

Introduction

Good morning!

And happy birthday, church!

- Not Hillside Community Church
- But the whole Christian church!

Anyone know why it's the church's birthday?

How many of you knew that today is Pentecost Sunday?

Today is essentially the birthday of the Christian Church

And, coincidentally, we will be going over a passage directly related to Pentecost this morning

- This wasn't planned, at least not explicitly by us!

Let's read our passage for this morning: **Acts 2:22-36**

22 “Men of Israel, listen to this: Jesus of Nazareth was a man accredited by God to you by miracles, wonders and signs, which God did among you through him, as you yourselves know. 23 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. 24 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. 25 David said about him:

“I saw the Lord always before me. Because he is at my right hand, I will not be shaken. 26 Therefore my heart is glad and my tongue rejoices; my body also will live in hope, 27 because you will not abandon me to the grave, nor will you let your Holy One see decay. 28 You have made known to me the paths of life; you will fill me with joy in your presence.’

29 “Brothers, I can tell you confidently that the patriarch David died and was buried, and his tomb is here to this day. 30 But he was a prophet and knew that God had promised him on oath that he would place one of his descendants on his throne. 31 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. 32 God has raised this Jesus to life, and we are all witnesses of the fact. 33 Exalted to the right hand of God, he has received from the Father the promised Holy Spirit and has poured out what you now see and hear. 34 For David did not ascend to heaven, and yet he said,

“The Lord said to my Lord: “Sit at my right hand 35 until I make your enemies a footstool for your feet.””

36 “Therefore let all Israel be assured of this: God has made this Jesus, whom you crucified, both Lord and Christ.”

Let’s pray...

I want to start today by doing a quick *review* of what Pentecost is all about

Kevin covered a lot of this last week, so again, I'll make this quick

Major Jewish Festivals

There are many Jewish festivals

- But there are three such festivals that seem to be the most prominent on the Jewish calendar

The first is Passover, or *Pesach* (pesak) in Hebrew

- The Passover is the most important Jewish festival
- And gets its name from the idea that God "passed over" the Jews when he afflicted Egypt with the plague of the firstborn
- It commemorates the Exodus from Egypt
- The Exodus was the most significant event in the history of Israel
- So Passover is extremely significant

Another major festival is the Feast of Tabernacles, or *Sukkot* (sukkoth) in Hebrew

- The Feast of Tabernacles (or feast of booths) is one of the most celebratory feasts
- It commemorates joyfully how God sheltered the Israelites as they wandered in the desert for 40 years
- So, the Jews would often gather during this time and build temporary shelters (tabernacles, booths) to relive the experience

Between these two festivals on the Jewish calendar is the Festival of Weeks, or *Shavuot* in the Hebrew

- The festival of weeks occurs 50 days after the second day of Passover
- This day is called "Pentecost" in the Greek
 - o Pentecost means "50th" (50th day)
- And it commemorates the culmination of the Exodus
 - o When Israel arrived at Mt. Sinai and received the law
 - o In effect, making them a nation under God

So Pentecost is highly significant

- For Jews, it commemorates the creation of Israel as a nation
- But for Christians, it commemorates creation of the church
 - o Which is what we are talking about today

If you have your Bibles, turn to chapter 2 of the book of Acts

We are going to consider the details of Peter's sermon on Pentecost

Peter's Sermon

Context: Coming of the Holy Spirit (2:1-13)

In the first section of Luke's account of Pentecost, he describes the coming of the Holy Spirit upon a band of believers who had gathered to celebrate Pentecost

These disciples had been listening to the teaching of the risen Lord for a period of forty days

They had received the great commission to be witnesses throughout the world

And they had been given the promise that they would receive the Holy Spirit as the fuel for that mission

Jesus then ascended into heaven

And the disciples gathered together in Jerusalem to wait and pray for the fulfillment of these promises

Here in chapter 2 of Acts, we see that promise fulfilled

While these believers were gathered in prayer, the Holy Spirit came upon them in a miraculous way

The text at the beginning of chapter **2 (verses 1-4)** says,

2:1 When the day of Pentecost came, they were all together in one place. 2 Suddenly a sound like the blowing of a violent wind came from heaven and filled the whole house where they were sitting. 3 They saw what seemed to be tongues of fire that separated and came to rest on each of them. 4 All of them were filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other tongues as the Spirit enabled them.

Now this was a remarkable event

And it was not just a spiritual event, but it was also an audible and visual event

And this event resulted in these disciples being able to speak in languages that they were previously unable to speak

It was at this point that the church was created

And the creative force behind the creation of the church was the Holy Spirit

- The word “spirit” in Greek is *pneuma*

The equivalent of *pneuma* in Hebrew is *ruach*, which Kevin talked about last week

Both the Greek word *pneuma* and the Hebrew word *ruach* can be translated as “wind” or “spirit”

And it is interesting to note that this “wind of God” or “spirit of God” is present at key moments of creation in the Bible

In Genesis 1:2, at the dawn of creation, it says,

...and the Spirit of God was hovering over the waters

The word translated “spirit” here is the Hebrew *ruach*

And during the Exodus, when Israel was caught between the Egyptian army and the Red Sea, the Lord used the *ruach* to drive back the sea and dry the land

- And the nation of Israel was effectively created

And here at Pentecost, the church was created by the Holy Spirit (*pneuma*) of God

So the wind/spirit of God is present at each of these major creation events

The text then shifts to the scene of a much larger crowd that had gathered at the sound of the *pneuma*, and at the sound of the disciples speaking in their own language

And this is when Peter stands up to address the crowd

Now realize that what we have here in the book of Acts is not a full transcript of Peter's sermon

- If one were to give this speech as it appears in the text, it would probably take 2-3 minutes
- And Peter most likely spoke much longer than that

So, what we have here are the highlights of Peter's sermon

But ultimately, as we believe, all Scripture is God-breathed (inspired), so we trust that this is the message that was intended to be recorded

Let's look at these highlights of the sermon

The Last Days (2:14-20)

Acts 2:14-20 contains the first part of Peter's sermon, which Kevin spoke about last week

Here, Peter explains what is happening with the coming of the Holy Spirit

And he refers to a passage from the book of Joel

- Something that the Jews would have been very familiar with, to explain it

The Proclamation (2:21)

And then, in **verse 21**, Peter makes a bold proclamation, quoting Joel 2:32

He says,

21 And everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved.

This, I would suggest, is the theme of his message to the crowd that had gathered

- Peter's sermon is ultimately the first evangelical presentation of the gospel

You see, before he ascended into heaven, Jesus commissioned his followers to make disciples of all nations

- And this proclamation becomes the rallying cry for the disciples
- Their reason for being

Think about it...

- They just experienced the crucifixion of their rabbi and teacher
- They witnessed his resurrection and ascension
- The Holy Spirit has come upon them in miraculous form
- They have been filled with the Spirit and emboldened to proclaim the message of Jesus

And now they have the motivation to do so –

- “Everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved”

And again, this is not a new message that they just heard for the first time

- This is something that they are very familiar with from the prophet Joel

So, this is a powerful moment, and a powerful proclamation!

The Evidence (2:22-36)

And now we get to our text for this morning, Acts 2:22-36

- Which is the heart of Peter's sermon on Pentecost

In this section, Peter lays out key pieces of evidence that Jesus of Nazareth was in fact, the Messiah to whom Joel was pointing

- And the Messiah for whom the Jews had been waiting

And this evidence comes in several forms:

- The miracles, wonders, and signs of Jesus
- The crucifixion
- The resurrection
- And prophetic proof from the likes of King David

Miracles, Wonders, and Signs

He begins with Jesus' miracles in **verse 22**

22 “Men of Israel, listen to this: Jesus of Nazareth was a man accredited by God to you by miracles, wonders and signs, which God did among you through him, as you yourselves know.

Peter refers to “Jesus of Nazareth,” which is a designation that appears frequently in Acts (5x)

- And it refers simply to his hometown

Jesus is also identified as

“a man accredited by God to you by miracles, wonders and signs, which God did among you through him”

The term “accredited” in the original Greek usually referred to someone who held and office

- One who had been appointed for a specific role by an authority
- You could substitute the word “endorsed” here
- A man *endorsed* by God to be the Messiah

This is significant, because Peter is confirming to the crowd that Jesus was the designated Messiah – the chosen one of God

And the proof that Jesus was the appointed Messiah is found in the miracles, signs, and wonders that he performed during his ministry on earth

- Changing water to wine
- Healing people from illness
- Releasing people from demonic possession
- Calming the storm
- Walking on water
- Multiplying loaves and fishes
- Restoring sight and speech
- Raising the dead to life

Some 40+ miracles, signs, and wonders that point beyond themselves to a divine power behind them

- And all witnessed by various disciples at various times

So, Peter is basically saying,

“You, yourselves, saw these things and know these things”

And notice here, there is no denial of what Peter is saying

- There is no one—in this account or in accounts outside the Bible—that stand up and refute what Peter says

Which is significant

- Because the gospel accounts, that include these miracles, were all written during the first century AD, within 30-60 years of Jesus’ death
- So, the eyewitnesses named in the accounts would have had ample opportunity to refute these claims if they weren’t true
- But they didn’t

So Peter claims these miracles as proof that Jesus was who He claimed to be

- And who the prophets claimed He would be

The Crucifixion

The next piece of evidence Peter refers to is Jesus' crucifixion in **verse 23**:

23 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.

What we see here is the balance of human responsibility with God's divine plan

- Jesus died at the hands of humans
- And the Jews present at Pentecost were responsible
 - o They put Jesus to death with the help of wicked men, the Romans
 - o Because Jesus died on a Roman cross
- But, at the same time, it was all part of God's will
- So Jews and Gentiles were guilty
 - o But it was all done within the purpose and foreknowledge of God

And Jesus' death by crucifixion was also the fulfillment of OT prophecy

- Providing further evidence that he was the Messiah they were expecting

The Resurrection

Next, Peter turns to the evidence of the resurrection in **verse 24**:

24 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.

Yes, humans nailed Jesus to a cross and killed him

- But God raised him from the dead

And it is interesting here, the Greek word for "agony" literally means "birth pains"

- So, God freed Jesus from the "birth pains" of death
- Which is fitting when you look at the Jesus' resurrection as a new birth from death

So, Peter established that Jesus was the chosen Messiah based on his miracles, his death, and his resurrection

Further Prophetic Evidence

Then, he provides further scriptural/prophetic evidence that Jesus was the Messiah

Let's look at **verses 25-28**

25 David said about him: "I saw the Lord always before me. Because he is at my right hand, I will not be shaken. 26 Therefore my heart is glad and my tongue rejoices; my body also will live in hope, 27 because you will not abandon me to the grave, nor will you let your Holy One see decay. 28 You have made known to me the paths of life; you will fill me with joy in your presence.'

This is a direct quotation of Psalm 16:8-11, a psalm of David

Initially, one might think David is referring to himself in Psalm 16

- Pleading that God would vindicate him and that he might escape death and the grave
- "Holy One" here could refer to David himself as the anointed king

But Peter sees it as a designation of the Messiah

- Who, according to the prophecies and promises, would come from the line of David.

So, Peter is taking Psalm 16 as a messianic psalm, a messianic prophecy

And the following verses confirm that

Look at **verses 29-31**:

29 "Brothers, I can tell you confidently that the patriarch David died and was buried, and his tomb is here to this day.

30 But he was a prophet and knew that God had promised him on oath that he would place one of his descendants on his throne.

31 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.

He presents a well-structured apologetic argument here

And his reasoning was clear

- Because it is known that David died and was buried in a tomb
- The psalm could not apply to him
- So, the psalm had to be a prophecy about one of David's descendants
- And the term "Holy One" refers not to David, but to the coming Messiah

So, the psalm prophetically shows David's vision that the Messiah would not be bound by death

And since Jesus was the only one ever resurrected—the only one released from the bonds of death—then it logically follows that He was the promised Messiah

Then, once again, Peter refers to another psalm of David to affirm that Jesus had been exalted, fulfilling yet another prophecy

Look at **verses 34 & 35**:

**34 For David did not ascend to heaven, and yet he said,
"The Lord said to my Lord: "Sit at my right hand 35 until I make
your enemies a footstool for your feet.""**

This is a quotation from Psalm 110, which is another messianic psalm in which David is prophesying about the coming Messiah

And again, Peter makes the point that David did not ascend into heaven

- So this psalm could not have been about himself
- And since Jesus had just ascended into heaven with his disciples as eyewitnesses
- Then it follows that Jesus was the Messiah that David was writing about

These are prime examples of prophetic evidence for Jesus being the Messiah

The Old Testament contains numerous prophecies about the coming Messiah that were all fulfilled literally by Jesus

- And the odds are astronomically against any one man fulfilling all of these prophecies simply by coincidence

Also, we must remember that David and Jesus are separated by a millennium

And that is one of the profound things about the Bible

- It was written over a period of 1500 years
- By approximately 40 authors (including David)
- From all different occupations
- Living on 3 different continents

And yet we have case after case where Scripture confirms Scripture

- Just like it does here

Eyewitnesses

Peter then proceeds to convey more proof of the resurrection in **verse 32**:

32 God has raised this Jesus to life, and we are all witnesses of the fact.

And the proof of the resurrection is the eyewitness of the disciples

Now the book of Acts was probably written within 40 years of Jesus' death and resurrection

- So, this greatly reduces the possibility that the accounts of people seeing the risen Christ were simply legends made up at a later time
- These accounts were spoken and written while these eyewitnesses were still alive
- So, had they not been true, they could have easily been refuted
- But they weren't

And then Peter connects all of this to the events of that particular day in **verse 33**:

33 Exalted to the right hand of God, he has received from the Father the promised Holy Spirit and has poured out what you now see and hear.

So he brings it back around

- Jesus lived
- Jesus died
- Jesus was resurrected
- Jesus was exalted to the right hand of God
- Jesus sent the Holy Spirit just as he had promised
- And the disciples had experienced the receiving of the Holy Spirit that day

The Heart of the Message

And then Peter sums up his argument in **verse 36**:

36 “Therefore let all Israel be assured of this: God has made this Jesus, whom you crucified, both Lord and Christ.”

Once again affirming that Jesus is both Lord (God) and Christ (Messiah)

And using these Old Testament prophecies, he has established that Jesus was in fact the promised Messiah that the Jews had been waiting and hoping for

And we see their response in **verse 37**,

When the people heard this, they were cut to the heart and said to Peter and the other apostles, “Brothers, what shall we do?”

But we will discuss that section of the text next week

Communion

Today is communion Sunday

So, we are going to take communion together in remembrance of these things that Peter spoke about on Pentecost:

- Jesus lived
- Jesus died for our sins
- Jesus was resurrected

The worship team is going to come up and lead us in a song

You can all come up and get the elements and take them back to your seat

And then in a few minutes, we will take them together

The only requirement...

1Cor. 11:23-26

23 For I received from the Lord what I also passed on to you:

The Lord Jesus, on the night he was betrayed, took bread, 24 and when he had given thanks, he broke it and said, "This is my body, which is for you; do this in remembrance of me."

25 In the same way, after supper he took the cup, saying, "This cup is the new covenant in my blood; do this, whenever you drink it, in remembrance of me."

26 For whenever you eat this bread and drink this cup, you proclaim the Lord's death until he comes.

Application

Now I haven't forgotten about our application for today

And I think one of the best ways to apply the words of Peter's sermon is to use them as a model for how we share our faith with others

We, too, are disciples of the Lord Jesus Christ

- We, too, have the Holy Spirit within us
- And we, too, have been commissioned to make disciples of the nations

And Peter presents an exemplary way of doing that

Now, you don't have to get up in front of thousands of people and preach like this

But you can share your faith with your neighbor, or your co-worker, or a friend using a similar pattern:

- Tell them about the life of Jesus
 - o He was a real person that walked the earth
 - o He did many very human things
 - o But he also did miracles, signs, and wonders that could have only come from being God
- Tell them about the death of Jesus
 - o The crucifixion
 - o All of the events that led up to that point
 - o And how he willingly died as a sacrifice for us
 - o So that we could be forgiven of our sins
- Tell them about the resurrection of Jesus
 - o How by the power of God, Jesus conquered death, was resurrected, and ascended into heaven
 - o And there is ample evidence that this actually happened
- And tell them the story of the Bible
 - o How all of it, Old Testament and New, tells the story of creation, sin, and redemption
 - o And how the OT prophecies came true in Jesus

And as Peter says in his sermon:

“Therefore, let all Israel (every person) be assured of this: God has made this Jesus, whom you crucified, both Lord and Christ.”

“And everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved.”