

## MONDAY 06 June 2022 "DEVOTED!" (Acts 2:40-42)

Good Monday to you my "Walking with Jesus" friends,

*If you have an interest in history then you know this date 06 June is very significant for the freedom of Europe, for this was "D-Day" in 1941!!* The remarkable events of that day began turning the tide in pushing back the evil darkness of the Nazi devastation of so many parts of Europe and the near annihilation of Jews worldwide. I wonder how the events of that day have affected freedom where you live?

Yesterday I left you in a crowd of people in Jerusalem who were hearing Peter, the brash, flamboyant fisherman disciple of Jesus proclaims a powerful, radical message of FREEDOM! *As the people listened, they were deeply convicted by the TRUTH which Peter spoke.* While they thought they were good people, in fact very religious people, they knew they were not God honoring and they had in fact rejected Jesus whom God had sent to them! Many in the crowd wanted change! This was not a political rally so there was not a call for political change, this was a moral and spiritual rally, a call to understand WHO Jesus was, WHY He had come to earth, WHY He had been rejected and even killed on Passover weekend. WHY God had raised Jesus from the dead, WHY Jesus had returned to heaven and WHY God was willing to forgive the sins of any person who would repent of their wickedness, turn to and trust Jesus and His death and resurrection for their salvation, their FREEDOM from the sin bondage!

Did you get that my friends? Peter had promised that *IF a person turned from their evil and trusted in Jesus, God's superior resurrection power would deliver that person from sin bondage and God would place His Holy Spirit in them and they'd live the rest of their life in relationship with Almighty God rather than as His enemy.*

So, let's rejoin the crowd as recorded in Acts 2:40 ***"With many other words Peter warned the people and he pleaded with them, 'Save yourselves from this corrupt generation! Those who accepted Peter's message were baptized and about 3000 were added to their number that day.'*** WOW! So that tells me the crowd was bigger than 3000 people and not ALL of the crowd believed Peter and responded in repentance. But it also tells me there was a great awakening that day as 3000 people responded *'YES, I want change in my life! I repent of my wickedness; I turn to Jesus asking God to save me and forgive my sin. And YES, I will be baptized giving public evidence of the changing work God is doing in my life and also declaring my allegiance to Jesus as my Savior and my Lord.'*

Now, I know what some of you are thinking, my friends... *'but wait a minute, Jerusalem is far from any large body of water or river, so where did 3000 people get baptized that day'?* Good question! We know that there were several public, spring fed pools in Jerusalem at that time... including the Pool of Siloam, where the blind man had been instructed by Jesus to wash his eyes and he received his sight, remember? (John 9:7)

And the Pools of Bethesda where Jesus had healed a man lying by the pools who had been crippled 38 years. (John 5) There may have been other pools as well. Let's not allow logistical questions to rob us of the wonder, the miracle of this day in Jerusalem. 3000 people's lives are being changed forever! *The Jesus movement is being launched, growing from 120 people to over 3000 people in one day! Jewish Jerusalem is being shaken to its foundation during the Pentecost Festival!*

I wonder friends, if you remember the event which occurred when Jesus asked the disciples what they were hearing people were saying about Him, His teachings and His miracles. Oh, they had heard many different, sometimes crazy ideas that people had about Jesus. But Peter boldly that day said to Jesus: ***"You are the Messiah, the Son of the living God!" Jesus replied 'Blessed are you Simon son of John, for this was not revealed to you by flesh and blood but by My Father in heaven... and upon this rock [of God's unwavering truth] I will build MY church and the gates of Hades will not prevail.'*** (Matt. 16:16-18)

Undoubtedly Peter was waist deep in one of the pools baptizing people as fast as they came to him repenting of their sin and declaring their full trust in Jesus to be their Savior. Probably all the other apostles were doing the same... can you see it my friends? People are shouting and cheering and clapping, and water is splashing as men, women, kids, older folks are repenting and trusting Jesus in Jerusalem. *Perhaps some of these are the very same people who had been in the crowd in Jerusalem only 53 days ago, screaming for Pilate to crucify Jesus!!* Can you see the power display here friends! Satan is being defeated, sin bondage is being broken, lives are being transformed... Jesus is building His Church and the gates of sin slavery are not able to hold these people in bondage any longer! *A spiritual freedom D-Day was happening in Jerusalem!!* Have you ever been part of something like this?

Perhaps you wonder what happened in Jerusalem in the days that followed this unforgettable Pentecost? Remember Jerusalem and the surrounding towns were filled to overflowing with thousands, perhaps hundreds of thousands of Jews, from all over the Roman Empire and beyond. Soon it would be time for them to travel home, but in the meantime, Luke records this statement for us: ***"They devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and to fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer."*** (Acts 2:42) This was an incredibly strategic few days. 3000 people from all around the world had heard, for the first time, a clear explanation of Jesus and His Gospel. *They had responded, repented, trusted Jesus and been baptized. The Holy Spirit was inside each of them working feverishly to help them maximize these few days with the apostles and other close friends of Jesus.* If I had to choose one word that characterizes what the Holy Spirit did, it's the word **HUNGER!** Do you see **HUNGER** in Luke's one sentence description? ***"They devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching..."***

***"Devoted"*** is a very important word describing powerful action that flows out of ***hunger!*** A desperately thirsty person is devoted to finding water at any cost, right?

A searching parent whose child strayed away from them in a crowd is a devoted, desperate parent, right? We can assume many of these Pentecost pilgrims would be leaving Jerusalem soon and may never again see any of these who had known Jesus so well. They were totally devoted to learning from them as much as they possibly could about Jesus and the God truth Jesus taught! May I ask you an important question my friends? *How do you measure your hunger to know God, to know Jesus, to know God's Word, to understand God's truth, to discern the work of the Holy Spirit in your life?* Is '**devoted**' a fair word that describes your spiritual hunger?

Do you see what else these new believers in Jesus were '**devoted**' to? "**...fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer.**" (Acts 2:42) What is '**fellowship**' with people in your part of the world? Is that what happens in a bar among strangers who are sharing drinks, or is it a family reunion or a wedding or an evening together with friends? These visitors to Jerusalem were devoted to build friendships, as quickly as possible, with these who had been friends with Jesus. Why? *Because Peter and the others KNEW Jesus, personally!* Suddenly they all had one major thing in common... they were all Jesus followers! As a result, they wanted to share their stories with each other. They were coming to understand they were a big extended family, the family of God's people! What about you friends... *Do you have an insatiable hunger for fellowship with those you know who know Jesus?*

And Luke says they were also **devoted** to '**...the breaking of bread and to prayer.**' Perhaps '**breaking of bread**' means meals, all types of meals. Remember how Jesus loved to share meals with his friends? But it may also mean sharing Communion, that special meal Jesus invited His followers to share which celebrates His death... His brutalized body sacrificed for us, and His blood shed for us! Oh, can you imagine how sweet that would have been with these new believers having Communion with the apostles and friends of Jesus when they were together, just as Jesus had invited them to do?

*And finally, they were **devoted** to PRAYER!* Oh, how I would have loved to be part of those prayer gatherings... can you imagine my friends? *In those days following Pentecost, these new Jewish believers discovered the personal privilege and the power of prayer... talking directly with God, as Jesus had taught them!* So, I ask us all again my friends, what is the depth of our hunger to be a man or woman of prayer, real prayer, the type of prayer that gives you a certainty that you are reaching into the very throne room of heaven and God Himself is fully engaged with you, and loves you very much, and FULLY understands all that is going on in your life!!

Can you imagine my friends what those days were like following that Pentecost miracle of the coming of the Holy Spirit, Peter's powerful message and 3000 people responding and being baptized, and this great Jesus movement shaking Jerusalem!

Now here's a short but powerful song that celebrates what Jesus did that day... has He done this in your life my friends?

**Today's Scripture is Acts 2:40-42.**