

Peter's Sermon at Pentecost

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[0 : 00] And all were amazed and perplexed, saying to one another, What does this mean?

But others mocking said, They are filled with new wine. But Peter, standing with the eleven, lifted up his voice and addressed them, Men of Judea and all who dwell in Jerusalem, let this be known to you and give ear to my words.

For these words are not drunk, as you suppose, since it is only the third hour of the day. But this is what was uttered through the prophet Joel. And in the last days it shall be, God declares, that I will pour out my Spirit on all flesh.

And your sons and your daughters shall prophesy. And your young men shall see visions. And your old men shall dream dreams. Even on my male servants and female servants, in those days I will pour out my Spirit, and they shall prophesy.

And I will show wonders in the heavens above and signs on the earth below, blood and fire and vapor of smoke. The sun shall be turned to darkness and the moon to blood before the day of the Lord comes, the great and magnificent day.

[1 : 15] And it shall come to pass that everyone who calls upon the name of the Lord shall be saved. 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, this Jesus delivered up according to the definite plan and foreknowledge of God, you crucified and killed by the hands of lawless men.

God raised him up, loosing the pangs of death because it was not possible for him to be held by it. 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.

Therefore my heart was glad and my tongue rejoiced. My flesh also will dwell in hope. For you will not abandon my soul to Hades or let your Holy One see corruption. You have made known to me the paths of life, and you will make full of gladness with your presence.

You will make me full of gladness with your presence. 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. 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, he foresaw and spoke about the resurrection of the Christ, that he was not abandoned to Hades, nor did his flesh see corruption.

[2 : 36] This Jesus God raised up, and of that we are all witnesses. 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.

For David did not ascend into the heavens, but he himself says, The Lord said to my Lord, Sit at my right hand until I make your enemies your footstool. Let all of the house of Israel therefore know for certain that God has made him both Lord and Christ, this Jesus whom you crucified.

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? 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.

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. And with many words he bore witness and continued to exhort them, saying, Save yourselves from this crooked generation.

So those who received his word were baptized, and there were added that day about 3,000 souls. A common complaint within many churches today are that the pastor's sermons are too long.

[3 : 59] Regardless of how you feel about that, many churches seek to rectify the fact that they think the messages are too long. So they do that by either condensing the sermon.

One lady told me that she didn't think a sermon should be any longer than 20 minutes. And for some, 20 minutes is too long. Some prefer more like 10 minutes, if you can believe it, or even less. Or other churches will try to, and pastors, in lieu of preaching a message, they'll try to add in some other element to the service. So, you know, regardless of what you might think about those things, the priority of the sermon and preaching in many churches has greatly diminished, we can say. The first event of church history following the coming of the Spirit was Peter's sermon, which we just read. It led to 3,000 conversions and launched the church.

The book of Acts is largely the record of apostolic preaching. Preaching has always remained central to the church's mission. And then we've been studying the Reformation. And the Reformation, which we've been discussing, it recovered the faith.

[5 : 09] It was something that initiated and was initiated, excuse me, and spread largely through the revival of preaching. It was preachers preaching God's Word that led to the revival that took place back then.

Men like Martin Luther, Calvin, Zwingli, and Knox. And then we have the Great Awakening of the 18th century. And again, it was preaching that was responsible for that, that God used to bring that kind of revival.

George Whitefield, John Wesley, and Jonathan Edwards were a few of those men who were instrumental in doing that. And then in the 19th century, we saw the great evangelists such as D.L. Moody and also the Prince of Preachers, Charles Spurgeon, whose preaching did a lot. God used to bring a lot of good things for the church during that time. John MacArthur says, A godly man gifted by the Spirit to preach the Word has no equal in the presentation of God's truth. It is the God-ordained method for evangelism and for edification. The weaknesses of the contemporary church is largely due to the decline in powerful biblical preaching.

[6 : 20] So your church's influence on its community, it's important that, you know, the preaching in the pulpit is both biblical and that people in the church are supporting the fact that the message is coming from the Bible and that we are standing underneath its authority, right?

A couple of verses I want to read to you. 1 Corinthians 2, 1 through 5, they both support that. It says in 1 Corinthians, And then in Romans 10, 14 through 15, And then in Romans 10, 14 through 15, And so we see that preaching is important to the church.

And I don't think any of us have any real qualms with that here. But we need to encourage that in other churches as well. Preaching of God's Word is important when we gather together as a church. According to a study done by the Washington Post in 2014, This won't surprise you, The greatest fear among most Americans is public speaking. Followed by, can you guess some of them? Followed by the fear of heights, which is number two. Number three is bugs and snakes. Got a lot of those in Oklahoma. And then the next is drowning.

[8 : 13] And then blood and needles. So if you have those fears, you know, And some of them, even death, Ranks lower than the fear of speaking in public, if you can believe it.

Now imagine that you're in Peter's place, right? We know that a lot of people are already afraid of speaking publicly in front of other people. So now we have Peter, And he's about to speak to an audience of thousands of people.

And the people who have gathered there, Remember, they have come because the Holy Spirit has descended. He's come as a rushing wind from heaven, right? This has drawn a scene.

This has drawn a crowd. And so the people who are here, They are hostile to Peter and the other apostles, right? And so not only is he going to get up and speak, He's going to get up and speak in front of a lot of people.

And he's going to speak to a lot of people who are already against him Before he even utters a word. And he's going to be called to stand and deliver a message that he hadn't prepared yet, right?

[9 : 16] The Holy Spirit is going to speak through him. But you've got to imagine that this is Peter right now. This is his place. And so there's got to be maybe some, if it was you, Some real fear about what you're going to say.

Okay. So, again, I want to make it clear that preaching and public speaking are not the same thing. That, yes, when you're preaching, you're speaking, and you're speaking publicly.

But they are not the same thing because when you're preaching, The message that you should be declaring is not of your own opinion necessarily, But it's coming from God's word.

And your opinion matches what God's word says. You're not just providing some useful information, but you are providing insight into what God's word has to say for you and for others.

So, again, the sound of rushing wind from heaven had drawn this loud crowd. And once there, they heard all the believers sharing the gospel in many different languages, their own languages.

[10:19] Many of them were perplexed, and they were asking, what does this mean? And then others were thinking that they were just drunk, and they were just losing their minds, so to speak.

So this is the case with surrounding the circumstances, or these are the circumstances surrounding Peter as he's about to preach this message. And so Peter begins with the question that the crowd was asking about the phenomena of Pentecost, linking what they were hearing and seeing to Scripture.

And so he's going to go back to Joel 2, verses 28 through 32. And then from there, he's going to shift to the person of Christ, and he's going to explain how God has authenticated Jesus as both Lord and Christ.

So, Peter builds his case with this crowd, point by point, and as he's doing that, he's making the case that Jesus is both Lord and Christ.

And he's saving his main point until the very end, which we'll soon get to. But he's basically saying that what he's wanting to do is point everybody to the fact that Jesus is Lord and Christ, and he's going to build his message up to that declaration.

[11:39] So let's go down and break down the sermon. But first, I want us to see two important things, aspects of preaching. The first is that the message must be rooted in Scripture. And that goes back to Sunday night when we talked about Sola Scriptura, that the message must come from God's Word, right?

We're not just looking at some article that we read in the newspaper or in a magazine or a good book, and we're bringing that into church and we're sharing that. No, because that's not God's Word.

And so the message must be rooted in Scripture. And then the second thing that's important about preaching is that the message explains, reveals, and testifies that Jesus Christ is Lord and Savior. How can you have a message preached in a church without mentioning the name of Jesus Christ and without sharing the gospel? So now Peter explains how Joel prophesied about the outpouring of the Holy Spirit just as these people were witnessing.

And notice that twice Peter appeals to his audience to listen carefully. In verse 14 he says, Give ear to my words. And then in verse 22 he says, Hear these words.

[12:53] So for the listener, no matter how dynamic or dull the speaker may be, the Bible says that the listener has a responsibility to carefully listen to what the preacher is saying about the Word of God.

And we should always ask God to give us ears to hear what he wants to say to us through what is being preached, through his Word.

And if not, if we're not careful to hear, we might end up like the kid in Acts chapter 20 who fell asleep. Remember when Paul was preaching and he fell out of the window and he died and then, you know, had to rush down there and bring him back to life.

The good thing for us is in our sanctuary there's not really any windows for people to sit in. So your fall won't be as far. But, you know, it would be kind of embarrassing, I would imagine.

Okay, so Peter uses the book of Joel to make three points. The first point he's going to make is that Scripture has foretold the outpouring of the Holy Spirit that they were witnessing.

[14:12] And he does that by saying first that the Spirit would come and be poured out on all flesh. The Spirit would come and be poured out on all flesh.

And he says that in verses 17 and 18. In the last days it shall be, God declares, that I will pour out my Spirit on all flesh. Then he talks about how your sons and your daughters shall prophesy. Your young men shall see visions.

Your old men shall dream dreams. Even your male and female servants in those days I will pour out my Spirit and they shall prophesy. And so Peter's main point is not the particular form that that outpouring of the Spirit took, but rather that he was poured out on all flesh.

This is important. So what he's saying is it's not just prophets or rabbis whom you're used to, but it's even your sons and your daughters who will experience the outpouring of the Spirit. Not just that. It's not just your older men, but it's also going to be your younger men. It's not just your wealthy people, but it's the people who are bondservants, both male and female, that they would experience the fullness of the Spirit in their lives.

[15:24] Poured out on all flesh. Next, we see that this outpouring of the Spirit will be followed by a time of judgment, according to Joel, which Peter is preaching from memory.

Verses 19 and 20. And I will show wonders in the heavens above and signs of the earth below, blood and fire and vapor of smoke. The sun shall be turned to darkness and the moon to blood before the day of the Lord comes, the great and magnificent day.

Peter did not know how soon the judgments would take place. He was not saying that they had been fulfilled on the day of Pentecost. Rather, he is saying that these things would precede the great and glorious day of the Lord.

Since the prophecy had begun to be fulfilled as evidence, again, by the outpouring of the Holy Spirit, it is reasonable to assume that the rest will soon come to pass.

And so he's really issuing a warning, too, for these people to heed that now the Holy Spirit has come. And so we know that because we have entered into the church age, the Holy Spirit has come, that also this day of judgment is now going to follow.

[16:36] When will it happen? We don't know. Peter didn't know. But we know that it's going to come. And we're still waiting in anticipation of it. But we know that it is going to come.

Some relate the signs in the heavens to the darkening of the sky on the day that Jesus was crucified. Others interpret these signs as symbols for any kind of cataclysmic event that takes place in our world.

But this passage is clearly relating to the ultimate day of the Lord that is associated with his second coming. The signs that Joel mentions are connected with the events surrounding Christ's second coming in the book of Revelations.

Revelation 16.12 predicts these same signs when the Lamb breaks the seal during the Great Tribulation. And that verse says, When he opened the sixth seal, I looked and behold, there was a great earthquake and the sun became black as sackcloth.

The full moon became like blood. And what's also interesting is that there are many other verses in Revelations that talk about these different symbols. Blood, for example.

[17:40] Revelations 6.8, 9.15, 14.20, and 16.3 all talk about blood and how that associates with the Lord's second coming.

And then fire is also in Revelations chapter 8 verses 5 through 8 in verse 10. And then smoke even. Revelations 9.2-3, 9.17-18 in chapter 18 verse 9.

And if you remember in Matthew 24, 29-30, Jesus talked about the sun and the moon and the stars and how those will testify to his second coming.

So that's what is in Peter's preaching. That's what he is trying to communicate to these hearers.

Peter's point is that the outpouring of the Spirit predicted by Joel had now happened.

He's saying these things that you've read about, this has now happened. So this day of judgment predicted in the same passage may not be that far behind. And so the question would become then for who's hearing this is what can be done?

[18:49] What shall we do? And so here, Peter, now he's going to offer some good news. And that good news is of Jesus Christ. And in verse 21, it says, That's the good news.

What can be done? Everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved. And it shall come to pass that everyone who calls on the name of the Lord shall be saved. In verse 21. And this is amazing.

God in his mercy provides and offers a means of escape for those who deserve his judgment. And whoever will call on the name of the Lord shall be saved.

Up to this point, Peter had been pointing to something, but had not been real specific about who or what that something was. He has linked the phenomena of Pentecost back to Joel's prophecy about the outpouring of God's Spirit in the last days.

This hints that the day of Messiah has dawned, inaugurating now the last days. But he hasn't yet said that clearly. He has also brought up the subject of God's judgment at the final day of the Lord.

[20 : 02] But he hasn't stated yet that his audience needs to be in fear of that judgment. And he has set forth the offer of God's mercy for anyone who will take it.

But now he shifts from preaching to meddling. He's going to get personal here. He gets specific about just who this Lord is that a person must call upon to be saved.

And he shows them that this person was Jesus Christ who they had crucified. So secondly, we see that Jesus of Nazareth has been authenticated by God as both Lord and Christ.

So this is Peter's second point. Jesus has been authenticated by God as Lord and Christ. And he's going to show them how that is. Although Peter doesn't bring this truth truly home until the end of his sermon, he does show four ways that God has authenticated Jesus as Lord and Christ.

And so the first way he's done that, or he explains that, is that Jesus was authenticated through mighty works, wonders, and signs. Mighty works, wonders, and signs.

[21 : 18] Men of Israel, in verse 22, he says, 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.

Even Jesus' enemies could not deny the miracles that he did, but what did they say? They said, well, he's doing those miracles because it's Satan, really, who's working in him, or that's who he's in league with.

So not even Jesus' enemies could deny the fact that he did some really amazing things that could not be described, that could not be rationalized besides the fact that this is something supernatural that he's doing, but they would say, well, it's Satan, because they didn't want to admit that Jesus was whom he was declaring himself to be.

Even Nicodemus, if you remember, when he went and met Jesus, he said to him, No one can do these signs that you do unless God is with him. So it was clear that Jesus was doing things that were phenomenal, that were supernatural.

Peter reminds his audience that Jesus had done many such miracles in their midst, and they could not deny it. So the people who are there and who he is preaching to, many of them have seen Jesus doing these things, and so they cannot deny it themselves that, yes, this person was not some regular, ordinary person, and some carpenter from Nazareth, but this guy was supernatural.

[22 : 54] And many people today even still deny the existence of miracles taking place in our world, and they do so because of the assumption that they believe that God does not exist. Miracles don't happen because God does not exist.

But have you ever heard anybody talk about the miracle of science? And that doesn't make any sense, does it? In fact, I think there's a program that was on NPR, and that was their slogan was the miracle of science.

Well, that doesn't make any sense because science is all about finding out facts. And a miracle is something that cannot be explained. So Jesus performed mighty works, wonders, and signs.

And what were some of those things that he did? You remember? He turned water to wine. He multiplied the loaves and the fish. He healed various ailments, various physical impairments.

He walked on water. He could control the weather. He could read people's minds. He could bring dead people back to life. All these things testified to the fact that this man was Lord and Christ, that he wasn't a mere man, that he was, in fact, the Son of God.

[24 : 04] So that was the first way that he was authenticated. The second way that Jesus was authenticated was through his death. In verse 23, as Peter's preaching, he says, This Jesus delivered up according to the definite plan and foreknowledge of God, you crucified and killed by the hands of lawless men.

So now Peter is stomping pretty hard on these people's toes, is he not? This is coming. This is coming.

You know, he's pressing it in hard. And he's speaking the truth. And that's what good preaching does, is you're not afraid of hurting people's feelings, as long as what you're preaching is the truth. And you're not doing it intentionally because you've got some kind of vendetta. And unfortunately, sometimes that happens with pastors in the church, but it should never be that case. Jesus' death at first glance may have seemed like something that invalidated his messianic claims, but Peter shows that Jesus was not killed because he was a victim of his enemies, but that this was God's plan all along.

And that he was killed because God predetermined this before the world even was, that Jesus would die as Savior for his people.

[25 : 24] Isaiah 53, verse 10, prophesied, but the Lord was pleased to crush him, putting him to grief. And so rather than invalidating Jesus as Lord in Christ, his death actually validated him as Lord in Christ, since it was in fulfillment of God's eternal decree and plan.

So now the question comes, does this mean that God, since God determined it, that the men were not responsible? Right? If this was God's plan, then how can they be held responsible for killing Jesus?

Well, no, it does not mean that they are not without responsibility. Because again, Peter says very clearly and very directly to them, and you can almost see him pointing his finger at them, you nailed him to a cross by the hands of lawless men.

And he's referring to the Romans there, and he's saying very clearly and directly, you are the ones who put him to death. Without violating their will, God used evil men to accomplish his eternal purposes, and still does today.

But those evil men were responsible for the crime, and no one can blame God for their own sin. In Luke 22, verse 22, Jesus said, The Son of Man is going as it has been determined, but woe to the man through whom he is betrayed.

[26 : 49] So again, we even see Jesus knowing that this is what he's going to do, but saying, woe is the man, speaking of Judas, of whom will betray him. So we see this as well.

God is sovereign. God has a purpose in all of this. This is his plan. But men are responsible for their sin. The third way that we see Jesus authenticated as Lord and Christ was through his resurrection. Verses 24 through 32. And it's interesting that Peter spends only one verse on the life and death, one verse on each, the life and death of Jesus.

But then he spends nine verses on his resurrection because this was, as you've read through the books of Acts, the main apostolic theme and thrust in their messages was about the fact that Jesus had come back to life, that he had been resurrected.

And so Peter cites Psalm 16, 8 through 11. And so as we go through this too, it's important that we notice that Peter here is, he's been filled by the Spirit, right?

[28 : 00] And it's the Holy Spirit speaking through Peter. But it's these verses that he has memorized, that he is drawing back on. The Holy Spirit is bringing to his attention.

So it's not like Peter is like, hold on, everybody. Let me go grab a scroll. And then he unfurls it, you know, and starts reading to them. And this is all coming from his mind. This is scripture that he has already meditated on or thought over and has committed to his memory.

And so the Awana kids aren't here tonight. But what a great ministry Awana is because we're teaching them at a young age the importance of memorizing God's word. Because we're fortunate to live in the United States of America where we have God's word available to us.

The police and the military aren't beating down our doors to take it away. That's not the case in other countries where once they get the word of God, they've got to commit that to memory as fast as they can because who knows when it could be taken away from them.

So we are definitely blessed by that. So he's quoting Psalm 16, verses 8 through 11. And he's doing so to show an Old Testament prediction of the resurrection.

[29 : 09] If you remember in that Psalm, David declares that God will not abandon his soul to Hades nor allow his Holy One to undergo decay. But here Peter makes this argument.

He says that David is dead. That David is buried. And his tomb is here. And so that means that his body has undergone decay.

And so he's saying, therefore, he must have been talking about somebody else. And whom he was talking about was Jesus. That it was Jesus Christ whom God raised up again.

And then he's saying to which we are all witnesses there in verse 32. And so you can see probably the other 11 disciples behind him just nodding in agreement.

Yeah, we are the witnesses. We have seen this too. It's not just him. And then fourthly, we see that Jesus was authenticated as Lord and Christ through his exaltation and the outpouring of the Holy Spirit.

[30 : 09] Jesus was authenticated through his exaltation and the outpouring of the Holy Spirit. Peter states that the ascended exalted Jesus was the one who had sent the Holy Spirit as evidence of the miracle of everyone speaking in languages that they were witnessing.

And then again, he cites David in Psalm 110 verse 1 when it says, The Lord said to my Lord, sit at my right hand until I make your enemies a footstool for your feet.

Since David is not seated at God's right hand, again, this must refer to the fact that Jesus is the one who's been seated there because Jesus is the Messiah.

Then Peter comes to the point that he is going to press into his audience. This is what he's been building up to. Therefore, let all the house of Israel know in verse 36, for certain that God has made him both Lord and Christ, this Jesus whom you crucified.

And so now Peter's coming to the point of application and asking for the crowd to give a response. And really, he's not asking for it. They are going to give a response.

[31 : 29] The crowd was convicted. That was their response in verse 37. Now when they heard this, they were cut to the heart. And they said to Peter and the rest of the apostles, Brothers, what shall we do?

And what's interesting here is that this crowd who began hostile towards Peter and the other disciples and Christians, now they're calling them brothers.

So we see the work of the Holy Spirit here, softening their hardened hearts. And again, this is why preaching is so important because it's not really, it's not, it isn't at all the preacher.

It's the words that the preacher is preaching. It's the Holy Spirit who is using those words to impact the heart. And so that's what's taking place here.

That's why preaching is so important. And again, that the gospel is declared in our messages because this is what the Holy Spirit will use to penetrate and break through hardened hearts.

[32 : 32] It's hearing God's word. And so they are cut to the heart. They understood that they were responsible. They understood what they had done.

And now they're filled with anguish. They're filled with guilt because they've killed their Messiah. And I've heard it said, it's as if the Holy Spirit stabbed them in the heart with conviction over their sin.

And that's one of the things that the Holy Spirit does, right? You here tonight, if you're a believer, you heard the gospel preached to you by somebody else, whether it was a preacher or it was your Sunday school teacher or it was your mother or your father.

You don't have to be a preacher to prophesy, to share that good news, right? But you heard and it was somebody else sharing that message with you that the Holy Spirit was able to penetrate your heart, cut to your heart and enable you to receive it as good news.

Charles Spurgeon says it is the it is idle to attempt to heal those who are not wounded, to attempt to clothe those who have never been stripped and to make those rich who have never realized their poverty.

[33 : 43] And so what's he saying? He's he's basically saying that when we're preaching and when we're sharing the gospel with people, we got to talk about sin. We have to talk about sin because otherwise, you know, there's no there's not really going to be any repentance.

They're not going to be convicted. Why do I need to make this decision? Why is Jesus so important? Well, because of your sin, because of what your sin against the Holy God means for you, that you are going to spend your eternity in hell apart from believing in Jesus Christ as your Lord and Savior and what he has done for you on the cross and the good news of his resurrection. So conviction of sin is important. Have you ever shared the gospel with somebody? I've had a couple of encounters, you know, don't you? You know, whenever that person has been convicted of sin and you you can just see it almost on their face after they have made that decision that they just lighten up.

You know, they they they go from feeling that guilt and that remorse and that pain and there's tears sometimes. And then they believe it and then they they just like their countenance completely changes.

Why is that? Because they have truly been convicted of their sins and they have truly received and been sealed by the Holy Spirit. Then Peter applies the message.

[35 : 11] OK, so they've been convicted. They understand that they are guilty of their sin. And so now Peter applies the message.

What should you do? Well, first, he says, repent, repent of what? Repent of your sins. Right. This is an about turn. Turn from the direction that you've been going. Turn back to Christ.

Repent. Second, he says, be baptized. Now, it's important to note that this is not necessary for salvation. But Peter is calling for a response, an individual response from these people. Baptism is never just an outward symbol, but rather it is a public confession of one's faith in Jesus Christ and their commitment to serving and following him the rest of their life. And so Peter is calling them to be publicly identified with Jesus Christ. This outward symbol would show the reality of their inward repentance and faith and the fact that God had washed away their sins.

[36 : 20] So we've got to repent, be baptized. And then thirdly, a promise. And the promise he gives to them is that they would also receive the Holy Spirit.

And as a result of that, three thousand souls were saved, according to verse forty one. So because, again, you know, Peter was preaching boldly and it was God who was working inwardly.

Now the church was launched. That's a pretty good. That's a pretty good afternoon, is it not? Man. So this is one of the best sermons that has ever been preached.

Three thousand people come to faith in Jesus Christ. And and that's a mega church right there.