



# First Baptist Church Selmer

FOUNDATIONS OF THE CHURCH • BOLDNESS • ACTS 2:14-41 • 8/20/2023

## MAIN POINT

Knowledge and acceptance of the Gospel lead believers to a willingness to boldly proclaim the Gospel to reach others for the Kingdom of God.

## INTRODUCTION

As your group time begins, use this section to introduce the topic of discussion.

**Apart from weekly services at FBC Selmer, what other preachers do you listen to often?**

**What style of preaching do you prefer to listen to? (Prophetic, practical, prosperity, etc.)**

**If the preacher was to emphasize one central truth in his sermons each week, what would you say it needs to be? Why?**

There are all kinds of ways now to access information in hopes of engaging people and holding their attention. With access to commentaries, translations, and sermon archives that are available to us, there is no limit. In Acts 2, God captured the attention of thousands who were in Jerusalem for Pentecost (Acts 2:1-13) with supernatural sounds, sights, and the miracle of ordinary Galileans speaking in the many native languages to all who were present. But the primary tool God used to reach the hearts of listeners was, and always will be, the bold proclamation of His Word.

# UNDERSTANDING

Unpack the biblical text to discover what the Scripture says or means about a particular topic.

| HAVE A VOLUNTEER READ ACTS 2:14-21.

*14 "But Peter, standing with the eleven, lifted up his voice and addressed them: 'Men of Judea and all who dwell in Jerusalem, let this be known to you, and give ear to my words. 15 For these people are not drunk, as you suppose, since it is only the third hour of the day. 16 But this is what was uttered through the prophet Joel:*

*17 And in the last days it shall be, God declares, that I will pour out my Spirit on all flesh, and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, and your young men shall see visions, and your old men shall dream dreams; 18 even on my male servants and female servants in those days I will pour out my Spirit, and they shall prophesy. 19 And I will show wonders in the heavens above and signs on the earth below, blood, and fire, and vapor of smoke; 20 the sun shall be turned to darkness and the moon to blood, before the day of the Lord comes, the great and magnificent day. 21 And it shall come to pass that everyone who calls upon the name of the Lord shall be saved.'" (ESV)*

Peter and the others had been accused of being drunk. But bold, brash Peter had changed. The same Peter who had denied Christ to protect his reputation now boldly jumped to defend Jesus. Now, Peter didn't care what people thought about him; he cared only that they knew Jesus.

**What made all the difference in the boldness that Peter demonstrated so often in his life?**

**What did Peter mean when he said, "in the last days"? (v.17)**

This wasn't the only time the New Testament referred to current events as part of the "last days" (Hebrews 1:1-2, 1 Peter 1:20, 1 Cor. 10:11, 1 John 2:18). In all these texts the "last days" came when Jesus came. The coming of the Messiah was the beginning of the end—the beginning of the "last days." They will reach their climax with Jesus' second coming. In other words, Peter was right to say it, and so are we now.

**How should this understanding that we are in the last days impact our boldness to share the Gospel?**

The main effect of the outpouring of the Holy Spirit on all who believe is bold, prophetic speech. This should describe us, too. If we truly seek God daily and invite His Spirit to move in and through us, then we will be so gripped by Him that we see the greatness of Jesus with extraordinary clarity and boldness. Catastrophe will come, but in the midst of the darkness, the gospel will be preached throughout the whole world. The church will have extraordinary power, zeal, passion, and love for Jesus.

| HAVE A VOLUNTEER READ ACTS 2:22-36.

*22 "Men of Israel, hear these words: Jesus of Nazareth, a man attested to you by God with mighty works and wonders and signs that God did through him in your midst, as you yourselves know - 23 this Jesus, delivered up according to the definite plan and foreknowledge of God, you crucified and killed by the hands of lawless men. 24 God raised him up, loosing the pangs of death, because it was not possible for him to be held by it. 25 For David says concerning him,*

*'I saw the Lord always before me, for he is at my right hand that I may not be shaken; 26 therefore my heart was glad, and my tongue rejoiced; my flesh also will dwell in hope. 27 For you will not abandon my soul to Hades, or let your Holy One see corruption. 28 You have made known to me the paths of life; you will make me full of gladness with your presence.'*

*29 Brothers, I may say to you with confidence about the patriarch David that he both died and was buried, and his tomb is with us to this day. 30 Being therefore a prophet, and knowing that God had sworn with an oath to him that he would set one of his descendants on his throne, 31 he foresaw and spoke about the resurrection of the Christ, that he was not abandoned to Hades, nor did his flesh see corruption. 32 This Jesus God raised up, and of that we all are witnesses. 33 Being therefore exalted at the right hand of God, and having received from the Father the promise of the Holy Spirit, he has poured out this that you yourselves are seeing and hearing. 34 For David did not ascend into the heavens, but he himself says,*

*'The Lord said to my Lord, Sit at my right hand, 35 until I make your enemies your footstool.'*

*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." (ESV)*

**What were the conflicting opinions about Jesus that Peter would have been confronting with his testimony?**

**Why do you think he picked these two Old Testament passages as support for his message?**

**List all the characteristics that describe Peter's sermon (ex: bold, courageous (v. 22-24)).**

We'll find some additional characteristics in verses 37-41, but Peter's sermon didn't dance around the truth. He made a personal connection with a historical one. Peter used a current event in the miracle of the spoken languages. It was both passionate and urgent. His message was for everyone and called for repentance. Every one of these characteristics demonstrates that Peter's sermon was Christ-centered, not self-centered.

| HAVE A VOLUNTEER READ ACTS 2:37-41.

*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." (ESV)*

**How did the people respond to Peter's sermon?**

**From verse 40, what would you say was Peter's greatest hope in preaching?**

We can't determine a person's response to a message, but we can play a huge role in determining the message that he or she receives. We cannot worry if we are liked or if we offend someone's personal belief system. Our greatest hope must be that the person meets Jesus. This will only happen when the centrality of our message is Christ Himself.

## APPLICATION

Help your group identify how the truths from the Scripture passage apply directly to their lives.

**In what ways are the bold proclamation of the Gospel and Christ-centered preaching similar? How are they different?**

**What steps can we take to keep Christ at the center of all our conversations when sharing the gospel message?**

## PRAYER

Thank God for Peter's example of bold, Christ-centered preaching. Invite the Holy Spirit to move in each of you in these last days in such a way that the gospel would be the center of your conversations. Ask the Holy Spirit to move in those we speak to in the coming week.

## COMMENTARY

| ACTS 2:14-41

2:14–16. Now filled with the Holy Spirit and fresh from the Pentecost experience, Peter found new courage. He commanded immediate attention and addressed his remarks to fellow Jews and all who lived in Jerusalem. Drunkenness? Not a chance. Not at nine in the morning. On feast days a Jew would not break fast until ten.

Most scholars believe Peter spoke in Aramaic, the common dialect of Jerusalem which all there would have understood. It was the third hour of the day, a customary hour of prayer. Peter's interesting argument may contain a bit of humor. He sounds rather like a pastor saying to a crowd gathered outside the church, "Our deacons aren't drunk yet—it's too early for that." There is no intent to indicate that the believers ever became drunk, but to provide a clear-cut, non-challengeable argument against the charge of drunkenness.

2:17–21. Peter launched into a recitation of Joel 2:28–32 reproduced by Luke from the Greek Old Testament, the Septuagint. No doubt Peter saw this passage fulfilled at Pentecost, at least in part. Men and women, young and old who gathered in Jerusalem after the ascension had experienced the pouring out of the Holy Spirit and subsequently proclaimed God's wonders. Are we to understand that Peter thought the wonders in the heavens of verses 19 and 20 had also been fulfilled at Pentecost? The context implies that the remainder of Joel's prophecy, the full experience of cosmic wonders, would await the full repentance of God's chosen nation. Nevertheless, it is part of the passage in Joel, so he thunders on to get to his major theme, And everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved.

In terms of the earthly life and ministry of Jesus, this was the end of the beginning. The Christians will now carry on what he began to do (1:1–2). In terms of the unfolding of the church era, however, the New Covenant age, this was the beginning of the end. Prophecy had been renewed in fulfillment after four hundred years. God was at work again among his people—the resurrection and Pentecost had proven that.

What does it mean to be saved? Certainly for Peter the “Lord” in the Joel passage is Jesus Christ. The spokesman for the twelve and all the other believers called all who would listen to turn to the Savior, God’s Messiah, and in doing so, find life through his name. We will see this message and challenge many times in Acts.

2:22–28. The Book of Acts contains twenty-three sermons or speeches, including seven by Peter and eleven by Paul. Verse 22 stands in the middle of Peter’s first public sermon. Verses 14–16 constitute the introduction; verses 17–21 make up the text; verses 22–36 form the body; and verses 38–41 offer the conclusion/application.

2:22. During Jesus’ time on earth his ministry was guaranteed by threefold evidence—miracles, wonders, and signs—precisely the marks of an apostle which Paul identified in 2 Corinthians 12:12. Interestingly, first-century Jews didn’t deny Jesus’ miracles; that seems to be a theological characteristic of more modern times. The key term of the verse is surely the word accredited, used often in first-century Greek for people holding some official office. Jesus’ mighty acts pointed to divine power behind his life and ministry, thereby certifying that he was the Messiah.

2:23. Frequently the New Testament links predestination and free will, the two elements of a divine paradox. God handed over Jesus for crucifixion, but wicked men put him to death. So often people ask, “Does God choose us for salvation, or do we choose to believe the gospel?” Human reason searches for philosophical solutions, but the only biblical answer is a simple yes. Somehow in God’s eternal plan, these two seemingly parallel roads come together.

2:24–28. Peter’s sermon progresses well; in typical New Testament form, he comes right to the point: resurrection. Verses 25–35 in this chapter contain four evidences of the resurrection: David’s tomb, the witnesses, that very Day of Pentecost, and the ascension witnessed by the eleven disciples. God may have handed Jesus over for crucifixion, but he also raised him from the dead. As strange as it might seem to the human mind, Messiah’s death was God’s will.

Thus Peter turns to Psalm 16:8–11. Surely readers of the Old Testament up to this point had applied Psalm 16 only to David. Peter, speaking through the Holy Spirit, now certified it as a messianic prophecy. He did not use the psalm to prove the resurrection but to affirm the messiahship of Jesus. Peter didn't bother to prove the resurrection at all—he just proclaimed it. God raised Jesus to experience joy in your presence.

2:29–30. Something new has been added. Not only was David's psalm a messianic prophecy but the application of the psalm to Jesus is also linked with the fact that the Messiah came in David's line. David may have considered himself a shepherd and a king, but Peter tells us he was also a prophet, whether aware of it or not. We see here a major key to understanding Scripture, namely—Christ is the unifying link between the Old and New Testaments. Luke had already concluded his first report to Theophilus on precisely this point: "Then he opened their minds so they could understand the Scriptures. He told them 'This is what is written: The Christ will suffer and rise from the dead on the third day, and repentance and forgiveness of sins will be preached in his name to all nations, beginning at Jerusalem. You are witnesses of these things' " (Luke 24:45–48).

2:31–32. Not only did David understand Jesus' coming, he also foretold his resurrection. Standing in the crowd that day were many local residents who were familiar with the events that had transpired in Jerusalem less than two months earlier. Just in case their memories had lapsed, Peter raised again the broad banner of those courageous early Christians: we are all witnesses of the fact.

2:33–36. Peter wanted to proclaim the whole gospel, so he could not stop at the crucifixion and resurrection. In these verses he moves on to the exaltation and the coming of the Holy Spirit, bringing his listeners right up to the moment. Another quote from the Psalms (110:1) surely must have stabbed their collective attention. The humble carpenter of Nazareth was not only the Messiah but now he lives in heaven and has caused all the Pentecostal commotion which evoked this sermon in the first place. Showing enormous confidence in his God and his message, Peter used a phrase appearing only here in the New Testament (all Israel) and hammered home his final point: God has made this Jesus, whom you crucified, both Lord and Christ. In fine homiletical style, he returned to his original text (v. 21) and, along with the prophet Joel, extolled the messiahship of his Lord. The one you think is dead is your living Lord, Master, and Messiah!

2:37. The combination of God's Scripture and God's Spirit working through God's servant had the intended effect. From their initial question, What does this mean? (2:12), the

people now progressed to a specific response—Brothers, what shall we do? The phrase cut to the heart translates *katenugesan* meaning “stung” or “stunned.” Had some people listening to Peter that day also screamed for blood in Pilate’s hall? While the word conviction does not appear in our verse, this clearly reflects that heart attitude. The New Testament uses this word to describe the work of the Holy Spirit by which we see ourselves as we are in God’s sight.

2:38–39. Peter hesitated not a moment for the answer to their question, calling for repentance and baptism and offering forgiveness and the gift of the Holy Spirit. Repentance is not a new theme in the New Testament, having appeared in the ministry of John the Baptist (Mark 1:4; Luke 3:3) and in the preaching of Jesus (Mark 1:15; Luke 13:3). The context shows baptism here refers to water, not the Holy Spirit. In the New Testament, water baptism became the uniform of the Lord’s people. Today we call it “believers’ baptism,” the conscious identification with Jesus on the part of those who have trusted him for salvation. The gift of the Holy Spirit then became the seal of salvation. To whom is this available? For all whom the Lord our God will call.

2:40–41. Luke hastens to tell us we do not have the entire sermon recorded in his book. Peter spoke many other words and pleaded with his hearers who responded. That day God added three thousand people to the small number of believers already serving as Christ’s witnesses. But wait. Don’t miss the importance of what Luke does not say. This time there was no sound, no flame, and no foreign language. These people received the Holy Spirit because that’s what Peter promised in Jesus’ name. Pentecost was a one-time event, with only a mild echo or two appearing elsewhere during the first century.

Are we to believe that Peter baptized three thousand people on that one day? Of course not. The Bible knows no hierarchical system whereby people must be baptized at the hand of some official or titled clergy. We should probably assume all 120 believers assisted in this magnificent demonstration.

In the space of just a few verses, we see what happens when people trust Christ for salvation. First, they must recognize their need; then, they must receive God’s gift; and finally, they must obey the message.