

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

## *God's Method in Saving—Preaching, Pt 2*

### **Acts 2:14**

**Keywords:** Acts, Evangelism, Gospel, Preaching, Revival, Prophecy

**PowerPoint Presentation included:** none

**SermonAudio Blurb:** The excitement of the coming of the Holy Spirit has come but not the gospel. Now, in this incredibly important passage we see the God-given means to saving sinners, the preaching of the Word of God. What is preaching? And what are the impediments to hearing and believing the Word of God? In this sermon we see again the wisdom of God which confounds the wise of this world who see His ways as weak and foolish. We see the centrality and necessity of preaching.

#### **I. Introduction.**

- A. We come back today to the Acts 2.
  - 1. Last week we saw that Peter, now that the Holy Spirit has come, stands and begins to preach.
  - 2. A man who was once filled with argumentativeness and fear is now filled with boldness. And in the midst of a crowd of Jews he begins to expound the holy Scripture with the goal to point them all to Jesus Christ.
  - 3. But what we need to see is the method and come to some conclusions on why this method, preaching, was used.
- B. But last week I also gave you two out of three key reasons for the centrality and necessity of preaching in and for the Church. The first two were the grim reality in which every human finds himself.
  - 1. We said that these were impediments, which is a nice word. Massive, insurmountable barriers would be a better description.
  - 2. We saw that the sinfulness of man is full and complete. It captures every aspect of the human; affecting the body, mind and will. Strip away any person to their very core and it is not a spark of light or goodness, but evil and sin.
    - a. By nature we live and die under the dominion and power of sin.
    - b. We sin because we are sinners, not the other way around.
    - c. Because we are all sinners we fool ourselves into thinking we are quite fine and acceptable. But we are not.

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- d. Gunk illustration.
3. But a second reality also presses upon the whole of humanity as a group and as individuals. It is the work of Satan to blind us to the hope and life found in Jesus Christ.
  - a. We saw that the whole of the world lies in the lap of the evil one.
  - b. We walk in the power and influence of Satan.
  - c. And he blinds us to the beauty and glory of Jesus Christ.
    - (1) This is a powerful image given to us in 1 Corinthians by the Apostle Paul. We are described in other places as blind due to our innate sinfulness.
    - (2) And then Satan doubly blinds us through his lies, distractions and tricks.
    - (3) We believe there is no God, though our heart knows this is a lie. Our eyes behold the mysteries of the universe and it screams daily of His glory. But we shrug and look away.
    - (4) We believe, if we are willing to consider that maybe He exists, that He is uncaring and disinterested in us.
    - (5) Or we determine that He is an evil, hateful god who seeks to torment his creatures. And that he is not worthy of our love or obedience.
    - (6) Or perhaps it is the lie that believing and following Jesus Christ as Lord is to have a life of restrictions and rules. That it is designed to rob us of joy.
    - (7) Whatever the lie may be, for the unbelieving mind it is readily received and believed. By some of you, by your children, and by your friends.
    - (8) Anyone who does not know and love Jesus Christ is found believing lies of God because their heart loves darkness rather than light, as the gospel of John says.
4. One aspect that I did not cover last week is what I will call the sin hangover.

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- a. This is in regard to the Christian, the one who now believes the gospel of Jesus Christ and is saved from sin and forgiven.
  - b. Though we are saved from the power and dominion of sin we still deal with the presence of sin until either we die and are in the presence of Christ in heaven or He returns.
  - c. The bible speaks of this reality as the “flesh” in the better translations. Sometimes it is called the sin nature. Bottom line it is the same problem but not the same unbending, unbreakable reality.
  - d. Romans 7 speaks to this in very stark terms. Paul talks about how though he desires to do that which is good and right, the reality is that he doesn’t all the time. He sins. He fails. And that is our struggle too.
  - e. In Romans 12:1-2 he speaks of how this age is constantly pressing upon us, seeking to mold us into its rebellious image. And we must constantly battle it by renewing our mind daily via the Word of God.
  - f. 1 John 1:8-10 is helpful here.
    - (1) John’s joy is not complete (4) and the reason is that the readers are not living as they ought and so he instructs them....and us.
    - (2) He makes it clear in vs 5-6 that a life style of sin is not indicative of life in Christ. One cannot continue in unbroken sin and claim Christ.
    - (3) But we are also fooling ourselves if any of us here says he does not sin (8).
    - (4) So what is the cure? We confess (9).
    - (5) And 2:1 then becomes critical to remember. Always, always remember this.
5. And so, even as Christians we find the battle to be real and constant. Satan hurls his evil at us like fiery darts and he seeks to disrupt us and divert us from looking to Jesus and His forgiveness every day.

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- a. And this then leads to pride in the lives of the believer, thinking they have it all together on their own. They do not need the fellowship of others and they need not feed upon the Word of God.
  - b. And it leads to pride in the preachers, who abandon the only tool given to rightly battle the sin in the hearts of both believers and unbelievers alike.
  - c. The light of truth—the Word of God. It enlightens the heart of man and it pushes back the darkness of Satan’s lies.
- C. And so today we will make a shift from the problem to the means of salvation and growth. And it is preaching the Word.

## **II. The power in preaching the Word of God.**

- A. We must come to grips with this reality of preaching. We must see that it is of the utmost necessity or we will be led astray with great ease.
- 1. God has given us the ultimate tool to push back the darkness that threatens every believer and the ultimate tool that saves sinners. This is something we see throughout the bible.
  - 2. That tool is the Word of God. Not the Word of God and philosophy. Not the Word of God and marketing. Not the Word of God and social issues. It is the Word of God that both converts the soul and build God’s people up into maturity.
  - 3. Hear how this is described:
    - a. Deuteronomy 32:44-47.
      - (1) The word came to Israel from God.
      - (2) It is described as the “law.” But it is not just a list of rules, but it is the law by which God’s people are to live by and order themselves under.
      - (3) Do you believe this? And if so is it obvious within your choices and actions?
      - (4) Do you train up your children daily to walk in the ways of the Lord? Or do you train them to be unbelievers? What is the atmosphere that your children breathe daily in your home? And what atmosphere are they breathing elsewhere?

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- b. Psalm 19:7-14
  - (1) vss 1-6 speaks to natural revelation (not theology).
  - (2) 7-14 speaks to what is known as “special” revelation. This is simply knowledge and revelation that can only come through God’s supernatural means.
  - (3) Note vss 7-8 on how powerful the Word of God is. Nothing in nature can do any of these. Nothing in philosophy can do these things, nor psychology, nor laws and regulations, nor anything else under this sun.
- c. The whole of Psalm 119 is nothing but a exulting in the glory, sufficiency and power of the Word of God.
- d. Romans 1:16.
  - (1) Why shame? It is because to this age and the people of this age, it is weak and shameful.
  - (2) How many enter hell for eternity doubting and resisting and arguing against the truth of the gospel? How many cannot and will not see that in Jesus Christ sin, Satan and death are destroyed. Destroyed in His death and resurrection?
  - (3) And how many Christians buy into the lie that they must somehow appeal to the mind of the unbeliever until they make the gospel make sense to them?
  - (4) To philosophize and to rationalize it as if a dead mind can think of life.
  - (5) The gospel possesses the power of God. Think of that.
    - (a) The power that destroys nations and lifts up others. The power that holds Orion in its place and places doors around the seas, enclosing them in. The power that holds back the rain and the power that releases it where He wishes.
    - (b) He is the one who brings forth both life and death and all things hold together by Him and in Him.
    - (c) This is the power resident in the gospel message.

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- (6) Paul says, when tempted to speak something other than the gospel, “No!” But do you? Do we? Is this truly settled in your mind?
- e. 1 Thessalonians 2:13.
  - (1) He gives thanks. Why? Because of what they received.
  - (2) Two “logos” or words are presented. The word of man and the Word of God.
  - (3) But is he thankful to them that they received it? No, he thanks God. Why? Because it is what “works” in them.
  - (4) Why bring a word from the wellspring of all of humanity that cannot work when God has given you and I the Word of God, which is the very power of God for us.
- f. 2 Timothy 3:15
  - (1) Timothy had a believing mother and grandmother. Godly women. But that is not enough and never will be enough.
  - (2) Notice what leads a person to faith in Jesus Christ... the sacred writings, the Word of God.
  - (3) You can be an incredible believer and yet never raise your children to know and hear the only thing that will change them. Your example is never more powerful than the hearing of the Word of God.
- g. Hebrews 4:12-13.
  - (1) There is a parallelism here that is not immediately obvious. It is the Word of God in vs 12 and the God of the Word in vs 13.
  - (2) The word "sword" should be "scalpel." It is capable of separating what is inseparable. Notice also how it is "able" to judge the thoughts and intentions.
  - (3) We are too quick to abandon the Word of God as our tool of choice when exeging our homes, jobs, country and finances. We are too often practical atheists, or at least deists in life.

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4. So the tool God gives us is simply His Word. Whether that is found in the gospel or beyond it into the fulness of the bible matters little. That is our tool, our weapon of warfare in this life.
- B. Therefore, we need to embrace what the bible commands.
1. Ezekiel 3:26.
    - a. This poor prophet is asked to do so many things distasteful as a prophet of God. But the central task is to proclaim God's message to a rebellious, evil people.
    - b. In chapters 1-3 we have the commissioning of Ezekiel by God.
      - (1) What an intimidating call. How does one face an entire nation that is running headlong into destruction by both man and God?
      - (2) What is it that Ezekiel must take hold of and never let go?
    - c. It was simple really. What God says, you say. "Thus says the Lord" has far more power in it then, "May I suggest that you do such and such?"
    - d. Basically, Ezekiel is to deal faithfully with God's Word and leave the results to God. All of us must learn this until it flows in our veins and synapses.
  2. 2 Timothy 4:2.
    - a. We cannot underestimate the power and problem of sin in the life and mind of the unbeliever.
    - b. But we also cannot underestimate our own problem with our own hangover with sin.
    - c. Paul is waiting to die here. He has no more time left. He writes only what is critical for Timothy to hear and know.
    - d. And therefore he commands something so clear and so simple that it is amazing that we continue to forget it. Preach the Word.
    - e. We have one basic responsibility: "Preach the Word!" Mothers and fathers need to do this. Husbands and wives must do this. We must do it to ourselves daily. "Preach the Word!"

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- (1) Notice that this is very clear and concise. You and I are to proclaim only one thing, God's Word.
- (2) This immediately define and confines everyone of us if we are faithful. The content of our preaching/teaching/instruction is to be the Word of God. We don't mention it and then jump off into other things, but rather we remain in it.
- (3) This is the essence of James' concern. Are you and I hearers of the Word only or doers of it?
- (4) The fool hears the Word but then looks elsewhere for the "real" answer. But the wise person hears it and then does it.

## **III. Conclusion.**

- A. And this is what we see with Peter on this fateful day in Acts 2.
  1. A massive crowd gathers around and he stand up and begins to preach.
  2. But it is not a carefully constructed speech born out of the mind of man. It is a scripture infused and informed message.
  3. He preaches without fear. He preaches without vagaries and hedging and equivocating.
- B. He tells them what the Word says is actually taking place before their eyes.
  1. He tells them of Jesus. And what the Scripture says about Him.
  2. He tells them what Jesus did.
  3. And worse he tells them what they did to Jesus.
  4. And most powerfully he tells them of Jesus' resurrection, His ascension and the reality of His judgment to come.
- C. He is like Ezekiel.
  1. If they listen, then they listen. If they refuse, they refuse.
  2. But one thing he will do is preach the Word.
  3. Or as I often say it, "Preach the Word and let the chips fall where they may."



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- D. So as we think about 2021 and what it may bring let us again recommit ourselves to that task. As individuals, as households and as a church, let us be a people who are of the Word.

## ***Benediction***

**May the word of Christ dwell in you richly, teaching and admonishing one another in all wisdom, singing psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, with thankfulness in your hearts to God. And whatever you do, in word or deed, do everything in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him. Amen.**

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## Small Group Questions

- Come up with various ways you or those you know resist the reality of their lostness and slavery to sin. Try to see how many lies you can come up with. It is best if you think about yourself before looking outward. Before salvation, what did you think and say to yourself?
- What are ways you are learning to see the need to better understand the Scripture in your life? What are ways Missio might help you in this? Or, what is an issue you know the Word but you are reluctant to hear it and obey it? What can we do to help you?