

Acts 2:22-41

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Date: 13 December 2020

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[0:00] Well, good morning. Good morning. I invite you to turn with me to Acts chapter 2. We'll resume our series in Acts 2, beginning in verse 22 today.

! And as we turn there, I'm going to go to the Lord. Lord, we come to you looking for your mercy. Lord, will you work your mercy upon us and open up your word to us by your Spirit to show us your Son.

We pray that in Christ's name. Amen. I feel almost as if I owe the Apostle Peter an apology. When last we looked at God's word together, I cut him off in the middle of this sermon in verse 21. And today we resume in verse 22.

[1:08] Peter, the Feast of Pentecost, was explaining to the multitudes who had streamed into Jerusalem for that feast day what they were seeing in these incredible signs.

as the disciples of Jesus were proclaiming the wonderful works of God, the mighty deeds of the Lord, in the languages that all of these pilgrims from the corners of the earth spoke themselves. And what I want you, what I want us to see today, as we aren't just opening up God's word and studying Peter's sermon simply as a piece of history.

Certainly we believe that it is history. But it is not simply a transcription of what happened to some people some time ago, distant and removed.

We see that this sermon, Peter wasn't just preaching it to them. And so to remind ourselves where we are picking back at, Jesus in chapter one has said, you will be my witnesses to the ends of the earth.

[2:33] And he put an exclamation point on that right on the day of Pentecost by bringing the nations to Jerusalem, causing his people to claim the mighty works of God in those languages of the nations.

And it drew a crowd, astounded them. And last week, Peter explained by citing the prophet Joel, that this was not unexpected.

It was what God had been promising. And what his people had been hoping for, for generations. And just what is that?

Peter, that hope, right? Peter is explaining that hope today, that the fulfillment. Here's the twist. Peter is going to be talking about what they hoped for.

But the fulfillment of Israel's hope doesn't, at first, sound very hopeful. As Peter wraps up the body of his sermon, as we're going to see in verse 36, Luke is going to report in verse 37, Now, when they heard this, what Peter had said, they were cut to the heart.

[3:56] And said to Peter and the rest of the apostles, Brothers, what shall we do? Why? Why does this sermon about the hope of Israel, now that it has come to pass, why does it spark that reaction?

My hope is that we would sense something of this reaction, actually.

I want us to arrive at a place where we realize the significance, the severity of our situation. We're going to see here how Peter is not just preaching to that crowd that day, but to this crowd this day. I want us to sense the weight of it. Cuts to the heart. In terms of what Peter says, and then, when we ask, what shall we do?

Then his answer will be a sweet, sweet reward. And so the first reason that Peter's hearers cuts to the heart as he explains how their hope has come to fruition begins in verses 22 and 23.

[5:22] He says, Man 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, as we, Shoreline, know as we spent two and a half years walking with Christ through the book of Matthew.

This Jesus delivered up according to the definite plan and foreknowledge of God, you crucified and killed by the hands of lawless men.

And now that is really interesting that he says, You crucified and killed this Jesus. Remember, a lot has happened between Good Friday and Easter Sunday and this day when he's speaking to them. The Passover crowds have departed. Pentecost last week, right, means 50th. It's the Greek word for 50th. 50 days have passed since the Passover.

Nearly two months. Many have returned to the Pentecost feast, but these international pilgrims that are so emphasized in this passage, they probably couldn't come for all three major feast days each year.

[6:47] There's no way that Peter could know that these are the same individuals who chanted, Crucify him, Crucify him, Good Friday. This is not the same crowd, yet, he says, You, Crucify him, and killed Jesus.

How can he say that? There are several reasons for that, and friends, they all apply equally to the crowd who stood before him that day, the crowd who stands before me and of whom I am a member today.

At the very least, Peter must be saying that it was your sin that made the cross necessary. If we were not rebellious, sinful people, Jesus would not have needed to go to the cross.

It was our sin that, in his mercy, drove him there. It was our sin that drove the nails. And to be sure, God is, you know, not under compulsion.

We have no power over him. But his love would not have led him to the cross to pardon us if we were not guilty of getting with. Further, at the very least, Peter must be saying, you are no different than those who actually shouted, crucify him.

[8:19] Right? We might be pleasant to other people, mostly, right? But since the fall in the Garden of Eden, all humanity, the people standing before Peter and the Peter in this room and the people in this room today and the people who are watching this live stream, all of us, have been, by our nature, set against God.

Adam said, no, I don't think you belong on the throne, God. I'm going to go my own way. Pharaoh said, no, I won't recognize you as God. King Ahab said, no, I'll rule Israel according to my wishes. The people of Israel built high places and worshipped other gods, not to mention the idolatries of the other nations, right? And then, even then, Jesus came and said, I, the Lord, have come to you. And in that same heart, set against God, a heart which we all naturally participate in, they crucified him. Because we all, by fallen, sinful nature, participate in that same attitude in our hearts.

Peter says, you stood in solidarity with them as they did this. So at the very least, Peter is, you know, preaching in the direct inspiration of the Holy Spirit.

[9:44] At the very least, he's saying that you are responsible because your sin made the cross necessary. You're responsible because you have participated in the same self-centered, sinful heart that characterizes all of fallen humanity.

And I've been kind of hinting that at least these things, what I, the more that I might be pointing to is that there might be a sense in which we actually participated that day in that act.

I will commend to you further study in Romans chapter 5, verse 12, where the Apostle Paul says that he and Adam all sinned.

Not that we also sin in like manner or that we have the same sinful attitude, but that in Adam's sin, we sinned. And in a year, 2020, of conversation about community, corporate guilt, that might be something worth your consideration.

And again, this is not just a story about an isolated group of Israelites 2,000 years ago and how they were guilty of the Passover, of the crucifixion of Jesus on Good Friday.

[11:10] That was a different crowd. And Luke, the narrator here, is calling to our attention the diversity of that crowd. Verse 5, now there were dwelling in Jerusalem Jews, devout men from every nation under heaven.

And we see in verses 8 and 9 and 10 and 11 the many, many languages and people groups represented there that day. Luke is careful to draw out that international, universal implications of this message.

And Peter, the preacher, is clear about how the expansive character of this message, right? He says, verse 39, this promise is for you and for your children and for all who are far off, everyone from the Lord our God calls to himself.

This isn't just for his immediate viewers, but for the generations that follow. this isn't just for those who have made the pilgrimage to Jerusalem on that day.

It's for those who are near Amphar. This is for everyone whom the Lord calls. And friends, if you're here this moment, hearing his word, if you're streaming it either live or at some other point, right, the Lord is calling you this day by his word, which means Peter considers you part of his audience.

[12:43] This sermon is to you. Which means he is saying you crucified and killed Jesus.

Right? Because has anything Peter has said about their participation in Christ's death? Right? Your sin made it necessary. Your sin drove the nails. you have shown the same self-centered anti-God heart as them.

Has anything he has said about them, does any of that apply any less to you and to me? To any person who has ever dropped breath?

Luke, the narrator, goes out of his way to show this message is for the nations and for the generations. And Peter, the preacher, goes out of his way to say, you are responsible.

Even you. Even me. This isn't just a message from back then. This sermon, Peter speaks through the ages to you and to me and to everyone who will hear the word of the Lord.

[14:01] This isn't just history. This is about us. We stand with the people who stood before Peter. This sermon is for us.

Which means that the death of Christ is on our shoulders. Are you cuts to the heart yet? Maybe you will be or maybe you will be more as Peter progresses through this sermon as he explains just whose death we are responsible for.

Because the second and third reasons that this cuts to the heart we see in verses 24 through 23 or 24 to 33. It said, you crucified and killed Jesus by the hands of lawless men.

Verse 24, God raised him losing the pangs of death because it was not possible for him to be held by it. For David says concerning him, and this friends is Psalm 16 which we opened our service today with.

Peter continues, 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.

[15:48] 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.

This Jesus God raised up, and of that we are all witnesses. Being therefore exalted to 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 seen and hearing.

There are two big themes that I want to draw out of that section. First is King David, and second is Christ's resurrection.

You look at that section, Peter makes frequent reference to King David. Verse 25, for David says, then he cites Psalm 16, right, a Psalm of David.

Verse 29, he talks about the patriarch David. Verse 30, he says that we see that one of David's descendants would sit on David's throne. And then soon, in verse 34, he's going to say another reference to David, what he couldn't do himself, and then quote Psalm 110, another Psalm of David.

[17:24] Why does King David matter so much? Throughout their history, God had promised to bring about his promises to Israel in a coming king in David's line.

It's really difficult to capture this longing and the focal point of it in a way that would capture our hearts in the same way.

It's hard for us to put ourselves in that moment with them. We don't live in a culture really with a unified national generations-long hope.

That's not a feature of our culture. We live in a young country with a melting pot culture and focused on the individual, not the nation.

We have the bill of rights. We have a find yourself mentality and an ethos of expressive individualism that is like you're not fully realized as a human being until you have expressed yourself.

[18:37] Translation, performative narcissism. I still like the United States. But we don't resonate. We don't have categories for this hope, what David represents to them.

A united, generations-long hope that grounds our identity. The only thing that I could come up with to sort of say what this hope was like is, what if we were still fighting the Nazis?

If this had a generations-long hope that we needed to get done, that's our hope, or what if 30 years from now we are still fighting COVID, David would be that vaccine that is on the horizon someday, something along those lines.

They understood that David was not only the realization of their hopes, but that this coming king would be the light to the nations, that he would be the thing, the one to bring blessing to the whole world.

That was the institution of the nation of Israel and all her promises. We can look back all the way to Genesis chapter 12. The very first promise that God made to Israel in the patriarch Abraham was I will make you a great nation and I will bless you and make your name great so that you will be a blessing.

[20:14] I will bless those who bless you and him who dishonors you I will curse and in you all the families of the earth shall be blessed. So in killing the Davidic king they hadn't just assassinated their own hopes.

They murdered the one who would bring blessing to the whole world. And that cut to the heart. remember that that sermon is not for that day alone.

We stand with the people who stood before Peter. This is for us. The death of Christ rests on our failures. But every one of us by turning our backs on God have assassinated our own hopes.

and what comes next doesn't just extinguish hope again to another degree.

It ought, read it rightly, to stir fear, terror, actually, in our hearts.

[21:42] The first big theme in 24 to 33 is David, just whose death they are. We are responsible for it. The second big theme is this.

You killed him, God raised him. this resurrection theme that permeates this section. Verse 24, God raised him up losing the pangs of death.

Verse 27, for you will not abandon my soul to Hades or let your holy one see corruption. Verse 31, he foresaw and spoke about the resurrection of Christ.

Verse 32, this Jesus God raised up. Normally, we say, Jesus is risen from the grave.

Such good news. No! This is actually terrible news. How often have you heard a preacher say that?

[22:47] This is not good news. At least we didn't do something permanent. No, no. This is not good news if you're standing in this crowd and we are.

If you are responsible for Jesus death and we all are, Jesus resurrection is not at first good news.

If Jesus is risen from the grave, it means he is exactly who he said he was and we killed him.

normally when you kill someone they can't come back.

They can't exact justice and vengeance. But he can. If he has conquered the grave, what is stopping him from putting me in the grave?

I am certainly owed him. Christ's resurrection is the final repudiation of our rebellion against him.

[24:00] Because the chief, the focal point of our rebellion against him is we crucified him. And in his resurrection he utterly repudiates that.

and rebuffs us and rejects our sin. It is our condemnation actually. The great Scottish preacher Eric Alexander put it this way.

He says, what the resurrection does is to reverse the verdict that the world, again that's you and me, brought upon Jesus.

He said, do you remember how these two great verdicts stand at the center of the charges against our Lord Jesus Christ when he was brought before the authorities? Before the religious authorities, he was condemned for blasphemy.

Before the secular authority, he was condemned for sedition. He said he was God, he said he was a king. What happens at the resurrection is that God is saying again from heaven, as he did at his anointing and at the transfiguration, this is my beloved son.

[25:11] And the resurrection is the ultimate evidence of the divinity of Jesus Christ. Now you get the vindication of both these things in the resurrection.

God has raised him to demonstrate that he is the son of God with power and great glory. And God has raised him to vindicate his claim to be king. He is not simply king of the Jews, of course.

He is exalted and declared to be king of kings and lord of lords so that there is not one of us here over whom Jesus Christ's reign does not apply.

If we are standing in this crowd, friends, and we are, this is the worst news. It's as if the ultimate supreme court is reviewing the case we brought against Jesus.

And we exacted the punishment, right, the sentence, and tossing our verdict to the religious opposition.

[26:23] He said, your verdict on this man is wrong, and you carried out your unjust sentence anyway. to run to the secular authority.

He says, your authority does not stand here. You have no jurisdiction over this king. And yet, you acted as if you did. And so Peter's hearers, we would have thought, my hope, the hope for my ancestors, the hope for my entire nation, the promise of the generations, and for the world has come to pass, and we crucified him.

We crucified him. We have turned our back on God. We have raised our fist against him and his anointed one.

We've lost our chance for our longing, and we've done a hideous injustice, and God reached down from heaven and undid death, undid what we did to him.

We have been radically, miraculously refuted and repudiated. So what will God do to us now?

[27:41] We who have betrayed him, rejected him, spurned him by crucifying his Christ. Are you cut to the heart?

Oh, and Peter's not done yet. There is yet another layer, another reason to despair.

And this is really the death blood. That comes in verses 34-36. As Peter cites in Psalm 110, another Psalm of David, David, for David did not ascend into heaven, but he himself says, the Lord said to my Lord, sit at my right hand, until I make your enemies, the hearer understand, your footstool.

let all of the house of Israel therefore know for certain that God has made him both Lord and Christ, this Jesus whom you crucified.

The Father is going to make the Son's enemies his footstool. And we crucified him.

[29:11] shown ourselves to be his very enemies. What will become of us?

God Almighty sent his Son and we rejected him. He came to save us and we delivered him to earthly powers, the very ones who subjugate us.

he came that we might have life and we delivered him to death. We have made ourselves God's enemies.

enemies. And Psalm 110 says that he will make his enemies his footstool.

What will become of us? Will Jesus trample us underfoot as he tread down the grave?

[30:20] are you cut to the heart? They were. Verse 37 Now when they heard this, they were cut to the heart and sent to Peter and to the rest of the apostles.

brothers, what shall we do? If the Lord has brought conviction, I can't do that.

I can only tell you what he has said. if as the word of God has been made powerful in your heart by the spirit of God, I hope that you have been cut to the heart and are asking this same question.

And here's the reply. Verse 38 Peter said to them, repent and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins.

How sweet is that? And you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit that the promise is for you, for all your children, and for all who are far off, everyone whom the Lord our God calls to himself and with many of their words he bore a witness and continue to exhort them, saying, save yourselves from

this crooked generation.

[31:53] So those who received his word were baptized and they were added that day about 3,000 souls. If you stood there at that day and we do stand with them in solidarity, you would have worried this Jesus we killed, this son of David, this hope of the world, now risen from the grave in repudiation of what we have done, God.

Is he coming for us? And in fact he is, but not with vengeance.

Instead he comes for us with the same heart by which he said, Father forgive them, for they know not what they do, even as they crucified him.

Oh, the breadth and the length and the height and depth of the love of Christ that surpasses knowledge. Friends, behold the spectacular mercy of God.

in this passage we see condemnation pile up one after another like a mountain and in the moment it becomes too great to bear where we have seen ourselves fully exposed.

[33:37] We are God's enemies and we are due ultimate judgment. mercy come.

I hope you see the magnitude of our offense against the Lord, who this Jesus is, whom our sins drove the nails against, how we are responsible for his death and how God vindicated him and repudiated our verdict in his resurrection and the terrible reality that is owed his enemies every one of us and he is coming for us not with vengeance.

He comes for us with the missionary message of redemption, with the ministry of reconciliation, with the offer of his life and his love.

love. He's coming after us, after the world, through the mission of his church to proclaim just what Peter announced was coming in verse 21, that by his death and resurrection, everyone who calls upon the name of the Lord will be saved.

What will you do? Will you call on the name of the Lord? Peter says, repent and be baptized.

[35:18] Repent. The Greek word in the New Testament means a change of mind. And the Hebrew word in the Old Testament means to turn.

In this context, where God has shown him to be Lord and Christ, it means to change our mind, to turn from rejecting Jesus as Lord and Christ to embracing him as our Lord and Christ that is our Savior.

To embrace him as our Lord is to say I want to follow after you, to be your disciple. And to want him, to embrace him as our Christ is to lean on him for salvation.

I put my hope in life and in death in the offer that he makes. that by calling on his name, I can be saved.

And he says be baptized. Baptism isn't a declaration, right? Think about what this passage is saying. Baptism is not a declaration of what I have done.

[36:26] It's not a celebration of my decision. And in fact, I can't baptize myself, right? There's something to that, right?

It is an act of the church, the thing that Jesus left for his people, by which we affirm that we believe God has done this work in you.

So in baptism, the church of God affirms that to the best of our ability, we believe that this has actually taken place in the world. The Lord has drawn you to himself and convicted you of your sin, that the weight of this sermon or a sermon like it, right, that has come to rest and you see yourself as a sinner in need of his grace and his mercy.

And you have broken heart of prayer. And he has caused you, the Lord has caused you to cry out for his mercy. And he has worked repentance in your heart.

back to them as the sign as we are plunged down into the water and raised back up. That it signifies that God, the Spirit, has joined us to God the Son in his death and his resurrection.

[37:42] By grace, he has saved us. And so friends, what do we do? What shall we do? first, if you have never repented and been baptized, I call on you today to do just that.

See in this Savior, first the one that you have sprung. And how great your guilt is before him.

Layer and layer and layer and layer. And see in his resurrection and his offer of grace. You can run to him and call on him.

Find salvation in his name. So repent and be baptized. And if you have already done that, if that is the mark of your life, then glory once again in the magnificent love and mercy of our Lord.

It is always worthwhile to look again at the gospel. Not just the good news part, but the bad news part. As this sermon was largely about the bad news.

[39:13] God and the more and the more that we see of the bad news about us, the more astounding is his grace.

The more incredible, the more spectacular is his mercy. Let it prompt us to worship. God and last, all of us, what shall we do?

Let us pray for more of this. How does it end? Those who received his word were baptized.

There were added that day about 3,000 souls. friends, let us pray for more of that and let us share the gospel so that we might see the Lord do that work in our midst as well.

Let's pray. Lord, I ask that you would show us again and again the depth, the depth of our fall and folly against you so that we might turn every day to you in repentance, some for the first time, and the rest of us, as a daily habit in living so that we might glory in your matchless overwhelming, overflowing grace and love that is shown in your mercy to we who are responsible for this

[41:14] Christ's death. love that and we ask that you would buy your spirit and through your church, us, this church, that you would bring many to the point where they would receive this word and be baptized,!

out of their sins, trust in Christ, and find love in his name. We pray these things for your glory and for our good. Amen.