



2021 Weekly Devotions

Week of: June 14th - June 20th

Sermon: June 13th



SMYRNA BAPTIST CHURCH
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June 14

Psalm 16

It is interesting to me that until both Peter, in our passage for Sunday, and Paul in Acts 13:35-38, people may not have been able to equate what David said in the 16th Psalm with Jesus as Messiah. The Bible however leaves us no such room to miss the prophecy and evidence that Jesus was definitely the Messiah. We must learn to look for Christ in the passages of the Old Testament as we do the New. It is clear that real and genuine faith is based on the assurance that Jesus is who He says He is and that the Bible affirms that at every turn. Peter, led by and filled with the Holy Spirit, was adamant that the hearers, both then and now, see clearly the fulfillment of prophecy in the person and work of Christ.

In Sunday's sermon, Acts 2:25-28 is a direct quote from Psalm 16:8-11. Verse 8 of that beautiful Psalm reminds me of the evening that Jesus spent agonizing in prayer in the Garden of Gethsemane. I remind you that Our Lord truly was in agony as He sweat drops of blood while considering the wrath of God that filled the cup He was to drink for the sins of humanity. It may well have been that when the angel showed up to strengthen Him in that dark hour that night, that I how He endured and is what David was prophetically speaking here. Imagine in that overwhelming moment, Jesus saw the Father right there with Him and found the strength to drink the cup. Notice what He said in the Psalm, "So that I will not be shaken. Therefore, My heart was glad...moreover my flesh also will live in hope." Oh, dear friends, I hope that you see the application for our lives as well. In our darkest and toughest moments, it is the presence of the Lord that gives us strength, hope, and victory.

In the moment of our Savior's darkest hour, He was reminded that the Father would not leave Him in the place of the dead, not allow His body to waste away because of death. Think of how important that will be should you stand facing your own death someday. To be reminded that the grave will not hold you and that your body will be kept for the day of resurrection is a great source of hope. Like Jesus, we are meant to be able to survey our future with holy confidence as we keep our eyes on Jesus and experience His constant presence. In His steadfastness, caused by simple faith in God's divine help, Jesus stands as our exemplar. Our duty is to recognize the presence of the Lord and to trust our Champion and our Guard is the privilege of every child of God. Oh, to be able to say, "Because He is at my right hand, I shall not be moved." He knew that victory was certain, and that the enemy could not and would not finally overcome Him. We can live that way too.

When Jesus (David prophetically) spoke the words of Psalm 16:11, we get a glimpse of the wonder of heaven. Jesus knew that the Father and the Spirit would get Him home even after His death and that there would be endless joy in their presence. The author of Hebrews says, "For the joy set beyond the cross, He endured His suffering" (Heb. 12:2). Brothers and sisters, we can know these things are true because the Bible tells us so AND I hope that you are already tasting His love here below where we currently make our abode. Life is hard and full of challenges but don't lose sight of the joy, the prize that awaits those who hold firm until the end. Heaven's joys are without measure and is a constant happiness.

June 15

2 Samuel 7:11-16; Ps. 132:11

Peter relied heavily upon a conviction that his hearers were keenly familiar with the Old Testament prophecies. Here again, he quotes Ps. 132:11 and 2 Samuel 7:11-16. His assumption is that he is starting from a place of commonality with those who were listening. His defense of the Messiahship of Christ is based upon the cognitive recognition of his audience. That's a fancy way of saying that he was preaching building upon knowledge they already possessed. The Apostle Paul did the same thing in the first chapter of Romans when he, speaking to a mainly Gentile audience, avoided talking about the Old Testament or the Law. He realized his audience would have no knowledge of such things so he started with creation – a topic they could relate to. This reminds me of Paul saying, "I became all things to all people that I may by all means win some to Christ" (1 Cor. 9:22). You must know your audience. So, in Acts 2:30 when Peter uses another quote from King David, he is preaching from familiar territory.

The scene in 2 Samuel 7 is the moment when Nathan comes to David to tell Him that God was not going to allow David to build the temple but would instead build a "house" for David (v.11). God, through Nathan, goes on to tell him that after his death (David's) God would raise up a descendant who would come forth from his lineage and through Him God would establish His Kingdom. Surely, it would have been impossible, beyond divine revelation, for David and many of the prophets of the Old Testament to fully understand all that they were saying and writing. I think it is amazing that God would shed light on the prophecies of old so that we could clearly see the fulfillment of those prophecies in Christ. Sinclair Ferguson, in his book The Whole Christ wrote, "A fuller understanding of a prior prophecy is possible only from within a later prophecy." David trusted God enough to know that if He said one of his descendants would be on the throne then one of them would. Peter helps us understand in his sermon from Acts 2, that David believed God was speaking to him concerning the Messiah. He would surmise that from such statements as, "I will establish His kingdom. He shall build a house for My name, and I will establish His kingdom forever" (2 Sam. 7:12-13).

All of these references back to Old Testament prophecy was intended to do one thing. God was attesting to and affirming that Jesus was indeed the Messiah. The miracles, wonders, and signs were proofs of His Messiahship. The way He died according to the predetermined plan of God confirmed it too. In this part of our text from Sunday, the resurrection was a huge part of the evidence supporting His Messiahship and proving God's affirmation of Jesus. The very one the people rejected and killed was the One God raised up. Peter makes this statement in verse 36, "Therefore, let all the house of Israel know for certain that God has made Him both Lord and Christ. This entire sermon that Peter preached was for one sole purpose - Believe that Jesus is the Messiah and live your life in light of this fact. Dear friends, genuine gospel assurance is based upon your assurance that Jesus is Lord and the Christ. You cannot be certain of the Gospel until you are fully certain of the person and work of Jesus.

June 16

Psalm 110:1

This quotation that Peter used in his sermon (Acts 2:34-35) is from Psalm 110:1. Jesus refers to this moment in David's life in Matthew 22:41-45. The point that Jesus is making when He leads the Pharisees to consider this Old Testament passage is that there was much more to David's statement than met the eye. Jesus is forcing them to think about what David said because He is ultimately trying to help them understand that David was, in the Spirit, prophesying about a far greater Person than one of his own flesh and blood offspring. Jesus says, "How is the One David is calling Lord his son at the same time" (Matt. 22:45). Folks, it is important to understand how God utilizes the whole Bible to illuminate the individual parts. You might say it this way, Christ's coming brought to light the deeper meaning of many verses of Scripture. His coming makes clear what was already there.

B.B. Warfield commented on the relationship between the Old and New Testaments. He said, "The Old Testament may be likened to a chamber richly furnished but dimly lighted; the introduction of light brings into it nothing which was not in it before; but it brings out into clearer view much of what is in it but was only dimly or even not at all perceived before....Thus the Old Testament revelation of God is not centered by the fuller revelation which follows it, but is only perfected, extended, and enlarged." That is a fantastic quote that helps grapple with the need to know both the Old and New Testaments. So, in Peter's sermon from Acts 2, God is using him to shed the light on particular passages that were only dimly seen until the coming of Christ. So, Jesus was telling the Pharisees that David was speaking, moved by the Spirit, of that which He did not fully understand but now in Christ is seen clearly. My hope for us would be that the Spirit who spoke by the "man after God's own heart, would give us eyes to see hidden mysteries revealed in Christ and the revelation of the New Testament.

Particularly, Psalm 110:1 is a moment in which David is privileged to hear the voice of God speaking to the Messiah. My heart is warmed as I think about the wonderful conversations that the Father and Son had both in glory and even after the incarnation. Within the first verse of that beautiful Psalm, we see the reality of the Deity of Christ and the presence of evil that will someday be conquered and overcome by our King. How merciful this is that God would allow a mortal ear to hear and record this secret conversation meant to refresh His children. Just to be clear, please understand that the verse means that God (Jehovah) said to the Lord (Adonai) is God the Father talking to God the Son. So, David is being allowed to listen in and ends up calling Adonai his Lord. Isn't it interesting that He doesn't call the first one in the sentence his Lord but the second one. This simply points to the role of the second person of the trinity as the Messiah come to seek and to save.

Jesus will ultimately be placed in the seat of power, dominion, and highest dignity and will be placed there by divine appointment at the completion of His work on earth as Savior. Peter is once again, bringing to light the reality that "this Jesus whom you crucified" is He. Hang in there dear ones as the Father unfolds His perfect plan of redemption for us and victory over evil.

June 17

Psalm 132:11

I want to take up the quotation in Acts 2:30 which is from Psalm 132:11. Peter says in his sermon, "God had sworn to him with an oath to seat one of his descendants on his throne, he looked ahead and spoke of the resurrection of the Christ." Now, please keep in mind the big picture that I have been reiterating all week, namely that Peter is demonstrating through Scripture that Jesus was and is the Christ prophesied throughout the Old Testament.

Note first of all, God made an oath. This is important because there is nothing so sure as the word of our God. When he swears or makes an oath, our faith can and should have complete confidence in it because He means every word that He utters. Nathan conveyed this covenant to David and added to it, "A truth from which He will not turn back." God is immutable which means He is not a changing being. He NEVER turns from His purpose, much less from His promises. "He is not a man that He should lie" (Numbers 23:19). It is indeed a solid rock that we stand upon when we have an unchanging oath of God for our foundation.

Now, as I mentioned in an earlier devotion, Peter helps us understand more clearly that this covenant written down by David in the 132nd Psalm was really made with Christ and not David. Christ was in the line of David. Peter's point was that the people knew David was dead and buried and his tomb was not empty. The prophecy pointed to Christ and His resurrection. The truth that Peter is attempting to communicate is that Christ sits on a sure and everlasting throne. The hope that we can live with is that He must and will reign forever. God Himself has set Him on the throne and no rebellion or rejection of man will ever dethrone Him. The very honor of the Father is at stake in Christ's reign too and therefore is never in danger for the Lord will not allow His oath to be overcome or dishonored.

I know that Psalm 132:12 is not part of the quote in Acts 2, however it helps us to look a little further at that verse. It is told to David that there is a condition to the covenant. It says, "If your sons will keep My covenant and My testimony which I will teach them, their sons also shall sit upon your throne forever." This concerns the human lineage of David's family before the coming of the true Seed. But He (Christ) did fulfill that condition and secured the throne for David's seed. Fortunately, Jesus was true to the covenant in every way even where others in the lineage of David were not.

The kingdom of Judah may have stood to this day if the kings were faithful to the Lord. It fell by its own sin and nothing else. The Lord was continually provoked but was amazingly patient even when they were taken into captivity. There were constantly miracles and mercy extended to the people and His long-suffering was great. Even as the sons of the king's household were set on destroying themselves, King Jesus saw to it that every part of the covenant was kept and the lineage of David's seed on the throne sure. Peter utilizes these Messianic prophecies to drive home the truth that Jesus is Lord and King.

June 18

Acts 2:33

I am reminded today of the sermon that Pastor Aaron preached on April 25 this year. As he focused on the ascension of Christ back to heaven and His place at the right hand of the Father, we were reminded that as Jesus sat down next to the Father, it was a declarative statement. He sat down as if to say, "My work is done, and it is finished." Pastor taught us that the position at the right hand of the Father was one of authority. From that position, He was given the reign and rule over all things. From His seat of authority, He rules the universe, sustains the universe, and serves as our Great High Priest. In our text for Sunday, Peter said in verse 33, "Therefore having been exalted to the right hand of the Father." That place of exaltation and authority tells us much about who He is. Again, this was part of Peter's point in his sermon. Again, and again, he was proving to them that Jesus is the Christ and worthy of our submission and obedience to Him.

Now what does it mean when Peter said, "...and having received from the Father the promise of the Holy Spirit?" Well, we know it cannot mean that Christ needed to be filled with the Spirit while on the throne in heaven. The key to understanding this statement actually comes in the next statement which says, "He has poured forth this which you both see and hear." This is actually another testimony or attestation by the Father to endorse Christ as the Savior. Christ did not receive the Spirit because He needed Him, He received the Spirit with the authority to "pour" Him out wherever He chose. This is another evidence of His divine approval, His authority, and frankly His Deity. God endorsed Jesus as one worthy to receive the promise of the Holy Spirit and pour him out in great blessing on sinners who repent. This is of course what was happening at Pentecost. God has given into the hands of Jesus—the Lord and the Messiah—the privilege of pouring out the Holy Spirit—the privilege of baptizing with the Spirit (Acts 1:5) and filling with the Spirit (Acts 2:4) and clothing his people with the Spirit's power from on high (Luke 24:45).

What is at stake here and at every point in Peter's sermon is God. John Piper said, "The miracles of Jesus, the death of Jesus, the resurrection of Jesus, the exaltation of Jesus, the privilege of Jesus to baptize his church in the Holy Spirit, all these are endorsements from God almighty, maker of heaven and earth. Are we with him or against him? Do we join him in his exaltation of Jesus?" What Piper means here is that God is giving Jesus His full endorsement as Lord and Christ. Any and all who reject these evidences are rejecting God Himself. Do you see that not to believe these things is to side with the Pharisees and the rest of the Sanhedrin in charging Jesus with blasphemy? Who is the One who God would allow to decide who gets the Spirit and who does not? Who is He who can determine whether or not to pour out the Spirit upon the church as He did at Pentecost? Is He not the One prophesied to sit at the right hand of the Father and reign and rule over all? He can be none other than the Christ, the only begotten Son of God, and the Savior of this world. Believing that to be true, let us worship and serve Him with every ounce of our being.

June 19

Acts 2:36

Can you imagine what those people felt, who listening to Peter's sermon, realized they had just killed the Messiah? You talk about a sin that might cause you to think there is no way you could be forgiven. No wonder that in the following verses they were "pierced to the heart" or at least those who were sensitive to the Word of God preached. Before I go any further, please remember that they too had only to believe and repent in order to be saved by the One they had killed. What a Savior!

Peter dealt tenderly, but very plainly, upon their evil conduct towards the Lord Jesus. "He came unto His own, and His own received Him not" (John 1:11). As a nation, Israel had rejected Him whom God had sent. The inhabitants of Jerusalem had gone further and had consented unto His death even clamored for it, crying, "Crucify him, crucify him." Solemnly the Jews exclaimed, "His blood be on us, and on our children" (Matt. 27:25). None of them had protested against the murder of the innocent One; but many of them had been eager to make an end of Him. Peter, in plain words, charged them, and they could not deny it; nor did they pretend to do so. It is good when a sense of guilt compels a man to stand silent under the rebuke of God. We then have hope that he will seek forgiveness as he is driven to repentance.

Brothers and sisters, we are not in Jerusalem, and the death of our Lord happened more than two thousand years ago; so, let us not think on their sin. It will be more profitable for us practically to consider how far we have been guilty of similar sins against the Lord Jesus Christ. Let us look at home. Let each one consider his own case. I do not suppose that you have been guilty of outright blasphemy but there are politer methods of committing the same crime. People nowadays choose to believe opinions which lessen the guilt of sin or dismiss it totally, and, of course, lower the value of the atoning blood of Christ. The cross is still a stumbling block and a source of offence for many. Men do not accept the words of the Bible as authoritative, and they do not accept the teaching of the Lord Jesus one half so much as they criticize it. Remember that the Lord God made this atoning Jesus both Lord and Christ and set Him on His right hand. Any teaching that does not receive Christ as He is here presented in Peter's sermon, again puts the Lord Jesus to death. May you be pierced in the heart as you see that God has made that same Jesus to be Lord of all, including over your life.

You might say, "Pastor, I don't behave that way." Well good, but much more common is the sin of neglecting Him, ignoring His claims, and putting off faith in Him. If you put Him out of your thinking, if you treat Him as if He were nothing, you have put your Lord out of existence in reference to yourself. You treat Him with empty compliment by going to church and hearing His Word; but you have no real regard for Him. Is not this just as bad? God the Father has placed Him at His own right hand, and yet you will not give Him a thought! The great God thinks heaven and earth too little for Him, and magnifies Him exceedingly above all, as King of kings, and Lord of lords; and yet you treat him as if he were of no account. This ought not be dear ones. (Felt like preaching.)

June 20

Luke 2:11

After Peter had dwelt upon the sin of his hearers in treating the Lord so horribly, he declared to them the exaltation bestowed on Him by God. Friends, I'm going to give you a direct and lengthy quote from the pen of the wonderful preacher and writer Charles H. Spurgeon who stated this truth better than I could. He said, *"The great God loved, honored, and exalted that same Jesus whom they had crucified. O my hearers, whatever you may think of the Lord Jesus, God thinks everything of him! To God he is the ever-living, the ever well-beloved Christ. You cannot destroy the Lord Jesus, or his cause. If you could do all that the most malicious heart could suggest, you could not really defeat him. Men wreaked their vengeance on him: once they put him to a felon's death, they laid him in the grave, and sealed the stone; but he rose again, for God was on his side. My hearer, whatever you do, you cannot shake the truth of the gospel, nor rob the Lord Jesus of a single beam of his glory. He lives and reigns, and he will live and reign, whatever becomes of you. You may refuse his salvation, but he is still a Savior, and a great one. His gospel chariot rolls on, and every stone which is placed to hinder it is crushed into the earth and compelled to make a road for him. If you resist the Lord, you do it at your peril; but you do it in vain. You might as well hope to reverse the laws of nature, quench the sun, and snatch the moon from her orbit, as hope to overthrow the cause and kingdom of the Lord Jesus; for God is on his side, and his throne is established forever. God hath raised his Son from the dead and taken him up to sit at his right hand, and there he will remain while his enemies shall be made his footstool. By this you may see what evil you have done through rejecting Christ and may know who he is whom you have neglected, refused, and forsaken."* Isn't that a beautiful summary of Peter's sermon? Once again, you can see why many were pierced to the heart. My hope for us is that we too would be rightly convicted where necessary and willingly surrender our all to His Lordship. Unto us was born a Savior!

I want to remind you that from His place of authority in heaven, He is worshipped and adored by angels. He is worshipped by men and women who were saved by His blood. From His place of authority, He sits as our Judge. For those who refuse Him as Savior, they will not be able to escape from Him as Judge in the last great day. All the acts of men are being recorded, and in that day, when the great white throne is set up in the heavens, all things shall be made known, and the unsaved must stand unveiled in His presence. Love, when once it turns to wrath, is terrible beyond compare. As oil when set on fire blazes with great force, so the meek and loving Jesus, when finally rejected, will exhibit a wrath more terrible than death. Peter preached to "move" them and so do we.

Peter also showed his hearers that the Lord was greatly exalted in heaven as the Head over His church. When the Holy Spirit comes, He comes from Christ, and as the witness of His power. Christ's power was marvelously proved when, after He had been but a little while in heaven, He was able to give such gifts upon men. He is such a Lord that he can save or destroy. The Christ that died upon the cross has all things committed into His hands. Be sure of this, dear ones, even as Peter would have the house of Israel be sure of it, that "God has made that same Jesus, whom you have crucified, both Lord and Christ." The evidence is in, and He is the Messiah! Act accordingly.