

Sermon Outline

THE SAVIOR OF THE WORLD

REPENT AND BE BAPTIZED (ACTS 2:29-38)

Previous Lessons: (1) The Savior of the World (Jn 4:42); (2) Our Place in the Son (Col 1:15-17);
(3) Those of the Divine Image (Gen 1:26-28); (4) Hope for the Nations (Gen 12:1-3);
(5) Priestly Kingdom (Ex 19:1-6); (6) The Throne of Forever (2 Sam 7:12-16);
(7) The Branch of Jesse (Isa 11:1-5)

I. Peter Preaches the Gospel

II. The Gospel Is Based on YHWH's Promises (Acts 2:14-28)

- A. By the time we come to Acts 2:29-38, Peter had given much teaching.
- B. Since he was addressing a Jewish audience, Peter refers to ancient Israelite prophecy.
- C. In the first part of the sermon (vv 16-21), Peter refers his listeners to the prophecy of Joel 2.
 - 1. In this prophecy, Joel speaks of the outpouring of the Holy Spirit on all people.
 - 2. Peter uses Joel's prophecy to explain the events of Pentecost.
 - a. When the Holy Spirit descended on the disciples of Jesus, they began to praise God and speak in foreign languages (Acts 2:4, 11).
 - b. Peter says that that experience is the fulfilment of Joel 2.
- D. Starting in verse 22, Peter focuses his attention on the Lord Jesus.
 - 1. He says Jesus was "a man attested to you by God with mighty works and wonders and signs that God did through him in your midst..."
 - 2. Peter is making clear here that God worked and showed himself through Jesus.
- E. Yet, the Jews killed Jesus, God's Prophet.
 - 1. Peter says in verse 23 that even the murder of Jesus—which is the worst crime in human history—is also part of the plan of God.
 - 2. God specially ordained the death of Jesus to be the payment for our sins.
- F. But God raised Jesus, "loosing the pangs of death, because it was not possible for him to be held by it" (v 24).
- G. Why was it "not possible" for Jesus to be held by death?
—Because God had already promised his chosen King would not be ultimately destroyed.
- H. At this point, Peter refers his listeners to Psalm 16:8-10:
 - ⁸I have set the LORD always before me;*
 - because he is at my right hand, I shall not be shaken.*
 - ⁹Therefore my heart is glad, and my whole being rejoices;*
 - my flesh also dwells secure.*
 - ¹⁰For you will not abandon my soul to Sheol,*
 - or let your holy one see corruption.*
- I. David was talking about the future King of Israel, the Holy One.
 - 1. In David's prophecy, God promises that his Holy One would not experience corruption or decay.
 - 2. The reason "it was not possible" for death to hold Jesus was because God had already promised, in Psalm 16, to preserve his Holy One.

***Questions for reflection:** (1) How does the prophecy of Joel 2 relate to the events of Pentecost? (2) How does Peter describe Jesus and his relationship to God? (3) How do the Jews treat God's prophet? (4) Why was it not possible for Jesus to be held by death?

III. The Patriarch David Spoke of Christ (Acts 2:29-31)

- A. Peter mentions that the patriarch David “both died and was buried, and his tomb is with us to this day” (2:29).
—Therefore, David could not have been talking about himself in Psalm 16.
- B. Instead, David, being a prophet, was speaking about the Lord Jesus Christ: “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, *he foresaw and spoke about the resurrection of the Christ*, that he was not abandoned to Hades, nor did his flesh see corruption” (vv 30-31).
—Peter shows the link between David and Christ: Christ was the Holy One of David's Psalm 16!

***Questions for reflection:** (1) What does Peter say about the patriarch David? Why does Peter point these facts out? (2) Who then is the Holy One of whom David spoke in Psalm 16? How does Peter connect Christ to the figure of the Holy One?

IV. Jesus Is Lord and Giver of the Holy Spirit (Acts 2:32-33)

- A. Peter goes on to talk about what happened to Jesus, David's great descendant: “This Jesus God raised up, and of that we all are witnesses” (v 32).
 - 1. Peter is stating the results of God's promise upon Jesus:
—Because God promised that his Holy One would not see corruption, God has raised Jesus from the dead.
 - 2. The disciples know that Jesus has been raised because they've seen him for themselves!
- B. Verse 33 tells us what happened after Jesus was raised.
 - 1. Jesus was exalted to the right hand of God: “Being therefore exalted at the right hand of God...”
 - 2. Jesus received from the Father the Holy Spirit: “...and having received from the Father the promise of the Holy Spirit...”
 - 3. Jesus proceeded to pour out the Holy Spirit upon his disciples: “...has poured out this that you yourselves are seeing and hearing”
—Which explains how the disciples of Jesus are now praising God, speaking in foreign languages, and proclaiming the Gospel with boldness.

***Questions for reflection:** (1) What has God done for Jesus in keeping with his promise? (2) What is the significance of Jesus' being exalted to the right hand of God? (3) Who did Jesus receive from the Father? (4) What did Jesus proceed to do after he received the Holy Spirit?

V. YHWH's Ancient Promise to David's Lord (Acts 2:34)

- A. Peter returns to the Psalms, this time, Psalm 110:1.
 - 1. David hears YHWH God addressing another person, whom David calls, “my Lord.”
 - 2. YHWH said to David's Lord: “Sit at my right hand, until I make your enemies your footstool.”
- B. Now that the Lord Jesus has been raised to God's right hand, Peter is able to know the identity of David's Lord—he is *Jesus* himself!

1. Although Jesus is David's Son, Jesus is also David's superior.
2. It is to this *Lord* Jesus that God...
 - a. promises the seat at his right hand: "Sit at my right hand..."
 - b. promises victory over his enemies: "...until I make your enemies your footstool."
- C. God is not finished working on Jesus' behalf.
 1. During his time on earth, God worked miracles through the Lord Jesus.
 2. Today, God continues to exercise his power on Jesus' behalf!

—The work of world evangelization is God's Spirit-propelled expansion of Jesus' rule.
- D. In light of these four glorious facts—
 - that Jesus has been raised;
 - that Jesus has been exalted to God's right hand;
 - that Jesus has been given the Holy Spirit
 - that Jesus has been promised victory by the Lord God,

—Peter comes to the stunning conclusion of his sermon:
 "Let all the house of Israel therefore know for certain that God has made him both Lord and Christ, this Jesus whom you crucified."

 1. R.C. Sproul writes: Verse 36 is "a political statement with a vengeance, a statement of cosmic authority" (*Acts*, 61).
 2. "Lord and Christ" means that Jesus has been made the supreme King of the universe.
 3. Although Jesus was once dead, God has kept his promise to raise up his Holy One, and invest him with absolute and universal authority.
 4. Jesus is now, rightfully and legally, the Lord of every human being!

***Questions for reflection:** (1) In Psalm 110:1, what does YHWH promise David's Lord? (2) Who is David's Lord? (3) If God has promised to make Jesus' enemies his footstool, what does that suggest about what God is doing today? (4) How is God expanding Jesus' rule today? (5) What is the stunning conclusion that Peter draws for his listeners in verse 36? How does this statement impact you today?

VI. Brothers, What Shall We Do? (Acts 2:37)

- A. The Jewish listeners "were cut to the heart..."
 1. Their consciences were pricked—and they were afraid.
 2. Now that Jesus is Lord, those who shared in the crucifixion of Jesus ought to be afraid.
- B. Realizing their guilt, the Jews ask the only question that makes sense at this point: "Brothers, what shall we do?"

—Now that God has installed his King at his right hand of power, what shall we, who crucified Christ, do?
- C. We each must ask that question for ourselves.

***Questions for reflection:** How did the Jews react to Peter's sermon? What question do they ask Peter?

VII. Repent and Be Baptized (Acts 2:38)

- A. Here is what God wants us to do with the fact that Jesus Christ has been raised and exalted: "And Peter said to them, '*Repent and be baptized* every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ...'"

- B. To repent is to turn one's heart away from sin and back to God.
—It is to turn away from our sins, our religious allegiance to our idols and ourselves, and return to God with a renewed desire to do his will.
- C. Repentance was a key part of preaching the Gospel since John the Baptist.
 - 1. John the Baptist: "In those days John the Baptist came preaching...*Repent*, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand." (Mt 3:2)
 - 2. The Lord Jesus: "*Repent*, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand" (Mt 4:17).
 - 3. Now, the apostles of Jesus: "...*Repent* and be baptized..."
- D. Repentance is to be accompanied by baptism.
 - 1. Just as Jesus called people to repent and be baptized, so too do the disciples.
 - 2. Now that God's face has been revealed in the Lord Jesus Christ, baptism is to be done specifically "in the name of Jesus Christ."
 - 3. To be baptized "in the name of Jesus Christ" is...
 - a. to be cleansed by Jesus Christ.
 - b. to be brought into a relationship with Jesus Christ.
 —Baptism in Christ's name signifies that the person baptized now belongs to Christ

***Questions for reflection:** (1) How does God want people everywhere to respond to the exalted Lord Jesus? (2) What is repentance? (3) What should accompany repentance? (4) What is the significance of being baptized "the name of Jesus Christ"?

VIII. Forgiveness of Sin and the Gift of the Holy Spirit (Acts 2:38)

- A. As a result of repentance expressed through baptism, we receive what we so desperately need: *The forgiveness of our many sins against God and Christ.*
- B. The ritual of baptism is *not* what saves a person.
 - 1. What saves a person is simple, repentant trust in the Lord Jesus Christ.
 - a. Consider the criminal crucified next to our Lord (Lk 23).
—Jesus promises the criminal a place in paradise, even without him undergoing baptism (Lk 23:43)
 - b. Consider the case of Cornelius and his relatives (Acts 10).
—The Holy Spirit comes upon Cornelius and his relatives before they are baptized (10:44, 45, 48).
 - 2. From those instances, we see that the rite of baptism is *not* what actually saves a person.
- C. Peter emphasizes submitting to baptism because that was what Jesus required: "Go...and make disciples of all nations, *baptizing them* in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit" (Mt 28:29)
—Baptism in the triune name of God is the visible seal of God's ownership over the person.
- D. Along with the forgiveness of sins, God also gives us the Holy Spirit: "...and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit."
—If forgiveness of sins is the negative side of our salvation (because it implies the cancellation of something), the gift of the Holy Spirit is the positive side (because it implies the addition of a new reality into our lives).
- E. God gives us a "thick" salvation.
 - 1. When God saves us...
 - a. he does not simply drop all charges against us.
 - b. he comes and dwells in us by the Holy Spirit.
 - 2. According to Ephesians 1:13, the Holy Spirit is God's seal of ownership upon our lives.

3. The presence of the Holy Spirit in our lives is the assurance that we will go to where Jesus is.

***Questions for reflection:** (1) What does God give us after we have repented? (2) How do we know that baptism is not what actually saves us? Which instances in Scripture prove this? (3) Why does Peter emphasize submitting to baptism? What role does baptism play in the repentant sinner's life? (4) Why do we say that God gives us a "thick" salvation?

IX. Preach Jesus Christ Crucified—and Mightily Exalted!

- A. Peter's sermon has two important lessons for our evangelizing work.
- B. First: *The content of the Good News centers on, or revolves around the Lord Jesus Christ himself.*
 1. The Good News *is* the Lord Jesus Christ.
 2. We made this claim in our previous lesson on Isaiah 11.
—Since the Savior is the Branch of Jesse, all eyes should look to him for their salvation.
 3. We make this claim also on the basis of Romans 1:1-3.
 - a. Paul writes: "Paul, a servant of Christ Jesus, called to be an apostle, set apart for *the gospel of God*, which he promised beforehand through his prophets in the holy Scriptures, *concerning his Son...*" (Rom 1:1-3)
 - b. The Gospel of God is about Jesus Christ the Son of God.
 4. But what concerning Christ is good news for sinners?
 - a. Christ has been raised physically from dead and enthroned at the right hand of God.
 - b. Christ has died for sinners.
 5. Therefore, to preach the Gospel is to preach Christ (Rom 16:25).
 6. It is not to preach...
 - a. the prosperity or earthly wellness that God may grant us.
 - b. the good works God calls us to do (prayer, Bible reading, missions work; tithing; etc.)
 7. The Gospel is simply about the Lord Jesus Christ and what he has done for sinners.
 - Jesus has died for sinners.
 - Jesus has been raised physically from the dead for sinners.
 - Jesus has been exalted to the right hand of God to be the Lord of sinners.
 8. Yet, Peter emphasizes the kingship of Christ in this sermon.
 - a. The Gospel would not be complete if Jesus only died for our sins.
 - i. At most, that would only secure forgiveness.
 - ii. It would not bring about final victory for the Christian over the demonic powers of the world.
 - b. When Jesus ascended to his throne, he ascended as our representative King.
—Therefore, his ascension is what guarantees our ascension as well.
 9. One of the greatest obstacles to seeing the kingship of Jesus in all of life is the idea (ideology?) that religion must be separated from the public realms of life—*secularism*.
 - a. Many people, even some Christians, hold to secularism as if it is a religious dogma.
 - b. In our pluralistic context, it is understandable why people would want to resort to secularism.
—Nobody wants other religious views to be imposed on them!
 - c. Yet, just because something is understandable does not mean that it is excusable.
 - d. Today, secularism has become almost a kind of religious faith.

- People trust it to bring peace to a world fractured by old religions.
 - People are willing to allow their own religions to be regulated and modified by Secularism.
10. But if Jesus has been exalted to the right hand of God, what does that mean for all life?
 - a. It means that all life must submit to the loving rule of Christ.
 - b. Every institution, community, and society in the world must submit to Christ.

—Since Christ is Lord, then secularism cannot be.
- C. Second: *The right response to the Gospel is repentance to God, baptism into the name of Christ, and, underlying all those movements, faith in the Lord Jesus Christ.*
1. Now that Jesus has provided a way for sinners to be forgiven, we must make use of this opportunity to return to God.
 2. If faith in Christ is *what* connects us to the life, death, and resurrection of Christ, repentance explains *why* we put our faith in Christ.

—We put our faith in Christ because we want to return to God, and to be restored to the calling of holy, all-of-life service.
 3. When we see things in this light, we realize that repentance is much more than dropping a bad habit or two.

—Repentance is a return to God himself as our Ultimate Reality, our All-Lord.
 4. But God also wants people to be baptized upon returning to him.
 - a. This is not because there is anything magical in the waters of baptism.
 - b. It's because baptism is the sign *God himself* has chosen to signify his ownership of a particular person.
 - c. For a believer to reject baptism is akin to telling God that we are ashamed of him, and that we don't want to be recognized as one of his children.
 - d. Yes, baptism is not what saves.

—But if baptism is ordered by God, we are not at liberty to refuse it.
 5. When we are baptized, God does two things.
 - a. He assures us that we are his holy and cherished persons.
 - b. He indirectly warns the wicked world to leave us alone!
 6. Underneath baptism and repentance is simple trust in Christ for our salvation.
 - a. If Christ did not make salvation available to us...
 - i. repentance would be pointless (we'll be condemned anyway)
 - ii. baptism would be meaningless (there would no real washing away of sin)
 - b. The reason we can turn back to God and receive baptism is because Christ's death and resurrection can be relied on to save us.

Evangelism is directing people to the crucified and exalted Lord Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of sins and for the gift of the Holy Spirit. We are to preach Jesus Christ and him crucified and exalted. Then we are to call people to repentance to God and baptism in the name of Christ. This is the Church's message to the world until Christ returns for us.