

Ephesians 5: "15 See then that you walk circumspectly, not as fools but as wise, 16 redeeming the time, because the days are evil. 17 Therefore do not be unwise, but understand what the will of the Lord is. 18 And do not be drunk with wine, in which is dissipation; but be filled with the Spirit, 19 speaking to one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord, 20 giving thanks always for all things to God the Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, 21 submitting to one another in the fear of God."

"The Spirit Filled Church"

We recognize and celebrate this day as Pentecost Sunday. Why do we call it Pentecost Sunday?

Correct, we focus on what is revealed in Acts chapter two about the coming of the Promised Comforter, the Spirit of God. So why do we pause our exegetical preaching to highlight certain key times in the Church calendar? [Advent, Easter & Pentecost]

We must remember that all of these events & seasons are not only important in Church history but also the history of the world. This is why we remind you of their importance and the importance of giving our children a right understanding of them as well.

They give us our identity as the people of God and remind us each and every year that we are first and foremost citizens of the heavenly Kingdom.

- **A Kingdom that is not just some ethereal other, but a real Kingdom that is growing to fill the earth in real history! [*and often under attack!*]**

As Pastor Liberati reminded us last week, we as God's people are called to run a hard race and run it to the finish: He challenged us to think back, to look ahead and to never stop running!

This should make it easy for us to understand the importance of Pentecost... Where the Spirit was sent as our comforter and as the One Who gives us the power to run that race!

I am going to focus on Acts 2 this morning but I read as our text that familiar passage from Ephesians we have begun to study to remind us about just how practical the Spirit's power and comfort are in our lives.

Since it took eight sermons to cover this important chapter during my series on Acts, I can only hit some highlights this morning but I want to focus on how Peter continues with his sermon to the gathered crowd by putting Jesus front & center!

Peter began his sermon by calling on them to "heed my words" in verse 14 and now he tells them again to HEAR these words, an admonition that is important for us today as well!

"22 "Men of Israel, hear these words: Jesus of Nazareth, a Man attested by God to you by miracles, wonders, and signs which God did through Him in your midst, as you yourselves also know"

- **Peter leaves no doubt about whom he is speaking of: Jesus was a common name so he says, 'Jesus of Nazareth'**
- **The fame of Jesus of Nazareth had gone out to all the land and Pilate had put up the sign during His crucifixion that identified Him as Jesus King of the Jews!**
- **But Jesus was not just a carpenter from Nazareth, He was God's own Son and this had been confirmed with miracles, power and signs.**

We could review all the events during the ministry of Jesus to see these evidences, but think of just the three-fold witness these Jews had been given since His crucifixion, proving that Jesus was the Son of God, their promised Messiah...

- The curtain of the Temple had been ripped from top to bottom, demonstrating that the old system of sacrifices that pointed to the Messiah as the Lamb of God was at an end...
- The soldiers who guarded the tomb at the time that Jesus was resurrected went to the Chief Priests to report what had happened... They heard from those who may have been the only eye-witnesses.
- And lest we forget Matthew tells us that they even had witnesses from beyond the grave...

Matthew 28:52-53: “many bodies of the Saints who had fallen asleep were raised and coming out of the tombs after His resurrection they went in to the holy city and appeared to many.” All of these events would have caused quite a buzz of conversation around Jerusalem!

- Now the Holy Spirit has gathered the crowd so Peter can confront them with the truth about what all of it means...

23 “Him, being delivered by the determined purpose and foreknowledge of God, you have taken by lawless hands, have crucified, and put to death; 24 whom God raised up, having loosed the pains of death, because it was not possible that He should be held by it.”

Here we clearly see the sovereign working of God in history stated right next to the actions of men!

Now some may rightly ask, “So which was it? Was Jesus crucified by the determined purpose of God or the lawless actions of men?”

- We must answer with Peter that it was BOTH.

Professor John Frame reminds us that it is a serious theological error to think that talk of any human effort or responsibility compromises God’s sovereignty:

“In some areas, God does all the work and we do nothing, examples being creation out of nothing and the gift of saving grace in Christ.”

“But in many other areas, God works through created means, particularly through the work of human beings. For example, it is God who will gather his elect to himself; but, according to the Great Commission, He will do this through human beings who go and make disciples of all nations.

Certainly that includes translating, interpreting, applying, and communicating the gospel message. In this case, divine sovereignty and human responsibility are not a zero-sum game, in which each detracts from the other. Salvation is God’s work from first to last. But in part of that process he employs human beings to do his work. And that employment brings glory to him, rather than detracting from his glory.”

We need to understand that this is true in a positive and negative sense:

- God is glorified when we preach the Gospel and one who has been called by God from eternity past responds.
- And Peter reminds us that God was also glorified when lawless hands took Jesus & crucified Him.

As we have often said, these sinful actions came as no surprise to God, but actually accomplished the very purposes of God.

The coming of Jesus was not some Plan A where God had hoped His people would accept Him with open arms. Then when they rejected Him God was forced to go with Plan B in the church age and return to deal with Israel at the end of time.

- No, Jesus was delivered by the determined purpose and foreknowledge of God as Peter will now go on to show by quoting from the Old Testament in Psalm 16...

25 “For David says concerning Him 'I foresaw the Lord always before my face, For He is at my right hand, that I may not be shaken. 26 Therefore my heart rejoiced, and my tongue was glad; Moreover my flesh also will rest in hope. 27 For You will not leave my soul in Hades, Nor will You allow Your Holy One to see corruption. 28 You have made known to me the ways of life; You will make me full of joy in Your presence.’”

- Peter explains in his first Epistle how the Old Testament writers like David prophesied of the grace that would come to us,

And here, Peter directly confronts any who might argue that David spoke of himself or any other event of his day by going on to say...

29 "Men and brethren, let me speak freely to you of the patriarch David, that he is both dead and buried, and his tomb is with us to this day.

30 Therefore, being a prophet, and knowing that God had sworn with an oath to him that of the fruit of his body, according to the flesh, He would raise up the Christ to sit on his throne, 31 he, foreseeing this, spoke concerning the resurrection of the Christ, that His soul was not left in Hades, nor did His flesh see corruption.”

- David was speaking in Psalm 16 of the crucifixion and resurrection of Jesus!
- And the contrast that Peter draws between Jesus and David is relevant in our day as well

These men saw David as the Great King of Israel, but he was dead and buried and they could go visit his tomb... Peter might even have pointed toward it as he spoke...

There have been great men in history like King David or in our own country Presidents like Washington or Reagan. Or if you like bigger government, Lincoln & Roosevelt.

- Despite what our political persuasions might be, ALL of these men are dead and buried!

It is the resurrected Jesus who has been crowned the King of Kings!

There have also been down through history many powerful evil men:

- The examples we know from the 20th Century would be Lenin, Hitler and Mao Zedong who were collectively responsible for the death of over one hundred million people

BUT we must remember that they too have died and are rotting in their graves awaiting the great judgment.

- It is Jesus who will come as the judge of all the earth!

And finally there have been many other great religious figures in history whose writings and teachings have impacted the lives of millions in our nation: Men like Buddha, Mohamed or Joseph Smith...

- They too are dead & buried!
- It is the resurrected Jesus who is Lord of Lords, the one true Savior for the entire world!

Peter then reminds these gathered Jews what has happened to Jesus who is the King of Kings and Lord of Lords, the one who will judge them:

32 “This Jesus God has raised up, of which we are all witnesses. 33 Therefore being exalted to the right hand of God, and having received from the Father the promise of the Holy Spirit, He poured out this which you now see and hear.”

Here we see Peter, under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, bring to together the tapestry of our salvation with the resurrection of Jesus, His ascent to the Father's right hand of power and the coming of the Holy Spirit as the comforter

Three great events woven together by the three persons of the God-head: Father, Son & Holy Spirit: Something we will consider in more detail next week!

Peter then reminds his listeners again that David was NOT speaking about himself, turning to the most quoted passage from the Old Testament in Psalm 110:

34 "For David did not ascend into the heavens, but he says himself: 'The Lord said to my Lord, "Sit at My right hand, 35 Till I make Your enemies Your footstool.'"

- If we doubt this truth, the warning Peter gives this day must still be heeded in our time...

36 "Therefore let all the house of Israel know assuredly that God has made this Jesus, whom you crucified, both Lord and Christ."

Peter here in verse 36 gives the answer to the question these gathered men of Israel had asked back at verse 12: "Whatever could this mean?"

They had gathered into a huge crowd because all of the City heard a great noise and they all heard the wonderful works of God being proclaimed in their own languages from around the world by a band of disciples from Galilee!

Peter declares to them: "know assuredly that God has made this Jesus, whom you crucified, both Lord and Christ." 37 "Now when they heard this, they were cut to the heart, and said to Peter and the rest of the apostles, "Men and brethren, what shall we do?" 38 Then Peter said to them, "Repent, and let every one of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins; & you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. 39 For the promise is to you and to your children, and to all who are afar off, as many as the Lord our God will call."

- This same proclamation should also cut us to the heart today and bring much repentance.

In our modern age we have often thought of sin but lightly, if at all not wanting to offend anyone.

- Most today just want to be left alone do their own thing without anyone judging them.
- It is so easy to forget that the price which had to be paid for ALL sin was the crucifixion of Jesus...
- It is WE, as sinners, who crucified the Lord of Glory!

But Jesus was not held by the bands of death, but was resurrected in power and Peter declares that God has made Him both Lord and Christ

What we would refer to today as Lord and Savior, but again we have taken both very lightly.

Do we believe that Jesus is Lord?

The Lord of Lords?

Or do we see Him as just the Lord in heaven who wrings His hands hoping that the nations of the earth will one day allow His Gospel to be preached so folks can make the right decisions and be saved?

- This is not the Lord of Lords that the Bible presents...

Jesus did not leave us with a Great Commission that is an impossible task or an ideal goal...

- He left us with a great commission that reflects how He is going to fill the earth with His Kingdom pictured for us in Revelation 19: A picture we are called on to believe! [homework]
- Peter declares that God has made Jesus both Lord and Christ, both Lord and Savior

- **The Lord of Lords and Kings of Kings Who we see in that glorious chapter of Revelation as clothed with a robe dipped in blood...**

His own blood that was shed for the sins of His people on His robe as He rides forth as the King of Kings and Lord of Lords. This brings up the 2nd question:

Do we believe that God has really made Jesus THE Savior?

- **Did Jesus really mean it when He said, “no one comes to the Father except by Me!” ?**

These are questions that we must ask and answer, but the proper answers must also be lived out in our lives and the lives of those we witness to! Unlike many evangelical churches, we do not have alter calls at the end of our services...

- **Though I would certainly point out that we present the Gospel each and every week as we come confessing our sins and hearing from the Word of God the assurance that our sins are forgiven in Jesus!**

We firmly believe that God’s people, including our covenant children are to be disciplined, called to mature in the faith through discipleship and obedience

We are not to be singularly focused on a conversion experience or decision that earns us a “Get Our Of HELL Free” card we can present to God at the end of our life no matter how we have lived.

- **Christ is to be our Lord & Savior, remembering that this great sermon from Peter was preached to the CHURCH!**
- **Those who had gathered that day were circumcised members of God’s Covenant people.**
- **It could be argued that they were the most faithful members of the covenant who traveled to Jerusalem for Pentecost.**

Peter confronts them with the question that God’s people down through all the ages must answer:

- **What have you done with my Son Jesus?**

The bad news is that we have crucified Him! Our sins took Him to the cross of Calvary and this should cut us to the heart just as much as it did those gathered there that day! The Good News is that God still calls on us to repent and live!

- **May the Holy Spirit work in each of our hearts so that we might hear and respond to such Good News.**

Remembering the challenge of our morning text to “walk circumspectly, not as fools but as wise, redeeming the time, because the days are evil. Therefore we are not to be unwise, but to understand what the will of the Lord is. We are not to be drunk with wine, in which is dissipation; but be filled with the Spirit,” Who was poured out on that First Pentecost Sunday!

Communion Meditation: Joel 2:18-19:

“18 Then the Lord will be zealous for His land, And pity His people. 19 The Lord will answer and say to His people, "Behold, I will send you grain and new wine and oil, And you will be satisfied by them; I will no longer make you a reproach among the nations.”

An interesting promise in the same Chapter where God promises the early and later rain which we know from Acts 2 is the coming of the Spirit at Pentecost: Our zealous God called us to worship... Our God pitied us in confession, The Lord answered & spoke to us from His Word, Now the Lord feeds us at His Table, Then God will send us to the nations!