

Peters Sermon At Pentecost 2

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[0 : 0 0] Now may the words of my mouth and the meditations of all our hearts be acceptable in thy sight, O Lord, our strength and our Redeemer. Amen.

One of the difficulties of today is that there are so many things that we want to do that it's hard to know where to begin. And one of the things I'm concerned about is those of you who in your personal Bible study or in your group Bible study are laying out your schedule for the fall.

And I want to explain to you what's happening. This morning I'm beginning a series of ten sermons on ten sermons. The ten sermons are those from the Acts of the Apostles.

And they'll be followed through. And if you want to know when and what they are, then you should have a preaching calendar, which is available to you at the information desk or at the back of the church.

But I'm not preaching every Sunday. So on the Sundays that I'm not preaching, the sermon will be on the gospel for the day, and it's listed here as well.

[1 : 2 3] All that with the exception of next Sunday when Bishop John Sperry is going to be here, and you're exercising the prerogative, Bishop, to say what he wants.

And nobody can tell exactly what that might be. So, if you want to follow the sermons in Acts, there's a Bible study outline prepared. In addition, there is a Bible study outline on Christian stewardship prepared for you.

And if you plan cleverly, you can cover both of them this fall. So that's just to tell you what's happening. Now I want to tell you about the first of the ten sermons, and it appears in the second chapter of the Acts of the Apostles, and it's Peter's sermon at Pentecost, and it begins in chapter 2 and verse 14.

Let me give you the setting for this sermon, and then I'm going to ask you to listen to the sermon. The setting is that it was Pentecost, which was an ancient, annual, religious festival that filled Jerusalem with pilgrims.

A lot of them weren't quite sure why they came there, but they all knew that it was important to be there, not unlike Christmas Eve at St. John's. It's an ancient and important tradition that we observe, the point of which we sometimes lose sight of.

[2 : 5 3] And that's what happened to the pilgrims that gathered in Jerusalem. Some of them were remembering the Exodus. Some of them were celebrating the harvest.

Some of them were celebrating the giving of the law through Moses. And all these things came to be associated with the Feast of Pentecost, but all of them were there and happily observing the traditions of this high and holy festival.

Now, it happened on that day that a whole new festival was taking advantage of this ancient tradition of Jerusalem, and something brand new was going to take the place.

And that so exactly corresponds to our own Christian experience, I think, very often. Sometimes we get tied with tradition, and the tradition goes on and on and on, and then comes a point when that tradition comes alive for us, and we suddenly realize what it's all about and what it's meant to be.

Well, this city of Jerusalem had gathered in it a wonderful collection of Jewish people from all over the world. If ever you're invited to read this lesson in church, be careful, because you have to deal with the Parthians and the Medes and the Elamites and the residents of Mesopotamia, Judea, Cappadocia, Pontus, Asia, Phrygia, Pamphylia, Egypt, the parts of Libya beyond, belonging to Cyrene, visitors from Rome, Jews and proselytes, Cretans and Arabians, all heard in their own tongue the wonderful works of God.

[4 : 41] So you can see what a cosmopolitan collection of many people and many languages and many traditions were all gathered together in the city of Jerusalem. And in the midst of that, there was a small company of the disciples of Jesus.

And that company of the disciples of Jesus had been waiting in obedience to Jesus in Jerusalem until his spirit should come upon them. And at the festival of Pentecost, the ancient Jewish festival of Pentecost, something brand new happened.

That's why Pentecostals are Pentecostals, because of this brand new thing that was the pouring out of God's Holy Spirit upon them. And they had tongues of fire on them, a mighty rushing wind was heard, and they went out into the streets of Jerusalem, and everybody thought they were drunk.

It's typical. When I say typical, I mean everybody has to have ready at hand some put down for anything that demonstrates any kind of spiritual vitality.

And they had theirs ready when they saw these people behaving in this most unusual way. They said, well, they've been into this new wine. It was new wine indeed, but it was the wine of the Holy Spirit.

[6 : 03] I was glad that Archie Pell referred to the wine-colored prayer book this morning, and I hope that has deep symbolic implications for you all. And it was the outpouring of the Holy Spirit, so that all the people who didn't know what was going on looked and wondered what was going on.

And in the midst of that, there was a profound miracle that took place. And that was that that great cosmopolitan assembly of people from all over the Mediterranean world heard in their own language the wonderful story of Jesus.

Think what a wonderful thing it would be if at the United Nations everybody could speak the same language. Think what a wonderful thing it would be if the enormous cultural and linguistic barriers of our world were suddenly broken down and we were able to speak brother to brother to every man on the planet.

Well, we might be stuck as just what to say, but it would be a tremendous opportunity. And yet, some people were frightened by this and said, they're drunk.

But Peter, in order to tell them exactly what was happening, stood up and explained it all to them. And he explained it to them in these words.

[7 : 36] Fellow Jews, and all of you who are in Jerusalem, let me explain this to you. Listen carefully to what I say. These men are not drunk, as you suppose.

It's only nine in the morning. No. This is what was spoken by the prophet Joel. In the last days, God says, I will pour out my spirit on all people.

Your sons and daughters will prophesy. Your young men will see visions. Your old men will dream dreams. Even on my servants, both men and women, I will pour out my spirit in those days.

And they will prophesy. I will show wonders in the heaven above and signs on the earth below. Blood and fire and billows of smoke. The sun will be turned to darkness and the moon to blood before the coming of the great and glorious day of the Lord.

And everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved. Men of Israel, listen to this. Jesus of Nazareth was a man accredited by God to you by miracles and wonders and signs, which God did among you through him, as you yourselves know.

[8 : 53] This man was handed over to you by God's set purpose and foreknowledge. And you, with the help of wicked men, put him to death by nailing him to the cross.

But God raised him from the dead, freeing him from the agony of death because it was impossible for death to keep its hold on him. David said about him, I saw the Lord always before me.

Because he is at my right hand, I will not be shaken. Therefore, my heart is glad and my tongue rejoices. My body will also live in hope because you will not abandon me to the grave, nor will you let your Holy One see decay.

You have not known to me the paths of life. You will fill me with joy in your presence. Brothers, I can tell you confidently that the patriarch David died and was buried, and his tomb is here to this day.

But he was a prophet and knew that God had promised him on oath that he would place one of his descendants on the throne. Seeing what was ahead, he spoke of the resurrection of the Christ, that he was not abandoned to the grave, nor did his body see decay.

[10 : 08] God has raised Jesus to life, and we are all witnesses of that fact. Exalted to the right hand of God, he has received from the Father the promised Holy Spirit, and he has poured out what you now see and hear.

For David did not ascend to heaven, and yet he said, The Lord said to my Lord, Sit at my right hand until I make your enemies a footstool for your feet.

Therefore, let all Israel be assured of this. God has made this Jesus, whom you crucified, both Lord and Christ. The wonderful response to that sermon, if you were to read on, was that 3,000 people were baptized into Jesus Christ.

It was a decisive sermon. Now, it's just been read to you, and I long that it should have such decisive results among us. But somehow, you may regard it as somewhat irrelevant to the circumstances of your life.

Let me tell you why it is enormously relevant. That same Holy Spirit, which was poured out on that first Pentecost of the Christian era, is the Spirit which draws us together this morning.

[11 : 38] And you and I are, perhaps by reason of years of tradition, are hardened to what the Holy Spirit may be saying. Our ears may not be able to hear these words.

We may be forced into a position of dismissing it all with some trite remark like, they're drunk. But God's Holy Spirit is at work, and God's purpose is no less real here and now than it was there and then.

And let me tell you what happened there to give you sort of these hangers to hang on to this story.

First, there was a new wine. And that was the wine that Paul spoke about when he said, be not drunk with wine, but be filled with the Spirit.

This wine was the wine of the Holy Spirit, which when we first taste it, it may taste rough and raw, but ultimately it becomes the finest of good wine.

[12 : 53] The indwelling presence of the Holy Spirit. A new wine in the people of God. You know how many of our parties would be a disaster apart from lots of liquor.

Same way many of our gatherings are disasters. Apart from the work of the Holy Spirit in our hearts, bringing us into relationship with God and with one another.

So there was a new wine. There was a new language. And with the coming of the Church of Jesus Christ, there is a language that all mankind can now understand.

And the basic word of that language is Jesus Christ. That's how we are to speak to one another in Christ.

I have nothing to tell you about me that should be of any great significance to you. But I have something very important to tell you about someone Jesus Christ, which could be of the greatest possible significance to you.

[14 : 02] And the language that we are to speak is that language of which the central vocabulary is Jesus Christ. There is a new people.

And these new people are those who are spoken of by the prophet Joel when he says, I will pour out my spirit upon all flesh. We are made no longer white and black, men and women, rich and poor, cultured and uncultured, literate and illiterate.

Not all those things, but we have a new bonding with one another. And that bonding is by God's Holy Spirit. He makes us into a new people.

We want to escape, perhaps, from our corporate identity, but God in his love wants to bring us by his Holy Spirit into recognizing that. And what I need to tell you, and I am strongly convicted about this matter these days, is that the people among whom you are sitting this morning are the people whom God has chosen for you.

And he has chosen you for them. And with one another we are to come into the fullness of the fellowship of this new people of God, a people whose identity is through the pouring out of God's Holy Spirit upon us.

[15 : 29] All that we're doing in Count Me and Sunday is trying to get a network by which you are tied in to the people among whom God's purpose is to work in your life and through your life in their lives.

That's who you are to one another. so no more disdaining love for one another. That person whom you see as rather a problem in your life has been wonderfully put there to be the fulfillment of the purpose of God in the hard-crust ed arrogance of your heart and mine.

That's how it works. And that's what God has called us to as a new people. And then he has established a new kingdom. Peter quotes David in this sermon and tells how David, the greatest king that Israel ever had, saw in the Psalms recorded another kingdom and another king.

And he spoke about that. And Peter says, David is dead and his tomb is among us. But the king of whom he spoke has been crucified and is risen and is God's Christ and your Lord and you are to acknowledge him.

There is a new spiritual kingdom and Jesus is Lord of that kingdom. Well, the crux of the matter is, and this is what brought conviction to the people, what we have done in crucifying Jesus, God has undone by raising him from the dead.

[17 : 13] And when they heard that, they knew that either they bowed to God or else they ignored him. Your will, Peter told them, was to crucify him.

God's will was to raise him from the dead. Somebody, it's a kind of irresistible force and an immovable object coming up against one another.

What God has done in Christ cannot be moved and cannot be changed. And therefore, we're called upon to repent and to bow and to acknowledge that reality and proclaim Jesus Christ is Lord in the power of the Holy Spirit.

To acknowledge him as Lord in our lives. The pouring out of his spirit upon all flesh, the declaration of a new kingdom, the creation of a new people, the instilling of a new wine, all this is that we might be uniquely the people of God.

But, when they heard this sermon and were cut to the heart and said, what shall we do? Peter said, repent.

[18 : 28] repent. That means you turn and acknowledge Jesus Christ as Lord in your life. We turn and acknowledge him as Lord in our lives, as a people.

That's what we're called upon to do. We're called upon to repent and to say, Lord Jesus, you are to be the one who is Lord in my life from this moment on.

And it's my business to find myself in the place of day by day seeking to live in obedience to you, helped by your Holy Spirit.

That's the place that we're to come to at the end of this sermon. That's the place that 3,000 people came to in the record that is kept for us in the Acts of the Apostles.

Some simple act of repentance and obedience is called for from us. As one of the great turning points in our lives, yes, but as also part of the daily reality of our lives, yes.

[19 : 44] Turning in repentance and faith and acknowledging Jesus as Lord. that was the business of Peter's first sermon.

I am reminded that within the week Peter was in prison. People must have been listening and somewhere threatened and turned to Peter in violence and some were given by God's Holy Spirit the gift of faith and turned to Christ in obedience.

Amen. Now as our offering is received, we sing together hymn number six.

Amen. Amen. Amen. Thank you.

O Mata Ipawala, it fills the heart of the earth to stay, and love the song of the world to gain the mortal hope for mortal sin.

[21 : 48] He sent no angel to our ways, a fire o'er of the days, a God above the human pain, itself and to His lost world came.

For us He prayed, for us He taught, for us His daily works He wrought.

My words and signs and actions lost, still speaking of Himself alone.

To the love of the day will tell you to pray, such love in the world to rise.

He taught us to pray, such love in the world to gain the mortal hope for mortal sin. For us as we live in the world to gain the mortal hope for mortal sin.

[23 : 47] Thank you.

Thank you.

Thank you. Shall we pray?

Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you.

Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you.

[25 : 26] Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you.

Thank you. Thank you. Continue to remember those we know who are suffering in any way. And we will close this prayer time with a prayer of thanksgiving for all of our Father's many good gifts to us all.

God the Father, to you we pray. God the Son, through you we pray. God the Holy Spirit, in you we pray. Lift up our souls, O Lord, to the pure, serene life of thy presence.

That there we may breathe freely, there repose in thy love, there may be at rest from ourselves, and from their return, arrayed in thy peace, to do and bear what shall please thee.

Lord, in your mercy. We pray this morning for the Catholic Church. God let thy mercy descend upon thy whole Church.

[26 : 43] Preserve her in truth and peace, in unity and safety, in all storms and against all enemies. May she always offer to thy glory the never-ceasing sacrifice of prayer and thanksgiving.

advance the honor of her Lord and be filled with his Spirit and partake of his glory. Lord, in your mercy. Amen.

We pray for our own parish on this special Count Me In Sunday. Almighty God, we pray for your blessing on all who share in the life and work of this Church, in the ministry of word and sacrament, in teaching and pastoral care, in service to the diocese, the community, and those in need.

And as we look at all of the ministries listed on the orange Count Me In insert in today's bulletin, we ask the Lord to draw us all to those works of service where our gifts may be most effectively used in the service of Jesus Christ.

Lord, in your mercy. Hear our prayer. We continue to pray for those in our midst who are suffering.

[28 : 16] We all have those in our family circle, perhaps someone at work or school, someone who's come into the orbit of our lives who is suffering in some way.

Just remember them as we say this prayer. Almighty God, who art afflicted in the afflictions of thy people, regard with thy tender compassion those in anxiety and distress.

We think this morning of those who are lonely, the depressed, the sad, those who are in financial difficulty, those who are unemployed, those who are uncertain of their future, those who are sick in body.

Our God, we ask you to bear their sorrows and their cares. We ask you to supply all their manifold needs and help both them and us to put our whole trust and confidence in thee.

Lord, in your mercy. Lord, in your mercy. As a way of closing our prayer time this morning, could you take the prayer book and turn to page 14?

[29 : 47] And as a way of offering up to our Father thanksgiving for all of his many gifts to us, we'll say the general thanksgiving on page 14 together.

And so we pray. Almighty God, Father of all mercy, we, thine unworthy servants, who give thee... You. He a n