

My name is Joel Held. I am a fourth-year CMC program student through CUI and Concordia Seminary. I am a vicar and worship leader at Edgewater Lutheran church in Eastvale and Director of worship arts at CUI. A bit of a riddle for you to start of the message, what has Dutch, African, Asian Indian roots, with a bit Hispanic and Native American culture sprinkled in there? Did you guess? It is me I am from African/Asian decent but born in the Netherlands and speak fluent dutch, came here to be missionary to the Native American community and ended marrying someone of Mexican and cuban descent. I embody the Cross cultural program.

I moved here with my family when I was nine years old, my parents came here to be missionaries to Native Americans, So they went to a school in Pasadena to learn how to be missionaries, down the street from that school was a little lutheran church, a bunch of their fellow students went there, so they visited it and loved it! I remember coming out of church one day and my parents who were from a pentecostal background saying, “huh, the holy spirit is in the Lutheran church!” Yes the holy spirit is! And how appropriate on this pentecost to take some time and dwell on it. With that said My sermon is based from the Acts reading we just read regarding the outpouring of the holy spirit, let me recap for you.

Christ had promised the Helper, and they were patiently waiting, not leaving this city but being a blessing to those around them. And then the presence of the Holy Spirit was released upon them. And many came to the saving knowledge of Jesus Christ through the testimony of these ordinary guys who were just waiting. They were regular joes like you and I and God did amazing things through them. Its so exciting to see what God does through his people. That was a theme that struck as I was preparing for this message.

With that said let me give you a little background information on the book of acts and the events that occurred in Chapter 2.

So beside wearing red on Pentecost. We find out that are Pentecost is actually a Jewish feast held 50 days after Passover. It celebrated the first fruits of the wheat harvest. Jewish tradition teaches that Pentecost marked the day when the Law was given to Israel. In the New Testament on the day of Pentecost the Church received the Holy Spirit. Pentecost was the best-attended of the great feasts because traveling conditions were at their best. There was never a more cosmopolitan gathering in Jerusalem than this one.”

Regarding the book of Acts -

Acts comes from the Greek word *praxis* meaning great deeds, the book is a series of vignettes chronicling the lives of key apostles (especially Peter and Paul) in the decades immediately following Christ's ascension into heaven. Luke wrote the books sometime between AD 60 and AD 62, while Paul sat in prison, awaiting the resolution of his appeal. Acts is the only biblical book that chronicles the history of the church immediately after Jesus's ascension. It does this through sharing with us the ministries of both Peter the first half of the book and Paul second half. Acts is the only biblical book that chronicles the history of the church immediately after Jesus's ascension.

What I find interesting about the book of Acts is that it's the 2nd volume of a 2 volume set, guess the first one, the book of Luke the same writer, meaning the same author Luke wrote them.

It reminded me of Television in particular 80's and 90's television. You are asking how does He relate this to 80's TV? Well, let me explain. I love television, and I was raised with parents who were thankful strict as to how much Television I was allowed to consume. So when we did watch television it was a family event. I am originally from the Netherlands, and American television was popular there. And in the early eighties there was this TV show called the "A Team" It came on at Saturday night at 7pm and my dad would make a special trip to the store to get us something American to eat as we watch the show, what we got was Donuts, I didn't realize it was a

breakfast food till I got to this country. So I have great memories of enjoying that and other television shows there and here when we moved to the united states.

The only thing that I did not enjoy about that experience growing up were those dreaded three words, “to. be. continued.” “ You are getting into a show and right as we are to find who the villain was, we had to wait at least a week sometimes two weeks. And if we happen to be tuning in the month of May, we might have to wait till that coming fall to find out who shot J.R.? It was agonizing but thankfully with the advent of streaming. Producers will put the entire series on and you can binge at your leisure.

The book of Acts, we can watch the next episode, it is the “to be continued” for the book of Luke. Both were written by the same author. In the Book of Luke we learned about Christ His ministry life, death and resurrection and in the book of Acts we learn how the disciples/apostles continued what Christ had commanded them to.

Not only was acts a “to be continued” of the book of Luke but we see the church born and we see the continuation of Christ work here on earth. Pretty cool! So where the words “To Be Continued “ where dreaded words when watching TV, in the context of these books and what Christ calls us to its amazing!

So if Acts is part of Luke. Where did this story pick back up? Well Luke 24 ends with the resurrection of Christ and how he showed himself to the men on the road to Emmaus, appearing to his disciples with the ascension and the promise that He would the Holy Spirit, the first chapter is like those shows that give recaps at the bringing of the episode. We get a recap and here in chapter 2 of Acts the story picks back up.

And what we have is the disciples receiving an outpouring of the Holy Spirit signified by tongues of fire, The idea behind the picture of fire is usually purification, as a refiner uses fire to make Gold pure. This refining presence, the Holy Spirit empowered the disciples to do great things.

They received the holy spirit and a fisherman with little or know education, he didn't go to synagogue seminary or university of Judah.

Galilee (**Galileans**) were known to be uncultured and poor speakers. This was all the more reason to be impressed with their ability to speak eloquently in other languages. "Galileans had difficulty pronouncing gutturals and had the habit of swallowing syllables when speaking; so they were looked down upon by the people of Jerusalem as being provincial."

He was a regular blue collar guy who God used amazingly to share the story of Christ gift of salvation that around three thousand received Christ. They listened to the holy Spirit-inspired words and received this eternal gift.

This is what we get in this episode of the book of Acts, what is continued, is the good news of Jesus Christ being spread by his disciples. Normal guys who God used to do something extraordinary. He used their natural talent and gifts, fishing, in Peter's case, loud and obnoxious :) Whatever our gifting God is calling us.

As Peter stated later in 1 Peter 2:9 But you are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for his own possession, that you may proclaim the excellencies of him who called you out of darkness into his marvelous light.

The priesthood of all believers means that all who have faith in Christ and are baptized are share in Christ's royal priesthood. This means that every believer has equal access to the Father through Jesus.

What this means is that whenever we find our selves in our vocations, whether that is doctor, lawyer, plumber, homemaker, student what ever your vocation is. We get to share what Christ has done for us! For Martin Luther, vocation is nothing less than the center of the Christian life. God works in and through vocation. He places us in our earthly life where we grow in faith and holiness. And in our various callings, we are to live out our faith.

That is what we see here are in chapter 2 of acts. Peter and the disciples by the power of the Holy Spirit are living out there faith. And just like you and I they don't have particularly great gifts. So if God can use them He can use us. Sometimes we tell our selves that we can't be used

You might think you are boring and I am not talented. You might think that God can't use you. Maybe you are struggling with guilt of sin from your past, well Christ died for those sins and as far as the east is from the west he has removed your transgressions. What ever it is God can use you. He can even bless you with new gifts and talents.

Here is a personal story to make the point,

I have always loved singing and speaking, but at about 13 years of age I developed a severe stutter that lasted all of high school and a big part of college. During this same time, I was selected as worship leader of my team at church and I graduated to become a teacher. Both jobs required lot of speaking, my stuttering was so bad I would have to write down what I was going to say. I knew that God wasn't calling me to be a worship leader or teacher speaker. But God healed me, and He is using me now. When I realized how sever my stuttering was I believed I was a one "episode guy", no sequel, not third installment, no "to be Continued" for me. I had given up. God said, "to be continued" and here you see me years later serving God.

So it is with all of us, God wants to use us to bring people to himself. You might feel inadequate, weak. But just like the holy spirit came upon the disciples and they started to witness. Just as God took a stuttering kid and is forming him to be a pastor. So he can use any of us.

What is important to note here is that it was now 10 days after the time Jesus ascended to heaven (Acts 1:3), and since Jesus commanded them to wait for the coming of the Holy Spirit. They didn't know when it was coming.

So is it with us, we can't force God, its in his timing. Its nothing that we can do but its His work in and through us. So if you are not "walking" in your calling don't worry God will continue to work on you and when the time is right God will use you. Just like those 80's television shows that had us waiting either a week a month or the whole summer. It was worth the wait.

The book of Acts was the "To be Continued" of Luke, and we the church are the "to be continued" of the book of acts.

We are the church God wants to use to draw people to himself. We have this great gift, we have the fountain of youth, we know what it takes to live forever, we have the life vest, life line, the life boat. Let us patiently wait on Him to use us when He sees fit. Until Jesus comes again to take us home there will be a “to be continued” God is inviting all of us to be part of that next episode, till Jesus comes again.

Amen