
ACTS

LIFE-ON-LIFE DISCIPLESHIP

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“A World Changing Sermon”

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Living Hope Bible Church, Roselle, Illinois
livinghopechurch.net

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A WORLD CHANGING SERMON

So those who received his word were baptized, and there were added that day about three thousand souls.

ACTS 2:41

We are thinking about what kind of a church God wants our church to be. A New Testament church—a Spirit-filled, Bible-believing, Christ-honoring church—is a mighty weapon in the hands of a holy God. God’s pattern is found right here in the book of Acts.

If you want to see the church defeat the devil, you’ve got to look at this sermon Peter preaches. God will rip the world right out of the hands of the devil if we will do what Peter did: he went in the power of the Spirit, he exalted Christ, and he called sinners to be saved. Three thousand were baptized that day on the front steps of the Temple, where there are still 50 baptistries (mikvehs) there today. There were mikvehs at the Temple and many at every synagogue. There some 800 ancient ritual baths have been discovered in Israel, and 50 of them are near the entrance to the Temple.



Ritual Bath (mikveh) at the South Temple Steps, Jerusalem

God wants us to shine the light of Christ so that we can lift the night of darkness and wickedness from our culture. Oh, as the world gets darker and darker, I'm praying our church gets brighter and brighter. The night is coming when our work will be over. Christ is coming again when we can no longer evangelize. But let us work while it is still day. The night is not here yet. The only way God's going to shake the world one more time, and I believe he will, is if his people go forth empowered. We must speak out and speak boldly. So let me say it here, and let us say it everywhere: Jesus Christ is Lord! *Every knee will bow*. There will be a day when all the Presidents of the United States bow before Christ. They with all people will cry out that "Jesus Christ is Lord." But let's evangelize this world dear saints. Let's not wait.

Nietzsche (of whom Hitler was a disciple) was a cynic, an atheist philosopher. He was as ungodly and lascivious as they come. He went insane by the age of 44 and died at the age of 55. He looked at the church of his day. He considered Christianity. Do you know what he said? He said,

If you want me to believe in your Redeemer, you're going to have to look a little more redeemed.

— Friedrich Nietzsche¹

¹ Friedrich Nietzsche in Greg Ogden. *Discipleship Essentials: A Guide to Building Your Life in Christ* (Downers Grove, IL: IVP Connect, 2007), 153.

Now, think about it. This world gets their idea of Jesus Christ not from the Word of God—because they don’t read it; they get that from us. I want to get there, saints. We cannot get there alone. This series is on “life-on-life Discipleship”. We have to help each other get there.

I’m going to give you a description of a church triumphant, a church that will change the world. Let’s be that group of people that is truly forever family. Let’s help each other get there. What kind of church do we have to be to be a triumphant church and not a defeated church? We need to be a church that is: empowered by the Spirit, exalting the Savior, and evangelizing sinners! Here’s the key thought: Exalt Jesus in the power of the Spirit, and he will grow the church.

EMPOWERED BY THE SPIRIT (2:14-21)

The early church was empowered by the Spirit.² The Day of Pentecost had come. All of these signs and wonders had been done. The Spirit has come and been poured out on that group of 120 and far beyond. Thousands from everywhere are experiencing the gift of understanding each other speak the wonderful works of God.

And Peter stands up to preach the gospel so that the Spirit can bring thousands into the kingdom. He relies on the power of the Holy Spirit. If we are to go forward as a church that changes the world, we have to be empowered. But how?

The Spirit’s Moment

The Spirit of God was being poured out a specific moment in time. Peter is recognizing that this is the moment we’ve all been waiting for. The world will never be the same! Recognize this moment as Peter did at Pentecost. Listen to what Peter did. As those who were already saved were filled to the overflow with the Spirit, the ones observing them were mocking them. “They’re drunk. So early, but they are stone cold drunk.” People who don’t understand the Spirit put a target on Peter and the disciples. And you who are Spirit-filled have a target on you! Don’t be surprised when the world hates you. But you have an awesome opportunity in that moment of mockery and persecution. Peter didn’t walk away like before. Peter saw this as a moment of opportunity. He didn’t

² Adapted from Adrian Rogers, “The Amazing First-Century Church,” in *Adrian Rogers Sermon Archive* (Signal Hill, CA: Rogers Family Trust, 2017), Ac 2:22–47.

go into hiding like before. He “stood up”! What a difference the filling of the Spirit makes! Peter stood up with the other eleven apostles and explained this sacred moment to the onlookers.

Acts 2:14-16 | 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. ¹⁵ For these people are not drunk, as you suppose, since it is only the third hour of the day. ¹⁶ But this is what was uttered through the prophet Joel.

He says, “We’re not drunk!” He doesn’t condemn them. He informs them. This is a special moment in history given by the prophet Joel. This outpouring was planned long ago. He doesn’t condemn them for their ignorance. He invites them into what the Spirit is doing. How about you? As you get flack for living for Jesus, are you inviting people in? This is a moment for the church at Pentecost. And this week, there are people who are observing your Spirit filled life, and they may think you’re crazy. Don’t condemn them. Invite them in!

The Spirit’s Dawning

Peter said in his sermon that the fulfillment of what Joel had prophesied was what they had just witnessed. The Holy Spirit had been poured out, not on seventy, not on 120, but on hundreds, and soon three thousand. The Spirit falls not just on men, but on women, servants, and everybody in the flock of God. God has poured out his Spirit upon all of us. Peter quotes the book of Joel which describes the Spirit’s dawning.

Acts 2:17-18 | ““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; ¹⁸ even on my male servants and female servants in those days I will pour out my Spirit, and they shall prophesy.

There is no such thing as a Christian who has not been anointed by the Holy Spirit for ministry. Whatever age, the Spirit falls. “Everyone who calls upon the name of the Lord shall be saved” and gets the Spirit (2:21). Joel is describing the dawning of the age of the Spirit. Little children prophesy. Your sons and daughters are going to prophesy and

speak boldly of Christ. When we understand the Spirit, we can put away the myth of teenage rebellion. The greatest revivals are going to happen through our sons and daughters. Young men, like Brother Ahmed will see visions. Others, even old men, will dream dreams. Everyone who is a believer from the heads of households to servants, both male and female receives the outpouring of God's Spirit. If you have believed, you have the Spirit. They saw the Spirit's dawning, and now the Spirit is ready to shine at midday. Is he shining through you dear saint? Paul says,

For by one Spirit we were all baptized into one body.

—1 Corinthians 12:13

We do not all have the same gifts, but we have the same Spirit, and let him shine through us! We are all called to be richly involved in the ministry of the kingdom of God: life-on-life discipleship and evangelism.³ This is the life of the Spirit! With the coming of the Spirit came the Spirit's indwelling, baptizing, sealing, and filling. And believers everywhere started proclaiming Christ, not just in word, but in power. That's what we are to do dear saints: proclaiming Christ, lifting him up in the power of the Spirit. This power of the Spirit was something new—something wonderful and dynamic! Joel's prophecy tells us of the dawn of this wonderful age. The sunset of the age is also described.⁴ And it's coming quickly.

The Spirit's Sunset

There's coming a day when the current state of things as we know it will end. What the world has deemed so important will be shown to be worthless. When Jesus comes, people will be hiding under the rocks, but God's people know that day is coming. Let's read about it.

Acts 2:19-21 | And I will show wonders in the heavens above and signs on the earth below, blood, and fire, and vapor of smoke; ²⁰ the sun shall be turned to darkness and the moon to blood, before the day of the Lord comes, the great and magnificent day.

³ R. C. Sproul, *Acts*, St. Andrew's Expository Commentary (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2010), 50.

⁴ R. Kent Hughes, *Acts: The Church Afire*, Preaching the Word (Wheaton, IL: Crossway Books, 1996), 39.

²¹And it shall come to pass that everyone who calls upon the name of the Lord shall be saved.'

There's coming a day, at any moment, when Christ will destroy the earth. Joel tells us this. Peter later talks about this very text and gives us more information.

The day of the Lord will come like a thief, and then the heavens will pass away with a roar, and the heavenly bodies will be burned up and dissolved, and the earth and the works that are done on it will be exposed. ¹¹Since all these things are thus to be dissolved, what sort of people ought you to be in lives of holiness and godliness, ¹²waiting for and hastening the coming of the day of God, because of which the heavens will be set on fire and dissolved, and the heavenly bodies will melt as they burn! ¹³But according to his promise we are waiting for new heavens and a new earth in which righteousness dwells.

—2 Peter 3:10-13

Peter says, look how we should live, in all holiness and godliness, because of what is soon coming upon the earth. Jesus is coming! Be ready. Preach the Gospel today as if Jesus were coming tonight. There's an urgency and love that should be emanating from each of us. The point here is this: we have to be *empowered by the Spirit* for the world to change. And as we are empowered, we need to be *exalting the Savior*.

EXALTING THE SAVIOR (2:22-36)

If we are filled with the Spirit, we will boldly exalt Jesus. That's what Peter did at Pentecost. The church grew because they lifted up Jesus. Jesus said:

And I, when I am lifted up from the earth, will draw all people to myself.
—John 12:32

No church is going to be a growing, vibrant church that does not exalt the Lord Jesus Christ. Jesus is the attracting power of the church. We are to lift up Jesus in the power of the Spirit so all men will come to him.

Jesus Lived the Perfect Life

Now, notice the message that Peter preached began with Jesus' perfect life. Jesus lived the perfect life that you could not live. He lived

in your place so that he could give you his perfect record. And God confirmed that perfect life with miracles. Listen to Peter address the thousands gathered, who are baffled and wondering what this sound of mighty rushing wind is. What is the miraculous fire above the heads of many who are speaking? Peter speaks:

Acts 2:22 | 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.

Our Lord Jesus Christ was a man attested to by God! The Spirit came down upon him when he began his earthly ministry, and the Father spoke from heaven and said:

This is my beloved Son in whom I am well pleased. —*Matthew 3:17*

His Miraculous Birth

Jesus' birth was miraculous. He was raised in Nazareth, but he was born from a virgin in Bethlehem. His birth is unlike any other since he had no earthly father. God was his Father. He was conceived by the Holy Spirit.

Behold, the virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and they shall call his name Immanuel. —*Matthew 1:23*

His Perfect Life

Jesus lived in relative obscurity until the age of around 30. Yet Jesus' life was not usual or boring. His life was the most extraordinary life to ever be lived because he never sinned. This is the one who lived a perfect life in my place and in your place. Can you testify with the author of Hebrews?

It was indeed fitting that we should have such a high priest, holy, innocent, unstained, separated from sinners, and exalted above the heavens. —*Hebrews 7:26*

The Lord was “tempted in every way like we are, yet without sin” (Heb 4:16, KJV). Jesus lived the one perfect life.

You know that he appeared so that he might take away our sins. And in him is no sin. —*1 John 3:5*

He didn't just live a perfect life to be an example. He lived it in place of you and me to exchange our sin for his righteousness (2 Cor 5:21; Zech 3:4). Somebody wrote this about the manner of Jesus' life.

I'm far within the mark when I say that all of the armies that ever marched, and all of the navies that ever were built, and all of the parliaments that ever sat, and all of the kings that ever reigned, put together, have not affected the life of humanity upon this earth as powerfully as that one solitary life, Jesus of Nazareth.

—James Allen Francis⁵

Think about that. And here is another quote from Napoleon himself. I had to look it up and translate it from the French, but here it is:

I know men and I tell you that Jesus Christ is no mere man. Between him and every other person in the world there is no possible term of comparison. Alexander, Caesar, Charlemagne, and I have founded empires. But on what did we rest the creation of our genius? Upon force. Jesus Christ founded his empire upon love; and at this hour millions of men would die for him.

—Napoleon Bonaparte⁶

His Amazing Miracles

His life was also unique because he performed miracles. Jesus' healing miracles got people's attention. Disease and death were vanishing from the countryside of Galilee. Suddenly crippled people are walking around town. Those who were blind can now see. The deaf people could hear. A dead person gets raised to life when Jesus comes to town. Lepers, with gangrene in their limbs are now healed with skin as soft as a baby. That's what happens when Jesus comes to town.

When Jesus arrives in your town, thousands are fed with a little boy's lunch of five loaves and two fishes. It got people's attention. Jesus' miracles were evidence to all that Jesus was who he claimed to be. Everybody there at Pentecost were witnesses of Jesus' perfect life and could testify of mighty signs and wonders. He walked on the sea; he turned water into wine. He banished demons, disease, and death. He healed the sick, cleansed the lepers, and raised the dead. And the miracles recorded are a fraction of those he actually performed. Several times the Gospel writers simply lump miracles together and spoke of almost universal healing.⁷

⁵ James Allan Francis in Ken Blanchard. *One Solitary Life* (Nashville, TN: J Countryman Books, 2007).

⁶ Napoleon Bonaparte in Robert Antoine de Beauterne. *Sentiment de Napoléon Sur Le Christianisme* [*Napoleon's Thoughts on Christianity*] (Paris: Olivier-Fulgence, 1845), xxvi. (Translated into English from French)

⁷ John Phillips, *Exploring Acts: An Expository Commentary*, The John Phillips Commentary Series (Kregel Publications; WORDsearch Corp., 2009), Ac 2:22.

And he healed them all. —*Matthew 15:30*

Jesus went throughout all the cities and villages, teaching in their synagogues and proclaiming the gospel of the kingdom and healing every disease and every affliction. —*Matthew 9:35*

Every disease! Every affliction! Can you imagine if every one of his miracles were recorded? John ends his gospel narrative by saying that it would be impossible to record all the miracles Jesus did. The world couldn't hold such an infinite record of Jesus' miracles.

Now there are also many other things that Jesus did. Were every one of them to be written, I suppose that the world itself could not contain the books that would be written. —*John 21:25*

The Miracles at His Death and Resurrection

All those gathered at Pentecost were well aware of Jesus' healings, resurrections, and mighty miracles that Jesus performed, but also the signs and wonders that accompanied his death. The Temple curtain was torn in two. The earth quaked. The sun refused to shine. There were people who were raised from the dead as Jesus himself died on the cross and conquered death. And there were over 500 who were eyewitnesses to his resurrection. And now hear there is this sound, like a mighty windstorm, and everybody in Jerusalem hears it: it's the sound of the Spirit of God arriving and pouring out on all flesh.

The Ultimate Miracle: Salvation

Jesus' miracles in the physical realm pointed to an even greater miracle in the metaphysical realm: the salvation of souls. If Jesus can turn water into wine; if he can raise people from the dead; if he can make blind eyes to see and deaf ears to hear, then he can do an even greater miracle. He can transfer a sinner from earth to heaven. He can change a person's eternal destiny from hell to heaven. What greater miracle can there be than changing your destiny from hell to heaven.

Jesus lived the only perfect, sinless life in your place, to take off your rags of sin and give you a perfect robe of righteousness (Zech 3:4). Not only that, Peter says he died the perfect death. The purpose of the cross, as we learn from this message, is substitution.

Jesus Died the Perfect Death

Christ also suffered once for sins, the righteous for the unrighteous, that he might bring us to God. —*1 Peter 3:18*

We see as well that Peter preached how Jesus died the perfect death, planned and foreordained by God.

Acts 2:23 | This Jesus, delivered up according to the definite plan and foreknowledge of God, you crucified and killed by the hands of lawless men.

Now, what's Peter saying here? He's saying that Jesus Christ's death was not an accident; it was not an incident; it was planned before the foundation of the earth — "the definite plan and foreknowledge of God." Nothing went wrong. God was not up there in heaven wringing his hands and saying, "Oh, how terrible that this has come to pass!" No God planned for the most glorious and beautiful thing to come out of the greatest sin ever committed: the crucifixion of the Son of God. He did it to give his life for you.

Jesus' death was a divine strategy planned by God. He is called the "Lamb slain from the foundation of the world" (Rev 13:8). The Father planned it. The Son agreed to carry it out and pay for it. And the Spirit of God would apply it beginning at Pentecost, 50 days after the resurrection.

Jesus' death was voluntary. No one took Jesus' life from him. This wasn't an accident, or a plan gone wrong. Jesus said he's the "good shepherd who lays down his life for his sheep" (Jn 10:11). He announced, "No one can take my life from me. I sacrifice it voluntarily. I have authority to lay it down, and I have authority to take it up again" (Jn 10:18). Jesus signed up to be the "Lamb of God that takes away the sin of the world" (Jn 1:29). His life was not taken from him. He voluntarily laid it down for you.

Jesus' death was substitutionary. That is, he exchanged his perfect life for your sinful life. Jesus didn't die for his own sin because he had none. He was the only perfect person who ever lived. He lived a completely sinless life. But he died as a substitute for you and for me.

For He made Him who knew no sin to be sin for us, that we might become the righteousness of God in Him. —2 Corinthians 5:21, NKJV

God Christ's death is the propitiation for our sins (1 Jn 2:2). Only the death of Christ could satisfy God's holy wrath against sin. Our sin is the obstacle between man and God was removed. Hallelujah! There is therefore now condemnation for those who believe (Rom 8:1).

Jesus Resurrected from the Dead

But not only as the exalted Savior did Peter Christ's perfect life and substitutionary death, but he also spoke of the miracle of his resurrection. There's no way possible that death could keep Jesus in the grave.

The Person of the Resurrection

Acts 2:24 | God raised him up, loosing the pangs of death, because it was not possible for him to be held by it.

God loosed Jesus from the pangs (the horrific powers) of death for himself and for us! Jesus could not be held by death. The One who caused all things to exist cannot be defeated by death. Death cannot hold back the Author of life. So, Christ burst out of the grave that Sunday morning. Nothing can hold Jesus back. The *death of Christ* demonstrated that sin is defeated on our behalf. But the *resurrection* of Christ shows that death itself is defeated on our behalf. Jesus is our champion. He is the champion of heaven, and he is the champion who beat all of hell! Peter opens up to Psalm 16 for his text on Pentecost morning.

The Psalm of the Resurrection

Listen to Peter as he preaches Christ's resurrection. He opens up Psalm 16:8-11 and quotes them as the words of Jesus. He shows that the Holy One who will not see corruption is Jesus, and then Peter proclaims the resurrection of Christ from the dead.

Acts 2:25-28 | For David says concerning him [*Jesus*], "'I saw the Lord always before me, for he is at my right hand that may not be shaken; ²⁶therefore my heart was glad, and my tongue rejoiced; my flesh also will dwell in hope. ²⁷For you will not abandon my soul to Hades, or let your Holy One see corruption. ²⁸You have made known to me the paths of life; you will make me full of gladness with your presence.'

Is this David? No, Peter says that David is talking about Jesus. All the multinational group of people there at Pentecost could not imagine that the Messiah would have to die. But Peter stands up and proclaims from Psalm 16 that he would have to go to his death, but his "heart was glad" and his "tongue rejoiced". Why? How? Because he knew that the Father would not abandon his "soul to Hades." He wouldn't be conquered by death, but he would conquer death. He would pave the "path of life" right out of that tomb. He would be glad in the presence of God!

Psalm 16, Peter says, is a wonderful Psalm about the death and resurrection of Jesus!

The Point of the Resurrection

Listen now as Peter makes the point, first that this Psalm is about how Jesus will live that perfect path of life, and he will die, but he will defeat death. And now he wants to point out that this Psalm couldn't be about David, because David died. David couldn't be the one who defeats death. No, David was a prophet and he foretold how Christ would be the ultimate King and sit on David's throne. That he will sit on the ultimate throne, on the right hand of the Father at his resurrection and ascension.

Acts 2:29-31 | "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. ³⁰Being 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, ³¹he foresaw and spoke about the resurrection of the Christ, that he was not abandoned to Hades, nor did his flesh see corruption.

What is Peter's point? Jesus is the ultimate King. He's David's ultimate descendent. Jesus Christ, who these people had crucified is the Psalm 2 Messiah. They should have worshipped him, but instead they crucified him. But God raised him up, and this was all part of God's plan. His flesh was never going to see corruption, because he came to conquer death.

The Witnesses of the Resurrection

Now Peter gets to the most powerful point. He calls in his witnesses. They are standing right in front of him. Listen to Peter address this crowd of witnesses.

Acts 2:32 | This Jesus God raised up, and of that we all are witnesses.

These are the people who crucified the Lord. But they are also the people who were witnesses of his resurrection. And they had just been talking about Jesus and his resurrection in languages that everyone from everywhere could understand. And while you or I haven't seen the very resurrection of Christ, we have seen those who were dead in sin raised to newness of life. We all who know Christ have experienced the power of his resurrection.

Jesus Ascended as God's King

Peter is moving to his ultimate point. This isn't just any king they crucified.

The King's Throne

Acts 2:33a | Being therefore exalted at the right hand of God.

The Person the people of Pentecost crucified is sitting on a throne right now: but it's not merely the throne of Israel. It's an even higher throne. It's at "God's right hand"—the place of omnipotence and divine authority. It's saying this is the highest judge. This is God's very throne. David's descendent would be the eternal king, because he has a throne that is infinite and a life that can never die.

Peter says that the one they crucified is the one who sits on God's throne. He rose again and ascended to God's right hand in power as King of kings. Listen to Peter make this point.

The King's Army of One

Acts 2:33 | 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.

So he sits on God's throne and he sends out God's promise. He doesn't need armies to conquer people. He as King moves his scepter, and the Spirit of God is outpoured. The Spirit of God is greater than a million-man army! He's been sent out to conquer the people of Pentecost. The people who crucified the King. Peter says Christ has "received from the Father the promise of the Holy Spirit" and that this king "has poured out this that you yourselves are seeing and hearing." The King has sent out his army of one: the Holy Spirit.

The King's Deity

I love this. Peter says, if you're looking for David, his body is still in the ground. There was another king who ascended, one who could sit on God's throne.

Acts 2:34-35 | 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."

Peter quotes Psalm 110:1 and begins to preach the glory of the Trinity. Psalm 110 says: The Lord, YHWH, says to my Lord (Adonai): sit at my right hand. I will destroy all your enemies! That's the Father talking to the Son. That's God the Father saying to God the Son: "You are God. You are King of the Universe. You are exalted. You will rule the whole world." It's the same theme as Psalm 2. Jesus is God's Messiah. He's the King of kings and Lord of lords. Peter is saying: if you don't bow and call Jesus YHWH you are going to be destroyed. Paul says I this way in Philippians.

Every knee shall bow, and every tongue shall confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father. —*Philippians 2:10-11*

You may not be a believer, but I can tell you with all of the authority of the Word of God: One day you will confess that Jesus Christ is Lord. I don't care who you are, where you are. That's Peter's message. He exalted Jesus! If we exalt Jesus, the Holy Spirit will begin to work deeply in the hearts of sinners.

Have you experienced the empowering of the Spirit? Are you exalting Jesus? That's what Peter did. That's what any truly born-again Christian does. And we do what Jesus does: we evangelize sinners.

EVANGELIZING THE SINNER (2:37-41)

Now we come to what happens when the power of the Holy Spirit is poured out. Our King's marching orders were:

Go into all the world and preach the Gospel to every creature. —*Mark 16:15*

Let me tell you what true evangelism is. Let me tell you what true salvation is. Let us look in slow motion as it were how the Holy Spirit converts sinners.

Conviction by the Lord

First of all, people must be convicted by the Spirit. Peter is sweetly bold. He shows them what they've done! They've crucified the Lord of glory.

Conviction of Who the Lord is

Acts 2:36 | 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 says: “The one you hung on a cross was God’s Messiah. He is both Lord, YHWH, and Christ.” This is good theology. If you don’t believe that Jesus Christ is the LORD of Hosts, the God of creation, then you need to go back and read Genesis and John. It was “by Jesus all things were made, and without him was not anything made that was made” (cf Jn 1:1-4).

Yes, he is both Lord (YHWH) and Christ. “God has highly exalted him and bestowed on him the name that is above every name!” (Phil 2:9). Every knee will bow and every tongue confess that Jesus is YHWH. That’s a quote referring to YHWH from Isaiah 45:23.

Conviction of Who I Am

They crucified this Lord, the Lord of glory. Now before we get hard on those who crucified the Lord of glory, we have to remember that we joined with them. We need to be convicted that we did it. Luther said,

“We all carry about in our pockets His very nails.”⁸ —Martin Luther

That’s the realization we will each have if we consider the greatness of our sins. Don’t run away from opening up the sewers of your heart. Come to Christ. He will forgive those who crucified him. Of course, this cut the people of Pentecost to heart. They had literally crucified him. They had seen his miracles but let fear and pride overwhelm them. Now they can think of only one thing: How can we be saved? What must we do?

Acts 2:37 | 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?”

Peter preached and the people were cut to heart. This is what happens when we open up the sewers and we are honest about our sins. This is what made the church so powerful. They came to that place

⁸ Martin Luther. *Luther's Works. Volume 27: Lectures on Galatians, 1535*, (Saint Louis: Concordia Pub. House, 1964), 407.

where they saw the greatness of their sins. And they said, “What shall we do?”

Conversion to the Lord

Peter instructs them to throw away their old way of seeing everything. What they have just seen, with Jesus Christ as the Lord of glory, the God of the universe, the LORD of all in control of them: that’s how the world really is. So repent of how you lived before.

Acts 2:38a | And Peter said to them, “Repent...”

Repent! Be broken. Be sorrowful for how you lived. See how you lived in control of your life, and ignoring God. And Repent. To *repent* literally means to “change your mind.” Our whole outlook is now changed because we’ve seen the Lord high and lifted up. That’s what Isaiah said. Listen to his testimony of repentance.

In the year that King Uzziah died I saw the Lord sitting upon a throne, high and lifted up.
—Isaiah 6:1

Isaiah says, “I saw the Lord.” Then he says, “I saw the angels, and they were shouting one to another.

One called to another and said: “Holy, holy, holy is the Lord of hosts; the whole earth is full of his glory!”
—Isaiah 6:3

What could Isaiah do? He told the truth. His whole world was changed. He was shaken to the core. He confessed and said:

“Woe is me! For I am lost; for I am a man of unclean lips, and I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips; for my eyes have seen the King, the Lord of hosts!”
—Isaiah 6:5

This is genuine repentance from Isaiah. The Bible says there can be true and false repentance. False repentance is sorrow over the consequences of sin, but not sorrow over sin itself. Genuine repentance (*cf* 2 Cor 7:10), on the other hand, leads to an inward change of mind toward God, leading to a complete change of life and behavior.⁹

Peter preaches with power, and people’s hearts are changing right before him. When we repent, we see the world completely differently

⁹ Peter Williams, *Acts: Church on the Move: An Expository Commentary on the Acts of the Apostles*, Exploring the Bible Commentary (Leominster: DayOne, 2004), 29–30.

now: from God's perspective. We forsake our selfishness and turn in faith to Christ. That's what they did. Then Peter tells them to follow their repentance with a sure sign that they're repentance is real. He says: "Get baptized!"

Consecration to the Lord

Peter tells them to immediately consecrate themselves by identifying with Jesus. Show the evidence of your repentance with baptism!

Acts 2:38b | 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.

Identification with Christ

Once people repent, Peter expects true faith to want to identify with Christ. There are at least 50 mikvehs, ritual baths all around the Temple Mount today. They would consecrate themselves this way before they would enter into the Temple. But Peter was telling to consecrate themselves, not for Temple worship, but for Jesus worship, and for forgiveness. Before we talk about baptism, let's talk about the forgiveness offered. The sense of what Peter is saying is: be baptized "because of" the forgiveness of your sins.

Now to the baptism. As I said, there are fifty cleansing baths, baptisteries all around the Temple entrance. There are plenty of places many people at once could be baptized. The word "baptize" here means "to dip" or "immerse."¹⁰ We don't have to guess what it means because you can go to Israel today and find eight hundred of these baptistries from the time of Jesus scattered around Israel. You could be baptized in many of them today if you wanted to, because several ancient baptisteries are connected to ancient springs and "living water" is flowing in them right now.

Why does he tell them to be baptized? Why a ceremonial cleansing in the name of Jesus? Because it's an identification with Christ. Romans 6 tells us that when we go down into the water, we are identifying with his death and burial into the tomb. When we come out of the water, we identify with Christ in his resurrection. Christ is our Redeemer. We are co-crucified with him and co-resurrected with him.

¹⁰ Grant R. Osborne, "Baptism," *Baker Encyclopedia of the Bible* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book House, 1988), 257.

In the early church until today, baptism is the way we confess Christ as our Lord. Baptism is our wedding ceremony into the church. I loved Jill long before I married her. But she wasn't my wife until I declared my love and lifelong commitment to her publicly. That's baptism.

Baptism with the Spirit

And when you repent and believe, what happens? You receive what the 120 had already received, the indwelling Holy Spirit: the promise Spirit that Jesus dispersed when he ascended.

Acts 2:38c | And you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.

The Holy Spirit comes into you to control you. The Holy Spirit takes possession now of the person who has been bought with the precious blood of Jesus Christ. *Real salvation is not just to believe something, or to achieve something, but to receive Someone.* The Holy Spirit of God comes into you. He controls you. He overcomes you. He leads and guides you.

Evangelizing Family

With all of Peter's boldness, there is a powerful and genuine response. And he begins to comfort this crowd who crucified the Lord.

Acts 2:39 | 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.

He tells them: this promise is for you and your children and your loved ones. Anyone who is far off, come! God is calling! When you come to know Christ, one of the greatest burdens you get is for the salvation of your own family. God can save anyone, near in your family, or those who are far off, scattered in the world and in our lives. God is mighty to save, but we must evangelize.

Separation from the World

Next, as a new believer, you want to separate from the world.

Acts 2:40 | And with many other words he bore witness and continued to exhort them, saying, "Save yourselves from this crooked generation."

What a wakeup call to see how crooked this world is. You see that our nation is not progressing. It's falling apart! The foundations are

crumbling. They are trampling over truth in the streets. And oh, you see how we need to “save ourselves from this crooked generation.”

Continuing with the Church

Finally, we see this great harvest: three thousand souls were added to the church. How did they know who believed? They were baptized.

Acts 2:41 | So those who received his word were baptized, and there were added that day about three thousand souls.

In a sense, only the 3,000 that day heard Peter’s great sermon. There are professing Christians who need Christ. They’ve heard, but they haven’t heard. It is possible to be a respectable, well-taught, moral sinner. That is why the Lord said, in the Parable of the Tares, not to pull the tares out of the wheat field, because the roots are tangled together, and we will pull out the wheat too. We cannot tell the difference. Do we *hear* Peter’s sermon? If not, the God of grace invites us to come honestly before him who sees all and to allow him to speak to us.¹¹

Conclusion

Verse 42, which we will look into next week says: “They devoted themselves”—a continuance with the Lord. *Jesus did not call us to make decisions; he called us to make disciples.* I believe we are in a powerful moment in our church to experience the power of the Spirit like never before. But we are going to have to be loving enough to get into each other’s lives. We are going to have to invite messy people into our lives and love them and bring them out of this cesspool. Exalt Christ in the power of the Spirit. We must evangelize or we will fossilize. Jesus left his throne on high to bring us to himself. Do you think we could get a little uncomfortable here to love one another? There is no better life to live than one that is empowered by the Spirit, exalting the Savior, and evangelizing sinners. May our merciful God bring it to pass.

¹¹ R. Kent Hughes, *Acts: The Church Afire*, Preaching the Word (Wheaton, IL: Crossway Books, 1996), 42–43.