

Gospel Triumph: The Crucified & Exalted Lord – Acts 2:22-40

I want to try and be as clear as I can this morning with you because of the importance of this passage in Acts. The Bible teaches that all human beings are born into the world in a state of corruption and sin. This means that our hearts, desires, and thoughts are bent and twisted and aimed at all the wrong things. This means that we are inclined to do that which is harmful for us and opposed to God's requirements.

This sinful state has been passed down to all of us from our first parents because they chose to rebel against God and disobey His Words. Their disobedience broke the relationship God intended to have with human beings and caused a splinter of separation. This rebellion and corruption puts us in a position of deserving God's wrath and judgment for our sin.

We heard about God's judgment last week from the prophet Joel whom Peter quotes in Acts 2. The great day of the Lord, which will bring God's judgment, is coming in the future and each person here needs to be rescued from it. We need new hearts and new desires and we need our sins forgiven and we need to be brought back into a relationship with God. But how does this take place?

Well, last week we saw that Joel's expectation of God showing up through His Holy Spirit was taking place in Acts 2. The Spirit showing up meant that the last days had begun and God's day of judgment would surely come. Peter's quote of Joel ends with these words in Acts 2:21. To be saved from wrath and judgment and to be brought back into relationship with God requires us to call on the name of the Lord. Ok, you might say, that sounds good, but who is the Lord and what does it mean to call on Him so that salvation comes? That's what Peter tackles in our passage for today. Acts 2:22-40. **4 Reasons to Believe that Jesus is Lord and Savior.**

1. His Ministry and Death were Approved by God (vv. 22-23)

Peter makes it quite clear that what he's about to say is massively important. He's already spoken this way once in 2:14 and now he tells them to listen closely. What will Peter talk about? Look further in verses 22-23. Peter is going to make two points about Jesus in these verses.

First of all, he was a human being whom they all watched do miracles, wonders, and signs. He healed people, raised people from the dead, and fed the five thousand. But he also did signs, which pointed beyond the raw power of the miracle to something true about His person and work. For example, when Jesus turned the water into wine at Cana it testified to the Messianic banquet that He would bring as God's kingdom arrived. It should have been clear to the people that God was working in and through Jesus throughout His earthly life and ministry.

Second, even though God's hand was powerfully on Jesus with signs and miracles, He was crucified and killed. How could this happen if God's hand was on Him? If He could raise the dead and heal the sick, how could He be arrested and put to death by the hands of lawless men? The answer is that Christ's death was planned and ordained by God. God sent Him to do these signs and wonders and to die on the cross. Remember how I told you about the sin problem that all human beings have? Jesus's life and death were planned by God to deal with that sin problem. Listen to John 3:16 and Romans 5:8. And we know his death was a part of God's plan and expression of God's love because of our second reason to believe Jesus of Nazareth is Lord and Savior.

2. His Resurrection Announces He is Messiah (vv. 24-32)

God delivered Jesus to be crucified, and God raised Him from the dead. Look at verse 24. Notice that Peter makes the point that it wasn't possible for death to hold Him. Why is this the case? Peter explains in verses 25-28. Look there with me.

This is a quote from Psalm 16, which is a Psalm of David. Psalm 16 is a Psalm of confidence in God's help and protection. What does David say in this Psalm that means that Jesus couldn't be kept dead? The Psalm says that God won't allow His Holy One to see corruption or to remain in the realm of the dead and to walk in the paths of life. So, who is David talking about here? Himself?

Peter explains in verse 29. So, David couldn't have been talking about Himself because they knew where David was buried in Peter's time. Continue reading in verse 30. Ok, God has made a covenant with David that He would set one of his descendants on the throne forever. 2 Samuel 7:12-13. Psalm 132:11.

David knew this promise and expected God to fulfill it. Look at verse 31. So, when David wrote Psalm 16, he was anticipating God's protection and help to one of his descendants who would become King forever because death would not be able to hold Him.

So, the resurrection of Jesus doesn't just prove He is God, it proves that He is the OT Messiah, the fulfillment of God's promises to David and Israel. And Peter makes it clear that Jesus is the one expected in Psalm 16 and Psalm 132. Look at verse 32. God raised Him up and the Apostles and others were witnesses to His resurrection. This takes us back to Acts 1:8. But the story doesn't end with Jesus's resurrection proving His Messiahship. This brings us to our 3rd reason to believe He's Lord and Savior.

3. His Exaltation Clarifies His Authority (vv. 33-36)

The resurrection leads directly to His exaltation. Look at verse 33. The word therefore connects the exaltation to Jesus's resurrection. After His resurrection and through the ascension He's been exalted to the right hand of the Father. This is the place of honor and authority. It's a kingly throne. It's from this position of equality with the Father and authority in heaven that He sends His Spirit to work on earth. And the arrival of the Spirit is what they are hearing and seeing.

So, Jesus must be seated at the Father's right hand as Messiah because the Spirit has arrived and they have all witnessed it. The logic here from Peter is airtight and beautiful. And now He's going to prove Jesus's exaltation from the OT as well. Look at verse 34. This is a quote from Psalm 110. This is a Psalm that Jesus teaches on this Psalm and ties it to the Messiah and David in Matthew 22:41-45.

Peter says that David spoke this Psalm concerning the Messiah sitting at the right hand of God, which is where Jesus now is after His resurrection. And so, Peter's going to draw a clear conclusion from all of this in verse 36.

Who is Jesus of Nazareth? We know for certain, because of His life, death, resurrection, and exaltation, that He is both Lord and Christ. He's the Lord God of Joel 2. He's the Messiah promised to David and Israel who would rule on David's throne forever. And He's seated on that throne at the very moment Peter was speaking because He dispensed His Spirit on the Apostles from heaven.

Peter has made his case clearly and rooted in OT Scripture. Jesus is Messiah expected in the OT and Lord, the God who rules and reigns. Listen, this morning, you cannot remain neutral to this sermon from Peter. You can deny its truthfulness. You can ignore it, but you cannot remain on the fence. Peter has made the case clearly that all of Scripture points to. So, how do we respond? This is our last reason to believe Jesus is Lord and Savior.

4. His Lordship Demands Allegiance (vv. 37-40)

You can see that the people listening can't ignore what they have heard. Look at verse 37. No doubt some of these people were involved in the crucifixion of Jesus or were at least comfortable with it. Peter's already made this point. But the realization that the resurrection of Jesus and the gift of the Spirit means that Jesus is the OT Messiah and the Lord God have cut them deep in their consciences. So they ask what to do and Peter responds with clarity. Look at verse 38.

Repentance leads the way. Recognize your sin and guilt before God. Recognize the rebellion that has characterized your heart and life and turn away from it. Confess your sin to God and turn from it and to God in faith and trust. Turn to Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior. Call on His name. Reorient your life around Jesus.

Now, some people have gotten tripped up here over Peter's words "repent and be baptized". Is baptism necessary for salvation and forgiveness of sins? If you look at the whole of Acts, baptism comes as a result of repentance and faith, not as the means by which you receive forgiveness of sins. Baptism is a sign testifying to the cleansing and renewal that you have experienced.

This reorientation of heart and life from sin and to Jesus that results in baptism brings forgiveness of sin. The barrier between you and God is removed. God's wrath over sin is taken away because your guilt for sin is taken away once and for all. And with forgiveness of sins comes the gift of the Spirit who enables you to walk in new desires before God and not the old way of life.

The key here is to trust the promise of God that all of this can happen and is for you. Look at verse 39. The promise of forgiveness is being offered to the Jews in Jerusalem here, but you can see that it's also offered to those who are far off. We will see later on the book of Acts that the Gospel goes well beyond the borders of

Israel and membership in Christ's kingdom is no longer about ethnic identification. Listen to Ephesians 2:13-17.

Peter's words in this sermon are a summary of what was preached that day and it appears that the conversation continued throughout the day. Look at verse 40. This should be a warning to us as it was to them. This may have been talking about the people who crucified Jesus, but this language of "crooked generation" applies much more broadly to the entire course of human history.

You and I are born with corrupt hearts that desire sin and we are born into a world where the entire system makes righteousness look like evil and evil like righteousness. Every human has been born into a crooked generation. The tilting of humanity away from God has a way of continually encouraging people to reject God. Belief in God and trust in Christ looks strange. The crowd makes it harder to see what is true about Jesus.

Peter's words here are to look past the crowd and look past what is culturally accepted. Instead, look to the truth of who Jesus is and what He has done. Look past your time and see Jesus seated at the right hand of the Father ruling and reigning. See your own life of sin against Him and understand what you need, forgiveness of sins. Turn from your selfish ways and turn to Him in repentance and faith. Submit to Him in allegiance as Lord.

If you are here this morning and are already a follower of Jesus Christ, let this remind you once again of the clarity of this message and the majesty of the Lord to whom you submit. Look at what He's done to bring you to Himself. He came, He was crucified, He rose and is exalted. And He's Lord of all and has sent His Spirit to empower you. What a gift! What a Lord and Savior. Let's pray.

Sermon Reflection Questions – 10/6/24

- How would you summarize the beginning of Peter's sermon in Acts 2:14-21?
- What is Peter trying to explain in verses 22-36?
- How would you explain what it means to call on the name of the Lord to an unbeliever?
- Verse 24 says it was not possible for death to hold Jesus. How does Peter prove this in our passage?
- Why is it important that Jesus is at the right hand of the Father?
- Explain what it means that Jesus is both Lord and Christ? How does Peter prove both of these in this passage?
- What is repentance? Is it necessary for salvation?
- What role does repentance play in the Christian life? Do you regularly confess your sins to the Lord? Why or why not? Do you think a Christian needs to?
- Is Peter teaching in verse 38 that baptism is necessary for salvation? Why or why not?

- How would you explain the importance of baptism to a new believer?
- What are some practical ways that forgiveness of sins matters in the life of a believer?
- Why is it important to understand Jesus as both Lord and Savior? In other words, what impact would it have on you if you only thought of Jesus as Savior or only thought of Him as Lord?