

6—Acts 2.22-36—Who is the Lord?

I. Introduction

- a. We ended last week's text with a promise that if anyone calls upon the name of the Lord they will be saved. The question arises, who is the Lord? We probably think that is obvious, but it's not to those Peter is speaking to. In fact, the One they must call upon they recently killed.
- b. Since we are looking at a text this morning that is calling upon religious people who think they understand completely who the Lord is, I thought this story would be a helpful introduction. This lady claimed to be a Christian but she was unsaved. Here's part of the story. "The road to salvation began when my husband and I pursued a serious partnership with a missions agency. After the missionary orientation, we were tasked with several assignments before deciding on a specific mission field. The very first assignment drastically changed my life."
- c. "Getting involved in the local church was our initial endeavor, so we set up a meeting with the pastor of our church. This meeting did not go as anticipated. Instead of high fives and hugs to commence our ministry partnership, I left in tears. The pastor simply asked me to explain the gospel, and while I knew the message well, my words portrayed otherwise. I felt like a failure. It was embarrassing. Really embarrassing. But God used this catastrophe in communication to begin chipping away at my hard heart."
- d. "I knew I should get over this humbling conversation, but I couldn't shake the feeling that something wasn't right. Communicating the gospel ceased being the issue; there was a deeper insufficiency lurking in my soul. I realized that I feared death. Actually, I feared hell. And yet when I was most honest with myself, I wasn't sure my sin deserved hell. But I kept my thoughts pretty quiet and I kept doing my Christian thing."
- e. This is a common encounter living in the buckle of the Bible-belt.

II. Main Point

- a. The main point of this section of Peter's sermon is that Jesus is both Lord and Christ and the proof of this is the resurrection and ascension to the righthand of God. Salvation comes only through him.

III. Outline

- a. God accredited Jesus of Nazareth
- b. God delivered up Jesus
- c. God raised up Jesus
- d. God exalted Jesus
- e. Jesus is both Lord and Christ

IV. Exposition

- a. It was no coincidence that all of this was happening on the day of Pentecost. The international harvest began during this celebration because of the seed that was planted on Passover. Peter wants to explain that this Jesus is in fact the Lord and promised Messiah.
 - i. When Peter says back in verse 21, "everyone who calls upon the name of the Lord will be saved" these pious Jews immediately think of YHWH. To claim that Jesus is YHWH would be blasphemous to them.
 - ii. Peter claims here that God attested to them that Jesus was the Lord and promised Messiah WITH mighty works, wonders, and signs. Peter says rather emphatically in verse 22. "A man attested TO YOU by God with mighty works and wonders and signs that God did through Jesus IN YOUR MIDST, as YOU YOURSELVES KNOW..."
 1. This is so similar to what God did in Egypt: (Deut. 4:32-35) ³² "For ask now of the days that are past, which were before you, since the day that God created man on the earth, and ask from one end of heaven to the other, whether such a great thing as this has ever happened or was ever heard of. ³³ Did any people ever hear the voice of a god

speaking out of the midst of the fire, as you have heard, and still live? ³⁴ Or has any god ever attempted to go and take a nation for himself from the midst of another nation, by trials, by signs, by wonders, and by war, by a mighty hand and an outstretched arm, and by great deeds of terror, all of which the LORD your God did for you in Egypt before your eyes? ³⁵ To you it was shown, that you might know that the LORD is God; there is no other besides him.

- iii. They had seen and heard of all that Jesus had done...that's why Peter emphatically says...you yourselves know! These religious people need salvation. God is working to save them.
 - iv. Peter intends to prove that Jesus is Lord and salvation is only through him.
 1. They and we have been given proof through the mighty powers and wonders and signs. They were clearly shown to us through the Gospels: Matthew, Mark, Luke and John. We have evaluated the evidence as we've made our way through John.
 2. Who does this crowd of 3,000 plus think Jesus is?
- b. Let's hear how Peter explains that Jesus is the Lord. The first way we see this is that God delivered up Jesus.
- i. Peter wants to prove that Jesus' death was not an accident. If God had not delivered him into their hands, then he would not have died.
 - ii. We have discussed this before. I have cited Isaiah 53 to prove this point. (Isa. 53:10) Yet it was the will of the LORD to crush him.
 1. You must see that Jesus' death was the will of the Father. To say it even more clearly, Peter says, "this Jesus, delivered up according to the definite plan and foreknowledge of God..."
 2. This was God's will, fixed and determined from the beginning.
 3. In other words, this definite plan of redemption was "with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot: ²⁰ Who verily was foreordained before the foundation of the world, but was manifest in these last times for you." (1 Pet. 1:19-20)
 - iii. This was the loving plan of God to crush his only Son in our place so that we could be saved. Some have called this divine child abuse but Jesus calls it love in (Jn. 3:16) ¹⁶ "For God so loved the world, that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life.
 - iv. Yet, these men of Israel are held responsible for Jesus' death. Peter says, (Acts 2:23) you crucified and killed by the hands of lawless men.
 1. You yourselves knew about all these mighty works and wonders and signs...and you crucified and killed Jesus of Nazareth by the hands of lawless men.
 2. They were responsible for his death and yet the purpose of his death was to save them. And as we will see, some of those with blood on their hands are indeed forgiven and rescued!
 3. Can you believe that? If you have ever thought that God would not forgive you because of your past, I can't help but wonder what you think of God now?
- c. But how is God delivering up Jesus proof that Jesus is Lord? Well, it wouldn't be if he had remained dead. The next proof in Peter's sermon is that God raised Jesus up.
- i. He begins by stating that it was impossible for death to hold Jesus captive. The image he uses is amazing—loosing the pangs of death. This phrase would normally be used of childbirth. (Odin)
 1. This fits well with the image from last week of Jesus being planted as a seed, which fell into the ground and died and is bearing much fruit on Pentecost.
 2. Loosing the pangs of death is the plant sprouting to life.

3. Only Jesus has been raised. Why? Why could death not hold him? Because he was without sin. Death is the judgment for sin. Jesus died as the sinless suffering servant handed over by the Father and therefore, God raised him from the dead.
- ii. Peter turns to Psalm 16 because David had spoken about things concerning Jesus there.
 1. This psalm is presumably about David. And I suppose in many ways it is.
 - a. David gives these beautiful images of nearness and constant aid. You have to be awfully bold to say that you shall never be moved or very confident in the One beside you.
 - i. We had a cat back home that we named Oreius. In the Chronicles of Narnia, King Peter has drawn up in battle lines. He turns to his right hand where a centaur named Oreius stood. Peter asked, "Are you with me?" Oreius replied, "To the death!" Our cat didn't live up to his name.
 - ii. This is a description of the benefits of God's presence. One of the single most important promise is that God is with us.
 2. God's protective presence causes the heart to be glad and the tongue to rejoice.
 - a. God is not One to give up his friends. Those whom he saves he protects. That is good reason to be joyful and sing praises to him.
 - b. Only those who rest in the promises of God can KNOW and say, "my flesh also will dwell in hope."
 3. Why? because in verse 27 we hear Peter state the promises. "Because God will not abandon my soul to Hades (the place of the dead), or let your Holy One see corruption."
 - a. Death is the curse of the fall. Sin brings death. All who are in Adam die. You cannot escape it. Indeed, death is our captive. Every human being deserves it because we are sinner and we have sinned against our holy Creator. Paul says we were dead in our trespasses and sins. By our very nature, we are on the wrong path.
 - b. However, death does not get the last word.
 4. What can make hell bound sinners who deserve eternal damnation full of gladness?
 - a. (Acts 2:28) you will make me full of gladness with your presence.'
 - b. Jesus walked this path. He was certain of the ever-presence of God before him and beside him. He didn't fall off the path because he had his eyes on the Father.
 - c. All of us hated God's path. We like our own. We've always wanted to do things our way. But our path leads to death and Jesus knew it.
 - d. He took the punishment for people who walked the wrong road so that we could walk in the Presence of God and fullness of joy in his deliverance!
 - e. As David also says in Psalm 51 where he is confessing his sin—"Restore the joy of your salvation."
 - i. There is no abstract joy...joy that comes from nothing. Joy rests in the fact that we are sinners saved by God's amazing grace. To have joy in the Lord is to have joy in his salvation. And the joy that comes from his presence, is only possible through his salvation.
- iii. Now, there remains something Peter needs to explain about Psalm 16. These men of Israel would have easily thought that David meant this only about himself. But this cannot be about David. Why?
 1. (Acts 2:29)²⁹ "Brothers, I may say to you with confidence about the patriarch David that he both died and was buried, and his tomb is with us to this day.

- a. In other words, David's bones can be seen in his grave. His flesh did see corruption. And so will we. But we hope in the resurrection.
 - b. Then why does Peter quote this psalm?
- 2. Peter claims that David was prophesying when he wrote this psalm about the coming Messiah.
 - a. God had made a promise to David in (2 Sam. 7:12-13) ¹² When your days are fulfilled and you lie down with your fathers, I will raise up your offspring after you, who shall come from your body, and I will establish his kingdom. ¹³ He shall build a house for my name, and I will establish the throne of his kingdom forever.
 - b. David looked ahead to the coming of the promised Messiah who was his seed to sit upon his throne forever.
 - c. The stipulations for this to take place was complete obedience, which would lead to living forever. None of David's son did this except...who? Jesus!
 - d. You might say, "Well Jesus died." Yeah but he was raised! The psalm spoke of the resurrection of the Messiah. He would not be abandoned to Hades, nor did his flesh see corruption.
 - e. That can ONLY be said of Jesus. His tomb is empty. He conquered the grave. He put death to death.
- 3. This Messiah is verse 32...(Acts 2:32) ³² This Jesus God raised up, and of that we all are witnesses.
 - a. There stands before this multitude, witnesses of the risen Lord Jesus. Indeed, the Holy Spirit has come upon them for the very purpose of witnessing to the glory of God in Christ.
 - b. They saw him die, buried and raised. Jesus spoke with them for forty days. They watched him ascend into heaven. They have waited for the promise of the Spirit and he has come upon them.
 - c. They did not hang around Jerusalem for a myth. They know the truth. They want their brothers to know the truth. They want them to experience the presence and joy of the Lord through salvation.
- d. The final proof given is that God exalted this Jesus.
 - i. He must have been exalted if the Spirit has come. (Acts 2:33) ³³ Being therefore exalted at the right hand of God, and having received from the Father the promise of the Holy Spirit, he has poured out this that you yourselves are seeing and hearing.
 - ii. Again, Peter says, "Look, you are seeing and hearing this happen." You've heard Galileans speak in your own native languages. They proclaimed the glories of God before you. What of it?
 - iii. Oh, in case you did know...he tells them...(Acts 2:34-35) ³⁴ For David did not ascend into the heavens, but he himself says, "The Lord said to my Lord,
 - 1. The LORD said to my Lord. Who is David saying "my Lord" is? Dads normally do not call their Son "Lord" do they? Is it not the one who just ascended to the Father while the disciples stood there watching?
 - 2. And David's Lord has enemies. And the Father says, "Sit at my right hand, until I make your enemies your footstool."
 - 3. Oh my! Are these men Peter speaks to enemies of God? Did they not crucify and kill by the hands of lawless men, this Jesus? Will they be crushed? We will see.
- e. The result of all of this? This Jesus is both Lord and Christ.
 - i. (Acts 2:36) ³⁶ Let all the house of Israel therefore know for certain that God has made him both Lord and Christ, this Jesus whom you crucified."

- ii. What does this mean for those who crucified him?
- iii. What would you do? What did Joseph do to his brothers who intended to kill him but sold him into slavery? Did not God use Joseph to save his brothers who acts as his enemies?
- iv. What these men meant for evil, God meant for good. A response is necessary. If all this evidence is true, then their flesh does not dwell in hope but utter terror. They know how God can make them into a footstool.
- v. Though they deserve it...we deserve it...God is offering them salvation and joy in him if they will but call upon this Lord and they will be saved.

V. Conclusion

- a. Let's finish the story we began earlier: "But on Good Friday, I became fully aware that *my disgusting sin* made me an enemy of God. *My sin* earned me eternal separation from my Maker and *my sin* nailed Jesus to the cross. When I started owning my guilt, the good news of Jesus Christ became far more than facts."
- b. "After years of looking like a Christian, talking like a Christian, and doing ministry as a "Christian," I finally saw my desperate need for a Savior. And only then, did God save me."
- c. "It can be a tricky thing growing up in the church. Some of us "church kids" develop an attraction towards good and godly things (rightfully so), making us think we are closer to God than we are. Add some Bible knowledge and a developing appetite to "do what's right," and you have a recipe for an unsaved "Christian." In other words, it's easy to fly under the radar with lots of Jesus talk and attempts at godliness — all the while fooling yourself and others. Being a "good girl" sure fooled me."
- d. "Of course, there are no "good girls" according to God's standards; which is precisely the truth I failed to comprehend."

Benediction:

(2 Thess. 2:16-17) ¹⁶ Now may our Lord Jesus Christ himself, and God our Father, who loved us and gave us eternal comfort and good hope through grace, ¹⁷ comfort your hearts and establish them in every good work and word.