

The Identity of the Lord who Saves

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- [0 : 0 0] And I thought I'd start this morning with a bit of a who is this person quiz. I've even got some lollies here to incentivise you and I had to fight hard to keep them away from my kids.
- So here we go, let's see. Alright, so first one, who is this person? He is an Australian icon, had a 20 year career playing cricket and an unparalleled batting average.
- He is Don Bradman. Yep, well done. Who was that first one? All the heads are going up. I'm just going to put them out at morning tea and you can fight over it. Alright, let's try this one.
- This one's a little bit harder. He was a cartoon character created by Walt Disney in 1934, one of the best friends of Mickey Mouse. It's a bit hard to understand when he talks. Donald Duck.
- Annette was very loud and very clear that time. There you go. Alright, let's try this next one. Alright.
- [1 : 0 6] This one is a real person, born in the town of Queens, the US. He was known for making outlandish statements and claims to be making America great again. Yeah, Donald Trump.
- That's right. And so what we've seen is just three Donalds. And even though some might think Donald Duck would do a better job, this Donald is the only president of the United States because this Donald was the only Donald who ran for office and was elected as president of the United States.
- Well, today, as we return to Peter's Pentecost sermon, he will tell us who this Lord person is. And in those days, there were a number of men named Jesus.
- But Peter will explain it's only this Jesus of all the other ones that they are speaking about. It's this Jesus who is the Lord that saves.
- You see, last week, we saw the promised spirit arrive on the day of Pentecost. And the spirit came upon not just the apostles, but all the disciples, men and women, young and old, slave and free.
- [2 : 1 6] And while we know the spirit secures us as God's children, works through our conscience to encourage us and so on, the primary purpose of the spirit at Pentecost, as we saw, was to enable the disciples to speak God's wonders in Jesus.
- And so if you've got your Bibles there, just look back to Acts chapter 2, verse 11 for a moment, where we saw the crowd hearing the Christians proclaiming God's wonders in their own languages.
- And then in verse 12, they asked, what does all this mean? And then in verse 14, Peter begins to explain what it means. But he does so in two parts.
- Both parts begin with a call for them to listen. So at the end of verse 14, you see how he calls the crowd to listen carefully to what he's about to say.

This is part one of his sermon, part one of his explanation. And he explains that what they are seeing is what God promised would happen. That in the last days, verse 17, the last days, God would pour out his spirit on all people, not to do miracles, but to, notice, prophesy, to speak.

[3 : 35] Why? Well, down in verse 21, we saw, so that everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved. But the question now becomes, who is this Lord person?

Well, today, Peter calls them a second time in verse 22 to listen. Listen, this is part two. And now he explains that it's this Jesus that they're hearing declared in their own language.

It's this Jesus who is the Lord that saves. So at point one in your outlines in verse 22 in your Bibles. Says fellow Israelites, says Peter, listen to this.

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

Here Peter begins building a case that this Jesus of Nazareth is the Lord, first by appealing to his life and particularly his miracles. To show that he's no ordinary person.

[4 : 43] This was God's way of declaring or proving, attesting to the fact that Jesus was no ordinary person. And they knew it. They'd heard about them. They'd seen them. They'd be done amongst them.

They knew Jesus was no ordinary person. We can know it too because we have historical evidence for it, among other things. But we don't have time to go into that. But you see, this is Peter's first brick in building his case that Jesus is the Lord.

Firstly, he's extraordinary. He's shown by the miracles that they knew it. But then secondly, verse 23, this Jesus, literally this Jesus 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. Here we're told Jesus' death is the next thing that happened. And it was according to God's deliberate plan.

God had always planned to send his son to die for our sins. To save us from judgment by taking the judgment for us in our place.

[5 : 50] But while this was part of God's deliberate plan, while God brought it all about, it wasn't God who actually committed the crime. You notice Peter says, you put him to death.

You were there seven weeks ago at the Passover festival yelling out, crucify him. You did it. Peter doesn't pull any punches, does he? He wouldn't go down too well in politically correct Melbourne, would he?

And yet while they killed this Jesus, verse 24, but God raised him from the dead, freeing him from the agony of death because it was impossible for death to keep hold of him.

Why was it impossible for death to keep hold of him? Well, a number of reasons, but here particularly because he is the Messiah. You see, the Messiah means anointed one or king.

The one from David's line who would rule on David's throne forever. And if you're going to rule forever, then you can't stay dead, can you?

[6 : 54] I mean, dead people don't rule very well, do they? But on the flip side, if you are raised from the dead, then it proves you are the Messiah, this forever king from David's line.

And that's what Peter now goes on to explain from our first reading from Psalm 16. Verse 25, it says, 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 rest in hope. Notice verse 27. This is the punchline one. Because you will not abandon me to the realm of the dead.

You will not let your holy one see decay. David was God's chosen king. God's promised David that his kingdom would last forever, which meant that God would not let the body of the king on David's throne see decay.

God would not let this Messiah's body rot in a tomb. The problem is, however, David's body was rotting in a tomb. Verse 29, See what Peter's saying?

[8 : 12] You guys can catch a, hop onto a bus, go around and see David's tomb right today. His bones are still there, decaying away. So David must have been speaking about someone else whom God would raise, whom God would not let his body see decay.

Another person from his, David's family line who would rule forever as the Messiah, the forever king. You see verse 30, Peter says, But 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 would not abandon him to the realm of the dead, nor let his body see decay.

See what Peter's saying? David was actually looking forward and speaking about someone else whom God would raise from the dead, whose body God would not let rot in a tomb.

That one who is raised, that one is the forever king. That one is the Messiah. And who is raised from the dead? Verse 32, God has raised this Jesus to life.

[9 : 24] And we are all witnesses of it. I remember my first trip to Melbourne when I was being interviewed for a job here actually. And Andrew Reid, our former vicar who many of you know, met me at the airport to pick me up, which was very nice of him.

The thing is, I had never met him before. And the only picture I had of him was actually, oh sorry, this is Andrew Reid, just to remind you of who he is. But the only picture I had of Andrew Reid was one from one of his books, which was this one.

And so, as you can see, he's changed a bit. And so I wasn't exactly sure who to look out for. Now, as some of you know, he's not a tall guy. So he said to me, Andrew, I'm the short man with a backpack on.

Because he always wears a backpack around. And when I arrived at the airport, I saw one man who was reasonably short and a backpack. And it was him. Well, they saw this Jesus raised from the dead.

Therefore, they knew the Messiah was him. Do you see? This Jesus is the risen Messiah. Foretold by David, they saw it.

[10 : 30] You see, Peter is building this case that this Jesus of Nazareth is the Lord who saves. At first, his miracles show he's no ordinary person. They knew it.

Second, he was crucified according to God's plan, but they did it. And third, he was raised from the dead, proving he's the Messiah. They saw it. And then fourth, he's exalted to God's right hand to pour out the spirit.

And they're seeing it right then. Verse 33. Exalted to the right hand of God, Jesus has received from the Father the promised Holy Spirit and has poured out what you now see and hear.

What's happening at the day of Pentecost? You see, the crowd is seeing the effects of Jesus pouring out the spirit on his people, just as he promised he would. But to pour out God's spirit means you have to have God's authority to do so.

You have to be God's right hand man, if you like. In other words, Peter is telling the crowd that this Pentecost, they are seeing the effects of Jesus's kingship at God's right hand.

[11 : 40] And if you're at the right hand of God, then that makes you the Lord. See verse 34. He says, 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.

Now, this is a bit confusing, verse 34, because David's speaking about two lords. So, I've put it on the slide and tried to explain it so you can see it. So, David is speaking about the Lord God.

So, God then said to another Lord, someone, Sit at my right hand, at God's right hand, until I make your enemies a footstool for your feet. So, here David has two lords.

The first one is God. The other one is the Lord who is at God's right hand, and who has just been exalted to God's right hand, pouring out the Spirit?

This Jesus. Do you see how he's building his case? His resurrection shows that he's the Messiah, and the pouring out of the Spirit shows that he is at God's right hand as Lord.

[12 : 50] And so, Peter concludes in verse 36, saying, Therefore, let all Israel be assured of this. God has made or declared this Jesus, whom you crucified, both Lord and Messiah.

And so, if we do another, who is this person? Who is this Jesus? Well, he is no ordinary person. His miracles show it, and they know it.

He was crucified at the cross, but they did it. He was raised from the dead as Messiah. However, the apostles saw it, and he is exalted to the right hand of God to pour out the Spirit.

The crowd is seeing it. So, this Jesus of Nazareth is the Lord. He's the Lord who saves. Do you see how Peter's building his case?

It's worth pointing out here that true Pentecostal preaching is not about focusing on the Spirit, but as Jesus, who is Lord. Last week, we saw the Spirit enable them to speak, not about the Spirit, but about Jesus.

[13 : 57] And this week, the focus of the rest of Peter's sermon is on Jesus, isn't it? But it's also worth pointing out that we need Jesus as both Savior and Lord.

And sometimes we focus so much on the Savior bit, you know, how he died to save us from our sins, that we forget about the Lord bit, the one who ought to direct our lives. But we cannot have Jesus as Savior without Jesus as Lord.

Why? Well, because the Jesus who saves is the Lord. They go together. He can't separate them. To try and live life with Jesus just as Savior, but then ignore him as Lord, whether it's, I don't know, ignoring some of his teaching in the Bible that we don't like, or ignoring his way for living and trying to live our way, then it's like, you know, it's like trying to have Peking duck without the duck.

It's like trying to have lamb roast without the lamb. And for the vegetarians, it's trying to have a veggie dish without the vegetables, right? You just can't do it. And if you try to, then it stops being that.

It stops being the real Jesus. We cannot have a Savior without the Lord, you see, because Jesus who saves is the Lord.

[15 : 15] And so is he Lord of your life at the moment? Is he our Lord, not just on Sundays, but every day? And the one who directs how we speak to others, the one who determines our self-worth, the one who shapes what we think, regardless of what our society says?

Or are we trying to live with him just as our Savior and not so much Lord? If we do that, then we're following a different Jesus, because this Jesus who saves is Lord.

That's Peter's point. And the crowd finally get it, because they now realize that they've put their foot in it. Have you ever done that, by the way?

Have you put your foot in it? Ever said something to someone not really realizing who they are? My wife, Michelle, was working for a company when another person started. And in the offices, they had the Christian radio station, Light FM.

You know that one? They had that playing. And this new person said in a loud voice, Turn this Christian rubbish off. Not realizing that Michelle was a Christian, and her husband was a minister.

[16 : 32] And so this girl felt mortified and apologized profusely, and she and Michelle still joke about it today. But can you imagine being the crowd? They finally get this Jesus is Lord, only to realize they crucified him.

And so no wonder we read in verse 37, when the people heard this, they were cut to the heart, and said to Peter and the other apostles, Brothers, what should we do?

This is always meant to be the first response we're to have to Jesus. To be convicted that this Jesus who is Lord, is also the one we once ignored.

We may not have helped crucify him, but we've all at some point rejected him, or put our foot in it when it comes to him. And if we realize just who it is we've done this to, then it ought to cut us to the heart, convict us, and lead us to repentance.

And for those who are not yet Christians, it leads them to conversion. Verse 38, Peter replied, What shall you do? Well, repent and be baptized every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ, for the forgiveness of your sins.

[17 : 44] And you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. The promise is for you and for your children, and for all who are far off, for all whom the Lord our God will call. With many other words, he warned them and pleaded with them, Save yourselves from this corrupt generation.

Those who accepted his message were baptized, and about 3,000 were added to their number that day. Now, once they're convicted, then they are converted, aren't they?

By repenting, that is turning around, going back to Jesus, and being baptized in the name of Jesus Christ. The baptism part is not the part that saves, that's the public sign.

What they would do when they're baptized, is they would confess that Jesus is their Lord, that they trust or believe in him. And the baptism just symbolized that allegiance, that confession, and the forgiveness that came with it, the washing away of sins.

And it seems that about 3,000 were baptized that day, which is not a bad day at the office, is it? Of course, it's all really God's work, as the end of the chapter makes clear.

[18 : 53] And for some people today, it's not an instantaneous thing, like it was here. For them, it's a gradual process over time. And God doesn't always save that many people in one day, as he did then.

He seems to do it at certain points in history, like the beginning of the early church, and amongst certain people groups. We had our turn here in Melbourne, actually, back in 1959.

Remember the Billy Graham Crusades? He preached at the MCG, and do you remember how many people were converted in one day? 28,000 in one day. Pray for it to come again.

Either way, this is how we are to initially respond to this Jesus, with conviction of heart, conversion to him, to receive his pardon, his presence by the Spirit, and to belong to a people.

It says the Lord added to their number. But what does it mean for us who have already done all that, who are part of his people already? Well, we are to continue following this Jesus as our Lord.

[19 : 58] So at point three and verse 42, they devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching, and to the fellowship, and to the breaking of bread, and to prayer.

Here are the marks of the authentic people of Christ, the church. This is what it means to follow Jesus as our Lord, to be devoted to the teaching of his apostles, and to the fellowship he created, the church, and to the breaking of bread, in one another's homes, as verse 46 says, and to prayer.

The apostles' teaching was just starting out here in Acts, and so verse 43 tells us that it was confirmed by signs and wonders that they did. For us, we have it compiled into the New Testament, which we know has been reliably handed down to us.

I don't have time to show that to you, but I can do that later if you like. And so, this Bible, this teaching, is what we are to be devoted to, which I take it you are, because you're here listening, I think, everyone, most of you, to me explaining the apostles' teaching.

Although sometimes I do get comments where people suggest I should explain it less, and just give the highlights instead. But is that devotion? I mean, imagine me saying to my wife, look, I'm not really interested in listening to how your day was, just give me the highlights, and that'll do me.

[21 : 23] How do you think that would go down with her? The couch. Even if I'm not always interested, devotion means you make every effort, not just to listen, but to understand.

And here, to put into practice the apostles' teaching from the Bible. But so too is being devoted to the fellowship, part of the way we continue to follow Jesus as Lord.

That is, being devoted to each other, which means caring for each other. Verse 44, all the believers were together and had everything in common. They sold property and possessions to give to anyone who had need.

Here, being devoted to the fellowship means doing life together in common. And that means caring for those in need. Now, not everyone sold everything. After all, verse 46 tells us that they still had homes to meet in, but they did it occasionally to help give to those who are in need.

And can I say that I've seen people here at HDD caring for one another in need. I've seen people providing meals for those who are sick or just had kids, providing lifts to those who cannot drive.

[22 : 33] I know of some who have given quite substantial money to others in need here. In one case, providing a new oven. In fact, when I went away on holidays, not long after I'd started, I was living next door.

Michelle and I came home to a renovated bathroom. Someone from our church just renovated the bathroom while we're away. I thought I should go away more. No, I'm joking. So it's terrific.

Keep doing that. Keep looking out for people that you haven't seen for a couple of weeks. Give them a call. If you don't have their number, call me. I'll give it to you. We need to keep caring for one another.

That's part of being devoted to the fellowship, part of living for Jesus as our Lord. But so is meeting regularly, like verse 46. Every day, they continue to meet together in the temple courts.

They had church every day, it seems, after work. Our life is different today, but we had to be devoted to the fellowship, which means not just caring for one another, but meeting together regularly.

[23 : 33] So again, thank you for making every effort to do that. And thirdly, the third mark of following Jesus as his people is being devoted to the breaking of bread. That's not communion, actually.

Verse 46, it's eating together. They broke bread in their homes and ate together with glad and sincere hearts, praising God, notice, as they did it.

You know, talking about how great God is and enjoying the favor of all the people. And the Lord added to their number daily those who are being saved. That is where to keep spending time with one another to encourage each other.

I know people do lunches, not at their homes because that's too hard, but they go out together. That's terrific. Keep doing that. And then finally, we had to be devoted to prayer. That was the fourth thing in verse 42.

Now, this would have included going to the temple for set prayers, like chapter three, verse one, where Peter and John are off to the temple to pray. But it would also include a prayer in general. We had to be devoted to prayer.

[24 : 34] We have a prayer circle here, which I know many people are part of, and they are devoted to prayer. It's terrific. We have monthly prayer nights. If you're able to keep coming along, and the next one is in two weeks time.

We need to be devoted to prayer because God often uses our prayers to grow his church. Indeed, it is God, not us who grows the church, isn't it?

As we read in that last verse, the Lord added to their number daily, those who are being saved. Well, there are lots of famous Donalds, but only one who is president.

Much more importantly, there are lots of different Jesuses, but only this Jesus, who is Lord, that saves. And so may we continue to follow this Jesus in our lives.

Let's pray. Our gracious heavenly father, we do thank you for this reminder this morning that this Jesus is Lord, the one who died for us to save us.

[25 : 37] And so we pray that you would help us to keep following him, not just as our savior, but as our Lord. And in doing so be devoted to the apostles teaching, to the fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer.

Help us in this. We ask for Jesus sake. Amen. Amen. Amen. So, Amen.