

Text: Acts 2: 22-40

Theme: The One to be Proclaimed

Sermon delivered by Iyabo Agbelusi during Service of the Word on 23/04/2017 at 10.30am

On that day of Pentecost, the disciples had an experience of the Holy Spirit flooding their beings such as never before as they experienced the outpouring of the Holy Spirit upon them. Then spontaneously, each of them began to speak in different languages they'd never learnt or spoken before by the power of the Holy Spirit.

Vs 22-36: Peter's message-focus on Jesus Resurrection

Peter now raises his voice to address the crowd in a language common to all of them-Koina Greek. First, he disproves the allegations of drunkenness, and explains this phenomenon is a fulfilment of prophecy from the Scriptures, specifically from Joel 2. Then he explains how **Christ was God's Holy One, sanctified and set apart to His service in the work of redemption.**

Now Peter gets to the main theme of his message; to proclaim Jesus and show how God is involved in the crucifixion of Jesus on the cross. He shows how God endorses Jesus in a number of ways:

1. **God accredited Jesus by working miracles, signs and wonders through Him.** Vs 22: " *Fellow Israelites, 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.*" Note that twice in this verse, Peter says that God is the one at work in the miracles of Jesus. First, he says, Jesus '*was a man accredited by God to you by wonders and signs;*' Secondly, he continues, '*which God did among you through him.*' Lest we miss the point, Peter emphasizes that God Himself did those miracles through Jesus. God was in Christ to heal the sick, still the storm, cast out demons and raise the dead. While he was on the earth, God gave Jesus the fullest accreditation any human ever had. He gave him his Spirit "without measure" (John 3:34).

2. **God accredited Jesus by planning His death for the sins of all people, your sins and mine.** Vs 23- This man was handed over to you by God's deliberate plan and foreknowledge; and you, with the help of wicked men, put him to death by nailing him to the cross. Many of those listening to him had probably been part of the howling mob that cried, "Crucify Him!" However, all who participated in putting the Lord to death were unconsciously fulfilling the determined counsel and foreknowledge of God. Jesus death was no afterthought or mistake nor evidence of some powerlessness by God to deliver Him from evil men.

3. **God allowed the suffering and death of Jesus so that through His payment of our penalty for sin, forgiveness of sins could become available to everyone.** The difference between God's plan to crucify Jesus and Pilate's plan to crucify Jesus was that Pilate was rejecting Jesus as a mere pretender whereas God was honouring Jesus as the Anointed Messiah and the Saviour of the world. God planned the death of Jesus not to disown him or dishonour him or reject him, but to glorify him as the perfect, flawless Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world. God's plan for Jesus' death was not a condemnation like the plan of the Jews, but rather an affirmation of His infinite worth as the Only Lamb of God who could save us from our sin.

4. **God affirms Jesus by his Resurrection from the dead.** Vs 24 starts by showing a contrast to the end of vs 23- '**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.' We see here that the people denounced Jesus, but God endorsed Him; they killed Him thinking it was all over for Him, but God raised him up! Halleluiah! The Resurrection of Jesus is central/primary to the Christian faith, without the Resurrection there is no living faith, salvation for us. From vs 25-28 Peter shows that the resurrection of Jesus clearly fits in with Old Testament prophecy in Ps 16 vs 8-11. The personal pronouns used in vs 25-28 are definitely not referring to King David who is dead and decayed, but rather this was a prophecy pointing to Jesus the Messiah who was to come through the lineage of King David. On Palm Sunday, this was the title with which the people addressed Jesus – the Son of David (vs 30- 31), and Messiah.

In Vs 32 Peter boldly proclaims that God has resurrected Jesus as prophesied and they are all witnesses. For us, this the greatest defence for our faith and our confidence in God. No wonder Spurgeon said, 'the divinity of Christ finds its surest proof in His resurrection'- The cornerstone Christian doctrine-if it could be disproved the whole of our faith would fall to the ground.'

Peter's message is quite a shock for the people to hear and extremely hard to admit. These people are religious and know hundreds of verses of Scriptures by heart. Yet he is telling them that their minds are totally against God. They claim to know God, love, worship and follow God. But Peter says that they are anti-God and diametrically opposed to Him.

The test of whether we are anti-God or not is not whether we say we believe in God, or whether we say we know God, love God, serve God. The test is whether we embrace God's endorsement of Jesus. If we say we know God but reject God's affirmation of Jesus as the predestined Saviour- the perfect sacrifice that takes away our sin; if we claim to know God and reject God's offer of salvation through Jesus whom he raised from the dead, then we don't really know God.

This is what cut Peter's hearers to the heart. They thought they were zealous for "God" but they had been against God. This is so utterly important for us today. Because **in our live-and-let-live pluralistic society hardly anyone would dare say to another person, "You claim to know God, but if you do not embrace God's endorsement of Jesus, in fact you are against God." Why? Because Jesus is the test of all true knowledge of God.** Are we with God in his endorsement of Jesus by raising him from the dead, or are we against God?

5. **God affirmed Jesus by exalting him to his right hand and putting all his enemies under his feet.** 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. (v33) David in Ps 110 vs 1 could foresee that God would exalt the risen Messiah to His right hand and give him a place of rule and supremacy over every other person and power in the universe. It is absolutely horrible to be a person who rejects Jesus because it means they have also rejected the one whom God declared to be the Lord of the universe by exalting him to his right hand. Having been exalted, Jesus fulfilled His promise and poured out His Holy Spirit, the phenomena they were witnessing. Jesus' resurrection emboldened the disciples who were formerly timid and fearful. Now they could proclaim the good news with all confidence.

Let us catch fire this morning from the fire that was set alight within the disciples of Jesus on that Pentecost day so we can be bold to proclaim Jesus as Lord and Saviour.

Pastor-D. James Kennedy said in a sermon, "I remember years ago talking to a man in his home about Christ and asking him who he thought Jesus was. He said 'Oh, He's a wonderful man. He was the greatest man who ever lived, the most loving and gracious person who ever

walked upon this earth.' "I said, 'Let me tell you something I believe will startle you. According to the Scriptures, and the historic Christian faith, Jesus of Nazareth, the carpenter of Galilee was and is the eternal Creator of the universe, the omnipotent, omniscient, and Almighty God.'

"Instantly, his eyes filled with tears and this man of about fifty-five or sixty said, 'I have been in church all of my life and I never heard that before. But I have always thought that is the way it ought to be – that God ought to be like Jesus.'"

The crowd were cut to the heart-their eyes were opened to see their need for Jesus. Three thousand (3,000) people repented! This was a religious crowd in Jerusalem who heard the message; just like us, but they saw the need for God's salvation through Jesus. **Do you see your need for Jesus? What about us here today? Would you let God open your eyes today to see your need for Him in Jesus?**