**PRAY**

As we looked at Luke’s account of Pentecost last week, we saw that the Holy Spirit filled and changed the lives of all the disciples, to the extent that the first mass evangelism event brought 3000 souls into the kingdom following Peter’s sermon.

Today we are going to look further at what Peter said that day to the assembled Jewish people – as he used God’s Scriptures to reveal God’s message of salvation to the crowds.

Peter has already explained the outpouring of the Holy Spirit has been foretold by the prophet Joel, but he remains focussed on Scripture as he continues to talk about their Messiah – the resurrected Jesus of Nazareth.

Quoting Joel had merely been the introduction – enabling Peter to move on to the main message.

Peter told the crowds that they already knew of Jesus – of His **miracles, wonders and signs**. Peter is reminding the people that they already knew of His life and miraculous works.

It is an interesting way to introduce Jesus to people – even in this age where God and Jesus is marginalised and rejected, there may be some level of knowledge upon which to build.

We can, as Peter did, start with what they already know about Him.

Peter started with the thing that was the most recent in terms of chronology – Jesus’ death. He explains that even that was part of God’s plan. He reassures his listeners that Jesus was **delivered by the determined purpose and foreknowledge of God**… into **lawless hands**.

Peter was not out to appease his audience – he gave them blunt truth. Effectively he said, ‘You crucified this Man that God sent.’

Yet, Peter reassures everyone that Jesus, being the Son of God, could not be held, or even restrained, by death.

That is a great truth even 2000 years later. The Saviour of this world has conquered death, to enable you and me to do likewise.

To make his point, Peter quotes from what is our Psalm 16, where both David and Peter clearly understand David is speaking of someone who is far greater than himself – he is speaking of God’s Messiah.

**Psalm 16:8-11** says, **I foresaw the Lord always before my face, For He is at my right hand, that I may not be shaken. Therefore my heart rejoiced, and my tongue was glad; moreover my flesh also will rest in hope. For You will not leave my soul in Hades, nor will You allow Your Holy One to see corruption. You have made known to me the ways of life; You will make me full of joy in Your presence.**

Maybe Jesus had previously taught the disciples this very point –

* that God’s Messiah would have to suffer God’s wrath against sin whilst He was on the cross
* that God’s Messiah would die as a result of the sins of humanity
* that he would not be dead long enough for the body to decompose
* that the Messiah would be raised to life

That was Peter’s gospel message and it remains unaltered today – the proven resurrection, witnessed by hundreds of people, showed for all time that Jesus successfully and perfectly, paid for our sins.

King David, as the Psalmist, is joyful in knowing His Messiah would show all of humanity the way to glory - **you have made known to be the ways of life; You will make me full of joy in Your presence**.

Peter is clear that David is speaking about someone who is not bound by human death. David died and remained dead and buried. The Psalm must be and is speaking prophetically of the Messiah, Jesus.

Peter affirms that what the crowd saw (the outpouring of the Holy Spirit) was the work of the risen and ascended Jesus, who has sent His Holy Spirit upon His church.

Peter also quotes from Psalm 110, which is another Psalm that prophecies about the Messiah, saying, **The Lord said to my Lord, sit at My right hand, until I make Your enemies Your footstool**.

This verse, [Psalm 110:1](https://www.blueletterbible.org/kjv/psalms/110/1/s_588001), is apparently the most quoted OT verse in the NT, being either quoted or referred to at least 25 times. The Bible writers clearly understood and wanted the deity of the Messiah to be proclaimed.

Both David and Peter are declaring Jesus the Messiah to be Divine, a fact that Peter wants his listeners to know and understand.

So, Peter concludes his preaching by saying, **let all the house of Israel know that that God has made this Jesus, whom you crucified, both Lord and Christ.**

Peter says that all Israel then and the world now, should know that even though they crucified Jesus, God has declared Him **both Lord and Christ**.

Despite humanity crucified Jesus as if He were a criminal, through the resurrection, God proved that He is Lord and Messiah.

Remember we concluded last week with Peter saying that we all need to call upon the Name of the Lord o be saved?

Clearly, Peter’s teaching to the crowd had made an impression.

But it was not his teaching, remember that he was filled with the Holy Spirit, who was guiding his every word.

Acts 2:40 states that **with many other words he testified and exhorted them, saying, ‘Be saved from this perverse generation.’**

So, there was an invitation to respond – but how?

We are told the crowd had been **cut to the heart**.

This is a good way of describing the conviction of the Holy Spirit. They now knew that they were responsible for the death of Jesus (as each of us are).

But they also had a response to that knowledge and guilt.

You can know that you are guilty of something, but just ignore it. Alternatively, you can repent and seek forgiveness.

By doing the latter, in many ways you are clearing your conscience and removing a burden from yourself – something that has the ability to destroy your life by continually nagging away in your subconscious.

Here, Peter’s listeners realised their guilt and realised too they needed to both repent and respond.

In their case, the response that was demanded was to, **Repent and let every one of you be baptised in the name of Jesus Christ**.

It is truly good news that Peter didn’t respond by saying, ‘there’s nothing you can do. If God saves you, you’re saved. If God doesn’t save you, you’ll never be saved.’

It is true that God can get through to anyone, but He wants each one of us to come to Him voluntarily – we must come to Him through repentance and faith.

Repentance is more than feeling sorry. It means to change one’s mind or direction. Previously these people may have thought Jesus was worthy of crucifixion. Now they must turn their thinking around, embracing Jesus as Lord and Messiah.

Repentance is important:

* It was central to John the Baptist’s ministry - **Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand. Matthew 3:2**.
* Jesus preached saying, **Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand Matthew 4:17**.
* Peter included it too.

Repentance brings with it a great hope – it allows us the assurance that God will accept us back into His family.

But we cannot be half-hearted about our actions. We may fool others, but God sees whether your repentance is genuine.

Spurgeon said of this theme, ‘The old-fashioned grace of repentance is not to be dispensed with; there must be sorrow for sin; there must be ‘a broken and a contrite heart.’ This, God will not despise; but a ‘conversion’ which does not produce this result, God will not accept as genuine.’

Spurgeon was saying that if you claim to have turned to follow God, yet do not show a change of heart, you need to look at yourself again in the light of God’s grace.

But there was and still is a great promise as we return to God – Peter said, **the promise is to you and to your children and to all who are afar off**.

As they repented and demonstrated faith and obedience by baptism, the gift of the Holy Spirit would be given to them as it was given to the original group of disciples.

Peter also specifically promised that the **promise** of the Holy Spirit would be given to those who believe in all succeeding generations (**all who are afar off**).

That promise and opportunity remains open to all believers to this day – we would be spiritually foolish not to accept such a gift that our Heavenly Father is freely offering – you don’t have to be just an observer.

**v41** - the great response to the Holy Spirit’s anointing of Peter’s teaching, came in about 3,000 people being added to the group of believers who had trusted Jesus for their salvation, in one day.

Many of those 3,000 were undoubtedly pilgrims who had come to Jerusalem to worship God and experience Him in a deeper way. They may have asked for something special from God, but probably nothing like this.

Many in this crowd went back home, traveling far from Jerusalem, taking the good news of Jesus Christ with them.

**v42** states - **And they continued steadfastly in the apostles’ doctrine and fellowship, in the breaking of bread, and in prayers.**

This is the great legacy of that day – it is all very well for 3000 souls to be saved and sent on their way, but if they do not continue in their new walk, there is a danger that the repentance will be for nothing.

But, **they continued steadfastly in the apostles’ doctrine**: They relied on the apostles to communicate to them who Jesus was and what He had done, but now they wanted to know more – all that had gone before was just the first step.

Steadfast means a steadfast and single-minded course of action.

There was to be no departure from the **apostles’ doctrine**, because it was the truth of God.

That should be our attitude as well – to continue steadfastly in the apostles’ doctrine.

It hasn’t changed in all the years since it was preached by Peter and nor will it, because God is unchanging.

We can be thankful, too, that we don’t have to guess what the teaching was – because it is all written down, in the Bible.

That is the test you should put yourself under – do you match the apostles’ teaching? Equally, does what is taught in all areas of this church match the apostles’ teaching?

Does what you listen to on the radio or TV, what you read in books, match up to the apostles’ teaching – if not, do not pursue it further – it is of no benefit to you as you prepare for the Kingdom of God.

Part of that teaching was to continue in f**ellowship, breaking of bread and in prayer.**

These things were of importance to the Holy Spirit, who guided the early church and continues to guide us today.

Fellowship means association and participation; it means to share in something.

We should be sharing in God’s Son, Jesus, to guide our lives, to claim the victory for s that we have been promised by God – an eternal life in Heaven.

We should be sharing in breaking bread together (communion) – even though it was literally days since Jesus had been crucified, they never wanted to forget what He did on the cross. It should be important for us too.

They continued in prayers – they considered that communication with their Heavenly Father was all important. If Jesus did, it must be even more so for us.

**v43** shows the result of all these early believers did was to reflect the presence and the power of God. **Then fear came upon every soul, and many wonders and signs were done through the apostles.**

This is not fear in terms of being scared – this is fear in that people recognised God as their Creator and in turn had a deep respect and honour for Him.

When that happens, God will act – in this case, **many signs and wonders were done**. This was evidence of the power of God. Where God is at work, lives will be touched in miraculous ways.

**CONCLUSION**

Lives were obviously changed, as they have been across the centuries when the Holy Spirit comes and is allowed to work in people.

In Peter’s time, the people had a common purpose and served the Lord by looking after each other – although many of the 3000 would have travelled home, some would have been residents of Jerusalem.

Luke tells us that as the church continued over the coming days, **the Lord added to the church daily those who were being saved.**

These people, motivated by Jesus’ love, cared and shared for their new Christian family. Possessions were sold to support those in need, indicating the power of God at work - Jesus was more important to them than their possessions.

What we have here is God’s outpouring on His disciples, followed by their faith to preach to others.

The conviction that brought on changed lives enabled God to grow the church.

Our challenge is to follow the example of [**Acts 2:42-47a**](https://www.blueletterbible.org/kjv/acts/2/42-47/s_1020042).

If we do, God will bless you personally, as well as growing His church.

**PRAYER / OFFER**

**READINGS**

**Acts 2:22-47**

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

**‘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. Therefore my heart rejoiced, and my tongue was glad; moreover my flesh also will rest in hope. For You will not leave my soul in Hades, nor will You allow Your Holy One to see corruption. You have made known to me the ways of life; You will make me full of joy in Your presence.’**

**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. 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, he, foreseeing this, spoke concerning the resurrection of the Christ, that His soul was not left in Hades, nor did His flesh see corruption.**

**This Jesus God has raised up, of which we are all witnesses. 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.’**

**For David did not ascend into the heavens, but he says himself: ‘The Lord said to my Lord, ‘Sit at My right hand, till I make Your enemies Your footstool.’’ Therefore let all the house of Israel know assuredly that God has made this Jesus, whom you crucified, both Lord and Christ.’**

**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?’**

**Then Peter said to them, ‘Repent, and let every one of you be baptised in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins; and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. 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.’ And with many other words he testified and exhorted them, saying, ‘Be saved from this perverse generation.’**

**Then those who gladly received his word were baptised; and that day about three thousand souls were added to them.**

**And they continued steadfastly in the apostles’ doctrine and fellowship, in the breaking of bread and in prayers.**

**Then fear came upon every soul and many wonders and signs were done through the apostles.**

**Now all who believed were together, and had all things in common, and sold their possessions and goods and divided them among all, as anyone had need.**