

# Good News of Great Joy

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*Acts*

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I'm going to ask you to turn in your Bibles to the second chapter of Acts, Acts 2, departing from our series in Nehemiah to focus on the resurrection of Jesus Christ. The title of the message this morning is "Good News of Great Joy." Good news of great joy. Do you feel like you need some good news today? It seems to be in short supply and we're going to read and then consider the announcement of the most wonderful news the world had ever heard, the good news and great joy that comes from the gospel of Jesus Christ. In fact, the word "gospel" literally means "good news." And we have the gospel, we have the good news. We are the people who have the good news and so our lives should be characterized by great joy. Are you joyful today? Has your life been characterized by the joy that ought to be evident in the lives of those who know the risen Christ? I don't know about you but I feel like I forget so easily the reason that we should be joyful.

So this passage this morning, the story of Pentecost, the outpouring of the Holy Spirit, the preaching of the first New Testament sermon really, I mean, Jesus in the New Testament and he's preaching but in the sense, the new covenant sermon. Now that we have received the Holy Spirit, Christ has finished his work, this is the first preaching of the gospel after the finished work of Christ and it is a message of great news which brings even greater joy to the hearts of those who receive it. I'm going to read the entire passage but I want to give you the flow of thought before we read, not the whole chapter but the first 36 verses I'm going to read in a moment, but I want to set this in context so that as we read, even, you can see this unfold.

The disciples have been told by the Lord Jesus at his ascension which happened 40 days after his resurrection, they have been told to wait in Jerusalem to receive power, and so they've been waiting about a little more than a week in Jerusalem for the power of God to descend upon them, and on the morning of Pentecost, God pours out his Spirit upon them. Now the crowds, Pentecost is one of the three pilgrimage feasts of the Jews. There were three feasts built into the Hebrew calendar that God in his wisdom, his infinite wisdom put into the calendar of the people of God to really teach them about salvation. Three pilgrimage feasts. There were three feasts, they are called pilgrimage feasts because these feasts every male, every Jewish male was required to appear in Jerusalem for these feasts. They were to make a pilgrimage to Jerusalem three times a year. One

was Passover. The second was Pentecost. And the third was the feast of Tabernacles. These three feasts. This is the second of those three feasts, the second pilgrimage feast, the feast of Pentecost which was also known as the feast of Firstfruits. It was the feast where they celebrated God's provision to them in the land of Canaan. They left Egypt to go to a land flowing with milk and honey, and then they were to commemorate the receiving of the firstfruits of the blessings of God by offering the firstfruits to the Lord in worship.

So Pentecost was this feast and what we're going to see is the timing, the perfect timing of God. Jesus had to die at Passover and the Spirit had to be poured out at Pentecost and that's exactly what happened, and a faithful Old Testament Jew who then sees the ministry of Jesus, if they were really aware of the Scriptures, they would have known this. It's so clear.

Well, what happens is all these Jews have come from all over the world, it's the pilgrimage feast, so they've come from every corner of the globe, Jewish people who live in faraway places who were raised in other countries and their mother tongues are everything else but Aramaic. They return to Jerusalem for the feast of Pentecost just like every other year to praise God for his provision for them. They are there in town, it's early in the morning, 9 o'clock in the morning we're going to see, the third hour, probably just getting going, shops are opening, people are milling about, the events of the day are about to unfold, the normal day in worship at Pentecost, and as they are around the vicinity of the temple, suddenly they hear a sound, a strange phenomenon and it's a loud sound and then they see after this loud sound that causes them to come, for the crowd to just say, "What in the world happened?" They then see the people of the disciples of Jesus now empowered with the Holy Spirit preaching the gospel. They preach the gospel in the language of all of those people that have come from all over the world. The gift of tongues here is the specific languages of the people. And they are blown away and you're going to see, they're even blown away because the guys that are speaking in tongues, most of the disciples of Jesus are Galileans. Galileans were known to be less educated on average, or thought to be, and they actually had more trouble with languages than other Jews. They had trouble pronouncing guttural sounds. I think they were kind of like a lot of us, maybe they were like Southerners in the US. "Really, Southerners speaking like this?" It's something like that. The power of God is manifest in them and they are preaching the gospel and these Jews who come from all over the world are just stunned and they're asking the question, "What does this mean?"

Peter's answer, now they're all preaching but Peter then speaks in Aramaic because they all have a second language and it's the language of the Jews. When they come to Jerusalem, they're going to receive the worship in Aramaic, the language of the Jews at that point in history. Peter stands up and preaches the gospel to them to clarify what's happened and essentially he says this, "What you are witnessing is the outpouring of the power of God that He prophesied in Joel, that He would pour out his Spirit upon all flesh in the last days. You are witnessing that outpouring and you are witnessing that outpouring that has been done by the man Jesus of Nazareth whom you crucified." And when they understand that this is Jesus' power on display and they understand Jesus'

exalted position, they are cut to the heart and it's going to result in the conversion of 3,000 Jews that day who become worshipers of Christ, who actually in their conviction of their sin and how they have opposed him, they are brought to saving faith and they received the good news of great joy. This is essentially what happens in this passage and we're going to see how important it is that it's at Pentecost as we go.

So let's read the text together. Acts 2:1,

1 When the day of Pentecost had come, they were all together in one place. 2 And suddenly there came from heaven a noise like a violent rushing wind, and it filled the whole house where they were sitting. 3 And there appeared to them tongues as of fire distributing themselves, and they rested on each one of them. 4 And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit was giving them utterance. 5 Now there were Jews living in Jerusalem, devout men from every nation under heaven. 6 And when this sound occurred, the crowd came together, and were bewildered because each one of them was hearing them speak in his own language. 7 They were amazed and astonished, saying, "Why, are not all these who are speaking Galileans? 8 "And how is it that we each hear them in our own language to which we were born? 9 "Parthians and Medes and Elamites, and residents of Mesopotamia, Judea and Cappadocia, Pontus and Asia, 10 Phrygia and Pamphylia, Egypt and the districts of Libya around Cyrene, and visitors from Rome, both Jews and proselytes, 11 Cretans and Arabs we hear them in our own tongues speaking of the mighty deeds of God." 12 And they all continued in amazement and great perplexity, saying to one another, "What does this mean?" 13 But others were mocking and saying, "They are full of sweet wine." 14 But Peter, taking his stand with the eleven, raised his voice and declared to them: "Men of Judea and all you who live in Jerusalem, let this be known to you and give heed to my words. 15 For these men are not drunk, as you suppose, for it is only the third hour of the day; 16 but this is what was spoken of through the prophet Joel: 17 'AND IT SHALL BE IN THE LAST DAYS,' God says, 'THAT I WILL POUR FORTH OF MY SPIRIT ON ALL MANKIND; AND YOUR SONS AND YOUR DAUGHTERS SHALL PROPHECY, AND YOUR YOUNG MEN SHALL SEE VISIONS, AND YOUR OLD MEN SHALL DREAM DREAMS; 18 EVEN ON MY BONDSLAVES, BOTH MEN AND WOMEN, I WILL IN THOSE DAYS POUR FORTH OF MY SPIRIT And they shall prophesy. 19 AND I WILL GRANT WONDERS IN THE SKY ABOVE AND SIGNS ON THE EARTH BELOW, BLOOD, AND FIRE, AND VAPOR OF SMOKE. 20 THE SUN WILL BE TURNED INTO DARKNESS AND THE MOON INTO BLOOD, BEFORE THE GREAT AND GLORIOUS DAY OF THE LORD SHALL COME. 21 AND IT SHALL BE THAT EVERYONE WHO CALLS ON THE NAME OF THE LORD WILL BE SAVED.' 22 Men of Israel, listen to these words: Jesus the Nazarene, a man attested to you by God with

miracles and wonders and signs which God performed through Him in your midst, just as you yourselves know 23 this Man, delivered over by the predetermined plan and foreknowledge of God, you nailed to a cross by the hands of godless men and put Him to death. 24 But God raised Him up again, putting an end to the agony of death, since it was impossible for Him to be held in its power. 25 "For David says of Him, 'I SAW THE LORD ALWAYS IN MY PRESENCE; FOR HE IS AT MY RIGHT HAND, SO THAT I WILL NOT BE SHAKEN. 26 THEREFORE MY HEART WAS GLAD AND MY TONGUE EXULTED; MOREOVER MY FLESH ALSO WILL LIVE IN HOPE; 27 BECAUSE YOU WILL NOT ABANDON MY SOUL TO HADES, NOR ALLOW YOUR HOLY ONE TO UNDERGO DECAY. 28 YOU HAVE MADE KNOWN TO ME THE WAYS OF LIFE; YOU WILL MAKE ME FULL OF GLADNESS WITH YOUR PRESENCE.' 29 Brethren, I may confidently say to you regarding the patriarch David that he both died and was buried, and his tomb is with us to this day. 30 And so, because he was a prophet and knew that GOD HAD SWORN TO HIM WITH AN OATH TO SEAT one OF HIS DESCENDANTS ON HIS THRONE, 31 he looked ahead and spoke of the resurrection of the Christ, that HE WAS NEITHER ABANDONED TO HADES, NOR DID His flesh SUFFER DECAY. 32 This Jesus God raised up again, to which we are all witnesses. 33 Therefore having been exalted to the right hand of God, and having received from the Father the promise of the Holy Spirit, He has poured forth this which you both see and hear. 34 For it was not David who ascended into heaven, but he himself says: 'THE LORD SAID TO MY LORD, "SIT AT MY RIGHT HAND, 35 UNTIL I MAKE YOUR ENEMIES A FOOTSTOOL FOR YOUR FEET.'" 36 Therefore let all the house of Israel know for certain that God has made Him both Lord and Christ this Jesus whom you crucified."

Let's pray.

*Our Father, we come to Your word, to this declaration of the exalted glory of the man Christ Jesus who You have shown to be fully God and fully man, and we are aware of how much we need the same Holy Spirit that You poured out, Lord Jesus, we need the Holy Spirit to help us to reveal Your glory to us, to show our sinfulness to us, to show Your majesty and to show our own misery and how we dishonor so worthy a Savior. And Lord, announce to us again the good news of great joy, make us glad in Your presence. We pray this in Jesus' name. Amen.*

So good news of great joy. Good news of great joy. Two points this morning that we're going to look at, that Peter basically, well, Acts is making, this chapter is basically teaching these two points and the first point and these are essentially the gospel. The good news really you could say and the most succinct way to say the good news, the gospel, the message is Jesus Christ. Jesus is the Christ. That's not his last name, it's a title. Jesus is the King. That's the gospel. And what you have here, the message then really is

the person and work of Jesus. The gospel is a person. It's not a system of belief, it is the revelation and unveiling of a person, and to receive the gospel is not to receive a system of belief, an idea, it is to receive a person as your Lord and Master.

So this is what we witness in this passage, the presentation of the gospel which is a person, and so what we're going to see is two things about this glorious person, the man Jesus. The first point this morning is the extraordinary power of Jesus of Nazareth. The extraordinary power of Jesus of Nazareth and we're going to see that when you understand who Jesus is and the power that he has, then that should give you joy in the midst of whatever circumstances you find yourselves. It really, I mean, if you put it in context, no matter what you're up against if Jesus is with you, he has all power. The extraordinary power of Jesus of Nazareth. This is essentially what we witness and this is what Peter is explaining. He says, "You guys are perplexed about, you're asking what does this mean? What is happening? Why are these people empowered this way to speak miraculously other languages that they can't possibly know? How is this happening?" Essentially he says, "It is the power of Jesus of Nazareth being poured out. This is His power."

I mentioned already and I want to remind us, to make you note, verse 22, the emphasis is on the man Jesus of Nazareth. Verse 22, "Men of Israel, listen to these words: Jesus the Nazarene." The first words in his message after he introduces it, he gets to the heart of the message. Jesus of Nazareth, a man, the man Christ Jesus, the extraordinary power of this man. This is what he's trying to bring to their attention, the extraordinary power of this man. Now we know that Scripture teaches that Jesus is fully God and fully man. Other passages focus on his deity and this passage does as well when it gets to the reality that he is Lord and Christ, to say he is Lord is to say he is God. But Peter starts out by saying consider the man Jesus of Nazareth. This is going to help you understand what this means. The man has, in effect, and this is the power of Jesus of Nazareth, the man has, in effect, the man Christ Jesus has, in effect, this is what's happened, he has brought heaven down to earth. That is the significance of this moment, Pentecost. He has brought the blessedness of heaven into this sin-sick world. That's the power of Jesus and he has the same power today, to bring heaven down into whatever circumstances you are in and, in fact, if you are a believer, he has already brought heaven into you. This is the force of what they are experiencing and they can't understand what they're experiencing but when we look at in context properly, this is exactly what is happening. He has poured forth his Spirit.

The emphasis that has happened, heaven has come down by the Spirit of God coming down. Peter when he quoted Joel's prophecy, Joel 2:13 and following, and in our chapter 2, verse 17, he says twice, "God says, 'I will pour forth of My Spirit,'" verse 17. "God says, 'That I will pour forth of My Spirit on all mankind.'" Verse 18, "Even on My bond slaves, both men and women, I will in those days pour forth of My Spirit." The Lord, Yahweh says he will pour forth his Spirit. But what Peter makes clear is this is what happened and then he tells you in verses 32 and 33, "This Jesus God raised up again, to which we are all witnesses. Therefore having been exalted to the right hand of God, and having received from the Father the promise of the Holy Spirit, He has poured forth this

which you both see and hear." He said, "Listen, the Old Testament said the Lord God, Yahweh, would pour forth His Spirit. I'm telling you that Jesus poured forth the Spirit today," clearly saying Jesus is Yahweh. The man is God. Jesus has done this. Heaven has come down. Because of the work of Jesus, the man Christ Jesus has gone to heaven, ascended to heaven and he has brought heaven down to earth.

Now I want to show you this because I want us to note here in this first point, the extraordinary power of Jesus of Nazareth, I want to talk about, first, the timing. Two points, the first is, the subpoints, now we're under the first point, the extraordinary power of Jesus, the first is the timing, and the second is going to be typology, okay? So I'm going to tell you what those two subpoints are. The precise timing of Pentecost. Chapter 2, verse 1, "When the day of Pentecost had come," I'm reading the New American Standard Bible and there's a footnote there, when you look to the footnote it says, literally when it says, "had come," it means "was being fulfilled," is what the Greek says, and the idea here is a very important word. It really does picture a time, you know, a filling up to the fullness. The time, the days had passed until they all passed and now the time has come. It's not just that Pentecost, it just happened to be that day. No, it's that the time has come, that's the force of this.

Now Pentecost, I mentioned earlier, I think I mentioned, if I didn't, I'm going to mention it now, means 50 in Greek. I don't think I did mention that. I thought it. Doesn't that count? "Didn't I tell you, honey? I thought about telling you." In Greek, Pentecost means 50 and so it was the name for this, the Greek name and the Jews speaking Greek would use this term, Pentecost. But it actually translates a Hebrew word which literally means weeks. This in Hebrew is the feast of Shavuot, which means the feast of Weeks, and the connection is the feast of Weeks was seven weeks, seven weeks, seven sevens is 49, and what's interesting about this is I mentioned there are those three feasts, Passover, Pentecost or Weeks that we're looking at now, and Tabernacles. So Pentecost and Weeks is the same. I'm now going to go back to Pentecost but I want you to see that this connection. When God put these three feasts on the calendar, he connected from the beginning Passover and Pentecost. You see this when you look at Exodus and Deuteronomy and why is that? There is nothing by accident. God doesn't make any mistakes. He doesn't make any, you know, accidental really cool things happen. You know, don't you do that sometimes? I find myself doing my best puns accidentally. I kind of recognize it after I said it. I did one yesterday. I can't remember what it was, it wasn't that good to tell you anyway. But I did, as soon as I said, I'm like, "Oh, that was pretty clever. I wish I had thought of that." But anyway, God doesn't ever do that. "Wow, that's really cool that this happened this way." The Lord never says that. We say that. He's planned it.

It's really extraordinary, Passover and Pentecost connected, why? What's going on with that? Well, the first part of it is agricultural. This is timing still so we're talking about agriculture and now two sub subpoints. This is A1 and 2. The timing, first, the significance is understood when you understand the agricultural nature of these two feasts' connection. It's really something in the wisdom and providence of God. Passover took place at the time of the barley harvest. Pentecost took place at the time of the wheat

harvest. Those are the two grains grown in Israel. Now if you're in an agrarian society and you think about life, you think about in terms of the calendar of agriculture. Everything is about when you plant and when you harvest. I remember my grandfather used to say that you never plant before April 15, and so I've made a discipline of not planting spring flowers or anything before April 15, and I thought of that a week or 10 days ago, I thought, "You know, look at the forecast. It looks like we could go ahead and plant." I didn't plant. My grandfather said don't do it and I'm glad I didn't because it was 28 degrees the other night. Well, we know that people are used to planting and harvesting, they know the calendar and so God set it up so that these two feasts, Passover and Pentecost, would bracket the grain harvest in Israel. Think about how significant that is for an agrarian society. All of the bread that we get in this year comes between these two feasts. Our barley and our wheat come and God put the harvest there.

Now the spiritual, the spiritual significance. Passover and Pentecost are two of the key spiritual feasts. They are two of the three pilgrimage feasts. Passover commemorates the deliverance from Egypt. Pentecost, in a sense, commemorates the arrival in the land, though it didn't happen in that short a period of time. The feast connects these two realities, the deliverance and the arrival and that brings us to the second subpoint here. We're finished with timing, now moving to typology. The typology of the Old Testament. A careful student of the Scripture begins to see how the Lord teaches us progressively in the Bible. He, as John Calvin said, he prattles with us. He baby talks with us. That's what he meant by that, that the Lord baby talks with us. The same way you baby talk with a baby and a child and you use some of the language they use, and then you teach them basic elementary things, and then you add to that. God does that in Scripture and one of the ways he does that is through Old Testament types which point forward to the antitype which is Christ or salvation or the blessings that Christ brings, and the clear typology of these two feasts is significant.

The Passover and Pentecost. Let's think about that, how they're connected. I mentioned Passover was the time when the Exodus happened and God delivered the nation of Israel from Egyptian slavery. They were slaves in Egypt for 400 years and God delivered them through the Passover lamb. Remember all the plagues that happened? The 10th plague being the Passover itself, when the death angel went throughout the land of Egypt killing the firstborn of every household except those that had the blood of the Passover lamb over the lintel. So through the Passover, through the blood of the Passover lamb, God delivered his people from slavery.

One of the things, I remember sometime in my early Christian life asking the question: why did God let them become slaves in the first place? Because you really don't find a good answer for that, that they did anything wrong to become slaves. They go down to Egypt because the Lord told them to. That's the whole story, remember, of Joseph and his brothers. Joseph goes down first, they go down afterwards. They're supposed to go. But the Lord lets them become slaves, why is that? Well, part of his prattling with us. In his great infinite wisdom, he's allowing them to experience suffering that would help them think about their souls because there's nothing to help you think about your soul like suffering. But that the bigger point was that he was going to deliver them, he was going

to offer a type of salvation, that the Passover itself was intended by God in his perfect plan to be a picture of what Christ would do for us because they had to become slaves because you and I are all, according to Jesus himself, we are all born slaves of sin. Everyone who sins is a slave of sin. Jesus said, "If you know the truth, the truth will make you free," and they said, "We're not slaves to anyone." He said, "Everyone who sins is a slave of sin, but if the Son sets you free, you shall be free indeed." Jesus says, "Listen, you were the slaves of sin, you need to be set free." Every human being, we all come into this world enslaved to sin and so how are you delivered from slavery, slavery to sin? You were delivered by the Passover lamb. 1 Corinthians 5:7 says, "Christ, our Passover, has been sacrificed." You see, Paul tells you this is the whole point of the Passover, it was to picture the sacrifice of Jesus Christ and therefore the wrath of God, the death angel will not come for those who have put their trust in the blood of the true Passover, Jesus himself.

So that's the typology of the Passover, it's a picture of salvation. But Pentecost is also a type. It's firstfruits, firstfruits of the land. I mentioned it's a land flowing with milk and honey. In fact, let me show you this in Exodus 3. I want to show you how it's clear as God is revealing his plan that he connects the deliverance from slavery to the enjoyment of the land. There is a connection there. He's not just delivering them from the misery of Egypt and slavery, he's delivering them to something. Exodus 3:7. This is when the Lord appears to Moses in the burning bush and he says in verse 7, "The LORD said, 'I have surely seen the affliction of My people who are in Egypt, and have given heed to their cry because of their taskmasters, for I am aware of their sufferings. So I have come down to deliver them from the power of the Egyptians, and to bring them up from that land to a good and spacious land, to a land flowing with milk and honey, to the place of the Canaanite and the Hittite and the Amorite and the Perizzite and the Hivite and the Jebusite.'" It's a good and spacious land, a land flowing with milk and honey. That same phrase is repeated when you skip down to verse 16 and 17, "Go and gather the elders of Israel," God tells Moses, "gather the elders of Israel together and say to them, 'The LORD, the God of your fathers, the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, has appeared to me, saying, "I am indeed concerned about you and what has been done to you in Egypt. So I said, I will bring you up out of the affliction of Egypt to the land of the Canaanite and the Hittite and the Amorite and the Perizzite and the Hivite and the Jebusite, to a land flowing with milk and honey.'" I'm going to bring you out of slavery to a land flowing with milk and honey. I'm going to bring you out of bondage to absolute blessedness, a land flowing with milk and honey. I mean, milk and honey are where it's at. Do you know what that is? That is a code word for ice cream, is that not? Milk, honey, cream, ice cream. All you need is a cone. That's where the barley and wheat come in.

It's a land flowing with milk and honey. He's saying, "Listen, I'm going to take you out of the house of slavery and bring you into the blessedness of wonderful joy and abundant provision. I'm going to delight your soul in My presence." And we can see this, turn over a couple of pages to Exodus 6:4-8, another conversation with God speaking to Moses. He said in verse 4, "I also established My covenant with them, to give them the land of Canaan, the land in which they sojourned." Talking about my covenant with Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, I covenanted with them to give them the land of Canaan. The patriarchs,



the fathers, I had a covenant, I made a promise to give them the land of Canaan. Verse 5, "Furthermore I have heard the groaning of the sons of Israel, because the Egyptians are holding them in bondage, and I have remembered My covenant. Say, therefore, to the sons of Israel, 'I am the LORD, and I will bring you out from under the burdens of the Egyptians, and I will deliver you from their bondage. I will also redeem you with an outstretched arm and with great judgments. Then I will take you for My people, and I will be your God; and you shall know that I am the LORD your God, who brought you out from under the burdens of the Egyptians. I will bring you to the land which I swore to give to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, and I will give it to you for a possession; I am the LORD.'" They're not just delivered from slavery, they're delivered to this land. It is all a part of God's covenant, his relationship based on promises that binds him. This is how God saves people, he brings them into a covenant relationship.

Now they come to a land flowing with milk and honey and they enjoy the blessing of that but here I want to suggest to you, the New Testament makes this abundantly clear. In the same way that Passover is a type, the Passover, the Exodus from Egypt is a type of salvation that is fulfilled in the cross and resurrection of Jesus, that's a type. Passover is a type of salvation in the same way Canaan is a type of heaven. It's abundantly clear and we're going to look at it in just a moment but that's what, that's the connection and that's the emphasis. God is saying, "I'm bringing you to a land flowing with milk and honey. On covenant, I've sworn to give you this land and it's a land, it's a rich land."

Turn over to Deuteronomy, a couple of books to your right. Past Leviticus, past Numbers, Deuteronomy 8:7-10. So again, the typology building here. This is Moses preaching to the nation of Israel right as they're about to go into Canaan and he says this in verse 7, Deuteronomy 8:7, "For the LORD your God is bringing you into a good land, a land of brooks of water, of fountains and springs, flowing forth in valleys and hills," a land of abundant water, "a land of wheat and barley, of vines and fig trees and pomegranates, a land of olive oil and honey; a land where you will eat food without scarcity, in which you will not lack anything; a land whose stones are iron, and out of whose hills you can dig copper. When you have eaten and are satisfied, you shall bless the LORD your God for the good land which He has given you."

Now what he does, you turn over to Deuteronomy 26 and this is about the offering of firstfruits, this is about what they're to do at Pentecost. Deuteronomy 26:1, "Then it shall be, when you enter the land which the LORD your God gives you as an inheritance, and you possess it and live in it, that you shall take some of the first of all the produce of the ground which you bring in from your land that the LORD your God gives you, and you shall put it in a basket and go to the place where the LORD your God chooses to establish His name." You shall make a pilgrimage with your firstfruits, do you see that? You will make a pilgrimage from wherever you are in the land, you will make a pilgrimage with your firstfruits to the place where God has set his name. Where does that become? Jerusalem. And you shall take the firstfruits of your produce and you shall go to Jerusalem.

He continues on through verse 10, I encourage you to read it later, but turn with me over to Hebrews 11. I want to show you how we know without dispute that Canaan is a type of heaven. The author of Hebrews makes this abundantly clear in verses 8 to 10. We read this, Hebrews 11:8, "By faith Abraham, when he was called, obeyed by going out to a place which he was to receive for an inheritance; and he went out, not knowing where he was going." I mean, he was called in Ur of the Chaldees, "Go to the land I will show you," that's what God said to him. Didn't tell him where. Didn't give him a roadmap. Didn't say here it is, here are some pictures on your cell phone, look at it, you'll know when you see it. He said, "No, you go to the land I will show you." "By faith," verse 9, "he lived as an alien in the land of promise, as in a foreign land, dwelling in tents with Isaac and Jacob, fellow heirs of the same promise." What he gets at is the fathers Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, Abraham left Ur of the Chaldees, God said, "I'm going to give you a land." He goes to the land and what the author of Hebrews is saying is if you're reading your Bible carefully, he's writing to Jews too, remember, Hebrews, that's the whole point. He's writing to Hebrews, to Jewish Christians who have now placed their faith in Christ and he's helping them see that their faith in Christ is the right place to be. He is the fulfillment of the Old Testament. He says if you were reading your Bible carefully, you would have asked. God said he was going to give it to Abraham but he didn't give it to Abraham. He spent his whole life living in tents in the Promised Land. He died, all he owned in the Promised Land, we are told in Genesis he bought one field with a cave in it by the oak tree of Mamre to bury Sarah. And when he died, do you know how much of Canaan he had? He had that one field with that cave where his wife was buried. God comes to Isaac, his son, and says, "I'm going to give, My covenant is with you. I'm going to give you the land. This land that you're about, move about in it, I'm going to give it to you." Isaac dies, do you know how much he owns of the land of Canaan? The same thing Abraham owned, that one field and that one cave in that field and they keep burying their loved ones there. Jacob, surely by now God's going to give the land. No, Jacob dies without receiving the promises. Surely his sons. No, his sons are going to be living in Egypt for more than 400 years, where is the promise of God? What the author of Hebrews is saying, listen, the Lord was teaching them something. He said, "I'm going to give you this land, it's a land flowing with milk and honey, it's a great land, it's a spacious land." But by not giving it to them, he made them long for something better. Look what it says, verse 9, "By faith he lived as an alien in the land of promise, as in a foreign land, dwelling in tents with Isaac and Jacob, fellow heirs of the same promise; for he was looking for the city which has foundations, whose architect and builder is God." He realized, "Wait a minute, Canaan is not the ultimate point."

Look at verse 13, "All these died in faith, without receiving the promises." Abraham died in faith without receiving the promise of the land. Isaac died in faith not receiving the promise of the Land. Jacob etc. etc. etc. all the way down to Joshua. All these died in faith without receiving the promises "but having seen them and having welcomed them from a distance, and having confessed that they were strangers and exiles on the earth. For those who say such things make it clear that they are seeking a country of their own. And indeed if they had been thinking of that country from which they went out, they would have had opportunity to return. But as it is," listen to this, "they desire a better

country, that is, a heavenly one. Therefore God is not ashamed to be called their God; for He has prepared a city for them."

So Canaan is a type of heaven and so if Canaan is a type of heaven, Passover is a type of salvation. Passover is the picture of Jesus dying for us. The Passover lamb must, blood must be offered. Jesus had to die at Passover. That's why he set his face like a flint and he went to Jerusalem and he showed himself publicly because that was the time God had appointed for him to die, the time fulfilling the sign of the Old Testament. But in the same way, the Spirit was poured out at Pentecost because what is the Spirit being poured out but God giving us the firstfruits of the land? Jesus has entered the land. A man has. A man, this is impossible. We are sinners. Humanity is done. But no, there is a man born of a virgin who lived a perfect life and who was able to ascend the hill of the Lord and to stand in his holy place. This man has entered into the heavenly realm and because he has done that and has done so and been accepted by God, he now brings heaven down to earth. That's the mystery of it. That's the miracle.

So what we see then is the transforming power of the Holy Spirit given in Acts 2. This is the wonder of it. These people now receive God's presence into their hearts. What is that but heaven? What makes heaven heaven? Streets of gold? The presence of God. The presence of God has now come to man and the presence of God brings with it in the Holy Spirit, the person of the Holy Spirit now brings the presence of God and there's two things that you see in this passage that show you the unmistakable reality of the presence of God and that is, first of all, the transforming power of the Holy Spirit. These Galileans are radically changed. They're filled with the Spirit, verse 4. They're filled with the Holy Spirit, they begin speaking in tongues they can't do. God starts doing something supernatural in the hearts of his people. When the Spirit of God comes to his people, things begin to change.

Now these sign gifts are something that are temporary, they were given at that moment, but the Spirit begins to do even more amazing things in the lives of his people. He's going to come into the lives of his people and he's going to help them put off sin and put on holiness. He's going to write his law on our hearts. He's going to make us different every day and that's the transforming power of the Holy Spirit. But then you also see the unifying power of the Holy Spirit. This is extraordinary. This is what happens in verses 7 to 11 when all these different peoples that speak these different languages hear the gospel in their own language. What you have here is a reversal of the Tower of Babel. The Tower of Babel was where God spread everyone apart. It was necessary. He did it because man was so wicked and separation and division are an effect of sin. But when Christ the King comes and pours out his Spirit and heaven comes down, what you see is transforming power but you also see unifying power. The Spirit is at work and he brings people together of different ethnicities, different tongues, all together, why? Because they're together at the feet of King Jesus. That's the only thing that can unify sinners in truth. Nothing else can do that and that's what happens here.

So the people, they're even sensing this. "This is so amazing, how are we hearing these languages?" And Peter says, "This is the power of Jesus of Nazareth." That is the

extraordinary power of Jesus set on display. The second point this morning is the exalted position of Jesus of Nazareth. The exalted position. Extraordinary power, now the exalted position. We've seen he is a man but there's something extraordinary about this man, that is, his position. And he basically tells us there are three little subpoints here that Peter emphasizes as he's preaching. It's interesting that this message, this gospel message is really not primarily about the cross. I mean, it's understood that Passover has happened, they've seen the cross. He brings it up a couple of times but basically he brings the cross up to say, "You guys crucified Him. That is, you were opposing His power, and I'm here to tell you today," Peter says, "who you were opposing." That's why they were cut to the heart.

Three subpoints here. The exalted position of Jesus of Nazareth. The first is Jesus is in an exalted position because he is resurrected. The resurrection of Jesus is the first emphasis of this. As soon as he tells them that they killed Christ in verse 23, "you nailed to a cross by the hands of godless men and put Him to death." He doesn't leave any moment, "But God raised Him up again, putting an end to the agony of death, since it was impossible for Him to be held in its power." He repeats the same thing in verse 32, "This Jesus God raised up again, to which we are all witnesses."

I love how he makes his argument here. This is where he quotes an extended quotation of Scripture, again he quotes David in Psalm 16, and essentially his message is this: Jesus is greater than David. He is way greater than David. To the Jews, that was a powerful comparison that he was making. It wasn't David that was resurrected. That's his whole point. He says, "Look, David quoted these verses," but I love what he says in verse 29, "Brethren, I may confidently say to you regarding the patriarch David that he both died and was buried, and his tomb is with us to this day." He's still there. His bones are still in that tomb, David says. He wasn't talking about himself. Jesus is greater because Jesus' tomb is empty.

This is what sets Jesus apart. The exalted position of Jesus is, first of all, seen in his resurrection. His tomb is empty. Every man regarded as a great man, though Scripture would not regard them as great men, others would, Buddha, Confucius, Mohammad, every other religious leader that has ever been born died and he died and he was buried and he remains in the tomb. Buddha, Mohammad, Confucius, all of them save one, Jesus Christ. He's out of the tomb and because of the resurrection, he has this exalted position.

But it didn't stop there, Peter says he didn't just rise from the dead, he also ascended into heaven. The ascension is the second subpoint here. The exalted position is seen in his resurrection and his ascension. And again he makes the point: not David. Verse 34, "For it was not David who ascended into heaven, but he himself," David says, "The Lord said to my Lord." David looked ahead and he saw Yahweh talking to his Master and he said to his Master, "Sit at My right hand." Exalted to the right hand of God. He says in verse 33, "Therefore having been exalted to the right hand of God." That's the ascension of Christ. He not only rose from the dead but they saw him ascend with their own eyes to heaven. A man went to heaven in their vision with his body, with his glorified body.

So Jesus' exalted position is seen in his resurrection and his ascension and in his enthronement. Thirdly, his enthronement. He's at the right hand. That's the emphasis there in verse 33, "exalted to the right hand of God." Verse 34, "The Lord said to my Lord, 'Sit at My right hand.'" He's at the right hand, the place of blessing and honor and power. All throughout the Old Testament, the right hand is the place of blessing and honor and power and so Jesus is at the place of supreme blessing and honor and power and that is the emphasis of the New Testament. I'd encourage you to look at Ephesians 1:20, Colossians 3:1. We're not going to look at them right now. Ephesians 1:20, Colossians 3:1. Four times the author of Hebrews makes this point, Jesus is at the right hand. Hebrews 1:3, 8:1, 10:12 and 12:2. The Jews hearing that, that Jesus is at the right hand of God, that he's enthroned on David's throne at the right hand of God, but David's throne has gone into heaven. And then it climaxes, Peter then climaxes his sermon in verse 36, "Therefore let all the house of Israel know for certain that God has made Him," Jesus, "both Lord and Christ."

He is God and he is King. He is Lord and he is Christ. Now just to be clear. He didn't become Lord and Christ on this day. He didn't become Lord and Christ at his resurrection. Do you know how we know that? The title of the message, good news of great joy. What was that good news of great joy and when was it given? It was given when Jesus was born. The angel said, "I bring you good news of great joy which shall be for all people." Do you see how this is being fulfilled in Acts 2? "It's good news of great joy which shall be for all people, for unto you this day is born in the city of David a Savior who is," what? "Christ the Lord." He was Lord at his birth. He was Christ at his birth and now what's happened, though, in this moment and God ascending him to heaven and now giving him the power to send down heaven to the earth, it has made it unequivocal, irrefutable, undeniable: Christ is King of kings and Lord of lords and you must bow before him.

That's what's happened here and so the weight of all of this comes crashing down on the Jews that hear it. Again, this is a fulfillment, actually, also of Joseph and his brothers, a type of this. Remember how terrified they were when they realized they had done what they did now to the man at the right hand of power in Egypt? They trembled. The same thing happens here. They are trembling in abject fear as they understand that they rejected so great a King.

Verse 37, "Now when they heard this, they were pierced to the heart, and said to Peter and the rest of the apostles, 'Brethren, what shall we do?' Peter said to them, 'Repent, and each of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins; and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.'" Two questions. I'll close with two questions. Are you acknowledging, are you acknowledging the exalted position of Jesus Christ? He alone is risen. He alone is ascended. He alone is enthroned at the right hand of God. To acknowledge his exalted position is to submit to him. Are you submitting to Christ today? Have you submitted yourself to Jesus? How have you placed your faith in a saving way to Jesus Christ? Or are you actively resisting his reign? Are you living for yourself? Are you doing what you want to do because that's just what you want to do? Behold, the one to whom you show such disrespect, the only man who ever got up out of the tomb, the

only man who could ascend into heaven, the only man who sits at the right hand of the throne of God, and the man who has all power and who one day will judge the living and the dead, and God furnished proof of that reality by raising that man from the dead.

Are you ignoring him? You're not actively resisting but you're ignoring him. To ignore him is to despise him, to dishonor him. One this worthy must be submitted to and worshiped and loved because the wonderful thing is this great King is a merciful and tender King who said, "I am meek and lowly of heart. Come unto Me you who are weary and heavy-laden for I am meek and lowly of heart." If you are ignoring him, if you have been resisting him, I urge you to repent and believe today. The wonder of this great King is he will give you the grace even to repent. He will give you the grace even to believe. He will give it to you. You receive him and he will give you everything you need. All the demands of the covenant that God places upon you, the wonder of salvation in Christ is whatever he requires he gives to you. So there is no reason for anyone to not place their faith in him today.

The first question: are you acknowledging his exalted position? Secondly, are you displaying his extraordinary, if you're a believer, are you displaying his extraordinary power? Are you living in such a way that people can see the glorious power of Christ? So great a Savior deserves that we honor him with our lives. His transforming power needs to be evident. The Spirit comes in and the Spirit is to change us. We're to put to death the deeds of the body by the Holy Spirit. We're to manifest not the deeds of the flesh but the fruit of the Spirit: love and joy and peace and patience and kindness and goodness and gentleness and faithfulness and self-control. These are the things that the Spirit produces. Is the transforming power of the Son being made known in your life? If it's not, repent and return.

And you see, the reason we want to do it, the reason we should be motivated to live a holy life is so that people can see his power. It's not so that you and I can have a better life. I mean, that's a byproduct. The way of the sinner is hard. The way of the transgressor is hard. Sin brings misery. Righteousness does bring blessedness and joy, but that's not the primary reason that we should be motivated. We should be motivated so that people can see Jesus and his power. He has such great power that he changes people like me and you. He makes people who are prone to anger and fear and lust and greed, he takes people like that and he changes them.

But not only that, are you displaying his extraordinary power in his unifying power of the Spirit? Are you doing what you can to manifest the love of Christ to your brothers and sisters in Jesus? Are you fighting for the oneness of the Spirit in the bond of peace? Are you doing everything you can to preserve the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace? The Spirit brings unity, that's why it's called the unity of the Spirit. In the same way those people speaking different languages came together when they heard the message of Christ proclaimed, you and I are called to live different than the world. The world is becoming fractured every day. The world is becoming different and distant to one another every single day. It is not to happen in God's house and if you're letting it happen, you are denying the glory of Christ who has brought all men under his throne to be one in his

presence. Repent. Stop it. Loving him means loving your brothers and sisters. Loving him means fighting against everything that the world tells you should separate you from others, race, class, anything. Forget it. In Christ there is neither Jew nor Greek, Barbarian Scythian or slave. All are one in Christ. And a Savior this great is worthy of a body of people who are committed to unity for his glory. Anything less is to dishonor him. He is worthy of nothing less than you and I fighting for his transforming power and our personal holiness, and in the holiness of our brothers and sisters. He is worthy of nothing less than you and I fighting for love in our hearts for everyone who names the name of Jesus and who truly loves him. And he's worthy of nothing less.

Hallelujah, what a Savior! And when we understand that, it doesn't matter what the world does. We have the power of God, we have heaven come down into our souls, the power to overcome sin. You're depressed because you're struggling with sin, well, get with another brother or sister and pray and seek the Lord and keep fighting and keep fighting because the power of the Spirit will have its way. You will become more holy over time, though there are times where the valleys, you go down in the valley, don't be discouraged, Christ is faithful. And you're having trouble in your relationships, you're having trouble in harmony, don't despair. Christ has made an end to the division. You keep loving him and fighting for the unity of the Spirit and he will show his glory. And in doing that, people around who see it, when they see our holiness, when they see our unity, they will say, "What is the meaning of this?" And we can say, "It is Jesus. He is at the right hand of God and He has done it. Would you come to know Him today?"

Let's go to the Lord in prayer.

*Our Father, how grateful we are for so great a salvation and so wonderful a Savior. Lord Jesus, as we think about Your perfection of Your work, beauty and glory of Your person, we confess that we are unworthy servants, unprofitable servants. Far too often, Lord, we do not live holy lives, we struggle with sin, we trip up the same way we tripped up yesterday and there's no help in us. Lord, we need Your power. Fill us with Your Spirit. Help us to walk in Your truth. Make us different and make us patient and willing to persevere in pursuing holiness. Give us strength to endure for You will that the battle is hard and You're glorified in our perseverance just like You were glorified in Abraham and Isaac and Jacob, trusting You even though they didn't see the full realization of the promises. Lord, we confess that we are too quick to be unloving and uncharitable to our brothers and sisters. We are too quick to listen to the world, to get worked up and to allow the enemy of our souls to divide us. Father, we ask You for Your outpouring of Your Spirit to bring oneness, supernatural oneness. Overcome our pride, make us humble. Let us replace every thought, every hostile thought with loving, joyful service to one another. Father, we ask that You would help those who are here today who have not before today had not repented and placed their faith in Jesus. Help them to keep looking to You and to bow their knee and to let Jesus reign as King in their hearts. We pray this in His name and for His glory. Amen.*