

Peter's Sermon at Pentecost

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[0 : 00] And I just want to look, it's a large section, just by way of overview from verse 22. We read there of Peter addressing the large crowd that was gathered, and he says, 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, and so on. These early days in the church were thrilling and they were exciting, and it would be a wonderful study to go through the book of Acts and see how God built up his church in these early days. God's spirit, of course, God's spirit is always at work, but God's spirit came in great power. These were days where the evidence of God's spirit in power was so clearly seen. It must be a wonderful thing to be part of a community where God's spirit comes in power. Maybe some of the older people here can remember times where they experienced a measure of that, where maybe in a time of revival where they saw something and experienced something of God's power at work.

[1 : 38] But one of the things that God's spirit does within our passion, one of the things God's spirit does is encourages and strengthens people, giving people courage.

Because we've got to remember, when we look at this man, Peter, who's standing up here, and he's standing up addressing the whole of Israel, well, all the people who are assembled there. This is a man who not so long before had run away, a man who was broken, and he was along with others hiding behind locked doors, a man who was in fear of his life.

And yet, a wee while later, this same man is out in the open streets, testifying. Not only is he sort of preaching, but he's telling the people, you, listen, you're the ones who put Jesus to death.

So there is this extraordinary boldness that has come over Peter. And the question you have to ask yourself is, how is that possible? Well, very simply, it was through the empowering of God's spirit.

[3 : 00] And I would say to anybody in here, you know, there might be, you might be here tonight, and you feel you want to be a Christian. Maybe you are a Christian, but you've hidden away, or you've tried to hide away.

And there is, although you might be a very courageous person in many areas and aspects of life, this is the one area that you're lacking courage.

And it's amazing how there are people who would almost face a roaring lion, or face an army, and yet they're scared to stand up and to confess Christ before others.

To them, it's the most difficult thing in the whole wide world. And it's the one area where they really, severely lack courage. Maybe there's someone like that here tonight.

And you say to yourself, I could never do it. No, you can't of yourself. But the Lord will help you. And that is why it is so important that we take that step, that step to confess.

[4 : 07] Because the moment that you do that, the moment that you take that step to confess Jesus Christ, something wonderful happens. And you are then given the courage.

So often, we look for the courage beforehand. We look for that strength beforehand. But it is as we do that the Lord enables and the Lord equips.

And it's just something in the passing that I think it is worth highlighting. How we can see people who were terrified, who were scared, who were hiding behind locked doors just a few days earlier, are now standing out publicly, declaring not only their support to the Lord Jesus Christ, but encouraging others to take Jesus Christ as Savior.

And Peter, we see here, is dealing with the people's issues and the people's problems. You know, that's one of the wonderful things about the Bible. It's one of the great features of Jesus' life, that Jesus always dealt with people where they were at.

And I think that's very, very important, that he met people where they were and reached down to where they were at. Because life, people are full of all kinds of problems and issues.

[5 : 34] There's so much brokenness and hurt in people's lives. And I think that's one of the things that the Christian must always be ready to do, is be ready to share, be ready, first of all, to listen.

That was one of the things that Jesus was very good at doing, was listening. And maybe it's something we've lost the ability to do, is to listen to people.

It's a very important thing. And I think it is one of the things that the Bible emphasizes, the importance of being able to listen. And Jesus listened to people.

And Jesus was able to deal with people, because he listened to them. You know, sometimes we say to people, How are you? We have no idea how they answer. A lot of people will just say, I'm fine.

They're not fine. But they say they're fine, because they know that, by and large, people don't really care. And I think it's one of the things that the Bible brings out, and particularly the ministry of Jesus, and subsequently, as we go through the epistles, as part of, although the Apostle Paul was a very robust kind of character, it's very obvious he was somebody with a huge heart, and he cared for people.

[6 : 50] The pastoral letters are just bulging, overflowing with Christian care and encouragement. And so we find that Peter is here dealing with people where they're at.

And Peter is explaining to people what has happened, because there was this amazing manifestation had taken place where they were speaking in different languages.

And Peter is showing how this is a fulfillment of God's word, that God's word is being fulfilled in the prophecy of Joel. That's what we read about in verse 16.

This is what was uttered through the prophet Joel. And you know, it's a wonderful thing to follow through world history with a Bible in one hand.

I always feel it's a bit of a risk to try and interpret the future. Because there's loads of people, you'll find loads of commentaries and books and things about, particularly the book of Revelation, and different aspects of prophecy in the scripture, and telling you exactly what's going to happen.

[7 : 57] But it's sometimes very difficult to be exact and to pinpoint things. But you know, it's as life goes on and you begin to see, it's wonderful how the word of God is coming, it always ties together with where history is really at.

And so Peter begins, and he preaches very fearlessly and powerfully. And at verse 22, Peter begins by summarizing the life of Jesus.

Now there are many things that Peter could have emphasized about the life of Jesus. He could have, for instance, spoken to them about the perfect life of Jesus. And there was nobody knew the perfect life of Jesus better than Peter, because he'd walked with him for three years.

Peter had seen Jesus in all the different situations in life, and he had never seen anything other than a perfect person. Peter could have spoken to them about, say, the prayer life of Jesus.

But what he did was he spoke to them about the mighty works of Jesus. And he particularly took this as a theme, because men of Israel hear these words, Jesus of Nazareth, a man attested to you by God with mighty works and wonders.

[9 : 23] Because that was the one thing that all these people present knew. They knew about Jesus. Jesus had lived among them for three years. And everywhere he went, there were huge crowds.

Because the one thing that Jesus was always doing was he was performing miracles. And this was part of the attestation that this would be the Son of God.

This would be the Messiah when he would come. Where he was going to be, there was the opening the eyes of the blind, there was delivering the captives, there was just this miraculous ministry was going to accompany the Messiah when he came.

And Peter is saying to them, look, you saw it. God attested that this was his Son. Because continually, throughout the years Jesus ministered, you saw with your own eyes just what Jesus was doing.

Now, as we say that, even although Jesus lived this perfect life, we know that they put Jesus to death. This Jesus delivered up according to the definite plan and foreknowledge of God, you crucified and killed by the hands of lawless men.

[10 : 43] Now, of course, it wasn't the actual Jews present that had killed Jesus. It was the Roman soldiers. But what Peter is saying is, you are the ones who crucified him.

The Roman soldiers were only doing what you asked them to do. It was the Jews and the religious leaders who had brought Jesus to the Roman authorities because the Jews themselves didn't have the authority to put Jesus to death.

They needed the authority of Rome. And so, although it was the Romans who actually carried out the crucifixion, Peter is saying to the Jews, you are the ones who crucified him.

You are the ones. You are the ones who actually pushed for this. Although you didn't put the nails in his hands, you are the ones who stirred up the people to crucify him.

And I'm sure present that day, there would have been those who had been yelling, crucify him, crucify him. And so it's one of the great mysteries why the most beautiful, wonderful, righteous, perfect person whoever lived in this world was put to death.

[11 : 54] But Peter, really, he brings together the two things that we can never really reconcile. And yet, they are reconciled perfectly by God.

And that is God's sovereignty and man's responsibility. Because both these things merge together incredibly in the life and in the death of the Lord Jesus Christ.

And so it's very hard for us often to understand these things. Because what Peter is saying here, this Jesus delivered up according to the definite plan and foreknowledge of God, you crucified and killed by the hands of lawless men.

And so we find here that there are two things at work. Jesus ultimately dies according to the eternal purpose of God.

It was always Jesus' mission coming into this world to die. He didn't come into this world simply to set out a good example. He didn't come into this world just to heal some people.

[13 : 06] He came to be a sacrifice for sin. That was the purpose. And it was an eternal purpose. Which means that when Jesus came, when the Son of God came into this world, He came because this was something that had been purposed and planned way back in the councils of eternity.

The coming of the Son of God was not an afterthought on the part of God. It's not that when man sinned in the garden and when Adam and Eve fell that God then said, well, we have to get a rescue plan.

We have to find some rescue mission. We're going to have to go to plan B. No. God had purposed from all eternity that this is what was going to happen.

This is God's foreknowledge. It's not just something that he knew. It was something that he planned. Something that he was in control of. This was his purpose.

And yet, tied into that, there is given to the human race an element of freedom of will. So that there is this amazing merging between what God is guiding and what God is overruling and yet what people are doing.

[14 : 30] because at the same time what God is allowing is for the evil within people's heart to rise and to surface.

He is taking back all the restraints and the barriers that are keeping the powers of darkness at bay and he is allowing Satan full scope at this particular time.

So there is on the one hand God's purposes which is that the Father's purposes is that the Son is going to die but tied in with that there is the freedom given to humanity to do the worst and they did where God takes back all the restraints and allows the powers of darkness and the evil of people to work.

And so it is one of the great mysteries that so often we find with regard to God's sovereignty and man's responsibility. And so we find that the cross of the Lord Jesus Christ because this is what Peter says this Jesus delivered up according to the definite plan and foreknowledge of God you crucified and killed by the hands of lawless men.

And you know the cross of Jesus Christ is the place where the glory of God is most displayed in this world. Now a lot of people might find that hard to understand because you say to yourself there is nothing glorious in the cross that is surely the most ugly scene that the world has ever seen but it is through the cross through the nailing of the Son of God onto that cross and his dying in our place.

[16 : 23] It is there that we really see the glory of God at work. So that is why the cross of Jesus Christ is term glorious although in itself there is nothing glorious in it it is the most horrendous thing yet it is revealing at the same time the glory of God.

And then Peter goes on from there from verses 24 to 28 really and he talks about the resurrection of how God raised up Jesus and of how the pangs of death loosing the pangs of death because it was not possible for him to be held by it.

You see here's the we've got to remember Jesus Christ is the Son of God. As God it was impossible for him to die. It was only by taking our nature that it was possible to die.

But the moment that Jesus died on the cross he had fulfilled he had satisfied all that the Father had given. That's why he said on the cross it is finished.

I have nothing more to do. Everything that you gave me to do I have completed it. It is all done. And that is why although he remained under the power of death for a time because again to be our representative Christ had to he had to go into the grave he had to everything that we have to do he had to do in order to fully be our representative.

[18:04] And so we find that Jesus although he is under the power of death he is not held by the power of death. we have often highlighted that before.

The great difference between Jesus death and our death. We will have no control in death. It is going to be one of the things where we will be completely out of control.

That is part of what makes death such an awful thing. Because we always want an element of control within our life. We will have none in the face of death. No control whatever.

Jesus had because Jesus dismissed his spirit. Nobody else was ever able to do that. He was able to do it with a triumphant cry.

And even when death set in the great difference was that he saw his body saw no corruption. There was no decay. There was no wastage.

[19:08] It is different to ours. That is what makes death such an awful thing. Such a painful thing. It is part of the absolute ugliness.

The horribleness of death. But Jesus had to go under its power. But not under its corruption. So that his body saw no corruption.

That is one of the wonderful things. And then we find that Peter is quoting here from Psalm 16. And again we know that this is one of these great messianic psalms.

And that was partly why there was such a serenity about Jesus in the face of death. Because there were two sides to it. One, he was fulfilling the work that the Father gave him all the time.

And this is what he delighted to do. In fact, it tells us there in quoting from the Psalm in verse 25. 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.

[20:16] That's lovely. That's the way Jesus lived in this world. That the Father was always before him. Always. Every day, every hour, every minute, always before him.

That's what made the forsakenness on the cross such a fearful thing. because up until that moment, there had always been this fellowship because, remember, Jesus had the fullness of the Spirit, the Spirit without measure.

And there was this constant dialogue between heaven and earth. So there was this peace and serenity in Jesus as he faced death despite all the awfulness of what he had to go through.

But there was more than that. There was a joy in him. You know, we don't read about the joy of Jesus. But I am fully persuaded that you would, although he was a man of sorrows and he was acquainted with grief, I believe that he was somebody who was full of joy.

If you met Jesus, it's one thing that would have impressed you about him, was his joy. Why do I say that? Well, for instance, it talks about the joy that was set before him, why he endured the cross.

[21:28] But the other thing is he was full of the Spirit. And part of the fruit of the Spirit is joy. So if ever you saw the fullness of joy in any passion, you would have seen it in Jesus, even although he was a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief, because he saw sin at a way and in a manner, at a level that you and I can't.

You see, when we look at sin, it doesn't matter how distorted or ugly sin is, there is still within us an element of sympathy for sin, because we're sinners.

We side often with sin. And even although we say, oh Lord, forgive me, there's still a part of you that goes out to it, that was not the soul with Jesus.

Although he was tempted, I often try and get my head around, I often try and think about that. of how Jesus was sinless and yet he was tempted in all points like as we are.

It's quite a mystery that. In all points he was tempted. You think of all the temptations that come your way. Jesus was tempted in everything.

[22 : 47] There was nothing that Jesus wasn't tempted in. It's quite an extraordinary thing. And yet he was sinless. Remember, we've often said it, temptation does not equal sin.

Temptation, sin begins the moment we begin to succumb to temptation. The moment we begin to side in and slide in to that temptation.

That's where the sin begins. And we know how easily that happens. But for Jesus that never happened. You know this, if he had given in once, that would have been it.

If Jesus had once given in to temptation, just once, he could no longer have been our representative. He could no longer have been our sacrifice.

But he never, ever, ever once gave in. It's amazing, wonderful. And so we find that, as I was saying, I believe that Jesus, although he was a man of sorrows and saw sin for all its ugliness, forgiveness.

[23 : 53] And that's why Jesus, remember when we're looking at Mary and Martha and Lazarus, how it tells us how he was troubled, there was an audible groaning in the face of death, of just how ugly, and he was seeing death at a level of ugliness that you and I cannot even see it.

And yet I believe he was somebody who was full of joy. And part of that great joy was seeing what he was winning for his people. Because he knew the glory that lies ahead.

He knew that what is in store is far greater than anything we could ever, ever, ever experience in this world. And that's why David is writing in Psalm 16.

We were looking at that recently in the prayer meeting that night. And it talks about I saw the Lord always before me, for he has had my right hand, I'll not be shaken, and so on. You'll not abandon my soul to hate, or let your holy ones see corruption.

You have made known to me the path of life. You know what I love about this Psalm is it is so vibrant and full of life, even although it's a Psalm that's facing death. Because, you know, the path of life is what Jesus is all about.

[25 : 16] Because when he came into this world, he walked a path of life. life. Because he brought eternal life to us. That's part of the wonder of it all.

And you know, it's all leading to life. Because it led to his resurrection, to his ascension, to his enthronement and government that he is ruling and reigning just now.

This path of life will lead to his return. life leads on to the opening of every grave. This path of life leads to our resurrection, leads to our glorification, to the great white throne, to the new heavens and to the new earth.

It's all part of it. So that as Jesus came as a little baby into this world, this is all part of the path of life that leads into eternal bliss.

the question I'd have to ask is, are you walking that path of life? Or are you on another path?

[26 : 26] Are you walking on your own tonight? Or are you walking with Jesus? Anyway, we find that as Peter goes on preaching here, he then talks about how the Holy Spirit has come in power.

And of course, this was one of the great evidences that Jesus gave with regard to himself that his going away was necessary in order that the Holy Spirit would come.

And here was this manifestation of the Holy Spirit being poured out. And nobody comes to faith in Jesus Christ except by the work of the Holy Spirit.

If you're a believer tonight, it is because the Holy Spirit opened your heart to receive Jesus Christ. If you're here tonight without Jesus Christ as Saviour, you need to pray and ask the Lord, Lord, open my heart.

Ask that the Holy Spirit will help you to see, because you can't see yourself. Ask that the Holy Spirit will open your ears to hear, because you can't hear yourself.

[27 : 36] But there is a natural and a spiritual deafness that we're born with. and it's only the Lord will open our eyes and open our ears and open our heart in order to see, to hear and to receive.

And this is what the Holy Spirit is doing. The Holy Spirit delights to take the things of Christ and reveal them unto us. And so there are just so many things.

But again, Peter quotes from David and he says, the Lord said to my Lord, sit at my right hand until I make your enemies your footstool.

There's many things we could say. It's not all one-way traffic as we see here, although this was a wonderful day, because we read there, where is it, at verse 31, so those who received his word were baptized and there were added that day about 3,000 souls.

What an amazing day that was. But you know, as we said, it's not all one way traffic, because quoting from Psalm 110, which we sang, the Lord said to my Lord, sit at my right hand until I make your enemies your footstool.

[28 : 48] There are always enemies. There are enemies tonight. There are individuals. There are groups. There are communities. There are movements. There are systems. There are philosophies that are at absolute enmity with Jesus Christ.

There are people tonight all over this world who hate the name of Christ. There are people tonight being butchered and people imprisoned because they love the Lord Jesus Christ.

And there are people who hate Jesus Christ so much that they have to kill them. It doesn't matter how old they are. It doesn't matter whether they're male or female.

There are people being killed every day in this world simply because they love the Lord Jesus Christ and there are others who so hate the Lord Jesus Christ.

There are movements afoot that are desperate to get rid and eradicate the very name of Jesus Christ from this world. But you know what's going to happen? The tables are going to turn and everything is going to change until I make, until, until there's going to be a particular time, until I make your enemies your footstool.

[30 : 05] Elsewhere it talks about he will make the enemies lick the dust. It talks about the triumphant power of the Lord. He is patient but there will come a day where every single person will have to acknowledge that Jesus Christ is Lord.

Remember how it tells us that in Philippians, in Philippians chapter 2. And it says, Therefore God has highly exalted him and bestowed on him the name that is above every name, so that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow in heaven and on earth and under the earth and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord to the glory of God the Father.

You know there's going to come a day when every, every single created being is going to have to confess that Jesus Christ is Lord.

On that day, on that great day, there will not be one atheist, agnostic, humanist, there will not be one secularist, there will not be one Persian that has ever, ever, ever lived who will not see Jesus and recognize the glory that is his, will have to bow down before him and confess him.

but for those people it's going to be too late because the word tells us that they will be cast from his presence and he will say to them depart from me for I never knew you.

[31 : 40] It's one of the most solemn things. There has to be a, we're told that there is going to be a judgment seat. The very injustice of this world requires that there will be a judgment seat where there will be a judge of total impartiality, a judge of unerring accuracy, a judge of total honesty and truth because there has to be a righting of wrongs because there have been so many wrongs and so many injustices throughout the history of this world and on that day there will be an exact and a perfect judgment.

it's an awesome thought but the one thing that is required of us as we face the judge of all the earth is that we know him because that's where it's all going to lie because for those he doesn't know he's going to say depart from me I never knew you but for those that he does know he's going to say enter into the joy of the Lord.

Well Jesus came into this world to make this provision for us that's why he came we've highlighted that so often that is the reason for us coming into this world is in order to give us life life.

If tonight you do not have that life then I urge you to seek it now. Let us pray. Oh Lord our God we pray that we may not turn away from your word but that we may seek you with all our heart.

We pray that we will hear your voice and hear your word that we will not close our ears to the truth but that the truth will indeed deliver us and make us free.

[33 : 47] We pray to bless all our homes and our families and all whom we love. We pray for your grace and your guidance and your help and your strength. Be near to us oh Lord we pray.

Do us good in all that we're about and take us to our homes safely. We pray to bless the new congregation that well the high free the new ministry that has begun there with Reverend Hugh Ferrier and ask Lord that your blessing will be upon him and that you will own and acknowledge his ministry there.

Guide us in everything we pray for giving us all our sin in Jesus name. Amen. Let us conclude singing from Psalm 16 the psalm that we're quoting there from Sing Psalms it's on page 17 and the tune is Golden Hill Psalm 16 on page 17 from verse 8 to the end chapter chapter 17 therefore my

heart is glad my tongue with joy will sing my body too will rest secure in hope and wavering for you will not allow my soul and death to stay nor will you leave your holy one to see the tombs decay You have made known to me the path of life divine.

Bliss shall I know at your right hand. Joy from your face will shine. Psalm 16 from verse 8 to the end on page 17. Before me constantly.

Before me constantly I send the Lord alone Because he is of my right hand I love the overgrown Therefore my heart is God My tongue will joyful sing My body too Will rest secure In open with a lead

[36 : 38] For you will not allow My soul and death to stay Why will you lead To Holy One To see the tombs he gave You have made known to me The path of life divine Bliss shall I know at your right hand Joy from your face will shine

Now may the grace, mercy, and peace of God the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit Rest and abide upon each one of you now and forevermore. Amen. Thank you