

The Cross to Pentecost - Part two

Pentecost Sunday

Acts 2:14

14 But Peter, standing up with the eleven, lifted up his voice, and said unto them, Ye men of Judaea, and all ye that dwell at Jerusalem, be this known unto you, and hearken to my words:

Acts 2:40

40 And with many other words did he testify and exhort, saying, Save yourselves from this untoward generation.

Acts 2:40 NLT

40 Then Peter continued preaching for a long time, strongly urging all his listeners, "Save yourselves from this crooked generation!"

One beautiful and bright Sunday morning, a mother hurries into her son's bedroom to wake him up. "Benson, it's Sunday. Time to get up! It is time to get ready for church!" Benson mumbles from under the covers, "I don't want to go." "What do you mean you don't want to go?" says the mother. "That's silly. Now get up and get dressed and go to church!"

Benson says, "No, I don't want to go and I'll give you two reasons why I don't want to go." He sits up on the bed and continues. "First, I don't like them and second, they don't like me." His mother replies, "Now, that's just plain nonsense. You've got to go to church and I'll give you two reasons why. First, you're over forty years old, and second, you're the pastor!"

I am preaching part two of the message I began on Wednesday, "The Cross to Pentecost".

- Pastor Benson didn't want to get up and go to Church on Sunday.
- He wanted to crawl back under his blankie and go back to sleep.
- He wanted to hide from his responsibility and his calling.

But fortunately, he had somebody to remind him of his calling.

His mother made sure he got to where he was supposed to be.
I was reading this illustration recently, and it reminded me of Simon Peter.

It reminded me of how Peter was acting during those 50 days between the Cross and Pentecost.

Not only Peter, but a number of the other disciples.

- The disciples wanted to go away and hide.
- They wanted to crawl under their covers.
- They didn't want to be seen by anybody.

If you were here on Wednesday, you will remember me talking about the way these disciples were acting during this time period.

Let me give a quick review:

- On the day of the Crucifixion of Christ, Peter assumes the end has come.
- He thinks this Jesus thing is all over.
- He denies he ever knew the Lord three different times in the space of a few minutes.

The rest of the disciples aren't much better; they don't even stick around to bury Jesus.

- Joseph of Arimathea, one of the Sanhedrin members, buries Jesus in his own sepulcher.
- A few days later, Jesus' body is missing.
 - Some said that He had risen from the dead.
 - Others said that His body had been stolen.
 - Nobody knew for sure what had happened to Jesus.

The disciples meet together in a secret house for fear of the Jewish leaders finding them and crucifying them also.

- Here, Mary tells them the news. Jesus is alive.

- That same day, Jesus came and showed Himself to his disciples.

When the disciples saw Jesus alive, they were happy beyond words.

- They thought it would be like old times again.
- They thought Jesus would be leading them again.
- But it wasn't like old times.

Jesus was with them only a few times. When He was with them, He would suddenly disappear.

- They were not going out into the multitudes to teach the people like they used to.
- There were no crowds following Jesus, there were no miracles.
- They knew something wonderful had just happened, but there was a tension in the air.

There was this feeling of uneasiness about the future.

Jesus was getting ready to leave them.

For months Jesus had been preparing them for this moment.

- Jesus death, burial, and resurrection were for this purpose.
- Calvary was pointing the way to Pentecost.
- Pentecost could not happen without Jesus ascending to heaven.

Jesus had to leave.

- They didn't quite understand what was happening.
- They didn't understand why Jesus had to leave.

Jesus had told them many times about leaving, but they were not ready for it.

- How were they going to make it without Jesus?
- They had just got Him back after losing Him on the cross.
- Now they were losing Him again.

So here we find seven of the disciples of the Lord!

- They were confused.
- They were upset.
- They were afraid.

Listen to what happens;

John 21:2-3

2 There were together Simon Peter, and Thomas called Didymus, and Nathanael of Cana in Galilee, and the sons of Zebedee, and two other of his disciples.

3 Simon Peter saith unto them, I go a fishing. They say unto him, We also go with thee. They went forth, and entered into a ship immediately; and that night they caught nothing.

After giving up their lives and professions to follow Jesus for 3 ½ years, they turn around and go right back to their old life.

- Even though Jesus had showed had explained this would happen.
- Even though Jesus had told them comforter was coming.
- Even though they were about to receive the greatest gift ever given.

We find them giving up on Jesus and returning to their old life.

The Bible says;

- They all got in a boat.
- They all went fishing.
- But they were not fishing for fish; they were looking for answers.

We can see that Peter is very upset. He is not even in his right mind. In verse seven we read that Peter is naked.

Who gets into a boat with six other men, naked? Peter has totally lost it.

- It is clear that he is not really there to go fishing.
- But Peter is bound up with fear and doubt and confusion.

Peter was so afraid about the future that he gave up on Jesus and went back to his old life.

- He didn't want to talk about Jesus.
- He didn't want to preach about Jesus.
- He didn't want to be crucified for being associated with Jesus.

What's worse, six of the other disciples have followed Peter down this lonely road.

Peter is hiding out in his old profession because that is the only familiar place that brings comfort.

Ok, that is my review for today.

Keep this picture of Simon Peter and the disciples in your thoughts as I read my text to you again;

Acts 2:14

14 But Peter, standing up with the eleven, lifted up his voice, and said unto them, Ye men of Judaea, and all ye that dwell at Jerusalem, be this known unto you, and hearken to my words:

Acts 2:40 NLT

40 Then Peter continued preaching for a long time, strongly urging all his listeners, "Save yourselves from this crooked generation!"

The same group of disciples that had totally given up on Jesus just a couple of weeks earlier were now standing up in front of thousands of people on the day of Pentecost.

Peter was leading the group once again.

- But this time he is not fishing on the back side of Lake Tiberias.

- But he is preaching in the city of Jeruslaem, during one of the busiest festivals of the year, Pentecost.

Two weeks after giving up on Jesus, Peter is preaching the key note Message of the Church at the feast of Pentecost.

- He is preaching a sermon about Jesus.
- A sermon that hits the people in the heart.
 - He wanted everybody to know that they had been responsible for crucifying Jesus.
 - But he also wanted everybody to know that Jesus was their Messiah...their Savior.
 - He wanted everybody to know what Jesus could do for them.

He wasn't worried about the religious leaders finding out.

He wasn't worried about being arrested.

He wasn't worried about being crucified.

What happened to Peter in this two week period of time that caused Him to turn around so drastically?

I want to focus on this because this hits close to home for all of us here today.

This is what Pentecost is all about!

- Some of us know what it is like to be ready to lay it all on the line for Jesus.
- But we also know what it feels like to give up on Jesus.
- We have had spiritual highs and spiritual lows.

This is you and me. We know what this feels like.

- There are days that we just want to crawl back under our blankets like Pastor Benson did and hide from everything.
- There are days where we mess up big time just as Peter did.
- There are days where we feel like we have failed Jesus.

We are no different than the man who preached the key note message of the Church at Pentecost.

- Just because you fail the Lord a few times it doesn't mean it is over for you.
- Just because you turn back on God and go back to your old lifestyle, it doesn't mean God has given up on you.
- You don't have to stay there.

The bible says;

Rom 11:29

29 For the gifts and calling of God are without repentance.

To repent means to make a choice to go in the opposite direction.

When God calls somebody as He called Peter, His call is without repentance. That means that God never changes His mind about His call.

- A few mistakes didn't change Jesus' mind about Peter.
- Jesus demonstrated this to Peter on the Sea of Galilee that day.

After fishing all night and catching nothing, the disciples see somebody standing on the shore. It was Jesus.

- Peter puts his clothes back on and jumps into the water and swims to shore.
- Jesus tells the other disciples to cast their nets on the other side of the boat.
- When they do they catch 153 ginormous fish.

It is still very early in the morning. Let me continue reading;

John 21:9-13

9 As soon then as they were come to land, they saw a fire of coals there, and fish laid thereon, and bread.

10 Jesus saith unto them, Bring of the fish which ye have now caught.

11 Simon Peter went up, and drew the net to land full of great fishes, and hundred and fifty and three: and for all there were so many, yet was not the net broken.

12 Jesus saith unto them, Come and dine. And none of the disciples durst ask him, Who art thou? knowing that it was the Lord.

13 Jesus then cometh, and taketh bread, and giveth them, and fish likewise.

Keep in mind, this is only the third time they have seen Jesus since the Resurrection.

Jesus cooks breakfast for them on a fire of coals.

I want to talk about this fire of coals for a minute.

The only other place in the New Testament where we find a fire of coals is at the palace of the High priest the day the Lord was crucified.

It was while warming himself over this fire of coals that Peter denied the Lord three times in the space of a few minutes.

- The fire of coals was the place of Peter's greatest failures.
- The fire of coals was etched in Peter's memory.
- The fire of coals was a dark stain in his past that he could not get over.

So Jesus recreated the same scene for Peter to get it right.

Three times over a fire of coals, Jesus walked Peter back through his failures and allowed Peter to get it right.

- Do you Love me Peter more than these? Yes Lord. Feed my Sheep.
- Do you Love me Peter more than these? Yes Lord. Feed my sheep.
- Do you Love me Peter more than these? Yes Lord. Feed my sheep.

Jesus was reminding Peter how much he loved him.

Jesus was reminding Peter of the call on his life.

Jesus made sure Peter got it right.

- This was part of Peter's journey to Pentecost.
- This was part of the disciples journey to Pentecost.
- If Jesus had not met them on the shores of Galilee that morning, they would never have made it to Pentecost.

I want you to know that Jesus, in His mercy, will do everything He can so that you can make it to your Pentecost!

- He will walk you back through your failures and allow you to get it right.
- He will help you overcome your dark past.
- Jesus wants you to experience Pentecost.

Are you thankful for that? Give the Lord some praise.

On the day of Pentecost, the comforter (The Holy Ghost came);

Acts 2:1-4

2 And when the day of Pentecost was fully come, they were all with one accord in one place.

2 And suddenly there came a sound from heaven as of a rushing mighty wind, and it filled all the house where they were sitting.

3 And there appeared unto them cloven tongues like as of fire, and it sat upon each of them.

4 And they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance.

Acts 1:8

8 But ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you: and ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judaea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth.

- At Pentecost, they all received their promise.
- They were all filled with the Holy Ghost.
- They all received power to become a witness.

It was the Holy Ghost that gave Peter the power to preach to the crowd that day.

Peter was able to turn his life around and preach the key-note message of the Church for two reasons;

1. The mercy and grace of God gave him another chance.
2. When God filled him with the Holy Ghost he received power to become a witness.

You may have to go through some trials before you receive your promise, but I want you to know that God will bring you through!

- God will set up a scenario in your life just like He did for Peter so you can get it right the second time or the third time.
- God hasn't given up on you. The call on your life is without repentance.

More than all of that, God wants to fill you with His Spirit.

Acts 2:37-39

37 Now when they heard this, they were pricked in their heart, and said unto Peter and to the rest of the apostles, Men and brethren, what shall we do?

38 Then Peter said unto them, Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost.

39 For the promise is unto you, and to your children, and to all that are afar off, even as many as the Lord our God shall call.

This promise is for you today.