

The Day of Salvation is Here

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Preacher: Mark Chew

[0 : 0 0] Now, if you were with us last Sunday, you know that I started on Peter's sermon, as Will sort of intimated, but didn't finish it. Partly this was due to the length of the sermon, as you can see, which wouldn't have allowed me to cover it adequately in one go.

But I felt it was important to at least start on Peter's sermon from last week because the first part of his sermon actually explained what just occurred on the day of Pentecost.

So to recap, if you want to hear, the Spirit had come to some 120 of them, and one manifestation of his presence was their ability to speak in tongues.

These were foreign languages. And Peter gets up to announce this as the fulfillment of the prophecy in Joel, which we read here in verse 17. Here he says, 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.

[1 : 1 2] And then I explained that Peter's emphasis wasn't so much on the speaking of tongues per se, but what the tongues enabled them to do, which, as the prophecy in Joel says, prophesy.

And ability to do so in many languages allowed them to witness to people from all nations. One of the key messages of this witness, which is in the prophecy, is found in verse 21.

Namely, that everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved. That's where we ended last Sunday. But you may have noticed that I was a bit vague as I was referring to the Lord.

Yes, I did say that the Lord was Jesus, but I had actually made a mental jump by doing that, haven't I? I hadn't really explained how we get from the Lord to Jesus.

Because you see, the reference in the Joel prophecy to the Lord would have been understood to be the God of Israel, the one who brought them out of Egypt into the promised land, the one who then sent them into exile for their disobedience.

[2 : 2 3] So this understanding, therefore, had to be updated. Not because the God of Israel was no longer the Lord, but rather that he had now appointed another to represent him, who was also the Lord.

Peter is about to show them that this appointed one is Jesus, and that it's on his name that they had to call in order to be saved.

And that's why Peter continues from verse 21 in the way he does. Because otherwise, you would think, is he going off a bit tangent on this, what he says here in verse 22?

No. Not if you realize what he's trying to say. So he continues verse 22. Fellow Israelites, 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.

So I hope you're beginning to see what Peter is trying to do. He's building the case for Jesus as the Messiah. He's pointing out to the Israelites, especially those that are living there in Jerusalem, what they already know.

[3 : 34] They've seen the signs and wonders of Jesus. These, Peter says, are accreditation from God, anointing Jesus as his Messiah. Nevertheless, there remained the awkward fact that no more than 50 days ago, Jesus was crucified.

And not everyone there would have witnessed or known of his resurrection. So Peter now explains, this man was handed over to you by God's deliberate plan and foreknowledge. And you, with the help of wicked men, put him to death by nailing him to the cross.

So yes, he was put to death on the cross. But let's be clear, Peter says, this is part of God's deliberate plan. It doesn't absolve them of their wickedness, but God has used it as part of his plan all along, in order that Jesus might then be raised from the dead.

Verse 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. This, with everything else that has happened in Acts so far, has occurred to fulfill scriptures.

And in this case, David points back to Psalm 16, to say, this is what's being fulfilled. And so, in verse 25, David said about him, in Psalm 16, I saw the Lord always before me, because he is at my right hand.

[5 : 06] I will not be shaken. Therefore my heart is glad, and my tongue rejoices. My body also will rest in hope, because you will not abandon me to the realm of the dead. You will not let your Holy One see decay.

You have made known to me the paths of life. You will fill me with joy in your presence. And as I said two weeks ago, when Peter uses a Psalm of David, it's with the view that David was writing as the Lord's anointed.

Psalm 16, as Ruth read right at the start, is a mictum of David. A mictum is just a type of song, you know, it could be just indicating it's three, four time, or four, four time, or something like that.

But it's a Psalm of David. And Peter now takes this one step further, by explaining that, when David wrote Psalm 16, he wasn't writing with himself in mind.

For he says in verse 29, fellow Israelites, I can confidently tell you that the patriarch David died, and was buried, and his tomb is here to this day. Go check his tomb, he's saying, if you don't believe me.

[6 : 11] He's dead and buried. So this prophecy can't be about David himself. Instead, verse 30, David was a prophet, and knew that God had promised him on oath, that he would place one of his descendants on his throne.

Seeing what was to come, he spoke of the resurrection of the Messiah, that he was not abandoned to the realm of the dead, nor did his body see decay. In other words, David wrote Psalm 16 with a future descendant in mind, one who would sit on the throne as the Lord's anointed.

This heir of his would appropriate Psalm 16 for himself. And it's interesting how this is all worded, because the implication here, isn't that the Lord's anointed won't die, but rather, having died, he'll not be left in the realm of the dead.

That his body, having suffered death, would nevertheless not decay. So this could only refer to a bodily resurrection, right?

Which is exactly what Peter witnessed of Jesus. So in verse 32, Peter claims, God has raised this Jesus to life, and, and this is important, we are all witnesses of it.

[7 : 31] We've seen him rise from the dead. Peter clearly shows, therefore, that Psalm 16 had now been fulfilled in a descendant of David, Jesus was, rising from the dead.

But then Peter goes on to say, wait, there's more. Because not only did the Messiah rise from the dead, he has now also ascended into heaven.

And so Peter continues, next verse, 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. Now I want to take a short tangent here, just for you to notice the relationship of the Trinity here.

Clearly, Peter says that the Son receives the Spirit from the Father, and pours it out on God's people. Very clear, isn't it, from the verses.

Thus, the Nicene Creed is correct, isn't it? The Spirit proceeds from both the Father and the Son. It's right here in these verses. Anyway, end of tangent.

[8 : 39] But you see, can't you, that Peter here is now building his case for Jesus as Lord. Why?

Because just go back to Joel, and just ask yourself, who is the one that's speaking in Joel? It's the Lord, isn't it?

God says, I will pour out my Spirit in the last days. And who does Peter now claim is pouring out the Spirit? Jesus of Nazareth.

And so if you put the two together, Jesus is Lord, if he fulfills the prophecy in Joel. And in addition, notice as well, where does Jesus pour the Spirit from?

Not on earth, below, is it? But actually, up above, in heaven. Hence, the need for Jesus to have ascended into heaven, which again, Peter and the apostles also witnessed.

[9 : 44] Recall back in chapter 1 of Acts, the angels told them to stop staring in the sky and go back to Jerusalem, because why? They had just witnessed Jesus ascending to heaven, haven't they? And now Peter says, guess what?

There's another psalm, another Davidic psalm, that speaks of Jesus being in heaven. So verse 34, Peter quotes from Psalm 110. He says, For David did not ascend to heaven, and yet, he said, that is David who wrote that Psalm 110, The Lord said to my Lord, Sit at my right hand until I make your enemies a footstool for your feet.

And again, it's clear here that this Psalm of David cannot refer to himself, right? The Lord, that's God who is in heaven, is saying to another, someone calls, someone David calls, my Lord, to sit at his right hand.

And that my Lord is not David, is it? Again, this can only be someone who has ascended to heaven to sit at God's right hand, isn't it? So it must be the risen Jesus, whom Peter and the others have again witnessed ascending to heaven from the Mount of Olives.

Can you see then what Peter is trying to do with this sermon? Can you see the logic? He's putting together what he's witnessed with what God's word has said to give them all irrefutable proof that Jesus is Lord, which is what he now says in verse 36.

[11 : 15] Therefore, let all Israel be assured of this. God has made this Jesus, whom you crucified, both Lord and Messiah.

Q-E-D. Right? Jesus is Messiah because he's the one risen from the dead as their witness. And Jesus is the Lord because he has ascended into heaven and now poured out his spirit on his people.

The Lord as the one Joel has prophesied back in the Old Testament. Now, I hope I haven't lost any of you along the way, but it's important, isn't it, to be able to work through the logic of Peter's sermon because what he's trying to do is explain to his listeners and to us why Jesus is Lord and Messiah.

Not just Lord, not just Messiah, but Lord and Messiah. In particular, he's also the Lord that's referred to in Joel's prophecy so that everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved.

He's helping his hearers, isn't it, join the dots between the word of God with the events in this world and tell them that what's happening is a fulfillment of Scripture.

[12 : 38] Now, why does Peter go to all these lengths to do this? Because now that Jesus has come, things have changed.

you see, if you think about it, the Jews already believed in the one true God, didn't they? The God of the Old Testament, Yahweh. They were right to worship Him, weren't they?

But for Peter, this is no longer enough. Now, they had to call on the name of the Lord Jesus to be saved. That's Peter's point.

And if that's so for the Jews, then how much more so for us? It's not enough to just believe God exists.

Rather, we have to know the identity of God. That He's the Father of the Lord Jesus Christ. That Jesus, His Son, is our Lord and Messiah.

[13 : 38] It matters. Because if it didn't matter, Peter wouldn't have the need to go through all that length with that sermon, isn't it? He could have just left them as worshippers of Judaism. But no, it was necessary for them to call on the name of the Lord Jesus to be saved.

And that's why, you know, some of you have been coming along to the Christianity Explored course. That course is all specifically focused, isn't it, on finding out who Jesus is and why He came.

Because the aim is for those who come along to recognize that Jesus is Lord and Messiah, to be convinced of His death and resurrection. As one of the leaders of CE shared early on, it's the fact of Jesus' death and resurrection that pressed her to make a decision, not to sit on the fence anymore, but to decide whether it's Jesus a lie and then in which case then we should have nothing to do with Him.

Or if He is exactly who He says He is, then He cannot be ignored, can He? He has to be reckoned with. Now at this point, the focus turns to people's reaction to his sermon, to Peter's sermon.

So verse 37, when the people heard this, they were cut to the heart and said to Peter and the others, brothers, what shall we do? And Peter replied, repent and be baptized, every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ.

[15 : 05] There we go. for the forgiveness of your sins and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. The promise is for you and your children and all who are far off for all whom the Lord our God will call.

With many other words, He warned them and He pleaded with them, save yourselves from this corrupt generation. And so the command and the response is pretty clear, isn't it?

Repent. That's, in one sense, that's the only and primary response. the fact that He mentions baptism is really something that occurs to the believer to welcome them into God's family rather than something they need to do.

But notice, too, as well, that repentance and calling on the name of Jesus are related, aren't they? Because repentance entails recognizing our wrongdoing and therefore seeing that we can't save ourselves.

We need salvation. We need a Savior. And calling on Jesus is to call on our Savior so that His death can save us from our sins.

[16 : 11] Now you see from the people's response actually that they didn't need to be really taught to repent, did they? Because they were already cut to the heart. They got it. They knew that they were responsible for their wicked act of putting Jesus to death.

But Peter merely makes it clear for them what they ought to do. Now we may not have historically had a hand in Jesus death. We were all not there at that time. But I have to say that we're just as guilty, aren't we?

Because were it not for our sin, Jesus would have no need to die. And sure, we're not single-handedly responsible for Jesus' death, each of us, but we've all played our part, haven't we, in adding the weight of sin to the burden He carried to the cross.

It's like a pile of sand like you see at the back of a truck, right? Every grain of sand is negligible in weight. You pick up one grain of sand and you ask, does this really add to the weight of the truck?

It's hard to believe that it does, right? But then when you see the mountain of sand on the truck and how it's weighing down the truck, then you go, of course it does.

[17 : 25] Each grain adds to the total weight, which adds to the weight of the truck. And so, likewise, each of our sins may be small compared to the totality of the sin of the world, and yet each of us have played our part, haven't we, to put Jesus on the cross.

Our sin may be small compared to the total, but it alone is enough to require Jesus to die in order to save us. And as we think about it, I mean, I pray that it would convict us of just how grievous our sin is to God.

I pray that it would cut our hearts the same way it did for Peter's hearers. But the good news, of course, is that when we do repent, then we have salvation, don't we?

When we turn away from our pride and selfish behavior, when we turn to Jesus and call on His name, we have all these things that Peter promises right here. Firstly, forgiveness of sins.

Instead of being punished for our sin in death, we now have a relationship restored with God, our Creator. What's more, He gives us His Spirit to empower us to live for Him, to be His witnesses.

[18 : 45] And then thirdly, in verse 40, we're saved from this corrupt generation. Now this is not an extra thing as if you need to then repent and then save yourself. No, rather, the act of repentance and faith saves us from this corrupt generation.

You see, the world without God is under judgment. And, you know, we may look around in Australia and think, you know, we're all living a good life. Everyone's back traveling, having holidays, you know, even Qantas, though the service with Qantas is bad, but we're out at restaurants, you know, out at the theater, out at the sport.

But if we scratch beneath the surface, Peter says, there's a rotten core underneath, isn't it? Because people are living without any regard for God. They've made themselves king of their own lives.

They failed to acknowledge the one who has blessed them with everything in life and more. And Peter says, there will be a day of reckoning for this corrupt generation.

Every generation, by the way, is corrupt. But there will be a day of reckoning, of judgment. But Peter says, we can save ourselves from this day by coming out of this world, by repenting, by putting our faith in Jesus.

[20 : 04] And so, if you're here today and you've not done that or you're not sure that you've done that, then please come talk to me. It's not hard, but I'll be able to explain to you or walk you through what this life of repentance actually means.

But you've already done that and you're part of this kingdom, then give thanks. Give thanks and live in this glorious truth that you've been saved and you are now Christ's disciple.

But as you do, I hope too that your heart may be burdened for those who aren't saved yet. People that you might know, will you pray for them? Will you take the opportunity to speak with them about Jesus?

Jesus. Well, verse 41 then describes what happens afterwards. It says, those who accepted his message were baptized and about 3,000 were added to their number that day.

Now, God isn't named here, but the words were added is used in what we call a divine passive voice. That is, God is the one that's doing the adding. Now, how do we tell that?

[21 : 08] Well, if you go back to verse 39, there Peter had promised that the promises for you and your children and for all who are far off. And then he adds, for all whom the Lord our God will call.

And so what Peter is saying is, yes, the command here is for you to call on the name of the Lord and the command first goes to the Jews there at the time and then to their children, meaning that this command is to be passed on to the next generation.

And then it's also to be passed on to those who are far off in both time and space and that includes the Gentiles. So everyone is to call on the name of the Lord. And yet, Peter then adds that those who respond to this promise are those whom the Lord our God will call.

Time and time again, God's sovereign choice and then human responsibility go hand in hand. There's no contradiction here. And so if you're here today and you've been told to call on the Lord and you have called on the Lord, then know that you're responding by faith because God has first graciously called you.

He has given you the gift of faith to respond in repentance. And you know, as we share the gospel with others, we ought to remember this as well so that we can speak confidently the truth faithfully because God will see to it that those whom He has called will respond by faith.

[22 : 43] It's not about how perfectly you preach the gospel, whether you make mistakes or not. God can still use us because when He calls someone, He will bring them to salvation.

One of the greatest encouragements to me as a Christian is seeing God add to our number those who are being saved. I have to say, I haven't experienced 3,000 in a day yet, but I say, you know, I'm not too demanding.

One every year is probably good enough for me. And by God's grace, you know, having worked here for the last 10 years, that's indeed what's happened. And it's always such a joy.

It happens in any number of situations. Could be at Christianity Explored, could be here, right here, one Sunday on Christmas Day or whatever, but it's always such a joy to know that when people hear about the Lord Jesus and they see Him and recognize Him as Lord and Messiah and they say, yes, I put my faith in Him, there's such a joy in seeing that person respond to Christ.

And so I hope that that will motivate us as a church to know that God is actually looking to add to our number. You know, He is.

[24 : 00] He's looking to add to our number those He has already prepared to save. And so we ought not to give up. We ought to keep praying. We ought to be faithful in our witness and then trust that God's Spirit is at work among us to do just that.

Let's pray. Father, thank You that You have raised Jesus from the dead and He is seated at Your right hand in Your eternal kingdom.

Thank You that You have sent Your Spirit to us as proof that He is Lord and Savior. Give to all of us a spirit of repentance and faith and please keep adding to us all whom You call to salvation.

In Jesus' name we pray. Amen.