

## An Adventure Begins

**Text:** Acts 2: 1-13.   **Readings:** Acts 2: 1-24; 36-41; Genesis 11: 1-9

At the moment I'm reading an Enid Blyton book *Adventures of the Wishing Chair* with Zoe. In the book Peter and his sister Mollie, along with their elf friend Chinky go on different adventures.

They have a special chair in their playroom at the bottom of their garden.

The chair sprouts little red wings...they jump on the chair and fly off to some magical place. The adventures are exciting, dangerous, funny or strange...but never scary.

They meet giants and goblins, wizards and magicians, and snoogle in his castle.

Peter always says... We've always wanted adventures haven't we Mollie...and everyone seems more exciting than the last!' (10, 18).

Well the disciples of Jesus were experiencing adventures with Jesus.

They had journeyed with him through the countryside as he taught and healed.

They were sent out themselves to proclaim the kingdom of God, and heal.

They had followed a triumphant Jesus into Jerusalem.

They had run for their lives when Jesus was arrested.

They had mourned when Jesus was crucified.

They rejoiced to see the risen Jesus (though some doubted).

One adventure after another...each one more exciting than the previous.

The question they would have been asking themselves was...where was it all leading to?

What was the purpose of all they had and were experiencing?

Well in the passage we read today the adventure becomes even more exciting... and more dangerous!

And the adventures continue through the book of Acts down to today.

The three years the disciples spent with Jesus gave them a good grounding.

They had seen Jesus at work...his head, heart and hands all working in unison.

He had a heart that wanted to do his father's will...with his Father's compassion

He had a head that was full of God's word and understanding of it.

Hands that ministered God's grace and mercy...he walked the talk.

The disciples had to see this in action...

Now they had to live it out themselves.

But they needed to be fully equipped to do the work they had been called.

They needed more than knowledge to begin the work of making disciples of all nations.

They needed their hearts fired up so that their words and actions were consistent.

They needed the passion ignited in their lives...so they could live courageously.

How often have I found myself like that...

I have such a knowledge of God...

Time at the RTC fills your head with knowledge.

But where does the passion come from.

It must not be misguided passion.

We all know stories of people who were passionate about a cause...but passionately wrong.

Their head did not have the right understanding.

So what happened that changed these disciples?  
What happened on that great day of Pentecost?

The passion is lit by the working of God's Holy Spirit.

That's what happened on this great day of Pentecost.

The fire was lit in the lives of Jesus disciples and they became passionate, courageous, bold ambassadors of the King.

As they moved out from there we see how their head, heart and hands were all about doing the work of God.

The outpoured Spirit made these disciples of Jesus Christ reliable witnesses.

They could testify to the truth of God's word.

The spirit poured out at Pentecost would ensure that they testified truthfully.

That happened so the world of their day would be turned upside-down.

What happened then still happens today...

People's worlds are turned upside down when they come face to face with the truth of the risen Jesus Christ.

They testified that Jesus suffered and died, that he rose from the dead on the third day.

They testified to the need for repentance and forgiveness of sins in the name of Jesus.

This is exciting news!

God has dealt with our sins; Jesus has triumphed over sin and death.

It is exciting news that can't be kept a secret.

Nothing could hold back the disciples when they received power from on high.

Nothing should hold us back either!

We are given the task to continue the adventure, to continue the work started that day.

And what would the Holy Spirit do?

How would it affect their task as witnesses?

They were clothed with power!

He directs their words and actions.

Look at what happens in chapter 2.

The Holy Spirit comes like a violent wind.

Some loud noise hits their prayer meeting.

They didn't know it was going to happen that day.

They just woke up and came to prayer meeting and all of a sudden there is a sound like a violent wind.

And more than that, there is something that looks like tongues of flame over the head of each of them, they begin to speak in languages they don't know and the people outside begin to hear the great exploits of God in languages they understand, but they don't know, the disciples don't know. (Reverse of the events of the languages dividing & separating...now they come together).

All of this is happening and by 9:00 o'clock they are accused of being drunk.

Another unexpected thing, and by the end of the day they had 3,000 new believers that they have to cope with.

Do you think any of them in chapter 1 were envisioning this sort of event?

I don't think so.

I don't think they had a clue what God was actually going to do.

But it didn't end there.

The surprises, the adventure didn't end in chapter 2.

The Book of Acts covers a period of time of about 27 years.

In that period of time the adventure begins in Jerusalem and goes just about to the ends of the earth.

It ends up with the church being in Rome, which is about 2000 kms away, and its just one step from what they could have considered the very ends of the earth, Spain.

All of this happens and in this period of time, they are constantly met with surprises.

The adventures and surprises continue through the book of Acts:

The challenge to Peter to bring the message to non-Jews

The eating of 'unclean food'

Paul, one who killed Christians, encounters God and becomes a major apostle in bringing the gospel to the Gentile world.

We read of his incredible adventures as he brings the gospel message to Rome:

Persecution, imprisonment, shipwrecks etc

But excitement in seeing churches planted and lives changed through the message of salvation found in Jesus Christ.

The list goes on.

Well, what do we learn from the experience of those first disciples?

The first thing is, that **we need to expect big things from God.**

The apostles were waiting, but they were waiting with some sense of expectancy.

Jesus said something big was going to happen and so they believed that it would.

They knew that God was powerful, and that same God is at work now.

God still cares about the ends of the earth

and God still has the power to do something about it that's bigger than us.

And so, we need to expect big things from God.

The second thing is **we need to pray.**

The expectation of the disciples gives birth to prayer.

The Book of Acts is loaded with prayer meetings,

and so our expectation, our desires and our hopes we bring to God in prayer,

and then we wait and we listen and we look for God to show us what's on his heart

and we wait to see, to see what God is doing around us.

We need to pray.

We need to hold these things before God.

The third thing is, **we need to be ready for change.**

If the Book of Acts tells us nothing else,

it's that very little happened according to the plan of the apostles.

We have to be ready for change.

We should hold onto some things tightly, Jesus and the truth,  
everything else, we have got to be willing to let God change.  
God might have something coming that turns our world upside-down.  
That scares me, but that's okay.

We have got to be ready for change because you know, we are in for an adventure,  
and the way we get ready for it is by expecting God to work by praying, and by being ready for  
change.

There is an adventure coming, but it's not a new adventure...  
it is just another chapter in the book of Acts (one set in the today).

With Pentecost, and the pouring out of the Holy Spirit...lives were changed.  
But that Gospel message remains unchanged...over 2000 years.

200 years ago, John Newton lived and adventurous life on the sea.

He was captain of a slave trader ship.

One day in a storm he is despaired of his life and finally said, "God save me, I give up."

God answered that prayer and John became a Christian.

He stopped being a slave trader and eventually he became a pastor and a hymn writer, and the  
author of Amazing Grace.

He responded to the gospel message.

Countless generations of people have recognized that Jesus Christ makes all the difference.

Not only 200 years ago...but today...stories of lives changed.

What is the message, the core of what we tell?

In Verse 22, it says that Jesus Christ was a real person. *Men of Israel listen to this. Jesus of  
Nazareth was a man accredited by God to you by miracles, wonders and sign, which God did  
among you through him as you yourselves know.*

In other words, this message is preached in front of an audience of people who have actually  
witnessed some of the things that he is talking about.

We are talking about history, an historical figure when we talk about Jesus.

He did things witnessed by thousands of people.

Go to Verse 23. Another core part of this message is that this man was handed over to you and he  
was put to death on the cross and yet this was because God had a purpose in it all.

You see, when Jesus went to the cross, God had a purpose in working out the forgiveness of our  
sins, paying the cost and opening a way for a new relationship with God.

Let's go on. Verse 24.

He died, but God raised him from the dead.

We start getting to amazing stuff here.

We can believe that somebody is killed, and we could even believe that somebody is killed in the  
purposes of God, but here is someone raised from the dead and it shows to us that Jesus  
accomplished what he set out to do.

And he proves that he is God's chosen leader for the world.

This is all part of the core central gospel message.

In verse 37 the people ask, "What shall we do?" and Peter responds, "*Repent and be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.*"

There is always a call for response in the gospel.

We have to wrestle with what it means to turn our lives from the way it used to be and turn our lives to God and say, "Yes God, come into my life and make it the kind of life that you want it to be."

The gospel has always had that call to response  
and when we do respond, God responds back by giving us the Holy Spirit,  
helping us to live as different people.

This is an old, old story. Peter preached it. Paul preached it.  
We will continue to share this same message.

### **Conclusion.**

Peter and Mollie were looking for adventures in their wishing chair.  
And they went on exciting trips into make believe places.

The disciples were caught up in an adventure too.  
One that involved telling the world about Jesus Christ.  
They were passionate about the adventure because they were filled with the Holy Spirit.

We carry on the adventure they began at Pentecost.  
That adventure is ours too.  
It is exciting in the world situation in which we have been placed.  
We undertake that adventure...  
With heads filled with the knowledge of God and Jesus Christ.  
Hearts filled with the Holy Spirit  
Hands that want to extend the compassion, love and message of Jesus Christ.  
How are you living out that adventure?

Peter and Mollie had to get on the wishing chair to undertake the adventure.  
We have to join in with God's work and people to undertake the adventure.

Don Cameron is living the adventure as he does God's work in his world.  
My challenge to you is to live the adventure wherever God has placed you, and with whatever difficulties or disabilities you have.

Annie Pilon, sight impaired...lives the adventure as God sends people to her...  
Home help, friends, neighbours, doctors, nurses etc.

How are you living out the adventure?