

God made Jesus Lord and Christ

Acts 2:1-47

Key Verse: 2:36

“Therefore let all Israel be assured of this: God has made this Jesus, whom you crucified, both Lord and Christ.”

Jesus' disciples had left everything and followed him for more than three years. They had hoped that Jesus was going to restore Israel's glory and that each of them would hold some position of power. However, their hope disappeared as they witnessed Jesus being brutally beaten, whipped with the cat of nine tails, pierced with a crown of thorns, mocked and humiliated and finally killed as they nailed him upon the cross. What were they going to do now? They had put all their hope in following Jesus and now their future was utterly destroyed. The religious leaders had Jesus killed and they thought that they were next. So they hid themselves in a locked room wondering what they should do next.

However in this passage today, which takes place about a little over a month after Jesus' death, we see these same men in Jerusalem, the very place Jesus was killed, boldly speaking to the crowds. They do not look fearful or uncertain, quite the opposite. They know exactly what they have to do and are boldly challenging the authorities. What could have changed the disposition of a group of fearful men so drastically? And what implication does this have for us over 2000 years later? After seeing an event as shocking as Jesus' crucifixion, only an event as equally powerful could wash those images from their minds. The only thing that could counter Jesus' death, was the magnificence of his resurrection. When people went to the tomb of Jesus, they saw what they described as two men dressed in white, but it was so bright that it blazed like the sun. And no longer was Jesus beaten and bloody, but he was healed, except for his scars where they pierced his body. Jesus' resurrection was the most glorious event in history, it had to be otherwise the disciples would have still focused on his death. But Jesus' death is an after thought as the disciples begin to move forward with powerful conviction and assurance that they never had before. Jesus' resurrection was the evidence that Jesus is exactly who he claimed to be, that he is the Messiah, the one who was promised to come and save God's people from their sins. And today is Easter Sunday, the day that we celebrate this unique, glorious, wonderful event that changed the history of mankind forever: the resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ from the dead. Jesus has Risen! He has risen!

Take a look at verses 1-4. “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.” After Jesus rose from the dead, he appeared to many people, then he ascended into heaven. The disciples were waiting for a gift that Jesus promised to send to them after he rose. They didn't know what to expect when all of a sudden on the day of Pentecost, the Holy Spirit came upon them. It must have been an intense scene as if a tornado hit their building. It wasn't a tornado but more like tongues of fire that came upon them and instantly they were able to speak new languages. This happened at the perfect time because Jerusalem was filled with people from all over the world who had come there to celebrate Pentecost. And now the disciples, who were ordinary tradesmen without a higher education, were talking in all the languages of the world telling the people the wonders of God.

Coincidence, or the providence of God? It was clear that something supernatural was going on. The crowd was amazed and perplexed. They knew that something was going on but they didn't know what and asked one another, "What does this mean?" (v12) And as expected those who didn't understand criticized them by making fun of them saying they were drunk. I don't know what they were thinking, I've talked with happy drunks, and angry drunks, but I've never talked with a drunk that could suddenly speak in a different language. Obviously this was Satan's way of attacking so that they would be discredited. But it was a weak, failed attempt.

Peter, who used to be so fearful that he denied even knowing Jesus, now stood up in front of this large crowd, raised his voice, and began to tell them what all this means. Peter quoted the Old Testament from the book of Joel to show that this wasn't a random event, in fact Joel predicted that this would happen and now Peter wanted to tell them what it has to do with them. Let's read verses 22-24. "Men of Israel, listen to this: Jesus of Nazareth was a man accredited by God to you by miracles, wonders and signs, which God did among you through him, as you yourselves know."²³ This man was handed over to you by God's set purpose and foreknowledge; and you, with the help of wicked men, put him to death by nailing him to the cross."²⁴ But God raised him from the dead, freeing him from the agony of death, because it was impossible for death to keep its hold on him." Peter explained that the miracles that Jesus performed were the credentials that verified he was God. As we saw at our Easter retreat last week, Jesus healed the centurion's servant from a distance, he raised a widow's dead son, the lame walked, the blind saw, and ultimately Jesus himself was raised from the dead proving that he was the Messiah.

Since Jesus came as the Messiah, you would think that they would have welcomed him, and treated him with respect and honor because they were all waiting for the Messiah. Instead they put him to death by nailing him to the cross. They crucified God's only son. The Jewish religious leaders hated Jesus because they felt that he threatened their position. Even though they knew Jesus was innocent, they stirred up the people to shout, "Crucify him! Crucify him!," thus pressuring Pilate to carry out their injustice. They acted as if they were the enemies of God and not his own people. However, we can't criticize them. We have no room to talk because in all fairness, it wasn't just them; in fact all people are guilty of crucifying Jesus. You might say, "I wasn't there so you can't put the blame on me." We would like to try and excuse ourselves from being part of this whole thing but we can't because it was our sin that sent Jesus to the cross in the first place. We crucified Jesus. Still we justify ourselves saying, "I haven't done anything that bad." The Bible describes many forms of sin such as jealousy, envy, anger, slander, lust, selfish ambition, liars, and gossipers. Basically lying catches everyone because even as kids we lie. You ask a small child, "did you do that and of course they say, no." But people often mask their sin in a way that makes it look righteous. For example a person may say, "Please pray for so and so, because they are doing ... whatever." That is an evil sin because they are gossiping about someone but masking it in the righteous act of prayer. It would be better to either talk to the person directly or just pray for that them on their own and entrust it to God rather than "pray" for them with other people. We must admit that each one of us has a part in crucifying Jesus.

Indeed wicked men crucified Jesus but when we look closer at verse 23, we find that Jesus was handed over by God's set purpose and foreknowledge. Jesus was crucified according to God's will which was his plan from the beginning to save mankind. Isaiah 53:10 says, "Yet it was the Lord's will to crush him and cause him to suffer, and though the Lord makes his life a guilt offering, he will see his offspring and prolong his days, and the will of the Lord will prosper in his hand." God used evil men, and their evil intentions, to fulfill his own good purpose and offered up Jesus as a sacrifice of atonement for the sin of the world. God loves the world so much that he sacrificed his own Son Jesus for each one of us. Not

only that, Jesus willingly obeyed God's plan and offered himself as the Lamb of God.

Thankfully the story doesn't end there. Look again at verse 24. "But God raised him from the dead, freeing him from the agony of death, because it was impossible for death to keep its hold on him." Everyone past, present and future will have to face death. And everyone has fallen prey to death. Because of the agony of death, people have lived with sorrow and fear. And often this fear rules over people's lives paralyzing them. And like all other men in history, Jesus died too. However unlike all other men in history, Jesus did not remain in the grave because it was impossible for death to hold on to Jesus, for Jesus has power over death because he is the giver of life. He is the Son of God. The almighty power of God raised Jesus to life. Jesus completely defeated the power of death opening the way for us to receive eternal life. This is what separates Christianity from all other religions. You can visit the tomb of Muhammad in the city of Medina in Saudi Arabia. You can visit the tomb of Confucius in his home town Qufu in the Shandong Province in China. You can visit the tomb of Joseph Smith, the founder of Mormonism in Nauvoo, Illinois. My point is this, you can visit the tombs of the leaders of many religions but you can never visit the tomb of Jesus. He doesn't have a tomb because he isn't here, he has risen.

King David was one of the greatest men in Israel's history and he is regarded as a patriarch and a prophet. After meeting the Risen Christ, Peter could understand the secret of David's victorious life. It was his resurrection faith. Peter quotes David in Psalm 16:8-11 to show that even David believed in the resurrection. Looking at verses 25-28 we see that David always lived with a sense of hope no matter how difficult his life became. He lived in hope because he believed that God would not abandon him to the grave and that God's "Holy One" would never see decay. David is pointing to Jesus and the fact that he would never die. Peter pointed out, "Brothers, I can tell you confidently that the patriarch David died and was buried, and his tomb is here to this day."³⁰ But he was a prophet and knew that God had promised him on oath that he would place one of his descendants on his throne."³¹ Seeing what was ahead, he spoke of the resurrection of the Christ, that he was not abandoned to the grave, nor did his body see decay." (v29-31) Peter knew that the people respected King David and he hoped that if they knew that David testified about Jesus and looked forward to him maybe they would too.

Now here is Peter's climax and point of his message. Let's read verses 32-33. "³² God has raised this Jesus to life, and we are all witnesses of the fact."³³ Exalted to the right hand of God, he has received from the Father the promised Holy Spirit and has poured out what you now see and hear." Peter testified that he was a witness to Jesus' resurrection. He saw it with his own eyes and now he was proclaiming to the world. Jesus has risen and God has exalted him to sit at the right hand of the Father. And the people speaking all those different languages were not a random act but it was God pouring out his spirit upon them to proclaim the resurrection. Then Peter puts an exclamation point upon his message in verse 36. Let's read that one together. "Therefore let all Israel be assured of this: God has made this Jesus, whom you crucified, both Lord and Christ." The world thought that they could kill Jesus and toss him away, but they were wrong. Jesus was raised to life and now sits at the right hand of God. Not only that, God made Jesus both Lord and Christ. Now all people will have to stand before Christ at the end of our life and give an account of all that we have done while we lived. The evil people of the world think that they can outsmart God, but they are just fooling themselves because Jesus is Lord and Christ. He sits at God's right hand and sees all we do. He knows our hearts and motives for why we do the things we do.

Peter conviction of Jesus resurrection was so strong that he challenged all Israel. In the past Peter ran away from a small servant girl but now he was standing in direct conflict with those who crucified Jesus. When God raised Jesus from the dead, God revealed that he is the Sovereign Ruler and the Living God. God proved that his good purpose will triumph over death. And now because of Jesus' resurrection, Peter had a new hope. 1 Peter 1:3,4 says, "Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ! In his great mercy he has given us new birth into a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, and into an inheritance that can never perish, spoil or fade—kept in heaven for you...." Most of his life, Peter lived under the agony of death and he couldn't see beyond the physical world. But when he experienced the resurrection and saw the Risen Christ, he was freed from the agony of death. Jesus did this once and for all. It will never happen again. And his resurrection is so powerful that it reaches all the way back in history and extends way into the future covering all men and women. The resurrection is so powerful that even a fearful man like Peter who was huddled behind locked doors could be changed into a courageous and sacrificial man.

This is only one, we can see many ways the resurrection changes people. We see how they were changed to speak different languages. I studied Spanish in high school for two years and about the only thing I can remember it is "cerveza fría." The disciples didn't take two years, it was instant. And they weren't speaking only a few words in these new languages they were declaring the wonders of God. It means they were speaking fluently, perfectly. So much so that the people were utterly amazed. And it wasn't just one or two languages, they were speaking to people from every nation. (v5) They were speaking to Parthians, Medes, Elamites; residents of Mesopotamia, Judea and Cappadocia, Pontus and Asia, Phrygia and Pamphylia, Egypt and the parts of Libya near Cyrene; visitors from Rome; Cretans and Arabs. (v9-10) Another way they were changed was that the scriptures were now open to him. It was as if a fog had been lifted and they could see the big picture of God's word and how everything pointed to Jesus. They could see how the psalms David wrote connected to Jesus and how the prophet Joel spoke about Jesus. Even when Jesus walked with two of them on the road to Emmaus he opened the scriptures to them. And they devoted themselves to studying the scriptures. (v42)

The fourth way they were changed was they became generous and sacrificial. In verse 45 they sold their belongings and shared with those who were in need. It was an amazing change in their character. They became joyful and sincere. They had this great assurance in the risen Lord Jesus Christ. But their biggest change was their love and shepherd heart that they had for God's people. So much so that Peter pleaded with them saying, "save yourselves from this corrupt generation." The people could see their love, compassion and urgency. Verse 37 says, ³⁷ When the people heard this, they were cut to the heart and said to Peter and the other apostles, "Brothers, what shall we do?" The people were cut to the heart. They were open to receive God's word. So Peter hit them with the knock out punch in verses 38-39. "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." Repentance is the key. We must all repent before God and acknowledge our sins. We must ask for his mercy and forgiveness and then be baptized in the name of Jesus, which means we must turn away from our old life and live a life dedicated to God. Praising God for what he has done and celebrating with God's people in peace, joy and love. Thank God for Easter. Thank God for Jesus who over came death and bring us back to our heavenly home in his kingdom.