

Peter's Sermon at Pentecost

There are many lessons we can learn from Peter's sermon at Pentecost. Today we are talking about the three main lessons to learn.

Introduction

The sermon Peter preached right after the outpouring of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost in Jerusalem almost 2000 years ago is arguably the best sermon ever preached outside of the words of Jesus himself. Peter shared this simple yet powerful message with everyone assembled in Jerusalem for the celebration of Pentecost.

The Church was just starting to come together. Jesus had ascended a few days earlier and had told the disciples to go and wait for the gift of the Father. There were about 120 disciples who had been with Jesus for a long time that assembled in an upper room and prayed for days waiting for the gift from God. Acts 2:1-4 says:

Acts 2:1-4

(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.

As they spoke Jews who were assembled from around the world heard the simple message of Jesus Christ preached in their own language. Many of them were perplexed and confused and asked one another, "What does this mean?" But we read that some made fun of them and said they had had too much wine.

Peter was emboldened to preach to all the people in Jerusalem. His sermon was powerful and effective, and it resulted in the conversion of thousands of people to Christianity. Let us look at what we can learn from Peter's sermon and how it can help us in our own lives. There are three practical lessons we can learn from Peter's sermon at Pentecost; believe in the power of God's Word, speak boldly about Jesus, and pray for the Holy Spirit.

Believe in the power of God's Word

Peter believed in the power of God's Word and was unafraid to proclaim it to the people. Acts 2:14-18 says:

Acts 2:14-18

(14) Then Peter stood up with the Eleven, raised his voice and addressed the crowd: "Fellow Jews and all of you who live in Jerusalem, let me explain this to you; listen carefully to what I say. (15) These people are not drunk, as you suppose. It's only nine in the morning! (16) No, this is what was spoken by the prophet Joel: (17) "'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. (18) Even on my servants, both men and women, I will pour out my Spirit in those days, and they will prophesy.

Peter was not an educated man, he was a fisherman. He had learned his trade from his father, most likely. He would have heard the prophecies read from time to time when he was at the temple but he was not a student of the scriptures at all.

He spoke with authority and went back to the Old Testament prophecies that the Holy Spirit gave him knowledge of to start explaining what everyone had just witnessed and heard.

People often want to know why things are the way they are. They want to understand the purpose behind a thought or process. Knowing the motivation for a thought or idea is critical for most people. In the case of this outpouring of the Holy Spirit, Peter needed to give the assembled people a scriptural basis for what they had just witnessed. Nothing else would do.

The world will often use humanism or the wisdom of psychologists to try and explain things. That is what many did in the case of this first outpouring of the Holy Spirit; they assumed the disciples had had too much wine. But Peter used scripture. He backed up what they witnessed and proved it using God's Word. Peter believed in God's Word and the power of it.

We learn from Peter's sermon at Pentecost that we too must believe in the power of God's Word and be willing to share it with others.

Speak boldly about Jesus

This leads us to the second lesson we can learn from Peter's sermon at Pentecost; speaking boldly about Jesus. Peter did not shy away from speaking boldly about Jesus. Acts 2:36 says:

Acts 2:36

(36) "Therefore let all Israel be assured of this: God has made this Jesus, whom you crucified, both Lord and Messiah."

The boldness Peter and the others showed is incredible, especially for the day. They stood up in front of the assembled crowd of Jews from around the world to speak. They could be ridiculed more than some already were doing. They were definitely going to be questioned by the religious leaders. Jerusalem was under Roman occupation and it was dangerous to have a large gathering. Yet, even with all of these circumstances, Peter and the others stood up in front of everyone and boldly proclaimed that Jesus was both Lord and Messiah.

Sometimes boldness like this escapes us. We are worried about what others may think. None of us likes to look foolish or be ridiculed. We do not want to risk getting in trouble or doing something to draw too much attention to ourselves. Yet, that is exactly what Peter and the others did.

They stood in front of everyone and got their attention, spoke with a loud voice, and later were taken and questioned about the actions and miracles they were performing by the religious leaders. I see the same boldness today when I see our brothers and sisters in Muslim countries walking the streets waving palm branches on Palm Sunday each year proclaiming Jesus. I see the same boldness when I read about



common Christians in places like Canada and the United Kingdom going to jail because they refused to stop publicly proclaiming the good news of Jesus Christ and reading scripture.

The second lesson we learn from Peter's sermon at Pentecost is we must be unafraid to speak boldly about Jesus and His mission.

Pray for the Holy Spirit

Peter sums up his sermon by calling on the people to repent of their sins and pray for the Holy Spirit to come upon them. Acts 2:38-39 says:

Acts 2:38-39

(38) Peter replied, "Repent and be baptized, every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins. And you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. (39) The promise is for you and your children and for all who are far off—for all whom the Lord our God will call."

There are many things we can preach from these two verses, but today we learn that our knowledge of God and his Word are through the power of the Holy Spirit and that we must proclaim Jesus boldly. To do those two things, we must pray for and receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. Paul tells us what the gifts of the Holy Spirit are in 1 Corinthians 12:4-11 which says:

1 Corinthians 12:4-11

(4) There are different kinds of gifts, but the same Spirit distributes them. (5) There are different kinds of service, but the same Lord. (6) There are different kinds of working, but in all of them and in everyone it is the same God at work. (7) Now to each one the manifestation of the Spirit is given for the common good. (8) To one there is given through the Spirit a message of wisdom, to another a message of knowledge by means of the same Spirit, (9) to another faith by the same Spirit, to another gifts of healing by that one Spirit, (10) to another miraculous powers, to another prophecy, to another distinguishing between spirits, to another speaking in different kinds of tongues, and to still another the interpretation of tongues. (11) All these are the work of one and the same Spirit, and he distributes them to each one, just as he determines.

Peter teaches us that we must repent and make Jesus our Lord and Savior. God is faithful and will fill us with the Holy Spirit and give us the gift of the Holy Spirit he has for us. Each of us has a gift, some have more than one. At times our gift changes. The important thing to understand is God will equip us by the Holy Spirit with what we need to minister to others and boldly proclaim Jesus Christ to the world.

The third lesson we learn from Peter's sermon at Pentecost is we must pray for the Holy Spirit to fill us, guide us, and empower us to do God's will.

Conclusion

The three lessons we learn from Peter's sermon at Pentecost must be applied to our own lives. We must have the courage to believe in the power of God's Word, speak boldly about Jesus, and pray for the Holy Spirit to equip us and be with us always. Peter's sermon at Pentecost is the best sermon to motivate, encourage, and empower Christians for service today and for the future until the day Jesus returns for us and calls us home.

