

Peter's First Recorded Message Blessed

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Pentecost

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Bible Text: Acts 2:37
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Congregation, the text for this evening's hour service is from the Acts of the Apostles, the second chapter, the well-known verse 37 and its context. Verse 37.

37 Now when they heard this, they were pricked in their heart, and said unto Peter and to the rest of the apostles, Men and brethren, what shall we do?

So far. "Peter's First Recorded Message Blessed." The Apostle Peter's first recorded message blessed. Three thoughts: a Bible-based sermon, and secondly, a personal sermon, and a blessed sermon. So the Apostle Peter's first recorded message blessed: a Bible-based sermon, we read in our text, "Now when they heard this." What did they hear? What did the apostle speak about that was so Bible-based that we hope to explain, so scriptural, right straight from the Bible? And secondly, a personal message, a personal sermon. I read, "they were pricked in their heart," because there was an accusation, the point was sharp, it was applied by the Spirit but it was also very personal. Very personal. And in the third place, a blessed sermon as we see in the text, they said to Peter and the apostles, "Men and brethren, what shall we do?"

Congregation, young friends, the people on the day of Pentecost were astounded. They didn't know what they saw, what they heard. First, that sound in the air and in the sky, and from the outside of the city they came flocking to the center, flocking to where that sound went. They were attracted by it, curious, never heard something like this. The shock. And then they heard also later the apostles preaching and they saw those flames of fire on their heads and the response was different. Some said, "What does this mean?" They were shocked, awestruck, didn't know what to do. They were critical. Others said, "Oh, they're drunk. They've had too much wine." In brackets, history has proven that when there comes a revival, there have been revivals in Europe and in the States, think of the Great Awakening, and when there is revival there is also a counter-movement. It almost always causes confusion and people being critical and people being sarcastic and people mocking. So if ever the Lord gives a revival among us, count on it. People get upset about it, we also.

And then that explanation, drunk. You hear that explanation, sad to hear that because ridicule, count on it, young people, count on it when you come with the truth, part of your friends will ridicule you and say you're drunk, filled with sweet wine. "How can you believe this in our day and age? It's so ridiculous." They will humiliate you. That's a means of Satan and also so human.

And then I see someone standing up among the 120, it is the Apostle Peter. That's the last one that should speak, right? Peter? Is that the same one as almost drowned as he looked at the waves and almost sank away if the Lord would not have held his hand? Is that the same Peter that said, "It's not going to happen, that cross is not necessary. I don't see the sense of it." Is that the same Peter as the Lord spoke to, "Get behind me, Satan"? Is it the same Peter as used his sword to cut off the ear of Malchus in the garden of Gethsemane? The same Peter who said, "I don't know him," and he denied the Lord Jesus, cursing himself? The same one. You would say let him keep his mouth closed. Let him not talk. But the Holy Spirit uses him still. The Lord has forgiven him. The Lord has made it well with him. He may also preach again. He's learned his lesson now, he's got now gifts and he speaks. He speaks to the audience and I see there Pharisees and priests and doctors in the law, people who are educated in the Bible, and I see this working man, fisherman Peter, no formal education and he's going to say something. He's going to do exegesis. He's going to explain the Bible to those Pharisees because they don't get it. They don't understand the word. The Apostle Peter is a very simple man but he understands it, the gift of the Holy Spirit and he explains it and he uses texts from the Bible.

What a faithful Lord to still use him, and then he preached his first sermon. It's recorded. So biblical. A model sermon. Ministers learn from that. "Oh, is that how you preach and how you should do it?" So Bible-based. So organized. So well put in words. So simple. So Christ-centered. So personal. Many things that can be said about this sermon, the first thing then, Bible-based. He begins very kind, "Ye men of Judea, all ye that dwell in Jerusalem that stay here," so friendly, so courteous, so civil, and a very short sentence about them being drunk. He's not going to defend himself, he's not going to make a long story about that. He said, "It's only 9 o'clock in the morning. That's pathetic to talk about that." And right away he kind of opens the Bible, maybe literally, maybe the heart, but he explains the scriptures and he begins with five verses from the prophet Joel. Just quotes them, five verses, that's his text. He started with text, and then he explains those verses in three verses, and when he is done, he continues with Psalm 16 and also explains that with a few more verses, when he's done with that, he explains and he quotes Psalm 110 also with an explanation in a few verses.

So Bible-based: Joel, Psalm 16 and Psalm 110. I don't know if he always preached that way, so Bible-based, but I suppose so. The Lord Jesus did it. The Apostle Paul did it. So Bible-based. So practical. And when you read this, something strikes you. I'll give you his first summary, what his point is. He says, "God has raised him up whom you have put down. You have crucified him, the Lord and Christ." He preaches Christ. He preaches exaltation of the Lord Jesus whom they crucified in all those texts.

Let's go over a few of those verses. Verse 16, "this is that which was spoken by the prophet Joel; And it shall come to pass in the last days, saith God, I will pour out of my Spirit upon all flesh: and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, and your young men shall see visions, and your old men shall dream dreams: And on my servants and on my handmaidens I will pour out in those days of my Spirit; and they shall prophesy." A few things. Joel speaks of the last days. Exactly. When does that begin? What is the last days? From when to when? Do you know? The last days begins with Pentecost and then it ends with the coming again of the Lord Jesus Christ. So we live in the last days. We live in the latter days. We live in the days of mission, the days of the Holy Spirit and Joel calls it the last days.

So in those last days, it shall come to pass that I will pour out my Spirit upon all flesh, not only Jews but also the Gentiles, to not only men, also women, not only clergy, also working class people, not only males or females. So he explains that, the Lord is at work. That's new to them, working class people, fishermen, women like Mary and other females among the disciples. Yes, they also received that Spirit, probably also approve of the fact that the 120 spoke in those languages to different things of the Lord, magnifying the Lord. No, congregation, it does not mean that females can be in the pulpit but what a good influence they can have. You need those God-fearing women to speak, to warn, to pray, to invite, to correct, to exhort, encourage. That's Pentecost and that's what Joel has spoken about.

"And on my servants and on my handmaidens I will pour out my Spirit in those days; and they shall prophesy." Not only listen but they'll also prophesy, so we need God-fearing people prophesying and be involved in church life and speak, opening their mouth, not only explain what they have experienced but also guide and correct and love the people and say, "Hey, young friend, let me tell you something." To the children, to the grandchildren. Not only office-bearers, also all flesh. That's the word of the Lord.

You would say, "Well, what about verse 19 and 20? And I will shew wonders in heaven above, and signs in the earth beneath; blood, and fire, and vapour of smoke. I don't see that, do you? Where is the vapor of smoke? Where is that fire? Where is the moon changing into blood? Where are all those signs?" Well, we're not done yet. We still live in the last days. Some signs at the beginning, some signs are going to be at the end but they will come. Joel's prophecy is complex, it's not fulfilled altogether yet, piece by piece.

"The sun shall be turned into darkness, and the moon into blood, before the last day comes, the notable day of the Lord." And then in that explanation, he gives a piece of bread. He makes a short application, beautiful, in verse 21. Maybe that's for you tonight, "And it shall come to pass, that whosoever shall call on the name of the Lord shall be saved." That's what the Apostle Peter said quoting Joel, in those days whosoever, all flesh whatever background you are, Gentile, Jewish, I don't mind, whosoever shall call on the name of the Lord. It reminds us of John 3:16, right? Who shall believe in him? But that's the same because the true faith comes with a call from the heart, there's a great need

inside and a trusting of the Lord, calling upon the name of the Lord, he shall be saved. He preaches Christ as well. It's the Bible, also Christ.

Now often feel how I feel now, shooting an arrow off, just mentioning a text, whosoever shall call upon his name shall be saved, and I can't apply it but I have to preach it and lay it before the Lord, "Lord, bring it to the hearts of this friend or that friend who feels so dark and he's so desperate and has no hope, that he or she may hear it." Whosoever shall call upon the name shall be saved. Satan tells you, "No, that's not true." The Lord says, "Yes, shall be saved."

And then after Joel's text, five verses and the explanation, he says something about Psalm 16. Now Psalm 16, you know we have sung of that, right? "Thou shalt not leave his soul in hell. The Holy One will not see corruption." Does David speak about himself, that he will not be left alone in hell? Probably not. By hell he means the grave, death, and the Lord will not leave his Son the Lord Jesus Christ alone in the grave. That's what he is talking about. He will not see corruption and then he's smart, Peter, he says, "Pharisees, scribes, doctors of the law, men and brethren, the grave of King David is among us. His body has been decomposed, right?" Of course. What does it say in Psalm 16? "Thou shalt see no corruption." So it cannot possibly apply to David. It must apply to someone else. Well, that's the Lord Jesus. He was in the grave. He didn't see corruption. He was not left alone. He rose from the dead and those people are stunned, have no answer. "What do we say now? How do we explain this? Is he right?"

So led by the Holy Spirit so mighty in the scriptures, Bible-based, Christ-centered, no he's not going to defend himself, "We are people of integrity and we don't do those things, we don't lie." No, he preaches Christ. "Not drunk, it's only 9 o'clock in the morning. Here is the word," opening the Bible. Joel 2, Psalm 16, and then also Psalm 110, the Bible verses often quoted in the New Testament. "The LORD has said to my Lord." What is that? How can that be? "The LORD has said to my Lord, Sit thou at my right hand. Two Lords? Let me explain that, Pharisees, Sadducees. That's the Lord Jesus is Lord himself as well and the LORD has said to his Lord, to my Lord. Ascend. See thou at my right hand until I put thy enemies thy footstool." And people's mouths fell open, kind of. "What do we answer?" So Bible-based, so right on, so authentic.

So this type of preaching, we're not going into all the details, is what we call expository preaching and that is what preaching should be. I may not preach just off-the-cuff using no text of the Bible, just explaining things how I feel about it. I must always back it up with the scriptures and say, "This is the word of God. The Lord says..." That might be experienced as boring, others say that's not experiential. Yes, it is. If it is really biblical, if it's really biblical, it's experiential as well. It's Christ-centered at the same time and also very personal.

So we need to be a servant of the word but preaching of Christ as well. Before we go to the next thought, look at verse 24, "Whom God hath raised up, having loosed the pains of death: because it was not possible that he should be holden of it." He is explaining that the Lord Jesus could not have been in the grave anymore. He could not be held any

longer. He had to rise. You tell me why. He had no sin. He was innocent. He had not done anything wrong, no guile in his mouth, so upright, so immaculate, so perfect. How could he remain in the grave? Impossible. He paid the price as well.

So Bible-based sermon. The next thought: a personal sermon. Now when you go over this sermon and you just let it sink in and just repeat it again and again, you say, "Well, something is remarkable. He is not only using texts and using a commentary, giving a commentary and just explaining the word, he also makes bread of it, he also brings it close to the heart. He applies it to the circumstances of today." And that's, for example, cleaved from those small words, not only saying, "we" and "they" and "so it goes" and "when," he says, "you, you, you." He points fingers. Very personal in his sermon right from the start.

Look at verse 14, "But Peter, standing up with the eleven, lifted up his voice, and said unto them, Ye men of Judaea, and all ye that dwell at Jerusalem, be this known unto you, and hearken to my words." And he is very explicit, verse 22, 23, "Ye men of Israel, hear these words; Jesus of Nazareth, a man approved of God among you by miracles and wonders and signs, which God did by him in the midst of you, as ye yourselves also know: Him, being delivered by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God, ye have taken," ye have taken, "and by wicked hands have crucified and slain." And 36, "Therefore let all the house of Israel know assuredly, that God hath made that same Jesus, whom ye have crucified, both Lord and Christ." Very pointed. Very personal. Very confrontational. Not just describing, not smoothing it over, saying, "You, you have crucified him." He didn't say, "I hope some day you will experience this." He didn't say, "When the Lord comes you will see it." He points fingers and he says, "You have crucified him. You have taken him and put him down. You've ridiculed him. You have crowned him with thorns. You did it. You did it. It's your own fault." Very personal. He speaks not only about sin but he speaks about, "You have sinned."

How did he dare? Look at those doctors of the law, those theologians, people standing there, they had no respect for him previously and now they're quiet so far and listening to his sermon, a model sermon, so biblical, so personal, and that's how the Lord wants us to preach, right? Not only describing the experiences. Yes, that is important as well. People should know how the Lord works but that's not the only thing. He wants you to also know something personal and not want to be encouraged by seek the Lord and seek first the kingdom of God but also very personal, what you have done, what are you doing now. Now let me explain that a little bit more. Sermons are difficult, difficult to preach a sermon, to be right, but we must say more than you need this, say more than pray for this, you've got to say you have sinned against the Lord and you must try to prick people in the heart. That's what he did. He tried to wound, to arrest sinners, to bring them to their senses. "You did it." He tries to hurt, to wound, to slay, to inflict pain.

I think of this sermon and I thought I want to do that too. I want to inflict pain tonight. I want to shoot arrows, sharp arrows, and I get a few from the Bible. I'm going to shoot them off and try to shoot in your heart but I can't but I hope that some will be wounded and leave the church kind of, "I'm wounded! Carry me out, I'm dying, men and brethren!"

So those people were arrested by the Lord hearing that they had rejected and taken and crucified the Lord Jesus Christ. They had no use for him, right? What is the work of the Holy Spirit? To convince of sin, right? What sin? Listen to this, "And when he is come, he will reprove the world of sin," right? Of sin, "and righteousness and of judgment. Of sin because they believe not on me." There's the arrow. The Holy Spirit convinces and reproves of sin. What sin? It is the first sin, the main sin, the major sin, the basic sin, "they have not believed on me."

What do you feel about yourself? You're sitting in church, well-dressed, faithful, going to evening service, you behave not perfect, may the Lord arrest you tonight not believing in him, not putting your trust in him, he's not everything to you. And people are all different. The one says, "I don't feel invited." What? The Lord Jesus does not invite you? You don't feel invited, how come? He invites you and that's unbelief. "The Lord Jesus doesn't really mean it." What do you say, he lies? He's not sincere? He's not genuine in calling you in your heart? By calling you to repent? You think only the outer calling is fake? You don't trust the Lord Jesus Christ? You don't need him? You bypass him? You have better things to do? You prefer other things over him?

Let me try to underpin this with a few texts from the Bible. From Isaiah 5, "And now, O inhabitants of Jerusalem, and men of Judah, judge," you judge, I pray thee, please judge, keep your attention, "judge, I pray you, betwixt me and my vineyard. What could have been done more to my vineyard, that I have not done in it? wherefore, when I looked that it should bring forth grapes, brought it forth wild grapes?" Why? What else could I have done, the Lord says? Do you see all the guilt is on our side, the onus on our side? What could you possibly say? Why do you spend money for that which is not bread? It's so foolish. It's such a sin, congregation, the sin of unbelief, right? To curse by the Lord Jesus Christ, he has raised him up who we put down. We all do. We all do by nature. It's our default. The Lord comes with a remedy and we don't even need the remedy. That's bad, right? The Lord says, "I have no pleasure in your death." And we say we would rather die. There is foolishness, a blindness, a stubbornness, a worldliness.

Or Micah 6, "O my people." My people? Is the Lord speaking to the regenerated ones? To the ones with the new heart? No. He's speaking to Israel, to the covenant people and, in a sense, to us as well. "O my people," my people, "what have I done unto thee? and wherein have I wearied thee? testify against me." What did I do to you? Sometimes people say that when people are treated unfairly, "What did I do to you? What do you do this to me?"

And so the Lord tonight has a question, "Why are you doing this to me? Have I wearied thee? What have I done unto thee? Wherein have I wearied you? Testify against me, just come up with that, with an answer." So I do shoot those arrows off and I hope they land in some hearts, so many places and people would be wounded and go out, leave church kind of, "What did I do?" Crucifying the Lord Jesus Christ. Do you want to hear a mark of grace? You say, "Make it more experiential." I don't have to. It is experiential. But let me say this and let it give you a mark of grace: when the Lord arrests people, they begin

to see that they have sinned against God's goodness, against the law, against the commandments, but what hurts the most is they have sinned against the gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ and that hurts so much. God's in so much pain. "Lord, what a fool I am not paying attention, ignoring, forsaking the Lord Jesus who has such great salvation, rejecting it."

What do you think will be like? You say, "Speak about hell." Well, I do. Hell. Hell is this, "Oh, would I. Oh, had I. I have refused to repent and to believe in the Lord Jesus Christ. I had better things to do and hell is so well-deserved for neglecting such great salvation." And then it's over. When the tree falls in the forest, not easy to move it, right? You will always be there. So may it please the Lord to put that arrow in your heart.

A personal sermon, a blessed sermon, now our third thought, "Now when they heard this," they heard it, they heard that sermon, so biblical from Psalm 16 and 110 and Joel 2. They heard this, so personal, so direct, accusing them. "Now when they heard this, they were pricked in their heart." Well, in English nowadays that does not sound too bad just a little prick in your heart. A little prick. But it actually says pierced, pierced in the heart, wounded in the heart. A fatal wound, I would say, something very grave and serious. Wounded in the heart.

It came home, "and said unto Peter and to the rest of the apostles, Men and brethren, what shall we do?" Previously hostile. Previously no respect for them and now so soft-toned. "Men and brethren, what shall we do?" Such a difference, congregation. There is appreciation, there is love. They ask advice. Doctors in the law, Pharisees, priests and others, asking advice of Peter, of a fisherman from Galilee. "What shall we do, men and brethren? Tell us, give us advice. We can't go home this way. Something needs to be done. Please answer us! We feel at a loss. We need answers. We are devastated, come with a solution." May that be our response today. Instead of hardening the heart, go home and say, "Oh, I've heard it again. You don't obey the gospel, I've heard that before and I just lay it aside." May it please the Lord to apply the word and bless the sermon. The blessing of the sermon is paramount. It can be good, biblical, experiential, personal, but if the Lord does not bless it, it will yet bounce off. The Lord Jesus preached perfect sermons and so many turned their backs to him. The Holy Spirit is necessary, right, to wound people, to apply the word, to bring it home.

So that's what we are hoping for, that somebody leave devastated and wounded and say, "I had so many years with hard thoughts of the Lord. I had so many years I was blind. I have despised the Lord. I was hiding my face from him. I ran away from the Lord. I sat in church and it went all over my head and I hardly heard a word. So indifferent. So hard. So worldly." May the Lord give that wounded heart.

What was Peter's answer? That's kind of remarkable. "Now when they heard this, they were pricked in their heart," and what did Peter say? Did Peter say something like, "Oh, I'm happy to hear that. Now the Lord is at work. I see you're convinced. That's the first step, you're on a good track. The door is opening. You're converted, the Lord is working in your heart. It must be the Lord working in your heart." He does not do that. He says,

"Repent." But they were repenting, right? No, they felt devastated. They felt in danger. They did not know what to do and the apostle says, "Now repent ye." What is that, repent ye? Not only feel sorrow, regret it, also confess it before the Lord, humble yourself under the mighty hand of God. Tell the Lord what you have done all those years. Be honest with the Lord. Ask for forgiveness. Ask for repentance. Ask for a new heart. Cry out to the Lord.

"Repent ye, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ." If you do that, if you'd like to be baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, you're disowned. You are shunned by the rest of the Jewish people. You have to just turn your back to the Jewish religion. It's a major thing. You have to do that. Choose ye today whom you will serve. It's not enough to feel at a loss, not sufficient to feel the pain, now also the true choice of Ruth needs to be made. Repent ye.

What does it say a little further at the end of 40? "Save yourselves from this untoward generation." Let go. Turn around. Break up. Devoid is this religion and, "Come unto me. Save yourselves from this untoward generation." You would say, "Reverend, that sounds Arminian. Repent, believe, save yourself, choose today." Well, what is the last sentence of this chapter? "Praising God, and having favour with all the people. And the Lord added to the church daily such as should be saved." The chapter ends with predestination, ends with the Lord is at work and the Lord adds people he has written in the book from eternity, chosen unto salvation. He added to them daily such as should be saved. According to the book. Election.

So the Lord saves a people himself. It does not depend upon people. It does not depend upon our choices and our repentance and our faith yet the Lord says repent and believe in the Lord Jesus Christ and save yourselves from that untoward generation. Also tonight, you can say I pray for it. That's not what the apostle said, "Pray for it. Pray from the heart. Ask the Lord." He didn't say that. He said, "Repent ye. Seek salvation in Jesus Christ and be baptized. Save yourselves from that generation. You need more than conviction, you need a new heart."

And then many were baptized, "Then they that gladly received his word were baptized." Not all of them did but 3,000 did, 3,000 gladly received the word. Gladly did. It just was water on a dry and thirsty land and they received it, they accepted it. The Lord gave it and they accepted it in a very sincere way. "And the same day there were added unto them about three thousand souls." They were all baptized.

Did that not go very fast? Were they not in a hurry? Same day? Should they not have waited? They should have said over winter, over summer, just wait, be cautious, don't judge so easily? Before you baptize someone, you need to know for sure. Why do you go so fast? Well, we don't want to go so fast, I agree. Why did they? This was an exceptional circumstance, Pentecost. Such a powerful sermon, such a powerful pouring out of the Spirit and apostles with so much discretion. Discretion. We don't have that, do we? They had so much discretion, so much light. And also don't forget, in those circumstances if you were baptized, it was a major thing, as I said before, the whole family would turn

their backs on you and say, "You don't exist anymore." So before you do that, only very sincere people would be baptized.

Congregation, we've heard so many sermons, biblical sermons, many shortcomings, personally toned, trying to reach hearts, to prick the hearts. What did it bring you? You've sinned against the goodness of the Lord and don't forget what's available. Look at verse 38, "Then Peter said unto them, Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins," for the sins taken off your shoulders and carried away. Do you need that? You have your sins on your back by nature, right, and you feel them all. That's are your sins. You are responsible for them. You have to pay for them. They can be remitted. They can be carried away. They can be solved by the Lord. And in order to have remission of sins, congregation, you need that broken heart, a contrite spirit, also the repentance and faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, that's saving yourself from an untoward generation and to cut the ties with sin, any sin, the world, so to walk that narrow path then into eternal bliss.

Those people stand there still and the whole city is talking about it and fear came upon every soul and many wonders and signs were done by the apostles, and all that believed were together and had all things in common. What a blessed time. May the Lord give us also such a revival today. Amen.

O mighty Lord, we acknowledge thee for thy word always new and fresh even although we know the Bible story. But Lord, foremost apply it to the hearts that for some this sermon would be new and fresh but also real, wounding the heart. And also encouraging as we heard, that whosoever believeth and calls on the name of the Lord shall be saved. Lord, give the remission of sins. Thou knowest them, who do not feel their sins at all, and others feeling they have sinned too much. Lord, I encourage sinners to come with empty hands, receiving the word gladly in their hearts. O Lord, come with thy Spirit and give that true liberty and true freedom. Thou knowest, convince people that are shy, bashful, don't dare to come, wondering if they are even permitted to come, Lord, give them that freedom upon the bases of the gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ to come without money, without price. Be with us this week, notice our plans, it's all in the books of the Lord. Also give that blessing tonight yet as we sing along, that also the light and we need to answer questions, young friends, so blessing upon what we sing. In Jesus' name alone. Amen.