

Do you remember Quantum Leap with Scott ...Bakula...Bacoola...Backara...Scott...the guy from Quantum Leap?

It was a cool sci-fi show where Scott would teleport into other people's bodies occupying their life for a period of time in history and he would have to overcome some challenge or figure out something they needed to figure out to set everything about history straight. And on and on he went through life doing this. One of the reasons I think the show worked so well because it was fascinating to see a character get thrust into a position without them growing into that moment of life.

Just about everything we encounter in life is just (hand motion) gradual. We work our way up to it. Very few things come out the blue and just surprise us. But in Quantum Leap we would just have a character who would appear in a moment and have to face an entirely new set of circumstances.

Even though through the work of Jesus we can kind of see what happened to the Disciples in Acts chapter 2 coming. It's still kind of surprise to see how dramatic the arrival of the Holy Spirit is and then see how dramatic the immediate response to what God has done is.

Which is exactly what we'll be looking at this morning in Acts chapter 2. I hope that some of you might go home today, or take time out of your day to read more around the text that we shared this morning. Because the Bible really is more engrossing if you take the time to look at it yourself and do it in big chunks. And as we wrap up our official stewardship season this week, we'll be jumping into the book of Acts in preparation for Pentecost, so go read, or refresh yourself or crack open this book for yourself again and read at least the first few chapters of the book of Acts.

But to refresh your memory a little bit... We are in the book of Acts, which is the tale of the forming of the early church after the life, death and resurrection of Jesus. We have seen the Holy Spirit arrives in grand fashion in Jerusalem. She appears miraculously through the Disciples giving them the ability to speak language that they couldn't speak to proclaim things about God to foreigners who would have been blow away to hear these Galileans speaking in their native tongue. And if that wasn't enough shenanigans for you, you may remember the little tongues of fire said to have appeared above their heads...ok so now that you remember the context..

Then Peter stands up and begins to address the confusion of the crowd that clearly didn't know what to make of this miraculous scene. Which is essentially him taking his first swipe at a public sermon. And it is a pretty solid effort. Peter is addressing the crowds questions about what do they do with all of this, and he invites everyone and anyone who wants to respond to join into covenant with God and the other Disciples of Jesus.

And here is where the Quantum Leap comes in. Because just before this passage, Luke tells us that “those that welcomed his message were baptized and that day about 3000 were added to their number that day.”

I mean. Are you kidding me? 3000 is a mind-boggling number, especially considering that just like seriously a page ago...This group had 120 people.

I remember the day last year, when one of my star wars friends sent me a Facebook live link, to a video of a woman, Candace Payne, now known as the Chewbacca mom went viral. One of my star wars friends shot me the link, and I laughed, and it had some, like 150k views or whatever. So I spammed it to a bunch of friends because it was awesome.

In case you haven't seen it, the video is her in her car streaming a video to her friends about exchanging some clothes and finding a Star Wars Chewbacca mask on clearance, and her needing to show it off because she thinks it funny. And while she is looking into the camera, she puts on the mask and starts laughing hysterically with glee. It really is one of those simple joys in life captured on camera (it's gotten a little carried away since then but still).

Anyways, I remember that day, I had gone to lunch and I showed it to somebody on my phone and just from the time that I had shared it out with some friends to the time that I got to lunch it was up over a million views and now it's at hundreds of millions of views.

My point is, that things going viral in the internet age is something that we've come to expect from time to time, but as you can imagine without the aid of technology this was a very unusual thing to have happen in the ancient world. In fact I couldn't come up with a single other corollary, that I've studied, in human history.

It's human nature to be that people want to see that other people are into it and that it's getting a following before they throw their energy at a new thing. And to me the fact that three thousand people joined something that only have 120 followers before lunch that day tells me that this thing was fueled by something very special.

And we know that something really extraordinary is going on here when we get to our text this morning: “Awe came upon everyone...All who believe were together and had all things in common...they would sell their possessions and distribute the proceeds as any had need...they spent much time together...broke bread and ate with glad and generous hearts.”

These verses give us a guideline on how the quantum leap expression of the early Christian church worshiped. Priority one was discipleship, raising people up to align their values with the values of Jesus (heal for the sick, aid the poor, love the stranger). Second they devoted themselves to each other, meeting needs as they arose within their covenant community and beyond.

And this is where we get to for a lot of American the harder to believe section of this story. Because ever since Karl Marx sat down and put pen to paper and scribbled out the communist manifesto; this little tidbit has been a somewhat controversial passage. Some look at this and say Oh, so the biblical model for how we live is Marxian socialism (make a unsure face).

Now you've probably already noticed the obvious nuance here, which is in this case, unlike Marxism, and that is that it's entirely voluntary. No one came with guns to force these people to live this way, or threatened to throw them in a cell somewhere.

Instead what I see is a bunch of people that are utterly convinced of the reality of Jesus and God's kingdom that they are starting to go all in. They would rather use their possessions, their gifts, and their resources to aid in the influence and mercy in the name of Jesus, than they would get ahead or get rich.

They understood the basic premise that when it comes to God 1+1 is always more than 2. You see one of the deep truths that I have learned in my own life is that when you can genuinely give, from a place of joy, then something inside you changes. I have been transformed most by the times that I have invested the most. I have been transformed again and again through generous Christian communities like this one throughout my life.

What I mean by this is that as you heard from Patsy in the Growing through Giving video this morning: That giving to the church is the best way to reach so many people. You've heard through out Stewardship season about how many children and youth are reached and transformed through your giving, you've heard about how many receive meals, prayer shawls, flowers, and services through Carelink. You've heard about how we sow seeds through hosting other organizations and partner with other like-minded missions.

We've talked about how we have a God of bountiful blessings. How we are invited into and shaped by the compassionate community, and blessed by the generous sower, and inspired by the model of the caring steward.

But today brings it together. Today is the ask; not my ask; but it's right here in the text. Peter is asking you to change your hearts and lives...so are you in? or Are you going to wait till the latest viral video has 1 million views before sharing it? Are you going to sit on your hands wondering about where exactly that dollar will be going? Or are you willing to see the best in something and invest in it before anyone else? Are you willing to trust the hard work of many faithful servants, officers, and board members inspired by the Holy Spirit to say Yes to personnel increases, Yes to new ministry initiatives, yes to technology investments, yes to children and youth ministry budgets.

This year during our Stewardship season, we've still not received a lot of our pledge cards. Now we are expecting more to come in this morning, and as many of you

know this isn't terribly unusual for this season, but it does make things harder. It does leave us wondering...

You see next week your leadership group will meet to work on what seeds we might plant in this year to come. What small seedlings will be given extra attention? They will shape the budget wanting to know how invested you in this community are in what we feel like the Holy Spirit is asking us to do.

They are looking at this and asking can we do all these amazing things that we want to do? Can we responsibly push ourselves to trust in the work of God, even when or perhaps even despite, the idea that we would love to have it all in hand before we move forward?

Help make their decision easier by turning in your pledge and renewing your commitment to be more than just a bystander in this preaching of the Good News. We're not asking you to sell all of your possession or to move into communal living arrangements (unless that is something you personally feel called to do). But we are inviting you to see that collectively, and alongside the same inspiring Spirit present those o-so-many years ago, that we can do more together than we could ever do apart. That the Holy Spirit is worth your investment, and you still have a time to join into the next phase of Broadway Christian Church.

The bottom-line is, that in Acts, at the beginning of this new community of faith, the things that Peter said, the big transformative quantum leap moment when so many people came to faith, the miracles that continued to happen and the ways the Disciples lived is used by God to make a whole bunch of people realize that there is something here in this guy called Jesus and they start to respond by joining in. And that question extends to you today.

It may sound a bit trite but it comes to you in our stewardship ask. We want you, to join with us, to put some of your value and your dollars in the pot, so that we can continue and add to our numbers daily.

We want you to turn in your pledge, to commit yourself to give \$5 or \$50,000+ to see what God might do in this evolution of Jesus' church in this corner of the world.

The book of Acts describes this new community of faith as those of glad and generous hearts, who praised God and demonstrated God's goodness to everyone.

Now that sounds an awful lot like the Broadway Spirit and it sounded an awful lot like what you had to say about what Giving means to you in our Growing through Giving box.

Join Julia and I in raising your hand, putting in your dollars, and revving up your hearts because we are that community in Columbia Missouri where anyone can come to encounter, serve, and celebrate the living God in Jesus Christ.