

Preaching Christ and Him Crucified

Radio Broadcast

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Bible Text: Acts 2:14-21

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Welcome to the Grace Abounding Broadcast brought to you by the congregation of the Shreveport Grace Church that meets at 2970 Baird Road in Shreveport, LA. My name is Ken Wimer and it is my privilege to bring to you today a message that seeks to exalt the Lord Jesus Christ and his glorious person and finished work of salvation accomplished for sinners at the cross. Please stay tuned.

My message today is taken from Acts 2 and verses 14 down to verse 21 and I want to speak with you about what it is to preach Christ and him crucified. We've all at one time or another driven by these places of worship where the sign out front proclaims that they preach Christ and him crucified and yet if you go in and sit down and listen for a while, you'd begin to ask yourself, "Well, where is Christ and him crucified?" They're talking about tithing. They're talking about witnessing. They're talking about walking the walk, anything but Christ and him crucified.

Now, my text is somewhat lengthy so I will not endeavor to read the entire text before I make comments but as the Lord directs, I want to read through this portion with you and make some comments as the Spirit of God would direct my mind and heart and, prayerfully, you'll be able to see, again, God giving you the grace to see, how all of Scripture pertains to Christ and how it is that a faithful Gospel preacher, one who faithfully sets forth the message of Scripture, his one subject will be Christ and him crucified.

Now here is Peter, verse 14 says, "But Peter, standing up with the eleven." Here the timeframe is that Judas Iscariot had killed himself and they had met together and chosen one, Matthias, who should take his place, this is an Acts 1. Then at the beginning part of chapter 2, we have the outpouring of the Spirit of God upon those gathered in Jerusalem. This would have been on the day of Pentecost, pente meaning 50. 50 days after the Passover was one of those Jewish feast days in which they were all to come to Jerusalem from wherever they were not only for the Passover but for the feast of Pentecost which is also called the harvest feast. This was a time where in the Old Testament initial firstfruits were brought in and waved before the Lord in remembrance of the Lord's mercies of granting another year of harvest. But as you read the Scriptures, you see that even all

those feast days were types and pictures of the person and work of the Lord Jesus Christ. Paul writing to the Corinthians said of Christ "Christ our Passover," so there is much to learn in studying the old Jewish Passover as a feast but the purpose of studying it is to see how the Lord Jesus Christ in coming into this world as the Lamb of God, John the Baptist the forerunner declared him to be the Lamb of God. No matter how many lambs had been sacrificed in the millenniums up to Christ's death, Christ is declared to be the exclusive Lamb of God. The blood of bulls and goats couldn't put away sin, it was just a picture, it was a covering and God in his forbearance withheld his hand of judgment upon his true people of Israel in the Old Testament until such time as Christ would come and pay their debt. So Christ, the Lamb of God, the Passover. But also what many miss is that he is also the firstfruits of God in that harvest that was celebrated. Christ himself compared himself to a seed that is sown in the ground and then is raised up and at a certain point cut down, harvested. And the Scriptures speak of him as the firstfruits just like he is the first one to come live, die and rise again and ascend into heaven as the substitute of sinners, the forerunner and then all that follow after him.

So a very significant feast day and it was on this day that the Holy Spirit was poured out. There were people from many different countries that had gathered in Jerusalem. These were Jews it says in Acts 2:5, in the context, that were dwelling at Jerusalem. Jews, devout men, they were devout to their religion but out of every nation under heaven. Here again is a point that is so vital because there is a lot of talking about speaking in tongues today and people asking, "Have you received the gift of the Spirit?" What they mean is, "Have you spoken in tongues?" I had someone ask me that one time if I believed in speaking in tongues and I said, "Well, I'm speaking to you in one now." And they said, "No, no, you know, by the Spirit." Well, when you read Acts chapter 2 and see what it was that these spoke, it wasn't gibberish. In fact, when the Spirit was poured out in verse 6, the noise went abroad, the multitude came together, it began and a house. They were meeting in a house in verse 2 but it was carried out into the street but it wasn't just an excitement, it wasn't just gibberish. Verse 6 says "because that every man heard them speak in his own language. And they were all amazed and marvelled, saying one to another, Behold, are not all these which speak Galilaeans?" So imagine these 12 and that's who the Spirit fell on, they went out and began to glorify God and I believe where the Spirit is poured out Scripture says that he'll speak of Christ. When our Lord taught his disciples and told them that he would give them the Spirit, it would be poured out but "He'll not speak of himself but he'll take the things pertaining to me," Christ said, "and reveal them unto you."

So when it says here that they spake the wonderful works of God but it was in these different languages, these were languages that were usually spoken outside of Israel and yet now these Galileans who had never traveled outside of Israel were speaking in a perfect dialect in these languages of these countries. You can imagine what that may have been like and just as any true work of God, there's going to be doubters, there's going to be mockers. Acts 2:12 says, "They were all amazed, and were in doubt, saying one to another, What meaneth this?" That's fine. It's good to question when you see a true work of God to wonder about it, how is it that God is at work. But then you also see in verse 13 of Acts 2, "Others mocking said, These men are full of new wine."

So you get a mixed reaction and it's in this context that Peter stands up in Acts 2:14 with the 11, these that the Spirit of God had been poured out upon and he, "lifted up his voice, and said unto them, Ye men of Judaea, and all ye that dwell at Jerusalem, be this known unto you, and hearken to my words: For these are not drunken, as ye suppose, seeing it is but the third hour of the day." So this would have been 9 in the morning, counting from 6 a.m., the third hour of the day. Now, here is a pattern that we find of preaching the Gospel and very simply: to preach the Gospel is to preach Christ. Christ is the Gospel. He is the subject of all of Scripture. The word "Gospel" means "the good news." There is no good news outside of the Lord Jesus Christ. It's not in man to save himself or even to desire salvation. Christ said to his disciples, "I am the way, the truth and the life. No man comes unto the Father but by me." I don't believe that he meant there "by me" as a crutch or "by me" as a helper but "by me," in other words, as the author and finisher of faith. None would even desire to come to God or be saved were it not for the Lord Jesus Christ giving them life. You see, he is life, and drawing them.

So this is the message that we're going to see Peter declaring as we continue down through this portion. It's not about speaking in tongues. Here this great phenomenon had occurred and people were wondering and you see how to the point his introduction is when Peter stands, lifts up his voice and says. How long did it take me to read those 2 verses? He addresses the confusion, he says, "These are not drunken as ye suppose," and then what does he do? He gets right to the word of God. So that's the first thing with regard to this matter of preaching Christ and him crucified. There are all kinds of voices out there and I see it all the time, I hear it, people post it on Facebook. They said, "Wow, I had such a good sermon today. Our preacher is the best." All the focus is on the preacher and how articulate that preacher is or entertaining or informative or whatever. The focus is on the preacher. Peter is standing up here and did not attempt to draw attention to himself, got right to the point and went to the word.

In verse 16 he says, "this is that which was spoken by the prophet Joel." Then verse 17 all the way down to verse 21, all Peter does is quote the Scriptures. Now, this is an amazing thing when you consider that they did not have handy copies of the Scriptures as we do today. The printing press had not yet been invented and so the scribes of the day had to make personal copies and it was tedious work and they were available mainly in the synagogues, not to the general population. So Peter would be quoting Scripture from the prophet Joel here without an actual text in front of him and yet as we see all the way down through this portion, he continues to come back to the word. And even more amazing is that every Scripture that he quotes here in verse 16, he quotes the prophet Joel but as he gets further on in the message, he's quoting from the Psalms, David and those writings that the Spirit of God directed him to write to make it be the inspired word of God. People often speak of these men as being inspired but it was the word that was inspired but it was the Old Testament.

I had a preacher one time tell me that there is no Gospel in the Old Testament. That's about the law and the New Testament is the Gospel. But now, wait a minute: the New Testament wasn't even written yet when these apostles went forth to preach. Even when

Christ was here on earth, isn't it interesting that he did not himself write any book of the Bible but these men were raised up of God to take what the Spirit revealed concerning Christ and to put it in writing to where it is preserved for us today but what they had was the Old Testament. So that tells us right there that this matter of preaching Christ and him crucified is to preach him through all of the Scriptures. How many preachers when they want to straighten people out or preach on some morals or walking the walk, they go to the Old Testament because they say, "Well, that's about personal obedience." No, it's about Christ. You won't find any personal obedience anywhere in Scripture that is of satisfaction to a holy God. Paul writing to the Galatians there in Galatians chapter 2 said, "If righteousness come by the law, then Christ is dead in vain." If it had been possible that someone should be able to obey God and through that obedience be accepted of him, it would not have been necessary for Christ to come.

So what we find is that in the Old Testament, Christ is there in type, in picture, in prophecy, in promise but, nonetheless, he is there. He is set forth and Peter has given us that example because when he mentions Joel in verse 16, "this is that which was spoken by the prophet Joel," he doesn't go back to Joel the prophet to preach on tongues or the work of the Spirit. You see, the Spirit doesn't speak of himself and when he quotes Joel, it's to show when he says "this is that," this outpouring of the Spirit was foretold by Joel that it should be accomplished in the last days. In verse 17, "it shall come to pass in the last days, saith God, I will pour out of my Spirit upon all flesh." When people ask, "Are we in the last days?" Well, they began when Christ came the first time. You say, "Well, 2,000 years have gone by so it's been a while." Yes, and the clock is ticking but even as Peter wrote in his epistle, "One day is with the Lord as a thousand years and a thousand years as a day." So if you judge from that, we've just been 2 days in in the last days. We don't know when the end will come. There are a lot of people running around predicting it and yet only God himself knows because he has determined it. But I do know this: that very final day before God destroys this world and this universe and creates a new heaven and a new earth is described in Scripture that that day will not come until the very last one for whom Christ paid the debt and that God purposed to save is brought in. Christ said, "Of all that the Father has given me, I should lose nothing but should raise it up in the last day."

So this notion that somehow the Lord Jesus Christ came into the world to try to save everybody and now the Spirit is going about trying to convince everybody to believe on Christ is not the message of Scripture. It's a lie. But he came to save his own. Read John 10 for he said, "I am the good shepherd and the good shepherd lays down his life for his sheep," and in that very same portion in addressing the self-righteous religious people of his day, he declares, "You believe not because you are not of my sheep." He didn't say as some preaches are saying, "Well, if you don't believe, then God won't include you among the sheep." No, this matter has already been settled. The Lord knows those that are his. Paul wrote that to Timothy, "This foundation standeth sure, that the Lord knoweth those that are his." He knows those he has chosen and purposed to save in his grace and that's from all eternity and it was for them that the Lord Jesus Christ came into this world and it was for them that this Spirit was poured out. But I know you're going to say perhaps in verse 17 it says, "I will pour out of my Spirit upon all flesh." Well, here it was poured out

in Jerusalem upon these that the Lord had drawn to Jerusalem from all tribes, nations and tongues.

When it says there in verse 17, "and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy," that word "prophesy" means "to declare the glories of Christ; to foretell." It's not speculating on the future and making predictions. No, prophesying in Scripture always had to do with declaring Christ and all he's saying there is that when this Spirit is poured out and is poured out upon sons and daughters, these are children of God that he has chosen, that Christ has redeemed, "and your young men shall see visions." That word "see visions" isn't that there's going to be necessarily new revelation being given but the word "see" is "to perceive." And the visions of which it speaks here has to do with all of those visions by the prophets of the Old Testament that now they see, they see the fulfillment of them. When it says there "and your old men shall dream dreams," it's not talking about inventing new revelation but just like Simeon there in the temple when he was directed by the Spirit when Mary and Joseph brought the Lord Jesus as a babe to be circumcised and Simeon was drawn to take that little baby Jesus in his arms and say, "Now mine eyes have seen thy salvation." And to be able to then foresee, that's what a dream is. A dream is yet to be realized. They shall dream dreams but to foresee the unfolding of all that God has purposed and now over time he is now calling out a people for his name.

So Peter is quoting Joel but he says "this is that." So this is not talking about something yet future. People get all caught up with the times and the seasons and what's ahead and prophecy conferences and what's going on in the world. That's not what Peter did. In fact, in quoting Joel in verse 18 it says, "And on my servants and on my handmaidens I will pour out in those days of my Spirit; and they shall prophesy." Now, not only Joel declared that but we also find that Zechariah and this is a prophet that if anybody asks you to turn to Zechariah, it may be a little bit difficult to find because we're just not used to going through these Old Testament portions. But here in Zechariah 12:10, the prophet declared, "I will pour upon the house of David, and upon the inhabitants of Jerusalem, the spirit of grace and of supplications." You see, where God in his Spirit gives grace and that's what it takes for him to give life, life-giving grace for a sinner even to look to Christ, but of supplication. Why is it of supplication? Because where the Spirit shines the light upon the heart, that heart is brought low in humiliation to see the sinfulness of its sin and so the supplication is the crying unto God for mercy. That's the sign of life. If a mother is delivering a baby, what you listen for is the cry of the baby. That way you know that the baby is alive. How do you know that a sinner has been made alive by the Spirit of God? Well, there's a cry and it says, "and they shall look upon me whom they have pierced." So again, the look is the result of the Spirit of grace but where is it toward? Him whom they have pierced. This isn't talking about end times, this is talking about the last days that Joel spoke of with God where the Spirit has already been poured out and sinners are being made to look away from themselves to the Lord Jesus Christ. And it says, "and they shall mourn for him, as one mourneth for his only son, and shall be in bitterness for him, as one that is in bitterness for his firstborn." That mourning is repentance and the mourning is over the fact that when the Spirit of grace points a sinner to Christ and opens his eyes to Christ, the mourning is the understanding that it was for their sin that Christ paid the debt.

Oh my dear friend, when I consider that it wasn't any but my sins that put him on that tree. I know he paid the debt for sinners from every tribe, nation and tongue but as the Spirit of God works in your heart, it's as though he died for none other but you and then that mourning to realize that my sins put him there. Even now, dear friends, as we live out this life and we're sinners, we fall daily. In fact, we're fallen, that's why we fall. We're fallen creatures still. But how many times does the Spirit then remind us that yes, even for that, the Lord Jesus Christ paid the debt.

So that's what it's speaking of here when it says "they shall prophesy," that mouth opened to declare him and who he is. Verse 19 says, "I will shew wonders in heaven above, and signs in the earth beneath; blood, and fire, and vapour of smoke: The sun shall be turned into darkness, and the moon into blood, before that great and notable day of the Lord come." This is not talking about some future judgment when it speaks of wonders in heaven above and signs in the earth: blood, fire, and vapor of smoke. Think of the Old Testament sacrifices. Think about what Israel would have seen, that smoke going up daily before the Lord and you think about the number of sacrifices that were being offered and the stench of blood and fire. That's talking about that burnt offering altar that was never, ever cold. It was to continually offer burnt sacrifices unto the Lord. You can imagine the stench and yet all of it was a picture of the Lord Jesus Christ. And lest any wonder, here's the wonders in heaven, signs on earth, verse 20, "The sun shall be turned into darkness." Remember, when Christ hung on the cross from noon until 3 in the afternoon it was dark. It was as if the sun had been hidden. But during that time, the Lord Jesus Christ entered into the veil with his Father. He was dealing with his Father. That's what his sacrifice is all about. And it says "the moon into blood." During the Passover, that's when the moon looks the reddest. You talk about an orange or red moon, that's it. So it's defining the particular time when this would be accomplished and the reason the Spirit now is poured out is because it has been accomplished. It says "before that great and notable day of the Lord come." So these things were to happen before then the outpouring of the Spirit of God so, again, we see the fulfillment of Scripture.

Then in verse 21, "It shall come to pass, that whosoever shall call on the name of the Lord shall be saved." Now, when you see in Scripture "whosoever," it's not just "whosoever," it says "whosoever shall call on the name of the Lord." You see, the Lord's people, those that God the Father in his grace and mercy purposed to save from eternity, they are distinguished by this that they worship God in truth and that calling on the name of the Lord is worship. It's not just saying a Sinner's Prayer, it's to continue to call on his name as the Lord and the Savior and the only one whereby salvation is granted. To look to him alone. Only the Spirit of God would do that and that's why it says "they shall be saved." It's because they have been saved in the death of the Lord Jesus Christ. Every debt already paid in his righteousness that he earned and established, God imputed, put to their account already, but they are being saved in that the Spirit is now calling them out and they shall be saved in that God the Father keeps them through his Son and not one will be lost.

So you can see this is what Peter was declaring but from the word. Just reading the word and through it pointing his hearers to Christ. I pray that the Lord would grant us this same spirit as we consider the word. It's important. It's the foundation. It's the one final authority, not men's commentaries but the word. That in reading it, pray that the Lord grant you eyes to see the one subject of the word is Christ and him crucified.

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