

A WALK TO THE CROSS (And Beyond)

Peter's Sermon At Pentecost

Acts 2:14-36

Preaching has always been *central to the church's mission*. It's been the *central focus* of the Church from the time that it was birthed. The *first event in church history*, following the coming of the Holy Spirit, was Peter's sermon. The book of Acts is largely a record of sermons that were preached.

- **Acts 4:2**...“They were teaching the people and proclaiming in Jesus the resurrection from the dead.”
- **Acts 5:42**...“Every day, in the temple and from house to house, they kept right on teaching and preaching Jesus as the Christ.”
- **Acts 6-7**...records Stephen, the *first martyr*...bearing witness beginning with **Genesis**, and continuing through Scripture, the works of God, before being stoned.
- After the first great persecution of the church broke out... **Acts 8:4**...“Those who had been scattered went about preaching the Word.”
- **Acts 8** also records the preaching of Philip (**vs. 5, 12**), and Peter and John (**vs. 25**) to the *Samaritans*, and Philip to the *Ethiopian eunuch* (**vs. 35**).
- After his conversion, Paul immediately began to proclaim Jesus in the synagogues, saying, “He is the Son of God” (**Acts 9:20**).
- Acts records how the early church “continued to preach the gospel” (**Acts 14:7; 10:42; 13:5, 32; 14:15, 21; 15:35; 16:10; 17:3, 13; 20:25; 28:31**).

Jesus instructed His disciples...“As you go, preach...” (**Matthew 10:7**), and at the end said, “Go into all the world and preach...” (**Mark 16:15**).

“For ‘Whoever will call on the name of the Lord will be saved.’ How then will they call on Him in whom they have not believed? How will they believe in Him whom they have not heard? And how will they hear without a preacher? How will they preach unless they are sent?...So faith comes from hearing, and hearing by the word of Christ.”

~Romans 10:13-15a, 17

Preaching has rightly held the *central place in the life of the true church* throughout the ages.

Here in Acts 2, Peter began his sermon, by first *repudiating the claim* that was made by those who were hearing the *Galileans' proclaiming the glory of God*...those who were gathered together in the upper room. He *rebukes* those who were hearing the *the glory of God* being proclaimed *in each of their own language*...by *claiming* that the *Galileans* were *drunk*. He mentioned that it was only **9:00 AM** and that not even a *drunkard* would be *inebriated* that early in the day. This would be especially true *on a festival day* such as **Pentecost**.

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. For these men are not drunk, as you suppose, for it is only the third hour of the day (**vs. 14-15**)...”

I. THE PROPHECY CONCERNING CHRIST: (**vs. 16-21**)

But this is what was spoken of through the prophet Joel (**vs. 16**)...What transpired on the **Day of Pentecost** wasn't that the *apostles* and *those who were gathered in the upper room* were *drunk*...they were experiencing what was spoken of through the prophet Joel (**Joel 2**).

And it shall be in the last days (vs. 17a)...The term **the last days** is a *common* Old Testament *expression denoting the time when Messiah would come to set up His kingdom*. The fact that there would be *two comings* of Messiah, *separated by a long intervening period, wasn't understood* in the Old Testament.

The *two comings*, however, can be more clearly understood from the *two purposes for Messiah's coming*.

- On the one hand, the Old Testament teaches that Messiah would *come as the Suffering Servant...to die for the sins of the world (Isaiah 53)*.
- On the other hand, it also teaches that Messiah would *come in glory to set up His kingdom (Isaiah 9:6)*.

The first coming of Christ ushered in what Scripture calls **the last days**. So far, **the last days** have lasted *over two thousand years*. And during that time, God has...

- *Established the Church.*
- Has *graciously called Gentiles to salvation.*
- And has *chastened Israel for her unbelief.*

The *complete fulfillment* of Joel's prophecy awaits the *second coming of Christ...the coming of His kingdom*.

On the **Day of Pentecost**, and indeed *throughout the church age*, God has given both a *preview* and a *sample* of *the power that the Spirit will release* when He comes and establishes His *kingdom*. But for now, believers in the present age only *have a foretaste* of the ultimate *kingdom living* that awaits.

God says, that **I will pour forth of My Spirit on all mankind (vs. 17b)...**In the *Church age*, God **pours** His Spirit *into* believers. In *His kingdom*, He will **pour forth** His Spirit on all mankind.

Obviously, not all the elements of Joel's prophecy are *revealed* during the *Church age*. It isn't until the **Spirit** is **poured** out upon **all mankind in His kingdom** that what is mentioned here *will take place*.

And your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, and your young men shall see visions, and your old men shall dream dreams; even on My bondslaves, both men and women, I will in those days pour forth of My Spirit and they shall prophesy. And I will grant wonders in the sky above and signs on the earth below, blood, and fire, and vapor of smoke. The sun will be turned into darkness and the moon into blood, before the great and glorious day of the Lord shall come (vs. 17c-20)...

It's *only in those days*...when *His kingdom is finally established* ...that such *extensive prophesying will take place*...the *bold forth-telling* of the *glorious works* of God.

The wonders in the sky above and signs on the earth below that Joel mentions, are all associated with the **glorious day of the Lord**...and are *yet to come*. The ultimate **day of the Lord** is linked elsewhere in Scripture with the events surrounding Christ's *second coming*.

For instance...the **book of Revelation**:

- Associates **blood** with *the time surrounding Christ's second coming (Revelation 6:8; Revelation 8:7-8; Revelation 9:15; Revelation 14:20; Revelation 16:3)*.
- Mentions **fire**...also associated *with that time (Revelation 8:5, 7, 8, 10)*.
- Mentions **smoke at that time (Revelation 9:2-3, 17-18; Revelation 18:9, 18).**

In **Matthew 24:29-30**, the Lord Jesus Christ described the changes that will occur in the *sun, moon, and stars* at His *second coming*.

“But immediately after the tribulation of those days the sun will be darkened, and the moon will not give its light, and the stars will fall from the sky, and the powers of the heavens will be shaken. And then the sign of the Son of Man will appear in the sky, and then all the tribes of the earth will mourn, and they will see the Son of Man coming on the clouds of the sky with power and great glory.”

~ Matthew 24:29-30

And it shall be that everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved (vs. 21)...After quoting Joel’s *chilling* and *terrifying description* of the *day of the Lord*, Peter tells them *how to avoid being caught* in that time of *terror* and *devastation*. He tells them that there is *salvation* for those who turn to the Lord Jesus Christ.

II. THE LIFE OF CHRIST: (vs. 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 (vs. 22)...

As he did at the beginning of his sermon, Peter challenged the men of Israel to listen to his words as he presented to them the Gospel. He boldly *proclaimed two truths*:

- *That God had worked miracles through Jesus.*
- *And that they had seen them.*

A man attested to you by God...Attested, Gk. *apodeiknumi*, has various meanings...but basically it shows that Jesus was *confirmed by many convincing proofs*...that He was *God in human flesh*...and that God *highly exalted Him, and bestowed on Him the name above every name (Philippians 2:9)*. That is, that He was *Messiah*...that He was God’s *anointed King*.

Miracles...Gk. *dunamis*, describes *the powerful, supernatural nature of the works* that only God can and does do.

Wonders...Gk. *teras*, describes the *awe*...the *amazement of one’s response* when one witnesses the power of God at work.

Signs...Gk. *semeion*, gives the intent that *God’s miraculous works are used to point to spiritual truth*.

Which God performed through Him...Jesus didn’t do His miracles on His own. God was at work **through Him**.

“For the Father loves the Son, and shows Him all things that He Himself is doing; and the Father will show Him greater works than these, so that you will marvel.”

~John 5:20

“The testimony which I have is greater than the testimony of John; for the works which the Father has given Me to accomplish—the very works that I do—testify about Me, that the Father has sent Me.”

~John 5:36

In your midst, just as you yourselves know...They couldn’t claim *ignorance*. Their *rejection* of Jesus *wasn’t based on lack of information* but on *their hatred* of Jesus and *love of their sin*. Notice...they *didn’t deny the works* that He did...they just *rejected* His claim of *who He is*.

“If I do not do the works of My Father, do not believe Me; but if I do them, though you do not believe Me, believe the works, so that you may know and understand that the Father is in Me, and I in the Father.”

~John 10:37-38

The *evidence* from Jesus’ *life* and *works* that He was the Messiah of God was *conclusive* and *undeniable*.

III. THE DEATH OF CHRIST: (vs. 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 (vs. 23)...

Delivered over...Gk. *ekdotos*, appears only here in the New Testament and it describes *one being handed over* or *surrendering to their enemy* (John 10:17-18).

By the predetermined plan...Predetermined plan...the *two words taken together* indicate that Jesus Christ was delivered to death because God *planned* and *ordained* it.

“For truly in this city there were gathered together against Your holy servant Jesus, whom You anointed, both Herod and Pontius Pilate, along with the Gentiles and the peoples of Israel, to do whatever Your hand and Your purpose predestined to occur.”

~Acts 4:27-28

Foreknowledge of God...Gk. *prognosis*, it means far more than just *knowing beforehand what will happen*. It *denotes a discerning knowledge* and *reveals the absolute certainty* of a *future condition that was purposed*.

You nailed to a cross by the hands of godless men and put Him to death...God used men to *accomplish His purpose*...yet He *never violated their will* or *removed their culpability* by doing so. That Jesus Christ was delivered to death by God’s *predetermined plan*...*does not absolve* those who put Him to death of their *guilt*.

IV. THE RESURRECTION OF CHRIST: (vs. 24-32)

After spending *one verse* each on Christ’s *life* and *death*... Peter now spends *nine verses* on His *resurrection*.

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 (vs. 24)...

The *resurrection* of Jesus Christ wasn’t only the *central theme* of the apostles’ *preaching*...it’s without question *the climax of redemptive history*. It’s what *guarantees our own resurrection*. The greatest proof that Jesus is Messiah isn’t His *teaching*, or His *miracles*, or even His *death*. It’s His *resurrection*.

Agony...Gk. *odinas*, literally means *birth pangs*. Like the *pain of a woman in labor*, the *pain of death* for Jesus was *temporary* and *resulted in something glorious*...the *resurrection*.

Since it was impossible for Him to be held in its power ...God has *designed* that His people *be with Him* for *all eternity*. In order to do that though, they must *first go through death*. Jesus *had to go first* to make the way (I [Corinthians 15:16-26](#))...but because *He lives*...His people *will live forever* (John 14:19).

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. Therefore my heart was glad and my tongue exulted; moreover my flesh also will live in hope; because You will not abandon my soul to Hades, nor allow Your Holy One to undergo decay. You have made known to me the ways of life; You will make me full of gladness with Your presence. 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. 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, he looked ahead and spoke of the resurrection of the Christ, that He

was neither abandoned to Hades, nor did His flesh suffer decay. This Jesus God raised up again, to which we are all witnesses. (vs. 25-32)...

These verses state four proofs of the Lord's resurrection and ascension:

- *The prophecy of Psalm 16:8-11, and the presence of David's tomb.*

Peter quotes Psalm 16:8-11 in verses 25-28...and he emphasizes that the Psalm speaks of a *resurrection*. Then in verses 29-31, Peter's emphasis is that David, the patriarch and prophet was *dead* and *buried*. Therefore, he couldn't have been referring to himself in Psalm 16:8-11. Hence, he was writing about the Christ...Messiah...and His *resurrection*. It is Messiah who *will rise from the dead*.

- *The witnesses of the resurrection (vs. 32).*
Referring to the *numerous occasions* that Peter and the apostles (and others) saw Jesus *following His resurrection*...throughout those 40 days.
- *The supernatural events of Pentecost (vs. 33).*
- *The ascension of David's greater Son (Psalm 110:1; vs. 34-35).*

V. THE EXALTATION OF CHRIST: (vs. 33-36)

Therefore having been exalted to the right hand of God (vs. 33a)...

Not only did Jesus *rise from the dead*, but He also was *exalted* to the place of *honor, glory, and power*...to the *right hand of God*.

“For this reason also, God highly exalted Him, and bestowed on Him the name which is above every name, so that at the name of Jesus every knee will bow, of those who are in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and that every tongue will confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.”

~Philippians 2:9-11

And having received from the Father the promise of the Holy Spirit, He has poured forth this which you both see and hear (vs. 33b)...Peter now brings everything back to the *wonders* of Pentecost. He tells them that what they had just seen, resulted from God *fulfilling His promise* to *send the Spirit*.

For it was not David who ascended into heaven, but he himself says: “The Lord said to my Lord, ‘Sit at My right hand, until I make Your enemies a footstool for Your feet’.” (vs. 34-35)...

Here, Peter is quoting from another *psalm of David*... Psalm 110...to prove from His *ascension* and *exaltation* that Jesus Christ is the Messiah.

Until I make Your enemies a footstool for Your feet...
Placing one's enemies under one's feet was a figure of speech denoting their *abject submission*.

Therefore let all the house of Israel know for certain that God has made Him both Lord and Christ—this Jesus whom you crucified (vs. 36)...

For certain...Gk. *asphalos*, speaks of *that which is known beyond a doubt*.

“He is the stone which was rejected by you, the builders, but which became the chief corner stone.”

~Acts 4:11

LESSONS WE CAN LEARN:

- Jesus' *life, death, resurrection, ascension, and exaltation* provides overwhelming evidence that He is **MESSIAH** and **LORD**. Every other deity that man has tried to worship has either never lived (an object)...or has died and is buried. Only Jesus has been resurrected!
- The **MIRACLES** of Jesus were the manifestation of God's power designed to get people's attention and point them to **SPIRITUAL TRUTH**.
- One's rejection of Jesus isn't based on **IGNORANCE** or lack of information, but on their **HATRED** towards Him and their **LOVE** of sin.

“...That which is known about God is evident within them; for God made it evident to them. For since the creation of the world His invisible attributes, His eternal power and divine nature, have been clearly seen, being understood through what has been made, so that they are without excuse.”

~Romans 1:19-20