

Happy Birthday Church - Acts 2:14-41 **Notes, Family Worship, Bible Reading**

Notes from the Sermon

The Day of Pentecost is generally regarded as the birthday of the church. A mere fifty days, less than two months out from the day Jesus died, the Holy Spirit fills the band of 120 followers in the upper room of Jerusalem home. They begin speaking in tongues and spill out into the city where the streets are filled with Jewish people and converts to Judaism from all over the world, and miraculously they begin hearing the Gospel in their own language. Yet, some in Jerusalem, presumably the religious establishment in Jerusalem (remember, they were at the center of the plot to kill Jesus) make the claim that Jesus' followers are drunk, and it's not even 9 AM. Peter then stands up and preaches the first Christian sermon in front of this crowd numbering in the thousands. Stop and think about this, and remember what Peter was doing at the Passover. Jesus had been arrested, and Peter follows the crowd secretly to the place where the illegal trial of Jesus was held. But he cowers there, denying three times that he even knew Jesus in fear of what others might think, and even that he too might be drug in before this tribunal. But Christ died and rose, the Spirit has come, and Peter along with the rest of these Jesus-followers are new people, empowered by the Spirit to be witnesses. So Peter, the ordinary uneducated fisherman, stands in front of this crowd and preaches the first Christian sermon. He quotes three Old Testament Scriptures, showing how all three have sight lines that lead straight to the Gospel of Jesus Christ and their present moment. And He addresses this crowd clearly and firmly, twice reminding them that the Jewish Messiah was in their midst and they were the very people who crucified their King. Their guilt is real and present, yet that event is also the remedy for their guilt and shame. The result is a throng of people who want to know what they can do. It is here that you might expect a confessional, with a whole bunch of "Our Fathers" and helping little ladies across the street. But the truth is that there is nothing they can do to remedy their condition and pay for their sin. They need grace, and the Gospel is the place where their wickedness meets grace. So they need to repent, to turn from their sin and self-salvation attempts, and turn to Jesus. They can demonstrate this by taking on themselves the New Covenant sign of baptism, which is a public confession of faith in Jesus and their new birth. That day 3,000 people are saved, and the church of Jesus Christ is born.

So what exactly births the church? This is really an important question. I work quite a bit with church planters. Its fun to see a man who has a sense of call to start a new community of faith. What advice would you give a person who wants to plant a church? Would you tell them that they need lots of bells and whistles, maybe a smoke machine and light show? How about a big building and amazing kids ministry. Or maybe they should give away an iPad or even better, a car, and build a baptistry with a water slide. Should we tell the planting pastor to preach relevant messages that address contemporary topics and life needs in practical ways? Here is the message we consistently build into our church planters. What you win people with is what you will win them to. Whatever births the church will give the church its DNA. If you win people over with entertainment and "practical" self help messages the outcome will be a people who need to be entertained. If a church avoids speaking of sin and the need for repentance (an idea that was often stated by so called seeker churches) it will gather a room filled with people on a self-salvation journey rather than a room filled with people who realize that there is no hope outside of the Gospel and no greater need than their own sin.

What birthed the church on Pentecost should be the foundational principle for every church and it should build the DNA of every faith community. What we have in this text is a community of people filled with the power of the Spirit who preach the Gospel of Jesus Christ from the God-breathed Scriptures. The Gospel is the good news that God is redeeming a

people and rescuing all of creation through the life, death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus Christ. We will discover that the Bible is not filled primarily with moral tales, ethical teachings, and practical wisdom. First and foremost the Bible is a story where every text and narrative points directly to life and work of Jesus, and to the cross and resurrection. This Gospel is the hope for all people, the remedy for all sin, and the answer to every question (believe it or not, Christ is even the answer to math questions, come see me sometime and I will explain).

At Genesis, it is our desire to be a Gospel-centered church. We have one message, but that one message is like a beautiful, priceless diamond that has many ridges, many different ways light reflect through it. You can turn that diamond so many different ways and see it from a myriad of angles, each as beautiful as the previous. On Pentecost Christ's church was birthed from the Gospel, and the result was 3,000 people baptized as Gospel-centered people. Next week we will see how the Gospel birthed people becomes a Gospel-shaped community. Pentecost is the birthday of Jesus' church, and it was birthed because Spirit filled people proclaimed the glorious Gospel of Jesus from the God-breathed Scriptures for the glory of God.

Bible Reading for the Week

Daily Bible Readings

Sun	Mon	Tues	Weds	Thurs	Fri	Sat
1 Samuel 23	1 Samuel 24	1 Samuel 25	1 Samuel 26	1 Samuel 27	1 Samuel 28	1 Samuel 29

Reading from this past week: Acts 2:14-41

Reading in preparation for this coming Sunday: Acts 2:42-47

Family Worship

Song - *The Lord, My God, My Salvation*

<https://youtu.be/RgikQg40ZEw>

Gospel Project

Unit: Into the Land

Story: God Defeated Jericho

Big Picture Question: What is a miracle?

Answer: A miracle is something God does that usually cannot be done so that we can know He is all-powerful.

Scripture: Joshua 2, 6

New City Catechism

Question #13: Can anyone keep the Law of God perfectly?

Answer: Since the fall, no human has been able to keep the law of God perfectly.

Verse: Romans 3:10-12

Scripture

Acts 2:14-41

- Think about the person preaching the first Christian sermon, standing in front of this crowd of thousands. What was he doing a mere month and a half earlier? Why is this significant and what do you believe led to this monumental change?
- Look over Peter's sermon. What are his main points?
- How does Peter show us that all of Scripture is really about Jesus and is a proclamation of the Gospel?
- We want to be a Gospel-centered church. What do you believe that means?

Prayer

*Pray that Genesis would be a Gospel centered church.

*Pray for our Genesis Kids Associate Director, Leslie Holdegraver.