

Acts 2:47 Sunday

September 24, 2017

The line between the source of good and the source of evil is as clear as the difference between absolute light and absolute darkness. In John's preamble to his gospel he said, "In Him was life and his life was the light of men. The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not overcome it." No passage in scripture more clearly draws the line in the conflict between good and evil in its purest form than Acts 2:22-24, part of a sermon by Peter.

Peter has summarized the events of Pentecost, highlighted as far as the crowds were concerned, by this phenomenon of speaking in other languages. He has put this in a prophetic, scriptural framework. His understanding of that event is different from many today that would say it was only for that time. For Peter:

1. It was part of the ultimate proofs that Jesus was the Son of God. Jh 16:17; Rom 1
2. The clear statement, "The promise is unto you, your children and to all that are afar off, even as many as the Lord our God shall call." Acts 2:39
3. It continues today;

Peter observes in Acts 2:22-24:

1. It was the man, Jesus the Nazarene, that is, not an apparition or emanation, nothing less than the one who was born and lived with thousands of witnesses to his manhood;
2. He was attested to by the Father with miracles, wonders and signs which God worked or performed before endless witnesses to leave no doubt He was who He claimed to be;
3. God knew ahead how we would treat Him;
4. He was nailed to a cross,
5. **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.

All of the elements of the battle are there: the humanity of Christ, the viciousness of evil: **"But God raised him from the dead."**

It is that that lets us know that no power of sin can hold a person who reaches to the Savior. I love *Jesus Messiah, name above all names, blessed redeemer, Immanuel (God with us); Rescue for sinners, ransom from heaven; Jesus Messiah, Lord of all.*

This service today is a service of praise for what God has done and is doing. The history of a few people gathered in the little fishing village that was called Harlem, down by the river, praying that God would raise up a Pentecostal church; partially in answer to those prayers, He raised up Northland Cathedral, and you, the church, have been a powerhouse raising up churches around the world. Each year several hundred

thousand dollars are given to missionaries to spread this gospel. If we did nothing else, this church would be worthwhile beyond words.

But thousands have found Christ here, many are in the ministry, some in college and seminary today; thousands have been in business, shining the light of Jesus Christ for three generations in dark places, in educational institutions, law, both in enforcement and advocacy, in research, raising kids, serving in the military: representing Christ.

The question is, "What keeps this church going?" What patterns and practices are essential? The short answer is, the same thing that got it started.

1. Preaching, conviction and repentance; vs 36, 27. When they heard Peter, they were pierced to the heart, said what shall we do, and repented of their sin.
 - a. The church like Peter and all after him, proclaimed truth, anointed by the Holy Spirit; men believed and in response, repented.
 - b. There is no other way to become part of the church, the body of Christ, the Kingdom of God, than believing and acting on that faith.
2. The practice of baptism in water is essential. It is the step of identification, a symbolic act that becomes an essential act because it is done in faith and obedience. Jesus commanded it in Matthew 28:18 ***"All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth. Go therefore and make the disciples of all the nations (ethnos, races), baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age."***
3. The continuing education, pursuing fellowship, small group experience and prayer;
4. There is a sense of awe in the presence of God. That was the atmosphere in the early church as people witnessed the presence of God.
5. Services were marked by praise. This is a church of praise.
6. This church does a lot, including sports, book clubs, men's clay shoot, antique and special car shows, Holiday bazaar; These things are auxiliary, but effective. I am certain I do not know all, but at the heart is exactly what Jesus instructed, what was followed, what was done out of spiritual intuition, and what the Spirit was leading to do.

Churches built on personality cult, entertainment, or who has the hottest band, that church will not stand when the waters rise, the laws change, or the ease is gone. But this church will.

This church did not begin with me, nor will it end without me.

It began with the one who said, I will build my church and the gates of hell will not stop it. The seed of the church is also the head of the church, Jesus Christ.