

Nineteenth Sunday after Trinity

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Preacher: Rev. Daniel Avitan

[0 : 00] A rousing speech can change the course of events, inspire valor and courage, and turn the tide of history in some cases. Oration is an incredible thing when it is used to communicate truth and inspire those that hear it.

And history has been full of such orations. I Have a Dream by Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Just take a look at any of William Wilberforce's speech for the abolition of slavery or the slave trade in the British Parliament.

Or Churchill's famous, We Shall Fight on the Beaches, as Britain was going to war. It's incredible what oration can do. Sermons have this power as well.

And I'm not saying necessarily my sermons. Okay, I'm not bigging myself up to that degree. But sermons have the power to do this as well. For they communicate the truth of God's Word in such a way that grips the listener.

Even more so because we trust that the sermon that is preached according to God's Word is then infused with the Holy Spirit to work in the hearts of all those who listen.

[1 : 15] So the proclaimed Spirit infused Word, we see it all through its scripture. Through the way in which God communicates to his people.

So whether we see that with Joseph or Moses or Samuel, David, Jeremiah, Jesus himself. And in this case we'll look at Peter. The proclamation or preaching of God's Word has been the means by which people hear and come to know the risen Christ as Savior and Lord.

It's the way God reveals himself to us. So important is the proclaimed Word that the Apostle Paul says, Without it salvation cannot happen.

Romans 10, 14-15 says this, How then will they call on him in whom they have not believed? And how are they to believe in him whom they have never heard?

And how are they to hear without someone preaching? And how are they to preach unless they are sent? As it is written, how beautiful are the feet of those who preach the good news. After the risen Lord Jesus Christ ascends to heaven, we looked at that a couple weeks ago.

[2 : 24] Remember we had a guest speaker last week. But a couple weeks ago we looked at how Jesus ascended. It was the ascension after he was resurrected. Forty days he met with the disciples.

He ascended. He told them then to wait ten days. Well he didn't say ten days. He said wait for the coming of the Holy Spirit. Ten days transpired. And then we read last time how the Holy Spirit descended on the church at Pentecost.

So after Jesus ascends to heaven, the disciples are given the Holy Spirit. Peter rises up and he gives the first sermon of the Christian church.

He gives a speech, an oration, that we will see absolutely grips the listeners. In this speech, in this sermon, as he preaches, he proclaims three things about the risen and ascended Christ.

That not only prove that Jesus was indeed both Messiah and Lord, but that in Jesus all of our deepest problems are exposed and our deepest longings are fulfilled.

[3 : 36] So Peter, and these are the three points because you've got to have some points. Peter proclaims Christ's life and death.

Peter also proclaims Christ's resurrection and ascension. And Peter proclaims divine salvation that has both personal and communal consequences or realities.

So we're going to spend time in the text that Ken read, starting at verse 22. But I don't want to skip over verse 14 to 21. I'm briefly going to touch on it here. So verse 14 to 21, as a bit of a summary, this pretty intense thing happens.

The sound of rushing wind is heard. These working class Galileans, uneducated folk, come out speaking a plethora of different languages to this pilgrim people that have come from all over the known world to Jerusalem for this Jewish holiday.

And they're hearing the gospel being proclaimed in their own voice. Now, there's some scoffers. There's some people that are criticizing them and making fun of them. And they say, these guys are drunk.

[4 : 51] Like, it's very clear they're not drunk. It's too early in the morning. And it's not like they're doing something that would look like a drunk person would do. But what they're trying to do is totally just dispel them, you know, marginalize them, put them to the side, make little of what is happening.

So Peter stands up and he proclaims that not at all are we drunk. In fact, this is a fulfillment of a prophecy. Some, I mean, we don't know entirely when Joel was written, but the prophecy of the prophet Joel that was written maybe some 500, 600 years prior.

And he goes on to read from Joel chapter 2 and explain that what has happened at Pentecost was foreordained by God and that this was the beginning of the last days, the beginning of the end.

Just on an aside before we jump back into our text, starting verse 22. If you're a Christian and you proclaim the gospel of Christ, you share your faith with somebody.

You bear witness to the cross. Do not be surprised if you will experience something maybe similar to this. Maybe somebody doesn't call you drunk. They're a bit more polite.

[6 : 09] But that there will be pushback. There will be insults. There will be skirting you away because you might be crazy or overly zealous. Just know you're in good company. This is what has happened to the church from the very beginning.

In fact, it happened to Christ himself. Christ saying, No servant is greater than his master. If they persecuted me, they will persecute you as well. So that is where we come to leading up into verse 22.

And Peter continues his sermon by proclaiming the truth about Christ's life and death. Look with me, verses 22 and 23. 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, this Jesus delivered up according to the definite plan and foreknowledge of God, you crucified and killed by the hands of lawless men. Peter establishes the facts of who Jesus was and what he came to do, beginning with the obvious, where he came from, and the things he did during his ministry, the things that were known to the inhabitants of Jerusalem, to his speakers.

[7 : 29] Peter says that Jesus of Nazareth was sent by God to perform miraculous deeds, and that would attest to God's power and truth, but also cause astonishment among the peoples.

That's the signs and the wonders that Peter references here. Jesus met people in their lowest moments.

I mean, we just read from Matthew chapter 9, the gospel reading, where Jesus meets a paralyzed man who can do nothing. He meets people right where they're at. He heals them.

He preaches to them and challenges them also to change their worldview, to get on board with the gospel and the kingdom of God. That's what he came to do.

That's what he did in Nazareth. That's what he did as he came to Jerusalem in the last week of his life. No one could deny that there was buzz around Jesus before he was crucified, spreading all over the land from the north all the way to Jerusalem itself.

[8 : 32] The man, Jesus of Nazareth, was surely known to them. However, the same Jesus was crucified and killed by the Romans, but Peter, rather, he puts the blame on the nation of Israel.

We'll just pause real quick. Especially this week with the amount of anti-Semitism that has been going on in the world with different gatherings.

It's not gatherings. The words, you know, missing, protests across the world in the UK, in Canada. I mean, you name it. I struggled with having to explain this because this is a key text that is used, that was used, that has been used throughout time to call Jews Christ killer.

I have a friend, I was talking to him about this. He's just like, listen, just blame it on the Italians. It's their fault Jesus died. I was a bit tempted to, but I decided not to. I don't want to make light of God's word.

But know this, even though the Jewish people were culpable. I mean, this is what God's word says, that they were responsible for Jesus being hung on a tree.

[9 : 47] Just know that it was not just the Jewish nation, but all of us. I mean, we sang the hymn right at the end, How Deep the Father's Love for Us, and I'm glad because I was going to put it in my sermon notes, but it's here.

It says, Behold the 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. This isn't an issue with the Jewish people. It is an issue primarily with humanity. We have rebelled against God. We have called the Savior himself a charlatan.

And a demon-possessed man as the religious leaders did. Not maybe literally, but we functionally, before we have known Christ, we were his enemies.

Although it was the Jewish nation and their leaders who fomented the cries for crucify, crucify, we're also told here that it was God's intention all along.

[11 : 01] And this is the interesting interplay in the tension that we have between the sovereignty of God, who has ordained things from the beginning of time, and how we have choice and agency, and somehow one doesn't negate the other, and yet God's predestined plans always come to pass.

And this is what it said. I mean, it says it right here in verse 23, according to the definite plan and foreknowledge of God. And I think that's what's important here.

Jesus was hung upon a cross. Why? Because God deemed it so. And Peter doesn't get to atonement or the reason why, and we're going to discover that with Peter as he continues to preach.

But we surely will have to ask the question, well, why did God preordain Jesus to hang on the tree? If Jesus is this wonder worker, this preacher from the Galilee in the north, who has come to Jerusalem, who was hung on the cross, why was it that God preordained him?

He's just a man. What's so special about Jesus? I mean, there are other people that claim to be the Messiah. There are other people that would perform, quote-unquote, miracles.

[12 : 26] There are other people that would preach and be kind of renowned rabbis of renown. So what made it so that Jesus himself would die on the cross?

This is how Peter is leading his hearers. This is what he's leading them towards. So really the question here is, who is Jesus and why did he hang on the tree?

And really this is the question of questions for all of us. Who really was Jesus? And it's very easy for us as people that have been at church for a long time, or maybe they have come back, maybe you've come back after a season away, but by and large you would say Jesus, the Son of God. It's kind of like baked within our cultural received knowledge. But ask the question, and I think even as mature believers, ask the question, who really was Jesus?

Was he a miracle worker? Was that all he did? Was he a messianic pretender? Was he a great moral teacher or philosopher like Socrates or Plutarch?

[13 : 33] This is the question we must go to the scriptures to time and again, if we are to walk in the truth. Peter will spend the next 13 verses explaining and proving who Jesus was by proclaiming the resurrection and ascension of Christ.

And this brings us to our second point. So Peter proclaims a life and death of Christ. Now he will proclaim the resurrection and ascension of Christ. We'll see this in verses 24 all the way to 36, but we'll look at verses 24 to 32 first.

This is what it says. God raised Jesus up, loosing the pangs of death, because it was not possible for him to be held by it. For David, this is King David, the writer of many Psalms.

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. Therefore my heart was glad and my tongue rejoiced.

My flesh also will dwell in hope, for you will not abandon my soul to Hades. That is just to say the place of the dead. That is where dead people go.

[14 : 45] It's the grave. For you will not abandon my soul to Hades, or let your Holy One see corruption. You have made known to me the paths of life. You will make me full of gladness with your presence.

So he quotes, David quotes Psalm 16, the latter half of it, verses 8 to 11. And then he explains it. He gives an interpretation of what that Psalm really means.

And he says this, 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 today. Being therefore a prophet, and knowing that God had sworn with an oath to him, that he would set one of his descendants on the throne, he

foresaw and spoke about the resurrection of the Christ, that he was not abandoned to Hades, nor did his flesh see corruption.

This Jesus God raised up, and of that we are all witnesses. Peter says that God raised Jesus from the dead, not because he was a mere man, but because he was the long-awaited Messiah.

And we start to see this picture that Peter is painting with this speech, this preaching, this proclamation. Jesus is the long-awaited Messiah.

[16:05] In fact, he is God in the flesh. Death tried to swallow him up, but God cannot be swallowed by death, because he is the source of life.

It's like in a movie, or, you know, kind of a big blockbuster sci-fi thing, where a big giant monster or sea creature eats up the hero, and all is lost.

Hope is gone. And then the hero bursts out and absolutely explodes the monster into a bunch of pieces, and the monster is unsalvageable.

It's gone. It's kind of like this. Death tries to eat the creator, the giver of life. Death does. And in doing so, death destroys itself, because Christ could not be held down, and he explodes out of the grave.

The grave can't be salvaged. It's done. This is what Peter is saying here. The grave is no more. The grave certainly does have power, but only in this life, because it takes our life, but the death that we will experience will not extend into eternity, because the grave has been destroyed.

[17:26] And this is what Peter is referring to in Psalm 16, where he is referring to David's, he is prophesying that the Messiah would come.

And this is excellent news for us. We have been exposed to unbelievable images of death this week. And you know what?

We've been exposed to horrific images of death almost daily with the news cycle. I haven't had a conversation with somebody about the war in Ukraine in weeks, maybe months. We forget about these things.

It's almost like we are so, images of death wash over us, that we become numb to them. But especially this week, it was, there were unbelievable, horrific pictures.

And to know that Christ has conquered death, so that its reaches do not extend beyond this life, that is good news. That if you have put your faith in Christ, that this proclamation we'll see is for everybody.

[18:34] That it's extended to everybody. That if we trust the source of life, we will not be subject to the power of death any longer. The grave swallows up all kingdoms and empires.

Every power that has existed, that currently doesn't exist, came to an end, which is remarkable. But with the resurrection, this Davidic kingdom, the kingdom that God establishes through David, promising that his descendant will be on the throne forever, this kingdom will forever exist.

So that the greater King David, Jesus Christ, who has conquered death, he sits forever enthroned, never to be usurped. This is the good news of the gospel.

This is what it means for Jesus to be the Messiah, the anointed one, the savior of mankind. And to this, Peter, he gives two proofs, based on, based on the scriptures, but also on his own, and in the apostolic witness of, of all of the apostles.

So the first is scriptural. He quotes Psalm 16, like I mentioned. And he is saying that, listen, David wrote this, but it certainly wasn't about David. I mean, listen, we could go and see David's tomb now.

[19:55] It's, it's present. We could check it out. Now, I don't think today, the tomb of David is, is accessible. But back then, it seems it was.

David's still buried. He hasn't, he hasn't, this can't be about him. I mean, what did it just say? My flesh, for you will not abandon my soul to Hades, or let your holy ones see corruption.

That's, that's images of decomposition, of being in a grave. David's in the grave. It's not about David. He's saying, no, this is a prophecy of David, about the ultimate David, this holy one.

It's about Jesus, this long awaited Messiah. The second proof that Peter gives, is apostolic. And what do I mean by that? This is to say that the apostles saw Jesus rise from the grave.

That, that, that it wasn't just one or two apostles. It wasn't the 11 apostles, or then later the 12 apostles. But it was, the multitude, at least 120 people in, in, actually in the gospels, it says that there's, hundreds of people that saw the risen Christ.

[21 : 01] They testify, eyewitness test, testifying to that. This, this apostolic witness, we can understand really as the New Testament, as it, as it, as the letters are written, as the apostles spread out, proclaiming the gospel.

So what we have here, is an Old Testament, and a New Testament, proof, in a sense, that Christ really was, that Jesus really was the Christ. He really was the Messiah. He really rose from the grave.

He really is, the Holy One of God. He really is God, Himself. And this, tells us a beautiful thing about our faith. Because, elsewhere in scripture, the Apostle Paul says, if the resurrection didn't happen, the faith is, is, is done.

It's gonzo. It's not worth believing in. And here, the key claim, which our entire faith rises and falls upon, isn't a matter of blind faith.

But, instead, it is, is backed by real evidence, through supernatural predictions, that were, were prophesied hundreds, and hundreds, and hundreds of years, prior that have come to pass.

[22 : 10] And also, the eyewitnesses of not one, or two, but of hundreds, and hundreds, and hundreds of people. It is very hard, to corroborate, a fake story, with hundreds of people.

One or two, a hundred percent, you could do it. Three, maybe, maybe ten, if, if you really, really crack the whip, this is what we're going to believe. But hundreds? And yet, they all testify, to the risen Christ.

What is, what I'm trying to say, we don't check our brains, at the door, with the scriptures. We test the scriptures. We push back on the scriptures. How on earth, did Jesus rise, from the grave?

He rose from the grave. It was a proof, that David, prophesied about him, but also, there was history, of hundreds, of witnesses, today. Don't make the mistake, in thinking, just because we don't have, a recorded video, of Jesus rising, from the grave, it didn't happen.

And with the resurrection, Peter goes to speak, also, of the ascension, as the reason, why the Holy Spirit, has then descended, and been poured out, onto all believers. And this is what it says, in verses 33 to 36.

[23 : 22] Being therefore, exalted, at the right hand of God, and having received, from the Father, the promise, of the Holy Spirit, he, Jesus, has poured out, this, that you yourselves, are seeing, and hearing.

For David, again, he's quoting David, this time, from Psalm 110. For David, did not ascend, into the heavens, but he himself says, the Lord, said to my Lord, sit at my right hand, until I make your enemies, your footstool.

Verse 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. I'll make a brief, mention of this, because it might, suggest that, Jesus wasn't Lord, in Christ, prior to God, making him Lord, in Christ.

This is simply to say, that what Jesus was, prior, to, his death, and resurrection, God declared, after it. As with Psalm 16, Psalm 110, quoted here, proves that David, was not referring, again, to himself, but to this Lord, who is deeply, connected to God, and is victorious, over all evil, and enemy powers.

And it is upon this truth, that the Holy Spirit, is poured out upon us. Jesus said as much, in verses, in chapter 1, verse 8, when he said, I'm going, the Holy Spirit, will descend upon you.

[24 : 47] In John, he says, it is good that I go, then the helper will come. And how does God, pour out the promised, Holy Spirit? Does he do it, with a little sprinkle, here and there?

I mean, I kind of feel, cheap sometimes, because it's like, oh, here's a little bit of wine. You know, it's like I'm, like just, I don't know, cutting you guys short, a little bit. Is that what, is that what God does?

Just a little sprinkle, of the Holy Spirit? The, the, the, the image, that we have here, seems to be, of a downpour. Our kids, for whatever reason, they love the rain, and they love, differentiating between, the rain, regular rain, and a downpour.

And they'll come, and run, it's a downpour, mom. And, in fact, it is a downpour. It's, you go out there, you can't hope to stay dry. In fact, I think the best picture, of what, the pouring out, of the Holy Spirit, looks like, for the church, comes from the parable, of, of the two sons, where, the prodigal son, goes out, and he, blows, through his, his inheritance.

He is, almost silly, with how much, he gives away, and how much, he spends. It seems, irresponsible. And, that word, prodigal, interestingly, it was the, the, the title, for one of, Tim Keller's

books.

[26 : 10] Tim Keller, was a Presbyterian minister, he passed away, earlier this year, but he called, he called God, the prodigal God, and I think it's wonderful, to look at it like that. That God, he pours out, in such measure, that it seems, it seems almost, irresponsible.

He's not a cheap God. He's a very generous God. God gives us the power, the Holy Spirit, he gives us the power, that draws us to him, through the conviction, of sins.

He, he gives us the power, to obey, and he also gives us, the ability, to, to enjoy, true, worship, in him. And he does, so, in a ridiculous way.

And, is this not our heart's desire, to be empowered, to be connected, to the transcendent? I mean, do we not desire, to connect with something, bigger and greater, than ourselves?

Do we not, get so frustrated, when we stumble, and trip through this life, and continually find ourselves, doing the same things, that we do not want to do, where, where, we struggle, and we want to, not struggle.

[27 : 20] do we, do we not want joy, that, that, that is deep in our hearts, that doesn't just come, and go? And I mean, whether or not, you or others, see that as, a heart, your heart's desire, to connect with God, or not, that's exactly what, is happening.

This desire, for the transcendent, the desire to, in a sense, be perfect, and, and, without struggle, and this desire, to have joy, that never ends. We vainly look, within, for this, power, and we, engage in, futile searches, outside of us, whether it be, through philosophies, or programs, or, or things, or friends, or love, or experiences, that promise us, this true, and ultimate satisfaction, that only the pouring out, of the Holy Spirit, can give.

So with the resurrection, crushing death, and the ascension, enthroning Christ, and being, the mechanism, by which the Holy Spirit, is poured out, generously upon us, we begin to start, we begin to see, this complete, and whole victory, of Christ taking place, and this is what, Peter is proclaiming, in this first sermon.

He, in a sense, is, is spelling out, the gospel, this good news, that demands, a response from us, and here's the thing, apathy towards the gospel, is still a response.

response. It's a failure, to grasp, the good news, that Christ, has won, on the cross, of Calvary. So, I'm going to wrap things up, with this final point.

[28 : 59] Peter proclaims, the death and resurrection, of Christ, or sorry, the life and death, of Christ, then he proclaims, the resurrection, and ascension of Christ, and now he proclaims, divine salvation, that has been extended, both to the individual, and that also, creates a community.

And look with me, verses 37 and 41, and this is how we'll wrap up. Now when they heard this, that is, the listeners in Jerusalem, 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?

And Peter said to them, repent, and be baptized, every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ, for the forgiveness of sins, and you will receive, the gift of the Holy Spirit, for the promises for you, and for your children, and for all, who are far off, everyone whom the Lord, our God, calls to himself.

And with many, with many other words, he bore witness, and continued to exhort them, saying, save yourselves, from this crooked generation. Verse 41, so those who received his word, were baptized, and they were added that day, about 3,000 souls.

This response from the crowd, is very good. What are we supposed to do? There's no self-justification, in that. There's not, well, like, I don't know, I've actually had a pretty good, track record, or, you know, I believed in Jesus, all along, I don't know about you guys.

[30 : 25] Like, there's no kind of, skirting around, the conviction, that they are, on the wrong side, looking in. How should we respond?

It's a question, we should ask ourselves too. How should we respond to Jesus? Peter is clear and simple. It's what he says. He says, stop building up your own empire. Stop chasing after your own dreams, and swear allegiance, to Christ, who is the King of Kings.

And he calls them to repent, and be baptized. And the result, is a promise. Forgiveness of sins, and the poured out Holy Spirit, into our hearts.

You receive a new status, and gradually, you become a new person, in a sense. You don't become perfect right away, when you come to faith. But your status changes.

You are, a part of the kingdom of God. You are part of his family. Salvation has come to you. You have been united to Christ. And the wonderful thing about this, it says in verse 30, sorry, in verse

39, for the promise is for you, for your family, for your children, and for all who are far off, everyone whom the Lord, our God, calls to himself.

[31 : 43] And that's it. If God calls you, and you respond, this irrevocable promise, of forgiveness, of sins, and the indwelling of the Holy Spirit, it is yours, till kingdom come.

It is yours, till kingdom come. everyone God calls to himself, through Christ, by the Spirit, will receive, the most dynamite promises, that can never be taken away from you.

A clean conscience, and the power to live, into, what God has created you for. So Christ calls individuals, and as a result, he creates this new community.

And surely, what is being communicated here, in verse 39, for all who are afar, it's those that aren't a part of, this in crowd. It is the known world.

It is those, that are yet, to experience life, outside of the darkness, they currently live in. It is for people, in North America, in Europe, in parts of Asia, parts of Africa, all over the known world.

[32 : 56] It is for everyone. And as a result, God creates this new community, of both Greek and Jew, that all are one, in Christ Jesus. That salvation is both the means, friends, by which we are saved, but also, as God, it's a means by which God, creates this community.

And the nature, and result of Peter's sermon, was the public, communal forming, of God's people. Three thousand, come to faith. Will we be like the crowd, and ask, what shall we do?

You're a Christian, it's very good, the promises are yours, but, ask the question to God, what shall I do? What will you have me do? How do I, how do I stop, looking, to my own kingdom, even though I say, I'm in your kingdom, and my flesh, pulls me over here, and the world, entices me over there, and the devil, whispers in my ear, to go over there, what should I do?

How can I, how can I come back, through your son? And that's not to say, that we get saved again, but, but it's the question, that we ask, so that we will, remain connected, to the Lord, in a way that will bring us, the joy that he has promised, and our life will continue, will, will, will get ever more, made into his image.

Peter ends by saying, save yourself, from this crooked generation, and that's our call today, and that's not, I say that not, because I want to start, punching at, all of the crookedness, that seems to, exist in our, in our day, but it is to say, that every path, that is not of Christ, is crooked, Christ's path is straight, and it leads us to him, and the other paths, they, they, they promise a straight, direct connection, to whatever, it may be that it promises, but it's crooked, it goes left and right, it goes into brambles, and it goes into, areas where the path, doesn't exist anymore, the crooked generation, is just to say, mankind's attempt, to be God, and to make their own kingdom, and Peter, what does he say here, save yourselves, throw yourselves, at the mercy of Christ, and he will save you, friends, the promise is ours, forgiveness of sins, and the indwelling of the Holy Spirit, let us take, hold of what, has been promised to us, this morning, let's pray, thank you, thank you, let us remember, and Tony, thank you, so recently, thank you, so first of all, we have answered, to Switzerland, a question that we do to?

[35 : 52] If you think about including■■ level, one example, two Shall Peter, one example, to re ■,