

Armagh Baptist Church
Sunday 14th June 2009 – 11:30am
Acts 2:14-36 Peter's Pentecost Sermon

Introduction

Today is the 6th Anniversary of Armagh Baptist Church at this new site on the Newry Road in Armagh City. So today I thought we would look at two passages here in Acts ch.2 – this morning and this evening.

This morning we are going to look at Peter's Pentecost Sermon as he presents the Gospel to that great crowd in Jerusalem.

Tonight we will look at our response to the Gospel – Repentance, Baptism, and our commitment to a local Church thereafter.

I think both these messages will reinforce for us what we are about as a church, and what we need to keep as our focus in the days to come.

So Pentecost had come!

- The Holy Spirit had been poured out on the believers that day in Jerusalem.
- The result was that they all spoke in other languages so that all the visitors present in Jerusalem from all over the world at that time could understand in their own mother tongues what was being said.
- This caused a great stir in vs.7-8:

'Are not all these men who are speaking Galileans?

Then how is it that each of us hears them in his own native language?'

- A stir had been created
- A crowd had gathered
- And some started mocking the believers – 'They're drunk!'

But Peter stands up with new found courage and boldness and addresses the massive crowd that day.

As we saw in our last study in the Book of Acts, he first of all defeated the idea that they were drunk, by saying: 'It's only 9 in the morning!' – So it was way too early for any of them to be drunk at that stage!

But then in v.16 Peter goes on to explain that what was happening before their very eyes was really the fulfilment of an important OT Prophecy.

1. The Holy Spirit had come (vs.17-18)
2. The Day of Salvation had arrived (v.21)

The coming of the Holy Spirit had ushered in the Gospel Age!

That period in the history of the world, when God's people would begin to take the Gospel to the four corners of the world, as witnesses, as missionaries, proclaiming the Good News of Salvation, by faith alone, in Christ alone, to All Nations.

We finished at v.21 last time, but Peter's Sermon had only just begun.

This was a great occasion. The long-awaited Holy Spirit had come! You would think that on such an occasion Peter would preach a powerful, inspiring sermon all about the Holy Spirit – and yet he doesn't!

From v.22 onwards Peter shifts the focus away from the Spirit to Jesus himself. And yet, if you think about it, that's exactly what should have happened:

Peter was being inspired to preach by the Holy Spirit.

Jesus said of the Holy Spirit in John 15:26 that *'He will testify of me...'*

And in John 16:13-14 *'He will glorify me...'*

The Holy Spirit's work is not to draw attention to himself, but to point to Christ, and that's exactly what was happening on the Day of Pentecost.

Through Peter's Sermon, the Holy Spirit was going to point this crowd to Christ (v.22 onwards).

The first thing about Jesus that the Holy Spirit points us to is...

1. His Person (v.22)

What sort of a person was Jesus of Nazareth?

- (i) **'A man'** (v.22) - It seems obvious, but as far as the Jews were concerned, that's as far as they were prepared to go. Jesus was just a man, a mere human being. Perhaps some would have said **'a good man'** but that was about it. But Peter goes further.
- (ii) He was **'a man, accredited by God to you by miracles, wonders and signs.'** (v.22)
They had all witnessed his miracles. The Jews were the people that Jesus had come to. They had been privileged to see all those **miracles, wonders and signs** that he had performed. They couldn't deny any of that. So some might have gone as far as saying that: **Jesus was a good man who did miracles.** But was that it? Peter goes on...
- (iii) He was **'a man, accredited by God to you by miracles, wonders and signs...which God did among you through him, as you yourselves know.'**
It was by God's power that Jesus had done all these miracles:
Luke 11:20 – Jesus claimed to do these by God's power.
Luke 7:16 – The people had realised it too at the time.

So they had to conclude that Jesus was not only a good man, but he was a Man of God – He was God’s Man. He was a man who had been specially used of God among them in their day and generation. That was Peter’s starting point. They had to accept that. They couldn’t deny anything of what he had just said, so far. But Jesus was much more than that – so Peter goes on... The next aspect of Jesus that the Holy Spirit points us to is:

2. His Death (v.23)

What kind of death did Jesus die?

This great man of God, who had gone about doing so much good, and performing so many miracles – what had they done with him?

Peter puts it to them:

*‘You have tragically taken him, and **with the help of wicked lawless men** (i.e. the Roman Gentiles) you have **put him to death by nailing him to the cross!**’ (v.23).*

The amazing thing was that the Jews and the Romans normally hated each other, but on this occasion they had collaborated – they had worked together – to do what – to get rid of the greatest man of God who ever walked this planet! And they did it in the most terrible way imaginable – they had crucified Jesus Christ. Peter says, ‘You put him to death! You killed him! – What a tragedy!

And at face value it was a terrible tragedy

But it was a tragedy – not beyond God’s control.

Peter reminds his hearers that this was all part of God’s foreordained plan.

Look at the start of v.23:

*‘This man was handed over to you
by God’s set purpose and foreknowledge...’*

This is hard to understand, but God loved you and me so much, despite the awful sinfulness of our sin, that it was God’s Will to have Jesus, His own Son, put to death on the cross, so that our sins could be punished and then justly forgiven, so that we could be accepted by a holy and righteous God! This was God’s only plan of salvation – this was the only way that you and I could be saved.

So the death of Jesus on the cross was **tragic** – from man’s point of view, but from God’s point of view, it was a **triumphant** victory over sin, and death and the devil!

But how, you may ask, can a death be triumphant?

Well the answer is in v.24: **'But God raised him from the dead!'**

So the Holy Spirit now turns our attention thirdly to...

3. His Resurrection (v.24)

In what way was the death of Jesus triumphant?

The only way that Jesus' death could be a triumphant victory over sin and the devil, was by Him being able to rise from the dead again, and by so doing show that he had the power to defeat death itself!

You see right from Genesis ch.3, death has been God's punishment for sin. For sin to be defeated and destroyed, death had to be destroyed as well.

And that's exactly what God did when He raised Jesus from the dead – He defeated the power of death!

Notice, in v.24, that the resurrection of Jesus was God, the Father's, doing:

- Jesus didn't raise himself.
- God the Father did it! (Read all of v.24).

God did it:

- (i) To reverse the sentence of men who said that because Jesus claimed to be God, he was guilty of blasphemy and therefore deserved to die.
 - (ii) By raising Jesus from the dead, God proved that Jesus' claim about Himself had been true all along.
 - He was God's Son, therefore
 - He was God's Messiah!
- He *had* been the one that God had promised to save Israel.
 - God's Messiah couldn't possibly remain dead.
 - If He was to deliver Israel, and save His people, He would have to be alive.
 - So God raised him up from the dead (v.24)!

The next thing that the Holy Spirit draws our attention to, is an OT Prophecy concerning the Resurrection of God's Messiah, and how Jesus of Nazareth is the only one who has ever fulfilled it.

4. An Old Testament Prophecy

(v.25-28) – The Prophecy is from Psalm 16:8-11

(v.29-31) – The Explanation given by Peter

Look at v.27 – ***‘You will not abandon me to the grave,
Nor will you let your Holy One see decay.’***

Here is a prophetic promise from the lips of King David (1000 yrs before Christ) referring not to David himself, because his tomb was obvious for all to see – it was just outside Jerusalem’s walls. His body had been allowed to see decay. So he couldn’t have been speaking about himself.

Rather he was speaking about the Messiah:

- He would die.
- But he would not stay dead.
- His body would never see decay.

Rather as v.28 says – God would restore him to life and seat him at his right hand in his presence. See Psalm 16:11 ***‘At your right hand’.***

Look at v.31 – Jesus did not stay dead in the tomb. Rather God had raised him up again, back to life.

‘God has raised this Jesus to life’ – and what’s more, Peter says, ***‘We are all witnesses of the fact.’*** (v.32)

And what’s more, we know where he is now – according to Psalm 16:11 – Jesus is at God’s right hand in heaven! (v.33)

And in fact, what had just happened that very day at Pentecost was further proof, that Jesus is at God’s right hand in heaven, because He had now poured out the Holy Spirit, from the Father, as he promised He would.

Do you see Peter’s logic here?

- If Jesus hasn’t really come back to life
- If he hasn’t really gone back to heaven
- Then how can you explain this coming of the Holy Spirit?
- You can’t!
- See John 16:5-7 *‘Unless I go away, the Counsellor will not come to you; but if I go, I will send him to you.’*

And so the final thing the Holy Spirit points us to concerning Jesus is...

5. His Exaltation (v.33-36)

God has raised Him up.

God has exalted Him to his right hand in Heaven.

God has poured out the Holy Spirit.

Therefore, not only is this man called **Jesus of Nazareth**,

But God has proclaimed Him **‘Lord and Christ!’** (i.e. Lord and **Messiah!**)

This is the punch-line of Peter's sermon that day:

1. This is the '**Messiah**' you've been waiting for all these years!
But you've missed Him!!
2. '**Lord**' – this is the one that Joel talked about (back in v.21)
The one that if you will just call on his name – you will be saved!!

But you've just rejected Him!
'You Crucified Him!'

And those were the last words that were left ringing on the Jerusalem air that day as Peter finished his Pentecost Sermon – '***You Crucified Him!***'

According to the Greek word order in v.36 Peter said:

***'This Jesus, God has made both Lord and Christ,
but You Crucified Him!'***

So the implication is: What are you going to do now?!! You've blown it!!

The Cross is the greatest **tragedy** of history according to man.

But...

The Resurrection is the greatest **triumph** of history according to God!

The Jews, realising they had crucified Jesus, probably thought they were now without hope of ever being saved, having heard Peter's sermon.

We'll see tonight that they had only one hope. And that was:

- To repent of their sin, and
- To believe in this Jesus of Nazareth as their Lord and Christ.

The same is true for you this morning:

1. You and I are just as guilty as the Jews were of crucifying Jesus.
Your sins and mine nailed him to that cross just as much as theirs.
So we are guilty.
2. But Jesus Christ is still Lord.
The question is:
 - Have you accepted him as Lord and Saviour of your life?
 - He is your only hope of salvation. He is God's only Saviour for you.

If you realise your sin and guilt this morning, then do what Romans 10:9 says: **Confess** Jesus as Lord

Believe in your heart that God has raised Him from the dead.
And you will be saved!

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