# Acts 2:22-36

# **Preaching the True Gospel**

(The message that we bring to the world is centered in who Christ is and what He did.)

See also theology files #805, #511

#### Introduction

- 1. The early church had a message that changed the world in that it gave individuals an eternal hope and power to overcome the pain in this present life. What was that message? Are we preaching the same message today? You might be surprised to realize that there was a pattern of preaching in the early church that has been too often ignored in our day. What was that pattern? It immerges early in Acts.
- 2. This text is the first recorded sermon of the early church. What was its emphasis?
- 3. Context Pentecost with the coming of the wind, fire, and speaking in several languages had stirred a crowd to wonder what was happening and what did it mean. Peter stands and begins to boldly preach. This is now a new Peter, not afraid, not confused, not misguided.

"22 Men of Israel, listen to these words: Jesus the Nazarene, a man attested to you by God with miracles and wonders and signs which God performed through Him in your midst, just as you yourselves know-

## A. Jesus is the subject of Biblical preaching.

1. It is not about ethics it is about a person. Proclamation started in response to a show of power but does not stay there. Actions or signs open an inquiring mind. The attention is quickly removed from the human experience and directed to the person of Jesus. We too often start and stay with the human experience and refer to Jesus as the instrumental agent in "our life changing experience." While social ethics are important they are not the main issue. Jesus' miracles of feeding and healing were designed primarily to highlight his authority not to solve social problems.

The World tends to reduce all religion to -

Jesus as model

Social ethics

Faith is defined by faithfulness

Incarnation over crucifixion

1st Commandment displaced by 2nd

- centering the Gospel message on social-ethical reform through psychological and political tools.

Jesus is atonement and model

Incarnation leads to the Cross

Jesus Christ

Faith producing faithfulness

The Christian message is focused on a person -

- centering the Gospel message on personal redemption through faith in Christ (to a community of personal and social responsibility).
  - 2. **It is a show and tell event.** We too often try to lead with our words. If we have no witness with our lives we have no witness with power.
  - 3. It is not our story it is Jesus' story that is most important.
  - 4. **The gospel story is grounded in history** not my experience, social reform, or personal ethical power.
  - 5. **Examples**: Why should anyone listen to our story? Is there a danger in starting with personal experience?
  - 23 this {Man}, delivered up by the predetermined plan and foreknowledge of God, you nailed to a cross by the hands of godless men and put {Him} to death. 24 And God raised Him up again, putting an end to the agony of death, since it was impossible for Him to be held in its power.

#### B. The Death & Resurrection are at the heart of his story.

1. Who was responsible for the death of Jesus?

Acts 2:22-23 "Men of Israel, listen to these words; Jesus the Nazarene, a man attested to you by God with miracles and wonders and signs which God performed through Him in your midst, just as you yourselves know – this Man, delivered up by the predetermined plan and foreknowledge of God, you nailed to the cross by the hands of godless men and put him to death."

**Jn.10:18** "No one has taken it away from Me, but **I lay it down on My own initiative**, I have authority to lay it down, and I have authority to take it up again."

**Isaiah 53:5** "But He was pierced through for **our** transgressions, He was crushed for **our** iniquities; the chastening for **our** well-being fell upon Him, and by His scourging **we** are healed.

2. It is about the Cross and Resurrection not our spiritual experience. The objective Death & Resurrection of Jesus is the point not our subjective

experience of Jesus' blessings. The resurrection is the corner stone of our faith. Without it, our faith is empty and our hope is a fantasy.

- 3. The Cross and Resurrection are not self-explanatory. While we may agree on the historical authenticity of certain events, this does not mean that their meaning is transparent. The ancient creeds all agree that Jesus died for our sins. The fact that he died is a matter of historical record. That he died for our sins is the meaning of his death.
- 3. **Examples:** The teaching of the epistles guide us into the true meaning of the cross and resurrection.

25 For David says of Him, 'I was always beholding the Lord in my presence; For He is at my right hand, that I may not be shaken. 26 'Therefore my heart was glad and my tongue exulted; Moreover my flesh also will abide in hope; 27 Because Thou wilt not abandon my soul to Hades, Nor allow Thy Holy One to undergo decay. 28 'Thou hast made known to me the ways of life; Thou wilt make me full of gladness with Thy presence.' 29 Brethren, I may confidently say to you regarding the patriarch David that he both died and was buried, and his tomb is with us to this day. 30 And so, because he was a prophet, and knew that God had sworn to him with an oath to seat {one} of his descendants upon his throne, 31 he looked ahead and spoke of the resurrection of the Christ, that He was neither abandoned to Hades, nor did His flesh suffer decay. 32 This Jesus God raised up again, to which we are all witnesses. 33 Therefore having been exalted to the right hand of God, and having received from the Father the promise of the Holy Spirit, He has poured forth this which you both see and hear. 34 For it was not David who ascended into heaven, but he himself says: 'The Lord said to my Lord, "Sit at My right hand, 35 Until I make Thine enemies a footstool for Thy feet." '

## C. Support for the story comes from authority sources accepted by the audience.

- 1. Support for the story comes from authority sources accepted by the audience.
  - a. How do we explain the gospel to various people in our culture?
  - b. Look at Paul's preaching in Acts 17 on Mars hill in Athens. He quotes their authority figures not the Scripture.
- 2. **Examples from our day**: We can approach people in our day with probing questions like: You believe man has dignity. You believe man feels moral responsibility and guilt. Where is there good news for your soul in the face of the pain of a broken world? How does the story of the gospel set with you?

36 Therefore let all the house of Israel know for certain that God has made Him both Lord and Christ - this Jesus whom you crucified."

### D. We are called to respond to him as Lord.

- 1. The implication Jesus is Lord and Messiah.
- 2. Note the characteristics of this message
  - It focuses on Jesus not his followers' experience of Jesus' blessings.

- It focuses on His death and resurrection not His ethics.
- It focuses on His identity as Lord not His role as servant to our wants and needs.

#### Conclusion

**Saints:** How do you tell the story? Do you create enough interest to gain a hearing? Does your story focus on you or Jesus? Is your attention on what Jesus can do for you and others or on who he is?

**Seekers:** Do you hear what Peter is saying? This man Jesus put an end to death by dying and raising from the grave. The issue is sin and death.

**Skeptics:** How do you explain the resurrection of Jesus? You can explain away the experience of his followers and the events of his life but what do you do with the resurrection?