

Part 2 - Acts Chapter 2

- Hey, if you guys got your Bible, can you open up to acts chapter two or your phone or whatever you got? **Acts Chapter 2.**
- We are just going to jump right into week two of our series and just a quick little statement here at the beginning is — in order to really pull this series off, I really need you guys to read the book of Acts on your own.
- I know, homework in church but I could be an old preach and say instead of it being homework, let's call it heartwork but I'm not going to do that...or did I just do that?
- But seriously, read the book of acts, pick a chapter a day and read it and you will finish it by the end of the month, better grab some friends and read it together because in order for us to make it through this with you really understanding it, you are going to have to know what's going on around the places we hit as we move through the book of Acts
- And so for instance — tonight we are looking at the first sermon spoken by Peter at Pentecost and so if you've just walked in and you weren't here, it's a little bit like you walked into a movie 30 minutes late and you are like...whoa...what is happening here
- And so tonight, because we are so fresh in — I will get you up to speed because there are some things you need to know that happen in Acts 1 that set the trajectory for the rest of the book.
- The first thing is in the very first verse, acts one verse one, there's this interesting phrase by the author of Acts, which is Luke, who also wrote the Gospel. Luke, he wrote Luke and Acts together — it's like a two part series.
- And he says in the first verse in the first book, **O Theophilus, I have dealt with all that Jesus began to do and teach**
- So Luke is writing now this book of Acts and he is saying that in the first book I wrote I told you all about the things that Jesus began to do and teach
- Which is interesting because it doesn't say, I wrote about all that Jesus did.
- He says, I wrote about all that Jesus began and **so the implication here is that Jesus is continuing to do and teach things, but now he's doing it from a different place.**
- In the book of Luke, we see Jesus doing it from Earth and in the book of Acts we see Jesus doing it from heaven because he sends the Holy Spirit into these people to then go do the work.
- Your Bible might say Acts of the Apostles — which is how a lot of people have titled it — but it could just as easily be titled the Acts of Jesus because these Acts that we are going to see — Jesus already began doing them in Luke and the reality is he never stopped doing them — he's still doing them, just in a different way
- **And this is really important because each and every one of us need to understand that in the book of Acts, Paul and Barnabas and Silas and Steven and Peter and John and James. — All these guys. They're not the hero. They're**

not the hero of the book of acts. Jesus is the one doing — Jesus is the one building all these churches

- Which is maybe said news or great news for you and I — **we aren't the hero of our own stories either** — Jesus is — Jesus is doing the redeeming — the Holy Spirit is doing the empowering — we are just living faithfully and in that we continue doing what Jesus began to do in the Book of Acts — that make sense?
- And so here in Acts chapter two the Holy Spirit promised in Acts 1:8 that we talked about last week is going to come at the festival called Pentecost.
 - Now, Pentecost means 50 days after Passover, that's what the pence — we're 50 days after the Passover. So this is 50 days after the crucifixion of Jesus.
 - And what happened at the Pentecost is that all the Jews from, not all of them, but many Jews from the entire Roman empire would come to Jerusalem and celebrate this feast.
- And so at this time, Peter and some of the other apostles, they're together, they're praying and they have this opportunity. They're near the temple. And so they get up and they start speaking the Gospel in all these other peoples language and some are amazed and some mock them and says they must be drunk because that makes a ton of sense, when I'm around sloshed people, they usually start speaking a different language, silly religious leaders
 - **Anyways, Peter says no non — let me explain and so from Acts 2 verses 14-41 he goes into this sermon explaining what happened over not just the last 50 days but really the last four years**
- And he explains to them — who is Jesus and what we are suppose to do about it
- And that's where I want to read right now, just the very end of the sermon verses 36-41 and then we will go back and reference some of the other things that come but I want you to get the punchline of what Peter preached that day first, so **Acts 2:36-41** it says this, **36 Let all the house of Israel therefore know for certain that God has made him both Lord and Christ, this Jesus whom you crucified.** **37 Now when they heard this they were cut to the heart, and said to Peter and the rest of the apostles, "Brothers, what shall we do?"** **38 And Peter said to them, "Repent and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins, and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. 39 For the promise is for you and for your children and for all who are far off, everyone whom the Lord our God calls to himself."** **40 And with many other words he bore witness and continued to exhort them, saying, "Save yourselves from this crooked generation."** **41 So those who received his word were baptized, and there were added that day about three thousand souls.**
- Ok, so when you think of major events in the Bible, you've got creation, you've got the fall in the garden, and you've got the flood, you've got the 10 commandments at Mount Sinai, the birth of Jesus, the death of Jesus, the resurrection of Jesus.
- And then you've got Pentecost, the birth of the church. This is the **outpouring of the Holy Spirit that Jesus had been telling his disciples about for a long time and now**

we finally see this major outpouring of the Holy Spirit into his people, empowering them for ministry

- Empowering them to do the very thing that Jesus commanded them to do, to go and make disciples of all nations.
- And when the Spirit comes upon them they begin to preach the gospel and it's a long sermon and so I just want to summarize it really quickly and then walk through how we can understand the flow of it
- Here's what Peter is saying as whole in this sermon, everyone's guilty and if you repent, everything will change
 - Everyone's guilty and if you repent, everything will change.
- **And so I'm going to walk back through that and show how Peter speaks to each of those things. So the first thing is everyone is guilty.**
 - Look back at what he said in verse 36 - he says this, **verse 36 36 Let all the house of Israel therefore know for certain that God has made him both Lord and Christ, this Jesus whom you crucified."**
- Ok remember what's happening here at Pentecost? These are people who are coming from throughout the whole Roman empire — and a lot of them haven't even heard about Jesus, and they for sure weren't there on the day that he was crucified.
- And so Peter is standing here and saying — hey you — you crucified Jesus.
 - And really if you read the whole sermon this is actually Peter doubling down on this statement because if you look back at **verse 23, you see he says, 23 this Jesus, delivered up according to the definite plan and foreknowledge of God, you crucified and killed by the hands of lawless men.**
- Now...let me ask you this question — how would you feel if someone was accusing you of killing somebody that you didn't know and that you didn't physically kill?
- What is Peter doing here? **Why is he pushing us and the hearers of this sermon toward this guilt of we've actually done something against Christ even though you never met him or saw him and weren't present for it most likely?**
- Well let me explain it a couple of different ways — Here's the first one. There's this painter a really **famous painter named Rembrandt** — some of you know his work but he did this one painting where he actually painted himself into the crucifixion of Jesus.
 - So you know the picture where you see Jesus being crucified and there are the two thieves and a lot of people around — Rembrandt painted himself as a person in the painting and what he was trying to communicate is that he took Peter's words here and was like, "yeah — I did kill him"
 - **I wasn't physically there, but I share in this sin that put him there**
- And that's true of all of us — in fact there is a song we sing called How Deep the Fathers Love for Us and one of the lines is — Behold a man upon a cross, my sin upon his shoulders, ashamed I hear my mocking voice, call out among the scoffers, it was my sin that held him there, until it was accomplished, his dying breath has brought me life, I know that it is finished
- And so in Rembrandt's painting he literally paints himself into the line "I hear my mocking voice call out among the scoffers"

- And so it feels weird to say, I killed Jesus, but I killed Jesus and you did too
 - Not that you were there, but you participated in the same sin that put him there.
 - You participated in the rejection of God's authority in your life.
 - All of us did. And it is so important for us to get this because the book of Acts, this sermon, and the rest of the book of Acts, it doesn't make sense if we don't get this desperation and guilt is a prerequisite for salvation.
 - We all know about prerequisites right — like you have to take this class before that class — this has to come before that — well the same is true with the Gospel, guilt has to come before grace
- If you want to know how sweet and amazing grace is, you've got to know how bitter and ugly sin is.
- And so Peter wants his listeners to get this and so as he preaches this first sermon in Acts he reiterates this point twice — that they crucified Jesus
 - Listen, every time we reject God's authority in our life — every time we intentionally disobey him what we are doing is whispering in our hearts, crucify him, crucify him.
 - I know when we read the stories in Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John, you see these people yelling out, crucify him! Kill him!
 - And we just think, man, they're awful people but here's the reality, — we whisper the same things in our hearts — every time we mute the voice of God, every time we walk in intentional disobedience, our heart whispers, crucify him.
 - Every time we give into materialism, every time we minimize our own sin and maximize the sins done against us, we whisper, crucify him in our hearts.
 - We participate in the crucifixion of Jesus. That's how we participate — no, we weren't literally there, but every time we let our sinful desires overcome our spiritual ones, we shout, crucify him.
 - And here's, here's why all of this matters because like I said — we need to understand guilt before we can understand grace and we need to remember it.
- And what is crazy is the people that Peter is speaking to are primarily Jews and the average Jewish male had about 5,000 Bible verses memorized.
 - They went to church or synagogue. They're generally pretty moral people and Peter is saying, you killed him, you killed him.
 - Everyone's guilty, and then even at the end of his sermon, he says “Save yourselves from this crooked generation.”
- Listen, when the Bible says that we've fallen short of the glory of God, that doesn't just mean that we're not as glorious as God is — It means that we have failed to do the one thing that we are created to do, which is to glorify God.
 - Sin is not just missing the mark as if you are shooting bow and arrow — like you're actually trying to aim at the right thing — that's not sin — sin is actually aiming at the complete wrong things — it's aiming at self glory instead of God's glory.
- Everyone's guilty and we make all kinds of errors when we, undermine the gravity of sin and allow it to just kinda be this mistake mentality. Like I sinned, I made a mistake — oh, you did more than that....

- There's a great quote by **Rosaria Butterfield** and she says this about sin, **"Sin is not a mistake. A mistake is taking the wrong exit on the highway. Sin is treason against a holy God."**
- I think that's good — see sometimes we have a mistake mentality when it comes to sin and when we do that we don't rightly internalize it
 - Or sometimes when it comes to sin, instead of having a mistake mentality we take on a **victim mentality** — we say things like — I'm just a victim of this thing, like I didn't really want to do it but God put me in this position we say, "Well it's God's fault because the Bible says I can't be tempted beyond what I can bear and God will provide a way out" — you're right, that way out is exactly what Peter is talking about — it's Jesus
- And so we can't fall into the victim mentality. We can't fall into the mistake mentality and we can't fall into the **comparison mentality** — which I'm better than the person sitting next to you or I'm better than I was five years ago so maybe I'm ok
 - **No when we think about sin and truly own it — we don't look at the people around us and we don't even look at our previous self — we look at God who is perfect, holy, eternal and infinite value**
 - **We see how pure and awesome and beautiful and majestic he is and then we realize just how sinful we are**
- And so what do we do? Well that was the question they asked too — look at it in verse 39, they literally ask — **"Brothers, what shall we do?"** 38 **And Peter said to them, "Repent and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins, and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit."**
- So what do we do? Well Peter says, all of us are far off, we are all rebels Ephesians 3 will say this **you were dead in the sins which you once walked, following the course of this world, following the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that is now at work in the sons of disobedience**
 - I mean, listen, sometimes there are those of you who don't think you have a good enough testimony? Like it's not messy enough, you didn't do enough bad stuff, you came to Christ too early — the reality is the Bible says you were wretched — in fact you were a son of Satan
- I mean...try that out for your testimony and so Peter says — Salvation can be found in Christ — to all who are far off — it's available to all who are far off.
 - **And so I ask you this question today — do you feel far off? Maybe you're like, you're a freshman, you're couple months into this thing and you've already screwed up the college thing.**
 - **You feel far off from God or there are those of you who are in here that just feel like you just keep coming up empty** with God and I just want you to know that I'm glad each of you are here because I'm betting there are a lot of people in Peter's audience who were also coming up empty, asking the same kind of questions you're asking — like what does God have to say to me? I feel far off
- I feel too far off, unstable and Peter reminds them that's exactly who God came for

- Listen, pick some of the greatest in the Bible and you will see adulterers, thieves, cowards, drunkards, thieves, deceivers and yet God called them to himself and redeemed them
- Dare I say, it's those people that God loves to use. The people who are far off.
- In fact the disciples range from a tax collector all the way to the other extreme a zealot — both despised the other and Christ puts them on the same team together
- How — there's this word **repent** it
- **So the first word says to them in his response to "What should we do?"**
- And so I want to talk about this word repent for just a little bit — repent because it's not a word we use in every day vocabulary but we really need to understand what it is what repentance is in in order to actually do it
- So let me draw your attention back to **verse 37** it says **37 Now when they heard this** (this being that the first part of the sermon of Peter, when they heard this,) **they were cut to the heart, and said to Peter and the rest of the apostles, "Brothers, what shall we do?"** **38 And Peter said to them, "Repent and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins, and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.**
- So it's kind of interesting when you are reading this because it says, **they were cut to the heart**, — so they were cut to the heart already and then later he tells them to repent. Why?
 - Why is that important? Here's why — I think sometimes we think of repentance as just that feeling of regret.
 - It's like just that feeling of like feeling bad about what you've done but actually what these verses are showing us — is that is just being cut to the heart — that's just the starting point
- And once you are there then repentance is something after that where there is a regret that then turns into a resolve and a reorientation of your life
 - **Repentance is to have a new allegiance — that your allegiance is no longer your own comfort and yourself as God but instead, your new allegiance is to Jesus Christ.**
 - That's what repentance is. It's not, it's not just a change of life — It's actually a change of mind that then leads to a change of life.
 - Repentance is not, it's not about climbing, but more about collapsing. **There's an author named Jack Miller and he writes that his new year's resolution every year is the same resolution and that is to collapse more fully onto Christ.**
 - That's repentance. It's not climbing. It's collapsing,
 - **And so Peter Calls these people to repent. It's different than regret. It's resolved to then actually do something different about it, to see life differently from now on.**
 - **It includes a new state of mind and new allegiance, new worldview.**
- But Repentance isn't just doing something about your failure — it's actually admitting that you can't do anything about your failure — That's repentance.
 - I just want to be clear that it's, it's not a works thing. It's not something that you achieve. It's something that you receive — you receive repentance

- Religion says there's good people and then there's bad people, but the Gospel says there's repentant people and then there's unrepentant people because everybody's bad.
- It's not that there's good and bad, it's everybody's bad.
- But one who is repentant realizes their badness and there's nothing they can do to fix it and instead of running to clean yourself up you realize you can't and that it's only through Christ who never failed are we made clean
- So here in Peter's sermon he says — listen, when you see and recognize, when the reality that you crucified Christ, that you whisper crucify him in your heart in your sin and you recognize that and it cuts deep down and then you just fall at his feet you repent and say I can do nothing I need you — that moment when you give up trying to justify yourself to God and instead you just say, here I am, I can do nothing but believe
- And when you do that — everything changes and Peter says when you get there several things will happen — you will get a new status, you will get a new power, you will get a new mission and you will have a new King
- And I want to walk us through that so new status — you get your sins forgiven, you're not just back at zero or just out of debt but you are actually rich in Christ — you get a new status — you are forgiven
- Next we get a new power. It says that you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit
 - The reality is there are two great needs in life to do the things God calls us to and that's pardon and power — and we receive that pardon through Christ and his resurrection and we receive that power through the Holy Spirit who makes his home in each one of us when we call on the Lord and Savior
 - That quite literally there is a new King in your life, the prince of the power of darkness is no more ruler of your life — instead the God your maker has brought you near through His son and empowered you through The Spirit
 - And lastly — you get a new mission — which is to make disciples of all nations, to preach the Gospel to people who don't know it.
- New status, new power, new mission, new King — it's not you as ruler, but Christ now.
 - Every blessing that we receive Jesus had to pay for on the cross. That's the good news of the Gospel.
 - God made him who had no sin to be sin for us so that in Him we might become the righteousness of God.
 - Jesus suffered for us so that we could be saved by him. And I know in a room this size, there's there, there's a lot of us probably on the fence and I wanna I want to say this gently, but I also want to say it clearly that if, if you don't know what to do with Jesus, what to do with this Gospel, indecision is a decision.
- And so I want to gently but also clearly push you to listen to the words of Peter, which really are ultimately the words of Christ and to say, come home, you're far off. Come home, you have sin. I can forgive it. Come home, call out to me. That's what Jesus is saying to every single one of us and I hope that you're listening.