

*We exist to make disciples who delight in God and make Him known
by proclaiming the gospel of Jesus Christ.*

Confronted with Jesus Christ

Acts 2:22-36

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Sermon Audio Blurb: Peter's opening sermon on the Day of Pentecost is a powerful declaration of two vital truths. First, that we are now living in the last days. And second, that Jesus was, and is, the Christ. That He died and rose again. And that He is returning to judge all His enemies. With those two points Peter confronts the Jews and us.

I. Introduction.

- A. Read Acts 2:22-36
- B. As you know we have before us the first sermon preached to the new birthed entity we call the "Church."
 - 1. It is known by various terms in the bible. All of them rich in their imagery. It is known as the temple of the Holy Spirit, it is a building and the people are the stones which make up the building. It is the flock of God and so on.
 - 2. What it is never called is Israel, the true Israel, or the spiritual Israel. This is a term frequently used in theology for the Church but it is not found anywhere within scripture.
 - 3. Rather, the Church is made up of both Jew and Gentiles creating from the two groups, as Paul writes in Ephesians 2 one new man. Something utterly new and different.
 - 4. But what stands out the most when considering the Church is its close relationship between the people of the Church and their Savior. It is impossible to separate them, you may make distinctions but never separation. He is the head and the Church is the body. He is the cornerstone and the Church is the building. He is the Shepherd and the Church is the flock.
- C. However, the great event that ushered in the Church Age was the coming and outpouring of the Holy Spirit.
 - 1. This is what Peter explained in the first part of this important sermon.

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2. And because the Holy Spirit has come in this manner it also indicates that the “Last Days” are now here. It is described as all of history hurtling toward what is known as the Day of the Lord and is described both as great and glorious.
 - a. It is a time of salvation for God’s people as Jesus Christ returns to rescue His people.
 - b. But also a time of utter dismay and judgment of those who spurn and reject Jesus Christ for who He is and what He has done.
 3. Therefore, the only answer for all hearing this is to turn from their way and call upon the Lord that He would save them.
- D. I ended my sermon last week noting that the very first sermon was expositional.
1. This simply means that it explains the Scripture.
 2. This is the essence of what a pastor is to do. If in doubt, preach. But preach what? Preach the Word. When? When it is convenient and popular and when it is inconvenient and dangerous.
 3. Why? Because it is God’s Word.
 - a. Peter does not bother telling the people what he thinks is happening. He is not interested in giving them a TED talk on the supernatural or unusual phenomena. Nor does he give a brief excursus on various views on deities and philosophy of religious.
 - b. Instead he says, “This is what was spoken through the prophet Joel.” And from there he does nothing more than quoting scripture after scripture and explaining them.
 - c. He does not need to come up with the content about what he will preach. That is provided to him, and us, in the bible. He merely needs to read it and explain it.
- E. There is something very powerful when you simply open the Word and explain it. And it is also very freeing. For the power and the import of what you say is not found in you, but in the Word of God. And God will accomplish what He wishes as it is proclaimed and explained.
- F. Today we will look at the second part of this sermon, where Peter confronts the listeners with the person of Jesus Christ.

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1. He now transitions from the first Old Testament quote to an application and exhortation.
 2. But do not miss the point here for your soul hangs upon understanding it. He has just said that if you call upon the name of the “Lord” you will be saved.
 - a. “Lord” there is the name of God. YHWH. There is only one, true God and His name is YHWH. This is the name He gave when He spoke to Moses and told him to go to Pharaoh.
 - b. So, to the Jew this was fine. They knew who YHWH was. He was their God and they were His People. So it is fine. Just repent and call upon Him.
 - c. But it is not that simple. For they had rejected Jesus and they did not receive Him for who He was and is. And therefore Peter was going to push Jesus to the forefront and confront them with Him.
- G. My goal today is to confront you with the person of Jesus. I want you to see what the bible says about Him. I want you to come to some conclusions about Him. What I don’t want is for you to think you can ignore Him.

Watchman Nee said this about Jesus:

First, if he claims to be God and yet in fact is not, he has to be a madman or a lunatic.

Second, if he is neither God nor a lunatic, he has to be a liar, deceiving others by his lie.

Third, if he is neither of these, he must be God.

You can only choose one of the three possibilities. If you do not believe that he is God, you have to consider him a madman. If you cannot take him for either of the two, you have to take him for a liar. There is no need for us to prove if Jesus of Nazareth is God or not. All we have to do is find out if He is a lunatic or a liar. If He is neither, He must be the Son of God.

Later, C. S. Lewis made a similar point when he said we must see Jesus as one of three possibilities: Liar, Lunatic or Lord.

1. What do you believe? Why do you believe it?
2. I am privileged to listen to people share what they believe about faith, sin, salvation and God all the time. It is consistently amazing to me how often they become vague on the person of Jesus Christ. Often they inadvertently

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err one way or the other. He is a man or He is God. He died or didn't die. He rose or He didn't rise, or only sort of rose. And so on.

3. So today, let us look at vs 22-36 and see what Peter shows us about Jesus Christ. Let us compare what we say about Him with what this Apostle says.

II. Confronted with Jesus Christ.

- A. First, we see His humanity (22a).
 1. Peter is not interested in trying to vaguely speak of Jesus. He is a man and that is that.
 2. Understand Plato's influence on the world of that day. One of the key ideas he successfully conveyed was that of matter. Matter was not superior; rather it was bad. Therefore the idea of God becoming "flesh" is simply preposterous. It is the same assumption that many use to think that Jesus would somehow lower Himself to sit upon an earthly throne in His Kingdom. It is not biblical thinking, but Platonic thinking.
 3. So in John 1:1, 14 we see a complete rejection of this.
 4. Philippians 2:5-7.
 5. So the bible knows nothing of something that is physical is somehow of lesser value or quality. Everything God has made is holy and good. And when Jesus took on flesh and became a man it was limiting but not bad. He grew tired, got hungry and thirsty. He was limited with regards to time and space. He suffered. He exhibited human emotions, intellect, and volition. And, of course, He died. He was a man.
 6. But He was without sin, which made Him unique.
 - a. We saw Him tempted by Satan in the early parts of the gospels. But He rejected each and every offer.
 - b. Hebrews speaks in chapter 2 that because He was tempted that He is able to come to our aid in are times of temptation. Even more important is chapter 4, "*For we do not have a high priest who cannot sympathize with our weaknesses, but One who has been tempted in all things as we are, yet without sin. Therefore let us draw near with confidence to the throne of grace, so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help in time of need.*"

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7. So a man, fully human, but without the stain and defilement of sin. Which is important for as Ezekiel the prophet says in 18:20, *“The soul that sins must die.”*
- B. Second, we see that Jesus was approved by God (22b).
 1. But not just any man, but God’s man. That word, “attested” speaks of proving. And who did the proving? Who placed this man, Jesus, before the world to show the world who He really was? God.
 2. How? In a tight summation of Jesus’ life Peter wonderfully draws the attention of the people to the Messiah.
 - a. God the Father worked miracles through Him and wonders and signs. These were well known by the people.
 - b. John 5:6ff.
 - (1) Note the miracle.
 - (2) Note the following comments by Jesus in light of what Jesus said in vs 17. [Father/Son Talk]
 - c. John 10:24-26.
 - d. John 12:34-40.
 3. Add this to the overt statements made by Jesus and the Scriptures and it becomes clearer and clearer who they all had seen and watched and killed.
 - a. What we find is that not only was He fully man but He was fully God. As it is written, *“you shall call Him Immanuel, which translated mean, ‘God with us.’”* (Matthew 1:23)
 - b. Jesus stuns the religious leaders in John 8:56ff.
 - c. In His final prayer in John 17 He utters these words (17:5)
 - d. And when even the famous doubting disciple Thomas finally saw the risen Jesus he could not contain himself but cried out, “My Lord and my God.”
 - e. And finally in Revelation 1:8 the Father says that He is the Alpha and the Omega and then at the end of Revelation in chapter 21 and 22 Jesus says that it is He who is the *“Alpha and Omega, the first and the last, the beginning and the end.”*

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- f. Two natures in one person. Not half and half but fully man and fully God. It is not the Son of God somehow taking possession of a human, but that the Son of God took upon Himself the full nature and essence of humanity.
- 4. The attestations given by Peter actually heap guilt on the people. It was no mystery about the many miracles and signs done by the hand of Jesus to various people. The works Jesus did were God working through Him. Again, guilt is heaped for they ignored the source of Jesus' power and authority.
- 5. "just as you yourselves know." Emphatic use here. The witnesses that shall be used against them are two: The first are the things they saw Jesus do. But the second will be themselves. They know what they saw. They are eye-witnesses and therefore guilty of suppressing what is true.
- C. Third, though it is clear that Jesus, who was sent by God, was then killed (23).
 - 1. Three groups here: God, the Jews and the Romans. And in this passage we see both the sovereignty of God and the responsibility of mankind.
 - 2. We learn that the death of Christ was no mistake. It was a plan made in ages past between the Son and the Father.
 - a. Ephesians 1:4 tells us that before the foundation of the world we were chosen by the Father to be saved by His Son.
 - b. John 6 says over and over again that Jesus had come to redeem and to save those who His Father had given to Him. Meaning, He was not here hoping to do something if things worked out. He came with a mission and purpose.
 - c. And a key part of that was to die. Why?
 - (1) Hebrews 9:22 says it bluntly, "without the shedding of
 - (2) But go to John 10 with me. Take them through vss 15ff. The substitutionary death.
 - 3. But for all of this it did not take away the guilt of the listeners.
 - a. The Jews were guilty though others did the actual act. They both conspired against Him or simply ignored and did nothing. But His blood is on their hands.

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- b. And it would end right there in many ways if nothing else happened. Jesus is dead. In time He will be forgotten and life will move on. The religious folks will keep looking for the promised Savior. The godless will go on living without any sense of God. And everything in between. Suns shall set, moons shall rise, seasons will flow by with babies being born, money being made and people finally lying down for the last time.
 - c. Except. . . There is a but. And beloved, in the dealings of humans there is always a “but.”
- D. Fourth, this God-man who was killed was raised again (24).
- 1. God overcame their godless actions and raised him up.
 - 2. And it is important to note that it was the Father who did this. It showed that the claims of Jesus Christ were true or He would not have raised Him.
 - 3. It showed His repeated statements that He must go to Jerusalem, be killed and rise again on the third day were actually true.
 - 4. But Peter makes the point that it was simply impossible to have death hold Him in power.
 - 5. 25-28
 - a. Note the “for” in vs 25.
 - b. Quotes Palm 16:8-11 attributed by Peter as being by David.
 - c. Again quotes it in vs 31.
 - d. The point of the Psalm is that the one referred to in it shall not be abandoned by God. David was not abandoned and the One, the eternal King, who would fulfill the Davidic covenant was also blessed with this promise.
 - e. Hades is the place where the dead are gathered to be judged. Jews believed that the soul stays with the body for three days and then departs.
 - 6. 29-33 is where Peter begins to expound upon Psalm 16.
 - a. (One thing that is happening here is the introduction of a second witness to the resurrection. The first were the witnesses, meaning these Jews, now it is to be the Scriptures.)

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- b. In vs 29 Peter essentially is saying that the ultimate referent of Psalm 16 was not about David.
 - (1) Why? Because David had died, buried and still in the tomb.
 - (2) Interesting side note, Herod apparently raided for money in the tomb around 135 BC. However the body was not disturbed and apparently fire kept his men back, killing two guards. This led to him building a marble memorial to the tomb that was rather impressive and was standing at the time of the sermon.
 - c. Therefore, in vs 30 he begins to make his point.
 - (1) As a prophet he was actually looking beyond himself to the ultimate “David” who would be raised.
 - (2) This was based off of the oath sworn by God, that made it a point of certainty.
 - (3) The oath points back to 2 Samuel 7:12-13 and the Davidic Covenant. This passage quickly became recognized as messianic.
 - d. Now, having risen and ascended He now becomes the one who sends the Spirit, and that is what is happening on this day. So it is not merely the outpouring of the Spirit, but that He is being outpoured by the resurrected Christ.
 - e. The big point in all of this is that Jesus is the Christ/Messiah and He is exalted to the right hand of God.
7. Vss. 34-35 is where Peter now moves to Psalm 110:1.
- a. The point is simple but important.
 - (1) David was not speaking of himself.
 - (2) Rather, he looked ahead to when the “Lord” [YHWH] said to another who would be David’s “Lord” to sit at His right hand.
 - (3) This is also a passage Jesus Himself quoted when refuting yet again the religious leaders of the time. His point is that the Christ could not be David’s son because David calls

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- him “Lord,” meaning YHWH. And the people could not answer Him.
- b. Notice also the issue of “location.”
 - (1) “For” is the reasoning of Peter.
 - (2) David isn’t the one who ascended into heaven. As he already pointed out, he was still in the grave.
 - (3) This makes it clear that he was not the ultimate point of Psalm 110 but the promised Savior was.
 - c. And so now the Lord is seated in heaven. For How long does he sit there?
 - (1) Until his enemies are a footstool.
 - (2) And that is what we see in these last days. Every enemy of Christ being brought low until He returns and makes all bow before Him.

III. Conclusion.

- A. In vs 36 Peter now concludes this sermon.
 - 1. Jesus is both Lord and Christ.
 - a. The Palestinian Jews used the term “Lord” for YHWH.
 - b. The Christ was the One God would send to rescue Israel.
 - c. And they crucified Him. . . the one God declares to be Lord and Christ. In other words, to kill the one who shares the throne of God is a sin directly against God.
 - 2. And so what does that make them? Enemies. And what did vs 35 say? Jesus’ enemies will be judged.
 - 3. They are guilty. Anyone who is a sinner is guilty. Anyone who rejects who and what Jesus is and has done is guilty.
 - 4. And the soul that sins must die.
 - 5. He is Man and He is God. He died as our Substitute due to our sin. And He rose again on the third day.
- B. Do you believe this? Is this your hope?

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- C. After Easter I hope to then show you the great work of salvation that is described for us in the rest of this chapter.

“May the Lord bless you and keep you; may the Lord cause his face shine upon you and be gracious to you; may the Lord lift up his countenance on you and give you peace.”

Small Group Questions

- **If there were any passages I had to skip due to time, go back and read them. Encourage the people to create a system of marking in their bibles that will help them find these verses later when they are needed.**
- **Compare this sermon of David with the sermon by Paul in Acts 17:22-32. Note similarities and differences. Why are these two so different in content? (CGLs email or text me if you are unsure of the answer yourself)**
- **Ask and practice describing the essence of the gospel over and over again with the group. What are the non-negotiables? Peter gives them so use this sermon as the basis of your study. But get it practiced until your whole group can randomly be asked, “What is the gospel?” and they will be able to state it quickly and cleanly. Make it a game if you want, but do it.**