are you, kid? 12? Goodness gracious. No, it's not that amazing. He is the Word of God made flesh. What a powerful, powerful picture once again. So, they come to Him, they find Him there. Verse 48 says that,

"when his parents saw him, they were astonished." (In fact, Mary said to Him) *"Son, why have you treated us like this?"* (She says) *"Your father and I, we've been searching for you, and we've been in great distress."*

Yeah, my mother would have said, I've been worried sick, right? I thought you were dead in a ditch somewhere. My mother used that on me last. I said, mom, what's with ditches? You got this thing with ditches. Anyway, verse 49 says,

"And he said to them, "Why were you looking for me? Did you not know that I must be in my Father's house?"

And with that statement, Jesus makes some very important declarations. First of all, He very gently corrects Mary because Mary said, your father and I were looking for you and we've been greatly distressed, and Jesus comes back and gently corrects her and says, I am actually with my Father and I'm doing His work and in His house. And that was probably an important reminder for Mary and Joseph at that particular time. But Jesus is also making it very clear to them that He understands at this point at age 12 that He is the unique Son of God.

Now we don't know, and that was another question that someone asked me this last week, when did Jesus first realize that he was the unique son of God? The Bible doesn't say. All we know is that at age 12, he knew, and He spoke it. I am, didn't you know I should be in my Father's house.

There was a very clear understanding there, but we're told in verse 51 that, “...he went down with them and came to Nazareth and was submissive to them...”

Very important statement there because it tells us that just because Jesus knew that He was the Son of God in a unique sense, He did not believe or think that He had outgrown these human parents. The Son of God went home and was submissive to His mother and to Joseph. And that's a powerful statement.

And then the chapter ends with the words that, ⁵² “Jesus increased in wisdom, and in stature, and in favor with God and man.”

Now as we get into chapter 3, Luke skips ahead about 17 years and it says, and he begins to date this period of time. And I want you to notice how he does it. Talk about overkill.

¹ “In the fifteenth year of the reign of Tiberius Caesar, Pontius Pilate being governor of Judea, and Herod being tetrarch of Galilee, and his brother Philip tetrarch of the region of Ituraea and Trachonitis, and Lysanias tetrarch of Abilene, ² during the high priesthood of Annas and Caiaphas, the word of God came to John the son of Zechariah in the wilderness.”

You can see why Luke is considered one of the most incredible historians of our time. In this single passage alone, he uses no fewer than 6 different dating methods to speak of this pivotal time in human history.

When John the Baptist emerged from the wilderness and began to baptize people to prepare the way for the Messiah, because this is huge. This marks the beginning, really, of the ministry of Jesus Christ, the one who comes to prepare and to prepare the hearts of the people so that Jesus might come.

You'll notice that the way Luke said it in verse 2 was, “the Word of God came to John in the wilderness.” Now that's an Old Testament phrase. We read that a lot in the Old Testament. Things like, *the Word of the Lord came to Samuel*, or *the word of the Lord came to Nathan*, or *Jeremiah wrote and said, the Word of the Lord came to me, saying such and such*.

Luke's wording reminds us of this Old Testament picture of the one who has received God's Word, and that reminds you and I that John the Baptist was so much more than just a baptizer. He was also a prophet because the Word of the Lord came to him and he was given a word to speak, and we hear some of those actually in this passage.

Luke writes in verse 3,

“And he went into all the region around the Jordan proclaiming a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins.”

Now, that single verse right there, verse 3, really sums up the ministry of John the Baptist. He went around the entire region proclaiming a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins, and it's important that we see that whole thing. He didn't just go around baptizing people. His was a baptism of repentance, okay? This was not some holy religious rite where this man is showering holy water on people. He's demanding something. He's demanding repentance. This is, you see what I'm saying? He didn't, John was, he was very passionate about that, and I don't think he was the guy who'd get in and baptize just anybody.

His was a baptism of repentance, and John wanted to know that you'd repented. In fact, we're going to read as we go on here in a minute, that when people came to him, he confronted them with coming with the wrong heart, right? And we'll see that here in just a couple of verses. But John's ministry was to prepare for the Messiah through repentance. Repentance is the mechanism that God uses to prepare hearts to hear His Word. That's the thing we learn about repentance when we study the ministry of John.

Repentance is a key for us, even opening our eyes, opening our hearts. If we haven't repented, we're not, our hearts aren't going to be open. We're not going to be able to hear what God's Word has to say to us, and when we do repent there's just this powerful thing that happens in our lives. Look at what it goes on to say in verse 4, it says,

“As it is written in the book of the words of Isaiah the prophet, “The voice of one crying in the wilderness: ‘Prepare the way of the Lord, make his paths straight. ⁵ Every valley shall be filled, and every mountain and hill shall be made low, and the crooked shall become straight, and the rough places shall become level ways, ⁶ and all flesh shall see the salvation of God.’”

What a powerful declaration by Isaiah, 700 years before it happened, telling about the coming of this one who would prepare the way for the Lord. How did he do it? Again, repentance. So, was he effective? Did John do a good job? Should we grade him? Luke actually grades him, but we have to go ahead in our study of Luke to find it. I'll just put it on the screen for you. It's from Luke chapter 7. Look what he says here. He says,

Luke 7:29-30 (NIV)

(All the people, even the tax collectors, when they heard Jesus' words, acknowledged that God's way was right, because they had been baptized by John. But the Pharisees and experts in the law rejected God's purpose for themselves, because they had not been baptized by John.

(All the people, even the tax collectors, when they heard Jesus' words, acknowledged that God's way was right, (Why?) because they had been baptized by John. (On the other side of the coin) But the Pharisees and experts in the law rejected God's purpose for themselves, (Why?) because they had not been baptized by John.

Is that amazing? Yeah. That is the power that repentance plays in our lives. It opens our heart to hear God. Don't think repentance, people, is a one-time act. We do repent when we come to Jesus Christ. We do turn from our previous ways and go the other direction, which is what repentance is all about, but boy I've had to repent. I'm still repenting all the time and I, and we all ought to be. Repentance is an ongoing work that continues to keep our hearts soft and pliable in the hands of the Master.

And when we neglect this idea of repentance, turning away, changing our mind, going a different direction, we can create a crust on our heart that then makes it more challenging for us to hear His voice and respond to His Word. And lest we become hard hearted we need to keep repentance in the forefront of our very lives. And again, repentance is not just sorrow. In fact, do you know that, I mean, sorrow is great as long as it's Godly sorrow when it goes with repentance, but you don't even have to really be sorrowful to repent.

It often goes with it when we realize how much we've, how much time we've wasted, how much we've hurt the Lord. But it doesn't have to be there. I think a lot of Christians would say, if you ask them, what is repentance? They say, well, it's great sorrow over our sin. Not necessarily. Sometimes, well, here's the deal, repentance means a change of mind and it infers a change of action that goes along with that change of mind. It means looking at my path and saying, that's the wrong one. I'm not going to go that way anymore; I've changed my mind.

I'm going to go this way because God is this way, right? And so that is really the essence of repentance. You don't necessarily have to be sorrowful to make that determination. Some people are, and if they are sorrowful, we're always hoping that they have a Godly sorrow, as Paul says, because that leads to repentance. But you can repent and just say, I'm done. I am done going that way. That way is the way to destruction, right? I am going that way.

I have changed my mind. I've changed my direction. I am now going to go in that direction. You see, repentance is absolutely necessary to even come to Jesus, because you're not going to come to Jesus if you're going the opposite direction. You first have to repent of the old way and turn around and come to Him. And that is that act of repentance, the changing of mind that precipitates the changing of action and so forth. I want to show you how the Apostle Paul described his ministry, and repentance played very significantly in it. Acts 26, I like this in the NIV. It says,

Acts 26:20 (NIV)

First to those in Damascus, then to those in Jerusalem and in all Judea and to the Gentiles also, I preached that they should repent and turn to God and then prove their repentance by their deeds.

First to those in Damascus, (Paul wrote, or spoke and said) then to those in Jerusalem and in all Judea and to the Gentiles also, I preached that they should repent and turn to God and then prove their repentance by their deeds.

This is how Paul described his ministry. I preached repentance. Now, you don't have to say the word repent to preach repentance. That's where people get so hung up. I didn't hear you say repent once in your message. You don't have to, you just have to say, hey, turn to God, change your mind and turn to God. That is repentance, you see.

It's a huge part of our life in Christ, ongoingly has to happen to come to Jesus, and it needs to happen continually as we walk with Jesus, and we are made aware of areas of our life that are needing to change. Now in the next section, you're going to see how John demanded repentance and the actions of repentance. Verse 7 in your Bible, he said,

“therefore, to the crowds that came out to be baptized by him, you brood of vipers!”

This is like looking at a big crowd. They're coming to hear what he has to say and to be baptized, and he looks at him and he goes, you snakes! You're a bunch of snakes in the grass! He says, who warned you to flee from the wrath to come? Verse 8, look what He says to them,

“Bear fruits in keeping with repentance. And do not begin to say to yourselves, (Well, we're Jews) ‘We have Abraham as our father.’ For I tell you, God is able from these stones to raise up children for Abraham. ⁹ Even now the axe is laid to

the root of the trees. Every tree therefore that does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire.”

This was John's rather stinging message. He didn't let people off the hook. This was not a religious experience. This was repentance. This was real life brokenness. And by the way, it was a big deal for the Jews to be baptized in water, and here's why. They were used to seeing baptisms take place, but baptisms were done when a Gentile came to faith in the God of Israel and wanted to embrace Judaism he would, he or she would be baptized in water by immersion to show they were coming into the faith of Judaism. That's how the Jews really understood baptism for the most part.

And so, for them to engage in water baptism was really tantamount to them saying, I'm as bad as a Gentile, and that was something for the Jews to say because they believed the Gentiles to be the worst of the worst. They were dogs in their estimation and not worthy of the kingdom of God. So, for a Jew, then, to submit to the rite of baptism was a big deal, right? Even so, even understanding that, John, so you can see here, John is encouraging them to come into the waters of baptism, and they're already going to be resistant from the standpoint of just being a Jew.

Secondly, they're going to be resistant because of their heritage as a Jew, and John knew that. And so, he said, don't you dare try to explain this away in your own mind by saying, well, wait a minute, I'm a son of Abraham. You see the Jews knew from the Scripture that God had considered Abraham a righteous man. They believed they were righteous too because of Abraham. In other words, that God had embraced them just because they were Abraham's offspring or descendants.

John made a point of clarifying. Listen, there's no hope for you to simply say to yourself, I was born into this Jewish family, and as a son of Abraham I've got to get out of jail free card. I got it at birth. He said no. He wanted them to know and understand, God will deal with every single person individually. Have you ever met an individual in our time who said to you that they believed they were a Christian and going to heaven because they'd been raised in a Christian home. I have, I've had people say that to me and it's really the same mindset.

My mom and my dad were Christians. We went to church, and I was raised in a Christian home, we read the Bible, I memorized verses in AWANA, went to Sunday school. Yeah, of course I'm a Christian. Now wait a minute. Have you personally repented and come to faith in Jesus Christ and said, yes, you are my Savior? John would challenge those same faulty conclusions. God deals with

people individually and so forth. Not because you're part of a people group or a family or something like that. Now, how did the crowd respond to John verse 10?

“And the crowds asked him, “What then shall we do?”

They wanted to know what repentance was going to look like. How do we prove our repentance, they're saying, and he answered them.

“¹¹ And he answered them, (Well) “Whoever has two tunics is to share with him who has none, and whoever has food is to do likewise.” ¹² Tax collectors also came to be baptized and said to him, “Teacher, what shall we do?” ¹³ And he said to them, “Collect no more than you are authorized to do.” ¹⁴ Soldiers also asked him, “And we, what shall we do?” And he said to them, “Do not extort money from anyone by threats or by false accusation and be content with your wages.”

What is John saying to these various individuals? It's pretty simple really. He's saying, live your life differently than you lived it before, because that's what repentance is. It's turning around, having a change of mind and going a different direction. So, whatever you've done in the past, do the opposite, right? He's really just speaking to people about the need to live a different life, and that is that the functional aspect, if you will, of repentance.

Now, obviously all this attention that John is getting, people are coming by droves to hear him, to be baptized. There was a general expectation in Israel at that time that the Messiah was coming, and it was natural for them to wonder if perhaps John might be that man. I want you to see how he responds. Verse 15,

“As the people were in expectation, and all were questioning in their hearts concerning John, whether he might be the Christ, ¹⁶ John answered them all, saying, “I baptize you with water, but he who is mightier than I is coming, the strap of whose sandals I am not worthy to untie. He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and fire.” ¹⁷ His winnowing fork is in his hand, to clear his threshing floor and to gather the wheat into his barn, but the chaff he will burn with unquenchable fire.” ¹⁸ So with many other exhortations he preached good news to the people.”

John clearly denied being the Messiah, and he did it two ways. First of all, he said, I'm inferior to Him. He's coming, and I am not worthy to even bend down and untie his sandal. Now that was the job of the lowliest household servant. They would take off the master's sandals when they came home and wash their

feet. John says, I'm not worthy to do that for Him, even to untie His sandal. Next, he said,

¹⁶ *“The baptism that I baptize you with is also inferior to His. I baptize you with water. He's going to baptize you with the Holy Spirit. I immerse you in water. He is going to immerse you in the Holy Spirit...”*

And the baptism, as we've said many times before, of the Holy Spirit is the promised outpouring of the Spirit that was prophesied in the Old Testament by prophets like Joel. Joel is the prophet that Peter quoted on the day of Pentecost when he stood up and spoke to the people after the Spirit had fallen on the assembled believers and empowered them for service. He said no, this is not these people aren't drunk as you think this is what Joel spoke about. This is that outpouring of the Spirit.

This is that baptism. Why do we call it the baptism of the Holy Spirit? Because that's what Jesus called it. In Acts chapter 1 He said, do not leave Jerusalem, stay here, wait for the promise. He said, for in a few days you will be baptized by the Holy Spirit and when you are baptized, you will receive power. Power to do, power to serve, power to go where you're called to go, power to speak, and so forth. And of course, all of that power emerged in the church in Acts chapter 2.

Luke is the same author, and he actually records for us the very first time the Holy Spirit fell upon the church to empower the believers. Remember, they already have the Holy Spirit, the indwelling Holy Spirit living in them because Jesus did that, He breathed on them the night that He was raised, or the evening of the day that He was raised from the dead. So, they've already received the Spirit, but now they're receiving the empowering work of the Spirit. It's recorded for us in Acts chapter 2. On the screen it says,

Acts 2:1-4 (ESV)

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 one of them. And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in tongues as the Spirit gave them utterance.

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the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other (languages. Which is what that word means) tongues as the Spirit gave them utterance.

Meaning as the Spirit gave them the ability.

And from that time on, when you read the Book of Acts, you see a completely different group of people. They were shut up in rooms before for fear. Now they're out in the open. Peter, the one who denied the Lord 3 times, stands up in front of thousands of people and says, He is the Messiah. He's the Christ. You crucified Him, but God raised Him from the dead and it's a just, it's a new Church. It's a new body of people. They now walk in a renewed power, a sense of ability, through the power of the Holy Spirit. It's the baptism of the Holy Spirit. It's what John prophesied.

He says, I baptize you with water. Just wait. The One coming after me is going to baptize you with the Holy Spirit, and you will have the fire of God in your bosom and you will be able to walk and talk in the power of the Spirit, not just the power of your flesh.

And we need the baptism of the Holy Spirit because we need power, we need strength. Some of you guys, just to live our lives, we need His strength every day, and certainly to witness, to share Christ with others.

We need the Holy Spirit's power because so much of what we deal with, even though we're not aware of it, has a spiritual dynamic to it. We get so fixated on the life of the flesh, the clothes we wear, the room we're sitting in at the time, the temperature, what's happening outside this and that and the other thing, it's all very physical. It's all very, just here and now, and that's what we focus on but there's a whole world that we're unaware of without the power of the Spirit. It's the spiritual world.

It's just as real as the world that you and I see and feel and smell and taste and hear. Just as real. But you and I have no power to work or address the needs and the concerns and the challenges that go along with that world because we're too physical. We're so physically inclined and so physically oriented that if somebody were to come up to you and say, are you spiritually prepared for this trip you got coming up or are you physically or spiritually prepared to speak to that person about the Lord?

Are you physically ready to go in and teach that Sunday school class? Are you spiritually prepared? You know, okay, we can talk about it from a physical standpoint. We can talk about, we know what they're talking about there, don't

we? Are you physically ready to do this? Well, I think so. I mean, yeah. Feel strong enough. Are you spiritually strong enough? What do you mean? I don't understand the question. Yeah, there's a lot of things for which the Spirit is our only answer.

And He comes to empower us for service. What kind of things does it do? Well, it changes people. It enables them to do things that they're otherwise unable to do. I hate to keep going back and looking at Peter, but Peter is just this perfect example of a man who had every good intention, but he failed miserably. He really, when he told Jesus at the last supper, listen, I am ready to die with you tonight. I believe that Peter believed every word he said. I believe he was completely convinced, within his mind, that he was ready to go to his death that night. I mean, A for intentions, right? And then the situation unfolded.

Suddenly Judas shows up. There's a group of soldiers. There's a group of people with him. They've got clubs. They've got swords. They've got lanterns. And it's all this confusing mess. What happens? Every single disciple deserted Him right then and there, that night, and they carried Jesus off. Where's Peter? He's off running. Well, then he thinks better of it and thinks, no, I got to stick with this thing, so he follows at a distance, we're told. And he decides, I think I'm going to, I'm going to try to do this. Again, A for effort.

Makes his way into the outer court of the high priest house where Jesus is in being questioned and beaten and ridiculed, and Peter's out there warming himself by the fire and he's thinking, okay, I can do this. And then this servant girl comes up to him and says, you look familiar. Aren't you one of his followers? No. Yeah, I think you are. You have a Galilean accent. I think you're one of His. I'm not.

Third time he starts swearing to punctuate the whole response. I don't know the man. Rooster crows. Peter realizes, I just don't have it. I don't have what it takes. The Bible says he goes off and he weeps bitterly. And the rest of us are thinking, wow, what a loser.

No, he's just a man trying to do in the flesh what can only be accomplished by the Spirit. And then the Spirit falls on Peter on the day of Pentecost. He's a new man.

Not only does he get up and preach in front of thousands of people, he finds himself, along with John, in front of the very Sanhedrin that condemned Jesus to death and handed him over to the Romans, and Peter stands up and says, *“Men of Israel, If we're being brought here to account for a man being healed,*

fine, but know this. That man was raised up by the power of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, whom you crucified, but whom God raised from the dead.” (Acts 4:10)

The very men who turned Jesus over to the Romans, Peter stands up with great authority and great boldness. How? Through the power of the Spirit. And that's what we see as we continue to read through the book of Acts, and that doesn't mean that the challenges stopped, they kept.

Peter got taken to jail, taken, and the Lord set him free and there was all these things that were going on, and the believers would get together, and they would pray, and they'd say, oh, God, give us boldness in the face of all this violence and opposition to preach the Word of God. (Acts 4:28) And it says at that time, the place where they were sitting was shaken and the Holy Spirit fell upon them, and they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and spoke the Word of God boldly.” (Acts 4:31)

Why did they pray for boldness? Because they needed it. Right? Why do you ask? You don't ask for things you don't need. This is starting to heat up, you guys. Things are getting dangerous. God, give us boldness to keep preaching and not to be quiet. Boom! Once again, the baptism of the Holy Spirit. It's powerful. And that's what he's all about. Giving us power, power to live.

Do you need the Holy Spirit's power in your life? If anybody says no, I'd say you're, you don't understand. We all need the power, that overflowing power in our lives. And we just have to ask, right? All right, we finish out just a couple of verses here. Verse 19, Luke jumps ahead in time here by saying,

“But Herod the tetrarch, who had been reproved (and that means rebuked) by him for Herodias, his brother's wife, and for all the evil things that Herod had done,²⁰ added this to them all, that he locked up John in prison.”

And so, Luke ends this section that we're looking at with a mention of the fact that John was eventually imprisoned by Herod for speaking out against Herod's adulterous marriage relationship. He married his brother Philip's wife while his brother Philip was still alive. And John spoke publicly against it, and he wound up in prison and we know that that led to his eventual martyrdom.

That's where we're going to stop, and we'll get into the ministry of Jesus. We'll be talking about the baptism of Jesus. We'll talk next week about why Jesus submitted to water baptism when it was a baptism of repentance and Jesus had nothing to repent for.

Let's stand together. Let's pray.

Heavenly Father, we thank You and we praise you for the power of Your Word. Lord, we thank You for the power of your Spirit as well, who empowers us to live our lives to the glory of God so that we might do the work of the Gospel. Living our lives as husbands and wives, employees, employers, and just plain old children of God.

We need Your power, Lord. Baptize us afresh. Help us to pray this every day. To remember to pray and say, Lord, baptize me, empower me, enable me to do what I am physically, emotionally unable.

Jesus, we thank You for Your Word. Continue to be with us and strengthen our hearts, for it is in Your name we pray and all God's people said, amen.