

5. The True Hero of Pentecost is The Lord Jesus Christ

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[0 : 00] And our subject this morning is the true hero of Pentecost. I was speaking just recently to a relative of mine about their church.

And she said this to me, If only we could have the Holy Spirit as the real focus in our church, then I'm sure great things could begin to happen. Of course, that sounds so right, doesn't it? But in fact, it's totally wrong. And this chapter this morning, paradoxically, about the coming of the Holy Spirit and the birth of the New Testament church, the Pentecostal church, this chapter is going to show us why that is completely wrong.

Surely there's no place to grasp the true ministry of the Holy Spirit better than the day of Pentecost, the amazing events that followed.

But when we do grasp it properly, we will find that the true hero of Pentecost, the focus of every mind and heart involved in the story, is not in fact the third person of the Trinity, the Holy Spirit.

[1 : 12] It's the second person of the Trinity. The Lord Jesus Christ, the true Christ of the Scriptures, and the true Jesus of history, he is the real hero of Pentecost.

Well, it's a very long chapter. We can only really skim the main thrust of it this morning, but we're going to look at it under the three movements of Luke's narrative. So first, if you look at verses 1 to 13, we have the extraordinary sign.

The extraordinary sign of the events of Pentecost. And yet, the dominant note, we have to say, is one of perplexity among the crowds. Look at verse 12. And all were amazed and perplexed, saying to one another, what does this mean?

Well, why was there that reaction? Let's see if we ourselves can find out what it means. First of all, let's look at the events of that morning. First of all, notice the day.

It was, verse 1, the day of Pentecost. That is, it was the Old Testament feast of weeks or harvest, 50 days exactly following the day after the Passover celebrations.

[2 : 24] That is, in this particular case, of course, 50 days exactly from the day of Jesus' resurrection. Now, that's rather significant, don't you think? For the Old Testament people of God, the Passover, of course, signified the redemption of God's people out of Egypt.

And the feast of Pentecost, or weeks, came to signify the sealing of God's covenant with his people at Sinai. And Jesus himself, remember, had clearly described his death in terms of the Passover, fulfilling everything that the Passover foreshadowed and pointed for.

And so Pentecost signed and sealed the great inauguration of the new covenant, just as it did for the covenant with God's people at Sinai. After Passover and after Sinai, things were never the same again for Israel, for God's people.

He was their God. He was dwelling with them and among them forever. His glory would be in their midst. And after the cross and after Pentecost, nothing would ever be the same again for the whole world.

God had promised to live among not just one nation, but among all the nations, revealing his saving truth, not just primarily to the Jews, but to every nation of the world.

[3 : 38] And just rather like the first fruits offering that were offered at Pentecost were tokens of the rest of the harvest to come, so it seems that the wonderful ingathering at this first day of Pentecost of the new era is also a token of the abundant harvest for the gospel among all nations that was to follow.

Well, there's a lot more that we could say about the theological significance of Pentecost, but just mentioning this business about the nations brings us on to its strategic significance.

See, God in his providence acted in Jesus in the fullness of the time. That's Paul's phrase in Galatians, isn't it? And indeed, Jesus' incarnation came at a time in human history when the impact could be truly global because of the unified empire under Rome, because of the lingua franca that everybody spoke and so on.

You see, the Lord is no stranger to strategy. And just so at Pentecost. You see, verse 5, it tells us that there were people from every nation under heaven gathered for the feast.

In other words, there was a ready-assembled multitude from all the known world of people ready to become missionary ambassadors back to their home countries to truly make this an event of global importance.

[4 : 54] Perhaps it's easier for us today to understand how an event in one place can really have global significance. We're seeing that just now, aren't we? In the global credit crunch. Things spreading all around the world.

Well, that's what happened the day of Pentecost. It was a truly global thing. Well, so much for the day. What about the sign? Verse 2 tells us that they heard something like a mighty rushing wind and something like tongues of fire were seen.

Not exactly wind and fire, but that was just the best description that could be given in human terms. Because clearly it wasn't just a human thing, it was a supernatural thing. Well, anybody who knows the Old Testament scriptures would know immediately that these things were significant.

Wind and fire are the signs so often of God's presence. The Spirit, the wind of the Spirit who blows where he wills. As Jesus said to Nicodemus, remember.

The great rushing wind of the Spirit that brought the dead bones to life in Ezekiel's prophecy, the valley of dry bones. Indeed, it was a great promise that all the prophets spoke about.

[6 : 04] The breath of the Spirit sweeping over the people to revive them, to bring them to rebirth rebirth and new life. The Spirit who would come and take away the days of darkness and living death that would be until, as the prophet Isaiah says in chapter 32, until the Spirit is poured out from on high.

And verse 4 of our chapter is plain. That's what's happening. They were filled with the Holy Spirit. This is the baptism with the Holy Spirit that Jesus spoke about in chapter 1, verse 5 of Acts.

It's the once-for-all event by which the whole church is anointed by the risen Lord. It's what Peter says in verse 33. The promise of the Spirit He has poured out.

Now notice that this baptism or this pouring out or this receiving or filling of the Holy Spirit is something that happens once to God's people. A similar event is recorded three times like this in Acts just so we get it clear.

Again in chapter 8, there's the Samaritan Pentecost and in chapter 10 there's the coming of the Spirit to the Gentiles to Cornelius' household. And these particular repeats are there primarily for the benefit of the Jews so that they would see that Samaritans and Gentiles were exactly the same as them.

[7 : 25] True believers through faith in Jesus Christ alone. Not through circumcision, not through historical association with Jews, nothing else. but it's a once for all event.

Now of course there can be many subsequent fillings with the Spirit of believers. Plenty of those through Acts 4 and 31 says that many were filled with the Spirit and notice they spoke the Word of God with boldness.

But a baptism in the Spirit, well that's something that's never ever spoken of in the Scripture as a subsequent experience to being born again. Subsequent thing for becoming a Christian.

No. And by the way don't listen to anybody who tells you that that is so. Tells you that perhaps you're a Christian but you're not quite fully there yet.

You need something else. You need a baptism in the Holy Spirit. No. Being a Christian is being born again by the Holy Spirit of God. If you want to ask me questions about that come and speak to me afterwards.

[8 : 26] And by the way also notice that this filling of the Spirit that Jesus calls the baptism of the Spirit Peter very clearly in verse 33 calls a pouring out from above.

Just as every other baptism washing in the Old Testament was a pouring or sprinkling from above. So also don't let anybody tell you that perhaps if you were baptized by pouring or by sprinkling rather than by immersion somehow your baptism is inferior either.

That's just not true. You take notice of the consistent biblical use of these terms it's always about pourings and washings and sprinklings. And there are many many cases where that word can't possibly mean anything else in the scriptures.

So don't be told by anybody that your mode of baptism is inferior whether you were poured on or plunged into. We're not going to make any time wasting arguing about trivialities like quantities of water are we?

That would be a stupid thing to do. People who argue obsessively about these sort of things tend to in the end lose the truth of the gospel. So whether it's great or little it signifies this great baptism of the spirit.

[9 : 33] But look back at the text. What is the immediate effect of these signs at Pentecost? Well verse 4b the spirit filled them and what? They began to speak. The spirit gave them utterance.

And totally miraculously this whole multi-ethnic multitude began hearing the mighty works of God in their own native language. Now notice it's not just that they imagined this nor is it just some sort of miracle of hearing.

Luke is absolutely plain verse 4b they spoke in other tongues and these tongues weren't as well as some people who are very taken up with these phenomena today are happy for them to be they were not just incoherent babblings.

They were not just some kind of worship language or ecstatic utterance. No they spoke languages Persian and Iraqi and Turkish and Cretan and Arabic and all of these other names that you see in front of you.

Now of course no doubt at first it sounded a raucous noise and they were all perplexed about it. I suppose it's like opening the door and going into a great room where there's a whole party going on and all you hear is a babbling of noise and you wonder what's going on.

[10 : 42] But as these people drew closer they were astonished they began to actually hear in their own mother tongue the glories of God being spoken of.

Well what does it mean? Well of course we know what it means. We know that it's a deliberate foretaste of God's intention for his eternal kingdom that Revelation 7 speaks of.

People from every tribe and language and people and nation united in the praise of Jesus. We know that. We know that it's a deliberate sign of the reversal of God's curse.

Remember right back in Genesis 11 at the Tower of Babel where God scattered men all over the world and confused their languages to stop them rebelling against him. And here's a reversal of that.

We know that. But they don't know it. What does it mean they say in verse 12. They're perplexed. These Galileans a bunch of tuchters. Sorry to the tuchters among us Sandy I can see you smiling at me.

[11 : 43] But that's what they meant. You see these tuchters these highlanders from Galilee.

They're speaking all these languages it's extraordinary. They're perplexed they're confused some of them are cynical or they're drunk they say.

Now you see that leads us to something very very important that we have to recognize. That the events of God's working in history on their own are not necessarily enough for the world to understand those events.

There must be interpretation of the events. There must be explanation. Otherwise forever people will be saying well what does this mean? And that's why the bulk of Luke's chapter here about Pentecost the bulk of it focuses not on the events but on the explanation of those events.

Not on the signs but on the significance of these signs. And you'll see that from verse 14 right through to verse 36 we have that right at the heart of this chapter.

The brief account of the extraordinary signs gives way to a very long account which is the second thing the explanatory sermon. So let's look at that.

[12 : 54] Peter answers the question what does this mean in two parts and you can see it there in verse 14 and verse 22. He introduces them both with the same phrase. Give ear to my words verse 14.

Hear my words verse 22. You see? You see how the dominant note in Luke's account about Pentecost is one of proclamation. It's his explanation of these events and his sermon interpreting these signs that makes it a life-changing experience for his hearers.

In verses 12 and 13 it's just perplexity. By the time we get to verse 41 we see something very different. There's penitence and faith. But the one leads to the other only through the proclamation of the message.

The words spoken. Give ear to my words. Now we need to be clear about this. Of course the Holy Spirit is at work on the day of Pentecost and thank God for him.

But actually he is at work in the background. In fact he's only mentioned in four occasions in this chapter. The actual word appears six times but there are four mentions of the Holy Spirit. His filling in verse 4 then in Joel's prophecy and then when Peter says Jesus pours him out and then in verse 38 the promise of forgiveness includes the promise of the Spirit.

[14:18] But by contrast there are at least 24 references to the word. To what is spoken and heard. To the message. I wonder if that surprises you about Pentecost.

It's all about proclamation. The Spirit, verse 4, gave them utterance. Now that's so important isn't it? Just think about it.

What is the sign for example of a truly Spirit filled church? Well, we go by Acts 2. It will be a church in which there is evidence of utterance. Where the mighty works of God are being spoken and heard in the plain language of ordinary people and by ordinary people.

What's the sign of a Spirit filled person? Well, it will be somebody whose tongue has been loosened to tell the mighty works of God to proclaim the gospel in vernacular languages.

It's a wonderful picture isn't it? Not just the apostles, but every single believer in the fellowship speaking the glories of God to their own particular audiences of hearers. They didn't know they could, did they?

[15:21] Some of them didn't. They were just Galilean fishermen or former thieves or prostitutes, some of them. Addicts. All kinds of people. All kinds of backgrounds.

And yet on that day some of them became missionaries to Egyptians. some of them became missionaries of the gospel to Iranians and Greeks and Turks and Asians and all kinds of different people. But that's what happens, isn't it, when the Spirit of God is at work among his people. God does call some to Japan and to Vietnam and to Cambodia, Turkey or Africa or wherever it is, Glasgow even. Ordinary people who at one time would never think that they could possibly do such a thing.

Well, that was a start, wasn't it, on that day? But it's been going on ever since. It's still going on today. We've just been praying for some of our own missionaries. The Spirit gives utterance to tell forth the glories of the gospel of God from ordinary people to ordinary people and in ordinary language.

Apparently there was no place for PhDs on the day of Pentecost, it seems, just personal proclamation from God's ordinary witnesses. That should be an encouragement to us, shouldn't it? But there was also, of course, public proclamation and that now becomes Luke's focus.

[16:41] And notice that Peter spoke very probably in the lingua franca, perhaps in Aramaic or maybe Greek. So you see, the many tongues were obviously not necessary for people to understand.

No, they were a clear sign to flag up that this was a momentous event of global significance. But now a full explanation was needed. So Peter stands up and lifts up his voice and says, verse 14, let me explain.

And he refutes the ridiculous notion that they're drunk and turns immediately to the truth. And you'll see that his sermon has a two-fold emphasis that is characteristic of all the apostolic preaching and in fact must be the pattern of all spirit-filled preaching.

He speaks words from the scripture and words about the Savior. There's two parts to his sermon. The first is this. Words about the promise of scripture.

Listen, he said, God's words through Joel have been fulfilled. Verse 16. He literally says, if you've got an authorized version, it'll have this.

[17:43] This is that. This that you're seeing is that that was spoken about. Well, what had Joel spoken about?

Well, he'd spoken about the events of the last day, says Peter in verse 17. And that's almost a technical term used all through the Old Testament to mean the time of the end of history. There's all kinds of variations.

There's the latter days. There's the end of the age. Sometimes it's just that day. Or sometimes it's days are coming. The days that culminate in the great day of the Lord.

And it was the prophets ways of talking from the very earliest of times about the great day that God had promised right from the beginning of the vindication of his people and the restoration of them. It was first mentioned by Moses way back in Deuteronomy 4. That's the words we began our service with. The days of God's great restitution, but also, of course, the day of God's judgment.

[18 : 41] If you go through the Old Testament prophets, you'll find hundreds and hundreds of references to this. So, for example, as we sang at the beginning, words from Isaiah 2, in the latter days, the mountain of the Lord's temple will be lifted up and nations will flow to it.

In that day, says Isaiah 11, the root of Jesse shall be a signal for the peoples. He will raise a sign for the nations. And yet, at the same time, says Isaiah, in that day, there'll be weeping and mourning and sackcloth.

Just as the Spirit will be poured out from on high, so also the prophet goes on to speak about days of consuming fire and of judgment. judgment. Well, if this that you are seeing is that which was spoken by Joel and the others, how do we make sense of the paradox of the great joy and restoration and yet also the great and terrible wrath and judgment of God?

Well, perhaps Peter chose to quote Joel out of all of the prophets because his words are so clear and helpful about this. And we must assume, I guess, that Jesus, during the 40 days before he was ascended, taught Peter and the other apostles particularly about Joel's prophecy.

Because all through Jesus' ministry, remember, he said very plainly that these last days had begun. But he described them not as being short, not as being a single day as perhaps people were expecting, but rather prolonged days that began with his coming and yet stretched right out until his coming again in glory, the end of history.

[20 : 14] Remember when we looked at Matthew chapter 24, he said these things that you're going to experience are the beginnings of the birth pangs, but not the end. Before the end will come, the gospel of the kingdom must be preached in every nation.

Well, listen to the scripture, says Peter. Joel spoke in exactly those terms too. The great events of the last days that he speaks of in verse 17 will occur, as verse 20 says, before the day of the Lord, the great magnificent day.

That day, according to Joel, is a day associated with cosmic signs and wonders. Sun turning to darkness, the moon turning to blood.

These are the things that Jesus himself had spoken of, didn't he? You can read it in Luke 21, verse 25, or Matthew 25, 29. Things that were associated very plainly with his return in glory to the earth. It's all one happening, Peter is saying. It's a beginning and an end, though. And we don't know the timetable, but we do know the sequence.

[21 : 20] And the prelude, the beginning, is this mighty outpouring of the Spirit upon all flesh. All classes of flesh, he says, young and old, male and female, even slaves, even Galilean chuchters like us, says Peter.

Yes. And it will be an age marked by the unloosing of the proclamation of God's mighty works, by all flesh to all flesh.

And this, says Peter, is that. It's what was predicted. You should be expecting it. If you listen to the words of the promise of Scripture. God's word through Joel, and indeed through all the prophets, has been fulfilled.

And you should be rejoicing in it, expecting it, recognizing it. God is at work. God is at work. It's a tragic mark, really, of the deadness of Israel for so long that the majority didn't recognize the day of grace when it thrust itself in their face.

When Jesus himself walked the earth, they called him a madman and a devil. And now through the disciples, through the apostles, they just think they're mad and drunk.

[22 : 29] But it's always the same. I said to you, I encourage you to read Jonathan Aitken's excellent biography of John Newton. And you'll see there how the true believers, the evangelical believers in Christ in those days were just regarded as extremists and fanatics under Wesley and Whitefield.

By an establishment that wanted nothing to do with that kind of radical faith. That's just the same today. Whenever the true gospel is unleashed, whenever the glories of God are spoken and truly heard, lives are changed.

convulsions occur. And that's exactly what's happening here, says Peter. It's all because of the promise of Scripture. But he has a second point in his sermon that begins in verse 22.

Hear these words, he says again. Words about the person of the Savior. You see, the question arises, why? Why now have God's words through Joel been fulfilled?

Well, the answer is because God's work through Jesus has been fulfilled. You see again who the real hero is, verse 22. It's Jesus of Nazareth.

[23 : 35] This Jesus, verse 23. This Jesus, verse 32. See, Peter is filled with the Spirit. He's driven by the Spirit indeed.

The Spirit is the agent of everything that's going on on that great day. But the focus, the focus is all upon the words of Scripture and the works of the Savior. And that's always so.

Always, that's the mark of the work of the Holy Spirit. Peter proclaims the person of Christ. Jesus is the focus of everything. Why has the great day of the Lord dawned at last?

Because the great Lord himself is here in person. In verse 17, you see, when he's quoting Joel, he says it's clear, it's the Lord alone who can pour out his Spirit.

Well, says Peter, you have seen that this Jesus has revealed himself as the Lord. You can only skim Peter's words here, but in any case, it's a summary.

[24 : 40] Verse 40 says he used many other words as well, but just notice that they are all words about Jesus. Hear these words. He says, look to Jesus of Nazareth. He is both Lord and Christ.

So in verse 22, first, he says you witnessed his unique life. He was perfect before God. He was attested by unique signs and wonders. You've seen his authority, his teaching, his wisdom, his grace, as you yourselves know, your witnesses.

And verse 23, you witnessed his unique death, a death planned and purposed by God from the start and yet perpetrated by you and by wicked men. You see, you notice that, no conflict at all there between God's sovereign control and man's clear responsibility.

We witness, he says in verse 24, his unique resurrection. And notice once again, he explains it all as being according to the promise of Scripture. It wasn't possible, says Peter, for death to hold him because the Scripture promised that the Holy One of God, the great descendant of David, the Messiah who would be king forever, would not be abandoned to death, would not see corruption, verse 27.

He's quoting to people who know their Bibles, but he's showing them how they misunderstand it. You're not speaking about David himself, he says, otherwise David was totally wrong. He's dead and buried. You can see his tomb.

[26 : 01] No, he spoke about the one that God had promised to him, that he would have a descendant who would rule forever upon his throne. Remember Jesus himself, at the end of Luke's Gospel, says that everything, Psalms as well as the Law and the Prophets, must be fulfilled.

The resurrection was promised. And verse 32, he says, we have witnessed it. We've witnessed also the ascension in verse 33 to the unique rule of this Jesus Christ.

There's your answer. Why has God's word through Joel now been fulfilled? Because at last God's work through Jesus of Nazareth has been fulfilled and finished.

He's ascended, just as David foresaw. And just again, Scripture is fulfilled. He quotes from another Psalm, 110. We're all witnesses of it, he says.

You've seen God's Spirit poured out. And it's Jesus who's done it. Verse 33, he has poured out this that you're seeing and hearing.

[27 : 04] You see how Peter reaches his conclusion in verse 36? Be certain. Don't be perplexed. Don't be confused anymore. This is all about Jesus.

And this Jesus, God has made both Lord and Christ. Only the Lord, only God himself can pour out his Spirit. You know that. And only the Messiah, the Christ, could not be held by death.

And that's the wonderful truth of what's been going on right before your eyes, says Peter. That's what this is all about. The day of the Lord is unfolding. The day of restoration and regeneration of all things because the Lord of that great day is risen and is raised to rule on high.

It's the beginning of the recreation of the whole cosmos because in Christ it's the first fruits of the recreation of true humanity. It's the crown of God's creation at last.

Man, true man, the perfect Son of God in the image of God, ruling over God's creation as he created him to be. He's begun to subdue the earth and to fulfill it.

[28 : 13] He's begun to subdue his enemies. It's the wonderful reality that God's people have been looking for from the very dawn of history. It's the very purpose of God's creation at last, despite sin, coming to pass.

Well, why then in verse 37 do they react with horror and fear? They're cut to the heart.

Why, if this is the great glory of God's ultimate purpose being revealed, should they not be dancing for joy? Well, it's obvious, isn't it? The evidence is irrefutable.

The day of the Lord is upon them. The Lord is revealed in Jesus, the Lord whom you crucified.

Remember, there is that other side, isn't there, to the great day of the Lord?

It's also the great intimation of the day of coming judgment. The risen Lord, says the psalm, will make all his enemies his footstool. And what was Peter's message? You witnessed, verse 22, you witnessed Jesus' rule on earth, but you crucified him.

[29 : 30] And now you're witnessing his rule from heaven. The rule of this same Jesus, verse 36, whom you crucified. Why were they struck with such conviction and fear?

Well, of course, because the penny had truly dropped. And they understood that they were standing as enemies of God's Lord and Christ. Enemies of his Messiah.

Enemies of the King and Judge of all the earth. They realized that they were guilty before God of blasphemous rejection of his rule. And that's where Peter's sermon left them.

Notice, he doesn't make any exhortation, any appeal, does he? He just lets it sink in. They've got the answer to their second question. Both of their questions, in fact.

What is this? And why is it now? But now they're very fearful. And so they ask this third question in verse 37.

[30 : 35] What will we do? And Peter's very plain. He's given them the what? And now he turns to the so what? What they must do.

And so verse 38 and following describes an exclusive summons, doesn't it? What's described in verse 38 and following is all about penitence. Repent.

That's what you must do when you've understood that you're a rebel against God, when you've been exposed as an enemy against God, as a blasphemer against his Christ. And this repentance before God is an exclusive repentance.

Do you see verse 38? It's in Jesus' name. Because that is God's name. If Jesus is the Lord who pours out his spirit in the last days, then Jesus is the name that alone can save everyone who calls upon it.

In truth, it's the saving name that Joel speaks about in verse 21. Everyone who calls upon the name of the Lord will be saved. You bow to the kingship of the Lord Jesus Christ alone.

[31 : 39] You repent in the name of Jesus and no other name. It's the only hope, says Peter, of forgiveness from God. It's the only hope of the rebirth into a new life that comes through the Holy Spirit.

Repentance in the name of Jesus. No other response will do. It's an exclusive summons.

Repentance. But what is repentance?

Well, if you look up the theology books, they'll give you screeds of definitions about it. Thankfully, the Bible's very plain and simple. Perfectly clear in these verses, isn't it? First of all, it's something we must do.

Verse 38. You must repent. And that something we do has two sides to it. Something very personal and something very public. First, there's a very personal change of heart and mind.

Turning away, isn't it, from a wrong belief about Jesus. They had rejected him as God's unique revelation of himself. And so they had to repent of their wrong thinking.

[32 : 44] And they rejected him as the unique ruler and Lord over their lives. And so they had to repent of their rebellion and their willful sin against his rule. And they had to acknowledge Jesus and none other as God and Lord.

To submit to his rule in a personal change of mind and heart. A personal conversion is a vital part of repentance. But there's also, isn't there, a very public commitment that's inseparable from that.

There must be both a personal change of mind and heart, but also a public change of life and allegiance. Repent, says Peter, and be baptized. That's what baptism signifies outwardly and publicly.

A public realignment of life away from this world, away from the enemies of God and rebellion against him and towards the kingdom of Christ and the people of God. See, real repentance can

never ever be just inward and invisible.

It's always also outward and visible too. A personal commitment to Jesus' person is always accompanied by a public commitment to Jesus' people. If you want a third P, you should notice also that it's not just a one-off.

[33 : 57] It is also a permanent communion with the Lord's people. It's a significance, isn't it, of verse 42 and following. They devoted themselves. Remember that word from verse 14 of chapter 1? They persevered in the apostles' teaching and fellowship and hospitality and prayer together, verse 42.

Verse 44. All who believed were together. That's repentance. That's what you must do in response to Pentecost. A personal conversion to Christ.

A change of mind and heart. A public commitment to Christ's people, his church, in a real change of life. And a persistent, persevering communion with him and with them in an ongoing life of belief. Because it's not just what we do, is it? But really, above all, it's what God is doing to us. It's what God is granting us in repentance.

We repent to him, but actually, says verse 38, we receive from him, don't we? We receive forgiveness. A blotting out of the old life. We receive the gift of the Spirit, the rebirth into a wholly new and eternal life.

[35 : 06] That's the promise that he gives. Verse 39, a promise for all that God calls to himself. It's God who saves, not us. He's the sovereign Lord.

He's the Savior. We simply receive it all from him. Sheer grace. And yet, we receive it only, as verse 41 makes absolutely clear, if we receive his word.

Those who received his word, that is, those who received the command to repent in Jesus' name, those were added to the church's eternal kingdom that day. It's all the gift of God's wonderful grace, but, you see, it's a gift that is laid in one place only, and that's at the feet of the Lord Jesus Christ. And so you can only receive it by stooping and kneeling at the feet of the Lord Jesus. It's the place you can find it. By the way, did you notice also that there's no appeal to believe in salvation here? Not an appeal to believe, but a command to obey. But, of course, that's what real faith is, isn't it? Obedience to the Lord Jesus Christ. And that's why verse 44 calls those who had obeyed, who had responded, repented, calls them believers.

[36 : 25] All who believed were together. They received his word, says verse 41. And they were added. Added, as verse 47 tells us, to those who are being saved.

Saved by the mercy of God from the great judgment of the day of the Lord, the great and magnificent day when Jesus comes. Well, friends, I want to conclude with three observations from this chapter.

First of all, to us as a congregation here in St. George's Tron. A question, are we a Pentecostal church? Is there evidence of the Spirit at work in power among us?

And if that's so, what will be the signs? Well, for one thing, surely, we'll be a church where in our personal ministries, among our friends, with our colleagues, with our family, with our relatives, they will be hearing from our tongues the mighty acts of God in languages that they can understand, whatever that might be.

Isn't that right? It's the mark of Pentecost. And in our public ministry, everything also will likewise be like Peter's. Words about the scriptures and words about the Savior.

[37 : 46] A Pentecostal church will be a proclaiming church. The Spirit isn't the focus, but the Spirit is, indeed, the floodlight, lighting up and magnifying the beauty of the Lord Jesus Christ as the true hero of Pentecost.

It'll be like when, finally, we're back in our church building down at Buchanan Street and the floodlights, which have been off for this last year, will be switched back on again. And what you will see is not the bulbs of the floodlights.

They're hidden in the pavement, in the stonework. But what you'll see, again, is the beauty of the building lit up as a beacon in the center of the city. Well, let's receive that word, shall we?

Let's be praying for the Holy Spirit's filling in us to that end. Second, something for those of us here today as individual Christian believers. We need to ask ourselves the question, are we Pentecostal believers?

What will the sign be of the Spirit's presence in our life? Well, surely penitence will be the dominant theme, won't it? Martin Luther said in his great 95 theses that the Lord Jesus has willed that the

entire life of believers be one of repentance.

[38 : 58] John Calvin put it the same way, our whole life is but one act of repentance. That means an ongoing, personal turning to Jesus in our minds and hearts.

Daily, seeking from him fresh forgiveness for the past, fresh filling of his Spirit for the present and the future. and an ongoing daily also public commitment to Jesus and his people.

How do you keep up your strength for this? How do you keep receiving that grace for penitence from him? Well, just exactly the same as they did at the very beginning by receiving his word.

Day by day, humbly submitting to his command, to his rule over our life. Day by day, turning away from this world's hold and towards the calling of the Lord Jesus Christ.

And of course, vitally doing that together. Not giving up, meeting together as Jesus' people. All the believers were together. You feel empty?

[40 : 01] You feel in need of a fresh filling of God's Holy Spirit? Well, receive his word. Come to him. Repent again. Turn to him personally and commit to him publicly.

Finally, a word for those of us here this morning who may not yet be believers in the Lord Jesus Christ. You haven't submitted to his rule. You haven't submitted to it personally or publicly.

Well, there's a very real warning for you in this passage because you also have the death of Jesus on your hands. You crucified him. Well, you might say to me, how can that possibly be?

I wasn't there. I'm just neutral. I've got nothing against Jesus. I'm not guilty. No, that's not so. The old Negro spiritual song is right when it asks the question, were you there when they crucified my Lord?

And the answer is yes, you were. And so was I. As we sang, it was my sin that held him there. my mocking voice was there among the crowd because although the Romans killed Jesus and the Jews of the day killed Jesus, says Peter, remember verse 23, it was all done at God's ultimate hand.

[41 : 26] Why did God have to do it? Well, the answer is to bear away sin. Sin and rebellion of this world. And friends, your sin and my sin was part of that problem.

And because of that, Jesus had to die. But you see, God has made him both Lord and Christ, this Jesus whom you crucified.

And this Jesus who is Lord and Christ will make all his enemies his footstool. He will judge them, every last one for their rejection of his lordship.

And you and I will one day stand before this Jesus, now Lord and Christ and on the throne of heaven to judge the whole earth. In fact, the date has already been set according to Paul in Acts 17 when he will judge the earth in righteousness.

righteousness. You will meet Jesus as judge one day. But he wants you to meet him on that day not as an enemy but as a friend.

[42 : 43] And that's why today he commands you to repent. It's not an option, it's not an offer, it's a command, you must do it. He demands from you today a personal change of heart and a public change of life.

But it's a wonderful command. It's a command to receive salvation. Joel said, whoever calls upon the name of the Lord will be saved.

So whoever repents in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ says verse 38 will receive forgiveness for the past and will receive new life forever and ever from the Holy Spirit.

So friends, if that's you today, don't let the day pass you by. That day we're told 3,000 souls were saved and added to the eternal kingdom of the Lord Jesus Christ.

And it went on day after day after day as people were added. Well, you can be added today. You mustn't wait until it's too late.

[44 : 00] Receive the word of Jesus today. Let's pray. Pass me not, O gentle Savior, ■■■ I could fill.