
Preaching as Though We Had Enemies

Acts 2:14-41

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.’

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.”

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.

Sermon Outline:

I. **Christ Remains Faithful to His Promises (Acts 2:14-21).** The answer to the quest for trust is Jesus Christ who has personally experienced everything we do and has sent His Spirit personally to confirm to us the promises of Scripture.

A. Grounded in History

B. Generously Fulfilled

1. Women
2. Slaves (v. 18)
3. Children

II. **Christ Reigns Over His People (Acts 2:22-24).** The sovereign Christ working through His Spirit in our world promises refuge from all our enemies. Notice in these verses our Lord's sovereignty over the most intimidating realms:

A. Nature (v. 22)

B. History (v. 23)

C. Death and Sin (v. 24)

III. **Christ Rose to Be the Perfect Savior (Acts 2:25-41).** Finally, Christ by His Spirit sets us free from self-centeredness to give our lives away as His witnesses that others might possess the same Gospel we have.

A. New Reference Point for Life (vv. 25-31)

1. Presence (v.25)
2. Physical Resurrection (vv. 26-27)
3. Praise (v. 28)

B. New Resources for Service (vv. 32-36)

C. New Reasons to Live Selflessly (vv. 37-41)

Discussion Questions

1. Read and discuss Question 26 of the Westminster Shorter Catechism: How does Christ execute the office of a king?
 - A. Christ executes the office of a king, in subduing us to himself, in ruling and defending us, and in restraining and conquering all his and our enemies.
2. According to Acts 2:24-35, what are some of the enemies from which Jesus defends us? (cf. Psalm 2:6-9; Ps. 110:1-2; 1 Corinthians 15:24-26, Colossians 2:15) What practical difference should this make in your life?
3. How does the Apostle Peter use Joel's prophecy (see Joel 2:28-32) to explain what happens on the Day of Pentecost in Jerusalem? What did Joel prophesy would be some of the effects of the Spirit's outpouring (Acts 2:17-18)?

4. Knowing Christ has conquered our enemies and that He is with us always should free us to be His witnesses with more abandon (v. 25). What is one way that the Lord is calling you to serve Him with more abandon?
5. Peter quotes Psalm 16 in Acts 2:25-28 and Psalm 110 in Acts 2:34-35. How should this affect the way that we read the Old Testament as Christians? Describe the reactions of the crowd. In essence, some flock and others mock. How should this encourage us today as followers of Jesus?
6. What is it that Peter wants his audience and us to know for sure (see 2:36)? How does this impact the original audience (37)? Can you remember a time when the Spirit of God took the Word of God and “cut you to the heart” and transformed your life? Why not share that with your group?
7. How would you succinctly explain Peter’s concluding exhortation to his original audience (37-41)? What is one way that you would live differently if you heeded his words?

Going Deeper

1. Acts 2:23 recounts the most heinous sin ever committed. Read and discuss the following: Who was it that ultimately delivered Jesus up to die on the cross? What difference should the following the answer given by John Stott make in our lives? “Not Judas for money, not Pilate for fear, not the Jews for envy, but the Father for love...”
2. How does Acts 2:23 help us in our understanding of God’s sovereignty and man’s responsibility? See also Acts 13:48. These two things seem to be mutually exclusive and oppose one another. How are we to hold these two things in tension?
3. How does the following quote from J.I. Packer help us grapple with the problem of evil in our world? “God’s will of events/decrees is all-inclusive and is always being fulfilled, even when his will of command is being defied. God, who is holy, faithful, just and loving, overrules sin and evil so as to bring about long-term good for rational beings who trust him and endless praise for himself.”
4. Think of the events in biblical history (namely, the crucifixion) where things were done against God’s will of command (you shall not murder), yet these events fulfilled His will of decree (Acts 2:23; Ephesians 1:11). Does God’s sovereignty in any way violate the moral responsibility and culpability of God’s rational creatures (angelic and human)?