

Sermon Notes

WORSHIP SERVICE - 3.30.2025

PART 8 - THE GOSPEL PROCLAIMED

I. INTRODUCTION

- Peter's powerful preaching is the starting point of the Church's testimony to the world, as the gospel is first proclaimed, beginning in Jerusalem, and eventually spreading to the rest of the world.
- The gospel is good news, but often, the good news isn't communicated as the good news that it really is.
- We will see from Peter's Pentecost sermon what true gospel proclamation must consist of.
- Main Point: Spirit-empowered witnesses proclaim the gospel's message of salvation, life, and forgiveness through Jesus Christ, heralding his Lordship and calling people to respond.

Acts 2:22-32

22 "Men of Israel, hear these words: Jesus of Nazareth, a man attested to you by God with mighty works and wonders and signs that God did through him in your midst, as you yourselves know— 23 this Jesus, delivered up according to the definite plan and foreknowledge of God, you crucified and killed by the hands of lawless men. 24 God raised him up, loosing the pangs of death, because it was not possible for him to be held by it. 25 For David says concerning him,

"I saw the Lord always before me,

for he is at my right hand that I may not be shaken;

26 therefore my heart was glad, and my tongue rejoiced;

my flesh also will dwell in hope.

27 For you will not abandon my soul to Hades,

or let your Holy One see corruption.

28 You have made known to me the paths of life;

you will make me full of gladness with your presence.'

29 "Brothers, I may say to you with confidence about the patriarch David that he both died and was buried, and his tomb is with us to this day. 30 Being therefore a prophet, and knowing that God had sworn with an oath to him that he would set one of his descendants on his throne, 31 he foresaw and spoke about the resurrection of the Christ, that he was not abandoned to Hades, nor did his flesh see corruption. 32 This Jesus God raised up, and of that we all are witnesses.

II. PROCLAIM HIS LIFE, DEATH AND RESURRECTION

- Immediately after Peter explains that what they are seeing and hearing is the fulfillment of Joel's last days prophecy of the pouring out of God's Spirit, he quickly transitions to explaining that the best way to understand the Pentecost events is not through Old Testament prophecy, but through Jesus Christ.
- What Peter is doing is exactly what would happen when the Spirit is poured out—he begins to prophesy.
- Prophecy means speaking God's word faithfully.
- Peter engages in prophetic preaching.

1. SPEECHES IN ACTS

- Preaching is still very much relevant and necessary today.
- The gospel is conveyed with words—not actions—words are necessary.
- “Men of Israel, hear these words...”
- One of the things that is most unique to the book of Acts is the narration of significant speeches or preaching of the apostles and the early Church.
- There are at least nineteen such speeches recorded in Acts. About a 1/3 of Acts is speeches.
- The gospel goes forth and advances through Spirit-empowered witnesses proclaiming Christ.

- Peter articulates some powerful truths about Jesus.
- They are the sum and substance of the gospel message that the apostles were called to proclaim.
- They are the sum and substance of the gospel message that you and I are called to proclaim.
- Pay special attention to Peter's gospel proclamation:
 - what he emphasizes
 - and what he calls people to do in light of who Christ is.

2. HIS LIFE AND MINISTRY

- “Men of Israel, hear these words: Jesus of Nazareth, a man attested to you by God with mighty works and wonders and signs that God did through him in your midst, as you yourselves know—“
- He grounds his gospel preaching in the fact of Jesus's life and ministry, the miracles, signs, and wonders that many of them had heard about or were witnesses of.
- God had attested or confirmed Jesus to them through these mighty works that were done by Jesus.
- He healed the sick, cast out demons, raised the dead, powerful signs were performed attesting to the reality that Jesus was sent from God—He was the promised Messiah.
- The miracles were God's seal upon His ministry.
- These works were done among them, the Israelites were witnesses to this reality, so they are without excuse.
- Jesus said, “For the works that the Father has given me to accomplish, the very works that I am doing, bear witness about me that the Father has sent me.” (John 5:36)
- He rebukes those who are eyewitnesses of the powerful signs he is doing among them, “You search the Scriptures because you think that in them you have eternal life; and it is they that bear witness about me, 40 yet you refuse to come to me that you may have life.” (John 39-40)

- They should have recognized the signs. They should have realized immediately who was in their midst doing all of these wonderful things and they should have received him, believed upon him, and come to him to have life.
- It is profoundly important that we speak of Jesus's life and ministry when we share the gospel.
- Everything Jesus did in his life and teaching pointed to his unique status—He is Messiah, he is the one God promised would come to save his people.
- Jesus not only did many good works, he lived a truly righteous and holy life.
- He perfectly obeyed God as every person is obligated to do.
- He embodied everything that is pleasing to God, submitting himself to the Father, and obeyed every command of God.

3. HIS DEATH

- Peter then speaks about Jesus's death.
- 23 this Jesus, delivered up according to the definite plan and foreknowledge of God, you crucified and killed by the hands of lawless men.
- First, Peter declares that what happened to Jesus was no accident.
- This Jesus—was delivered up and put to death in accordance to God's predetermined purpose and plan.
- And yet, at the same time, the fault lies with them, "you crucified and killed him by the hands of lawless men."
- They are not guiltless because God planned it from before the foundations of the world.
- They are not faultless, they are responsible for Christ's crucifixion and death.
- They Jewish people used lawless men to carry out their evil desires, presumably the Romans, to nail him to the cross and brutally kill him.
- The most wicked act in all of human history is attributed simultaneously to the purpose of God and to the wickedness of man.
- And God is not implicated, he is not liable for any guilt, the people are guilty.
- The sovereignty of God and human responsibility and culpability are set side by side.
- Peter does not make any attempt to reconcile that or explain it, he simply assumes it.
- God ordained Jesus's death, yet it was carried out through the agency of humans who are morally responsible.
- They chose to kill Jesus. They planned and schemed to take him out.
- **1689 LBC, 3.1** From all eternity God decreed everything that occurs, without reference to anything outside himself.¹ He did this by the perfectly wise and holy counsel of his own will, freely and unchangeably. Yet God did this in such a way that he is neither the author of sin nor has fellowship with any in their sin.² This decree does not violate the will of the creature or take away the free working or contingency of second causes. On the contrary, these are established by God's decree. In this decree God's wisdom is displayed in directing all things, and his power and faithfulness are demonstrated in accomplishing his decree.
- We can get hung up on this but the main point is that we will be held accountable for our actions and sins.
- We too are responsible for Christ's death.
- It is our sins that nailed Jesus to the cross.
- When we proclaim the gospel, it is absolutely important to tell people the bad news before the good news.

- God is the sovereign Creator of all things. He is holy, righteous, and just.
- He deserves the worship and obedience of all his creatures.
- Yet, we turn from God, we go after our own sinful passions and desires, because we are born in sin, morally and totally depraved, sin stains every part of our being.
- We are enemies of God, opposing God, wanting to be gods ourselves, doing whatever pleases us.
- This makes us deserving of God's just wrath and punishment.
- Don't shrink from declaring that to people.
- This is why it is dangerous to condense the gospel to a little catchphrase or bumper sticker slogan.
- We can mislead people.
- We can miscommunicate the truths of the gospel.
- The truth is that we are born hell-bent sinners who openly defy God and resist and rebel against him at every turn.

4. HIS RESURRECTION

- But then Peter springs the good news!
- Though Jesus was killed by God's design and man's sinful actions, God did something amazing—He raised Jesus up, freeing him from the agony of death.
- Death could not hold him! It was impossible to keep him in the grave!
- And just like he did at the beginning of his message, Peter declares this happened in fulfillment of Scripture.
- Quoting from Psalm 16, he adapts David's psalm, in support of Christ's resurrection from the dead.
- Peter is claiming that what David wrote about could not have been about himself.
- He says David was a prophet, he sees what is going to come in regard to the resurrection of his future son, the Messiah.
- And he knew God's promises to him that he would have a descendent who would sit on his throne forever and whose kingdom would be an everlasting kingdom.
- This is who he was talking about.
- For you will not abandon my soul to Hades, or let your Holy One see corruption.
- Peter teases this out logically, David died and was buried. His tomb was still in Jerusalem. This can't be about him.
- Psalm 16 is about the promised one—Messiah.
- David is dead, he can't fulfill this Psalm in the ultimate and fullest sense.
- The resurrection of Jesus Christ is the hinge of Peter's message.
- The King has been raised from the dead!
- This had been foretold through David. God fulfilled his promise to David in the raising up of Jesus.
- 32 This Jesus God raised up, and of that we all are witnesses.
- Not only was David a witness predicting the resurrection, but Peter and all those who stood with him have seen the resurrected Christ.
- This is one of the fundamental differences between Christianity and all other world religions.
- The founders or prominent figures of those religions died and were buried.
- Pharaohs, emperors, and kings declared themselves to be immortal, yet all died and were buried.
- But only Christ was raised from the dead.

- The resurrection is a historical reality, testified to by many eyewitnesses.
- We must herald the truth—God raised Jesus from the dead.
- Christ is victorious over sin and the grave.

III. PROCLAIM HIS EXALTATION AND LORDSHIP

Acts 2:33-36

33 Being therefore exalted at the right hand of God, and having received from the Father the promise of the Holy Spirit, he has poured out this that you yourselves are seeing and hearing. 34 For David did not ascend into the heavens, but he himself says,

“The Lord said to my Lord,

“Sit at my right hand,

35 until I make your enemies your footstool.”

36 Let all the house of Israel therefore know for certain that God has made him both Lord and Christ, this Jesus whom you crucified.”

- Peter transitions from the resurrection to the ascension almost as if it is one act fundamentally.
- Christ had to ascend to his position of supreme honor and absolute power.
- The evidence that he is presently ruling and reigning from his exalted place is that he has poured out the promised Spirit from the Father.
- Peter again grounds his argument with another OT quotation. This time applying Psalm 110 to the ascension.
- Just like Psalm 16 could not have been about David since his body saw decay, Psalm 110 could not be about David because David did not ascend into the heavens.
- David says that he saw the Lord declare to his Lord to sit at his right hand until all of his enemies have been put down.
- Jesus applied this verse to himself in Luke 20, by asking how it is that the Christ can be David’s son when David himself calls him Lord. He silenced his opponents as he pointed to himself as the one who would sit on the throne forever.
- It is Jesus who fulfills the promises given to David concerning his enthronement.
- To sit at the right hand is to be in a place of supreme honor and authority.
- Jesus shares the same authority and power of the Father, He is God. He has always been Lord.
- It is that now God exalted him to the to be in reality and power what he already was by right.
- The promise is “until I make your enemies your footstool.” There is a waiting period.
- Jesus is presently reigning, his ministry is continuing through Spirit-empowered witnesses, but the final act is yet to come.
- The kingdom has not come in all of its fullness, the enemies of Christ are still at work, the present task is the ongoing proclamation of the King’s message, until the point where all of Christ’s enemies will be subdued.
- Peter concludes with the implications of his message.
- “Let all the house of Israel know....” The gospel proclamation must begin in Jerusalem.
- What must they know with all certainty? That God has made Jesus Lord and Christ.

- He is the sovereign Lord.
 - He is also the Christ, the anointed one.
 - “God has made him...” he was designated from long ago, in his life, death, resurrection and enthronement as Lord and Messiah.
 - The gospel message is that Jesus is Lord!
 - But the house of Israel has crucified and killed their Messiah. They are guilty before God!
 - The one they had charged with a crime, though innocent, God has vindicated by raising him from the dead and exalting him to his rightful place.
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- Our gospel proclamation must include the reality of Christ’s Lordship. He is Lord! He is King!
 - If He is Lord, then complete allegiance is the only right response.
 - It is this confession that sets us in opposition to the world and all who reject his Lordship!

IV. PROCLAIM THE GOSPEL'S CALL TO ACTION

Acts 2:37-41

37 Now when they heard this they were cut to the heart, and said to Peter and the rest of the apostles, “Brothers, what shall we do?” 38 And Peter said to them, “Repent and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins, and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. 39 For the promise is for you and for your children and for all who are far off, everyone whom the Lord our God calls to himself.” 40 And with many other words he bore witness and continued to exhort them, saying, “Save yourselves from this crooked generation.” 41 So those who received his word were baptized, and there were added that day about three thousand souls.

- Luke now describes the crowd’s response to Peter’s powerful proclamation of the gospel.
 - They were convicted of their sin. They were cut to the heart.
 - The message was powerful and effective. We have to see this as not just that a persuasive argument was presented but that a deep work of the Spirit had taken place.
 - Jesus said to his disciples that when the Spirit comes, he would convict the world concerning sin, righteousness and judgment (John 16:8-11).
 - They ask Peter, “What shall we do?”
 - He replies that they need to do two things. Repent and be baptized.
 - Repent means to change your mind, to turn from your ways.
 - They need to completely change their mind about Jesus and see him for who he truly is Lord and Christ.
 - They must also be baptized, making a public profession of their repentance and faith in Christ.
 - They would receive two acts as a result of a right response:
 1. The forgiveness of their sins
 2. The gift of the Holy Spirit
 - Everyone whom the Lord calls to himself will receive these gifts.
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- The whole sermon had been framed around the question about the strange phoneme and the pouring out of the Holy Spirit.
 - Peter tells them that this gift is given only to those who show allegiance to Jesus—He alone is Lord and Christ!
 - The response is astounding. A large number of people, about three thousand accepted the message, received the word and were baptized. What a tremendous Pentecost harvest of souls!

- Christ's new covenant community is being formed. His new temple is being built.
- According to Peter's promises, they received forgiveness of sins and the gift of the Holy Spirit.
- Built into the gospel message as it is proclaimed is a call to action!
- When we proclaim Christ, his life, death, resurrection and exaltation, when we proclaim him as Lord and Christ—we must call people to respond to Christ.
- We can't proclaim Jesus is Lord and not also tell people that they must turn to him for forgiveness and salvation.
- We must focus on Jesus Christ.
- His life, death, resurrection and exaltation.
- While we are witnesses for Christ, we are not eyewitnesses of the historical Christ.
- Preach Christ from the Scriptures.
- Call people to respond to Christ. To follow him because He alone is Lord!
- God's promise is that he will save all those whom he has called to himself.
- Offer the promise of eternal life and forgiveness, indiscriminately to everyone God places in your path.
- Proclaim the gospel, trusting the Holy Spirit to convict and lead to repentance.

APPLICATION AND REFLECTION

In light of today's message....

- What did I learn about the gospel?
- How can I apply what I learned about the gospel to my life?
- With whom can I share the gospel this week?