



We return to Acts chapter 2 for one last time as we take a break from Numbers this week. We look at Peter's sermon as he preaches to the crowd in response to their questions. We began thinking about the simple question, "why are you a Christian?" or "Why are you not a Christian?" The sermon that Peter preaches is a great overview of the core gospel truths that we must believe to become Christians and the truths that give Christians confidence to know why they believe.

Jesus the man crucified for sin

Peter begins by preaching that the event the crowd is witnessing is the fulfilment of Joel's prophecy, he then quotes Joel 2:28-32 to show that the Holy Spirit has come and empowered God's people (believers) to prophesy. However, he then digresses to speak about Jesus. Peter's point that follows is that for them to understand this day they need to understand it is all about Jesus. Peter tells his hearers that this Jesus they saw perform miracles but rejected was a man from God. He was crucified by the people but crucified as part of God's plan to save his people.

Jesus the king risen to eternal life

Peter then proclaims that this Jesus rose from the dead. He proves it in two ways. Firstly, by taking us to a prophecy of King David, in Psalm 16, where he speaks about the Holy One not seeing decay; he spoke about the resurrection of the messiah. Secondly, Jesus' resurrection was witnessed by the apostles and many more. Jesus rose from the dead proving he was God's promised King

Jesus the Lord exalted to rule over all

Jesus is risen and he is now ascended in Heaven (we looked at that in chapter 1). And in heaven he is at the right hand of the Father given authority to rule and bring all things under his feet. Psalm 110 is quoted which as the Jews themselves believed was an invitation by God to the messiah to come and sit on his throne. Jesus applies this messianic psalm to himself when he is before Pilate before his death. The response by the crowd is, "what must we do?" Peter says, "Repent." The passage closes with the testimony of 3,000 people repenting and being baptised for the forgiveness of sins and receiving the Holy Spirit. The call for us listening in is also to repent.

Here are some suggested questions to dig deeper and to discuss for application...

Why are you a Christian? Has anyone ever asked you that? What was their motive and what did you say?

Feel free to take a look at the prophecy in Joel 2:28-32 and find how many times he uses the phrase 'the day of the Lord', but this isn't the main focus of the study.

What does Peter tell us about Jesus the man in verses 22-23? How do you think this might have been received by those listening? What does verse 23 tell us about the crucifixion and why Jesus died? How do you feel/think about that?

Do you believe Jesus is risen from the dead? How might verses 24-32 persuade you of this claim? How would you argue for the resurrection from these verses? How does the resurrection give hope? Why is a gospel talk/explanation only half done if you only speak about the cross and not the resurrection?

Is the ascension of Jesus important for Christians and the gospel? Do you ever think about what Jesus is doing right now? What other Bible passages might you go to, to inform people about Jesus' heavenly reign? How does Peter try to persuade his hearers of Jesus' exaltation (look at psalm 110). Do the 3,000 people who repented that day and the millions ever since give you hope that people you know might trust in Christ too? Why or why not?

How would you explain the gospel in a paragraph and how about a sentence?