

Acts 2:25-47

“The Work Of God’s Word”

As we situate ourselves here in the center of Peter’s sermon, he has deflected the scoffers, directed himself toward the seekers, grabbed their attention and given them the gospel. The day? Pentecost. The cause for the commotion? The out pouring of the Holy Spirit, and as was pointed out the last couple of weeks, anytime there’s some sort of spiritual phenomena taking place people are going to ask questions. There will be those who are interested in the work of the Spirit, wanting to gain insight and understanding. Then there will be those who scoff, those who have no real *regard* for the work of God, only *ridicule*.

Peter didn’t pay much attention to those who had nothing but ridicule regarding the things of God but rather he stood up, simply *deflected* their comment, then *directed* his attention to those who were really interested in what was going on. and Though he’s giving his message in a manner that’s powerful, profound, and persuasive, we took note of the fact that #1 it was simple, #2 it was centered, and #3 it was sharp. He wasn’t trying to impress everyone with his oratory skills, his message involved less than a handful of basic facts, #1 Jesus was a historical figure, #2 He was crucified and raised from the dead, #3 It was all prophesied in scripture, and #4 These fundamental facts are proof positive that Jesus of Nazareth is God’s Messiah. Which leads to a natural confrontation/culmination, now what are you going to do with it? It was that simple, but it was also *centered*, he didn’t delve off into the various esoteric aspects of theology, didn’t bring up the kenosis of the cross, biblical numerology, the mystery of the Trinity, or any of those things, he kept it focused, he kept it centered, his message revolved around the reality of the resurrection and what that means to *you*. But don’t mistake the fact that his message was *simple* for the notion that it was somehow *soft*; no it was *sharp*. Direct, to the point and honest, he spoke the truth in love.

Peter stood up that day, showed the people scriptural support for the spiritual phenomena, grabbed their attention again and then gave them the gospel, notice vs 22-24.

Vs22-24

This is the message of the gospel, that Jesus of Nazareth who demonstrated the fact that He was from God, not only on the basis of His Word, but also by His works, was delivered up by the predetermined plans and purposes of God, crucified on the cross by His foes, but raised from the dead by His Father because it was not possible that though He became sin for us, He Himself knew no sin therefore it was impossible that death should hold Him. Because the wages of *sin* is death, but Jesus was in all ways tempted as we’re tempted yet *with out* sin, so how could the power of death maintain its grip on One who was with out sin? It couldn’t, but I want to re-emphasize and draw your attention once again to the fact that the cross wasn’t a tragedy of happenstance, but that it was a part of God’s plan from the beginning to redeem sinful man.

Vs 23 tells us that Jesus was delivered up by the determined purpose and foreknowledge of God. You see though our sin resulted in the cross, the One ultimately responsible for the cross is God Himself. Jesus didn't have to give His life for you and for me, He could've simply allowed us to perish in our sin. Jesus Himself said in regards to His own life, "*No one takes it from Me, but I lay it down of Myself. I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it again.*" John 10:18 The bible tells us, "...*God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us.*" Rom 5:8 Of course we're all familiar with John 3:16 which tells us what God did, and why God did it. "*For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life.*" John 3:16

My point in bringing these vs up is to demonstrate to you that Jesus wasn't the helpless victim of circumstance, He *laid* down His life, God *gave* Him to us for the remission of our sin as His demonstration to us of how much He loves us. So that when man did his *worst* in taking the Son of God willfully rejecting Him and nailing Him to the tree of Calvary, God gave His *best* in allowing Christ to take upon Himself the sin of the world and pay the purchase price of our redemption. Which is where we left off specifically last week, speaking of the reality of the resurrection, how God loosed the pains of death, because it was not possible that He should be held by it. and We were speaking of the reasons why it wasn't possible, how the tomb was no more able to keep Jesus in it, than the womb of a pregnant woman is able to keep the baby in it. and Even as its eminent that that child should come forth from the womb, even so it was eminent that Jesus Christ should come forth from that tomb. On the basis of the fact that He was *with out* sin, on the basis of the fact that He paid in full the ransom required *of* our sin, yet as solid as both of those points are, Peter doesn't put forth either of those. There's another reason altogether for the resurrection, follow along (Vs 25-28).

Vs25-28

Yes it's true that Jesus was *with out* sin, yes its true that He paid the ransom required *of* our sin, but the reality of the resurrection of the Holy One of God finds its ultimate resolve where? In the written word of God, it wasn't possible that death should keep Him in its clutches why? Because God had written in His Word that He would not leave His soul in Hades, nor would He allow His Holy One, (that is Messiah) to see corruption, meaning physical decay. Or to understand it another way, He would rise again from the dead. and This is another reason we place such emphasis on the teaching of the Word of God, because Heaven and earth will pass away, but God's Word will by no means *ever* pass away. The bible says, "*God is not a man, that He should lie, Nor a son of man, that He should repent. Has He said, and will He not do? Or has He spoken, and will He not make it good?*" Num 23:19 You see God's not like you and me, when He says it, He does it. His word is sure. God had said in His Word that His Holy One would taste death, but would come forth from death never to die again, and there's only one Man in the history of the world that meets those particular conditions and His name is Jesus of Nazareth, conclusion: He is both Lord and Christ, the Holy One of God.

Even with in this text there's multiple pointers demonstrating the resurrection. He says, "My flesh shall rest in hope" now we're familiar with the biblical definition of the word *hope*. It's not "perhaps" it's not "wish" it's the *assured expectation*, the *guaranteed certainty*, and the *concrete reality*, there's no shadow of doubt in biblical hope. So these words, "My flesh shall rest in hope" the idea of "rest" being that period of physical death, but there was an assured expectation, a guaranteed anticipation, of what? "You *will not* leave My soul in Hades." It wasn't "You *might not* leave My soul in Hades," or "Perhaps if I'm lucky you won't leave My soul in Hades," "You *will not* leave My soul in Hades." That is, the place of the dead, when Jesus died on the cross the bible teaches us that He descended into the lower parts of the earth into Abraham's bosom to preach the gospel to those where there in Paradise awaiting the Messiah. That is, those OT saints who were by faith looking forward to the fulfillment of those things foreshadowed by the sacrificial system, all of those things were merely foreshadowing the ultimate sacrifice for sin fulfilled in Jesus Christ and When Jesus died on the cross, He descended into Ab's bosom, preached the gospel to those there, and then He led the captivity captive so that now they're in Heaven with Him just the same as those who die in Christ today.

But it was impossible that the blood of bulls and goats should take away sin so before the cross if you died you didn't go to Heaven. You went into Hades where you awaited the fulfillment of the sacrifice of Jesus Christ upon the cross. But all that to say that when Jesus commended His Spirit into the Hands of His Father, He descended into Hades to lead those who were there who had died in faith, out. We read in Eph 4, "*When He ascended on high, He led captivity captive, And gave gifts to men. (Now this, 'He ascended' -- what does it mean but that He also first descended into the lower parts of the earth? He who descended is also the One who ascended far above all the heavens, that He might fill all things.)*" Eph 4:8-10 and Of course you could cross-reference this to Luke 16:19-31 if you'd like, we just don't have time. But He had the assurance that though He would descend into Hades, He wouldn't be there long, not even long enough that His physical body would really see decay, or as it states here "corruption." and Even with the way it lays out, there's something of a contrast in the words "Holy One" and "Corruption" they just don't come together, it couldn't happen. and He says here, "You have made known to Me the ways of life." That is, resurrection life, now look at vs 29.

Vs 29

Now I'm going to give you a sneak peak into the irrefutable line of reasoning he's leading them down. Because no doubt until this time if you were to ask the average individual who David was speaking of there in this portion of Ps 16 they would no doubt say he was speaking of himself. I mean he's speaking in the 1st person, but Peter is saying, "Stay with me here and lets think this thing through. Ps 16 speaks of not remaining physically dead, of his body not knowing decay, yet (Peter says) David is both dead, and buried, and we have his bones with us to this day. Therefore the patriarch *couldn't* have been speaking of Himself *personally*, but *had* to be speaking of the Messiah *prophetically*."

David knew that God used his life in this capacity, as he was about to die he uttered these words, “*Thus says David the son of Jesse; Thus says the man raised up on high, The anointed of the God of Jacob, And the sweet psalmist of Israel: ‘The Spirit of the LORD spoke by me, And His word was on my tongue.’*” 2 Sam 23:1-2 So he wasn’t in regards to himself personally there in Ps 16 vs 8-11, but he was speaking of the Messiah prophetically who would come through his lineage, notice.

Vs30-32

Taking us back to vs 13, they’re not drunks, they’re witnesses of the reality of the risen Christ which has resulted in the outpouring of the Holy Spirit.

Vs33-36

Again we notice the powerful yet practical working knowledge of this man that God used as it pertains to the scripture. He quotes Joel ch 2 regarding the outpouring of the Holy Spirit, which is the result of the resurrection of the Holy One of God, which He supports by Ps 16 Vs 8-11, and then he gives further proof text for the ascension of Christ by quoting Ps 110. All from memory, and these are those attributes of the individuals God uses, so we do well to be a people of prayer, and those who are able to wield and rightly divide God’s Word if we want God to use our lives. But you can’t know God’s word if you don’t study, and spend time in God’s Word. Sure the Holy Spirit will help you in time of need when you’re sharing with a buddy, or witnessing to that classmate or whatever. But if the Word of God has never been implanted into your heart and into your soul by your concentrating on it, meditating on it, seeking to commit it to memory and all these things, then there’s nothing there from which He can draw. It’s like trying to draw water from a dry well, you can lower the bucket all you like, but if the refreshing waters of the Word of God aren’t in there, it’ll come up dry with nothing to quench that persons thirst every time. Peter was a man of the word, he spent time with Jesus, and God used his life.

Now vs 33 takes us back to vs 12. Remember, “Whatever could *this* mean?” As they were considering the commotion that was taking place with the rushing mighty wind, the speaking in tongues and all. Here Peter wraps back around to that question when he says that Jesus, being exalted to the right hand of God (speaking of the ascension) having received from the Father the promise of the Holy Spirit, He poured out this which you now see and hear.

Now all this is leading to the conclusive evidence that presents Jesus as the resurrected Christ, and Peter is here verifying the reality of the resurrection on the basis of 4 things. #1 His Life, He demonstrated the fact that He was *from* God, and approved *by* God by the way He led His life. (The miracles, wonders, and signs, remember Nicodemus confessed that no one could do the things that Jesus was doing unless God was with Him.)

Jesus demonstrated His power and authority over every possible aspect of challenge that this world has to offer. He demonstrated the fact that He could cure *incurable* disease as He would touch the lives of lepers and making the unclean clean. He would open the eyes of the blind, He demonstrated His ability to heal whether He was present at the place of crisis or not. He demonstrated His power over nature through the calming of storms, walking on water, cursing the fig tree. His power over the supernatural as He delivered demon possessed individuals, even His power over life and death itself having raised at least 3 people from the dead, the widow's son, Jairus' daughter, and Lazarus. #2 He tells them that scripture supports, and spoke of the reality of the resurrection, #3 Vs 32 He tells them that they are all personal witnesses having seen the risen Christ, and #4 The outpouring of the Holy Spirit bears witness that Jesus has ascended back to the right hand of God because until Jesus was seated in His rightful place at the right hand of God the Holy Spirit couldn't be sent. (and There are several scriptures that I could show you, I selected only one)

Jesus in speaking of His ascending back to the Father said to His disciples, "*I tell you the truth. It is to your advantage that I go away; for if I do not go away, the Helper will not come to you; but if I depart, I will send Him to you.*" John 16:7 and The question is, how could Jesus send the Holy Spirit if He weren't present at the right hand of God whereby He could "dispatch" Him (if you will) that He might begin His mission in this new dispensation of grace? So Peter is saying that by the very fact that the Holy Spirit has been poured out like the prophet Joel had said, bears witness of the fact that Jesus has risen from the dead and ascended to the right hand of the Father. (Repeat vs 36)

Taking them back to vs 21 "Whoever calls on the name of the *Lord* shall be saved." and He's just given them at least a 4-fold witness of the fact that the "Lord" on whom they are to call is by name, Jesus of Nazareth.

Vs37

I love this vs, because Peter didn't give an *invitation*, simply an *explanation* of what was going on, but the Word of God was having its way in the hearts of the people. and God's Word is always *prying* open, *peering* into and *probing* our hearts. It just *slices* us open and *seeds* itself down there in the deep recesses of our heart. The book of Hebrews tells us, "*For the word of God is living and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the division of soul and spirit, and of joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart. And there is no creature hidden from His sight, but all things are naked and open to the eyes of Him to whom we must give account.*" Heb 4:12-13 These guys have been convinced by the work of the Word of God and now they're convicted. The bible tells us that faith comes by the hearing of the Word of God, and they've heard God's Word, and it's convinced them 1st of all, then it convicted them. "We've crucified the Son of God, what can we do?" It's like, is there any hope for us, we've committed the most heinous crime possible, what should we do?

Vs38

Translation: There's nothing that we can do that God can't forgive, if we'll just *repent* God will *forgive* us. Now you have to be careful when handling this particular vs because there are those who will seek to use it as proof text as if to say if you're not baptized, you're not saved. and That salvation is linked directly to your being baptized, but you get into trouble when you start taking apart God's Word from the context of the whole counsel. and Since there are no punctuation marks in the Greek language, if you'd just take the comma out and place parenthesis around the words "and" and "Christ" it would solve the whole issue. What did Jesus say about the work of redemption just before He gave up His Spirit on the cross? "*It is finished!*" John 19:30 Question, did He mean that or not? Was it *really* finished or was there one part that He couldn't cover that depends on you? You see anytime you start adding to the work of the cross in order to merit your salvation, or your righteousness or anything else, you are in huge scriptural violation. So that you tell someone that in order to be saved they have to believe in Jesus "*and*" stop right there. There is no "and" or Jesus didn't finish the work. and I don't care if it's believe in Jesus *and count these beads or say these prayers*, believe in Jesus *and be baptized*, believe in Jesus *and become a member of our church* or anything else.

Back in Paul's day they were saying, "Believe in Jesus, *and be circumcised.*" and Paul wrote to the Gal and said, "*O foolish Galatians! Who has bewitched you that you should not obey the truth, before whose eyes Jesus Christ was clearly portrayed among you as crucified? This only I want to learn from you: Did you receive the Spirit by the works of the law, or by the hearing of faith? Are you so foolish? Having begun in the Spirit, are you now being made perfect by the flesh?*" Gal 3:1-3 The answer is no! You're saved by grace through faith and that's it, you don't perfect *anything* Jesus has done in your own flesh, God forbid that we would even have the audacity to think such a thing.

The fact is, Peter is saying, "Repent, for the remission of sins; and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit, and let everyone of you be baptized in the name (or more literally *into* the name)of Jesus Christ So that the purpose of baptism is that of *identification* not *salvation*. Identifying with the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ openly and unashamed, "You guys thought one way about Jesus, you need to change your mind (repent) and bear fruits worthy of repentance through baptism." You see in that day Jews weren't even baptized. Gentiles converting to Judaism would be baptized, so for a Jew to be baptized into something would take radical humility and full on public demonstration of their commitment to Christ. Jesus called people publicly, and here Peter is calling them to commit to Jesus publicly through baptism. Once you've had the inward transformation, you need to give the outward declaration of the fact that you belong to Jesus and you're not ashamed to be identified with His death and resurrection for you.

If you make baptism necessary for salvation here, than what about Peter's message in Acts Ch 3, or Acts Ch 5, or Acts Ch 10 in which he doesn't even mention the word "baptism" as it relates to salvation/forgiveness? Seems to me that if it were a necessity relating to salvation you'd want to be sure and mention that when instructing people on how to be saved...In 1st Cor Ch 1 Paul thanked God that he didn't baptize people, which would seem to me to be blasphemous if it were something needed for salvation, "I thank God that I left them all lost rather than sealing their salvation in baptism." Let's be careful not to take away from the cross by adding to it something of our own. Yes baptism is important, as is any act of obedience to the Word of God. But when establishing doctrine its essential to weigh in the balance the *whole* counsel of the God's Word.

Vs39

The invitation to salvation and the gift of the Holy Spirit is a promise to all, Jew and Gentile alike, not only to those afar off geographically, but generationally as well.

Vs40-41

It's interesting to compare and contrast the day the law was given with the day the Spirit was given. Fire was present (or the likeness thereof) for both occasions. But on the day the law was given 3,000 people died, on the day the Spirit was given 3,000 souls were saved. What does the bible say? "...*the letter kills, but the Spirit gives life.*" 2 Cor 3:6

Vs42-45

Not really *communism* so much as it is *commonism*, a lot of the people were from other parts of the world and the believers were just taking care of each other. But ultimately it didn't pan out, and it wasn't practiced long.

But vs 42 is the model that we want to emulate here, it wasn't about demographics, church growth programs, or any of those things. They did 4 basic things, and they did them continually and persistently #1 They stayed in the apostles doctrine, that is the teaching of the apostles, which we know today as the NT. But I feel a liberty to extend that to all the Word of God because that's what they were teaching. But as it pertains to doctrine, what the apostle established is protocol. We don't have the liberty to go outside the confines of what the apostles taught, does doctrine matter? You bet it does, what I believe determines how I behave and we have no biblical right to violate the teachings of the apostles who were commissioned directly by Jesus Christ Himself.

Paul in writing to the Eph regarding we being members of the household of God said, "...*having been built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ Himself being the chief cornerstone,*" Eph 2:20 Which is to say that the household of God has been built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets.

Jesus Christ Himself being the chief cornerstone. So the apostles doctrine is an essential aspect of a healthy church, a solid diet of the Word of God. #2 Fellowship, that is *koinonia*, meaning to share, or to have in common, sharing the same love for God, the same guide for life (God's Word), the same Lord, the same desire to worship, we share the same struggles, same victories, same responsibility to share Jesus with other and live our lives daily for Him. We have *fellowship* with one another, the corporate gathering of the body of believers, coming together sharing in these things, building up and edifying one another. #3 The breaking of bread, which carries the connotation of both sharing a common meal, but more importantly it points to the Lord's supper, partaking of communion. Remembering the work of the cross. and #4 Prayer Whenever God is doing a work, God's people are praying, and this is what we spoke of earlier, and last week, the need to be a people of prayer. You show me a church where these things are going on, and I'll show you (not a perfect church) but a spiritually sound church where there is a healthy body of believers.

Reverence and awe came upon the people (vs 43) God confirming His Word through the works of the apostles.

Vs46-47

Real quick, notice these things were taking place (not only on Sundays, or even a couple of times a week, but *daily* they continued in this pattern, being of one accord, one heart, and one mind, there was unity in the body of Christ. and God just honored the whole thing and *He* added to the church, that is the Lord Jesus added to the church daily those who were being saved. Our job is to abide *in*, teach *through* and share the Word, come together, remember/celebrate the work of the Lord, and be a people of prayer, yes for our needs personally but definitely prayer that's intercessory, praying for others, that they might come to know Jesus Christ as you know Jesus Christ and It's not the demographic studies that paid off, or the slick marketing that did the trick, the church growth programs, polls of what people want or anything else. "The *Lord* added daily such as were being saved." God is the One who does the work of adding to His Kingdom, so that to God be the glory, great things *He* has done.

Perhaps God wants to add you to His Kingdom today. You've heard the word, and if God is prying open and probing your heart and you're wondering what you should do; listen, repent and believe on Jesus Christ who died on the cross, shed His blood for you, and on the 3rd day rose again and you will receive the remission, that is the forgiveness of your sin.