

Pentecost: The Gospel of Conviction and Decision

Series: Gospel Drama in Four Parts

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Pentecost is actually not until May 31, but I am speeding up the timeline. Our previous messages:

- Palm Sunday: The Pre-Gospel
- Easter: Gospel of Life
- In-Between: The Gospel of Kingdom Rule
- Pentecost: The Gospel of Conviction and Decision

There are 50 days between Passover and Pentecost, in fact Pente means 50. Pentecost comes from a Jewish harvest festival called Shavuot. Leviticus 23 gives a description of this feast of harvest. The imagery could not be clearer. The day God chose to launch the kingdom of God, the sending of His Spirit, and the spread of the gospel seed within the earth is the day of harvest.

Jesus said in John 4:35, “Do you not say, ‘There are yet four months and then comes the harvest? Behold I say to you, lift up your eyes, and look on the fields, that they are white for harvest.’” Little did the disciples know that within a few months they would be harvesting souls for the kingdom of God, beginning right in the middle of Jerusalem.

Acts 2 is where the story is found. The elements of the story include:

- Waiting in Jerusalem for power (authority) (Acts 1)
- The pouring out of the Spirit according to Joel’s prophecy
 - Mighty rushing wind (2:1-2)
 - Tongues of fire (2:3)
 - Speaking in and hearing in tongues (languages, dialects) (2:4-11)
 - The explanation (2:12-21)
- Peter’s sermon
 - Jesus’ life (2:22)
 - Jesus’ death (2:23)
 - Jesus’ resurrection (2:24-32)
 - Jesus’ coronation (2:33-36)
- The crowd’s response
 - Conviction
 - Salvation
 - The follow through

My intent today is to focus on the crowd’s response to the phenomena and message of Pentecost that shows that the gospel is a gospel of conviction and decision.

- Keep in mind this crowd is responding to the truths of the gospel which contain power to save. (Rom.1:16)
- The convicting work of the Spirit
 - Read John 16:5-15
 - Sin, righteousness, and judgment
 - Sin. In my morning studies on the Holy Spirit, based on the book of John's use of sin, there are clearly four matters we need to be convicted of:
 - Sin kills (Death)
 - Sin enslaves (Slavery)
 - Sin blinds (Blindness)
 - Sin is inexcusable
 - Contact me offline and I can substantiate these four conclusions.
 - Righteousness. The need for conviction is because we too often confuse our righteousness with His. Ours will not save. His will. The source of our righteousness is unseen, from heaven where Jesus is.
 - Judgment. Those who persist in sin will be condemned along with the devil, the ruler of this world.
- Two phrases to focus our attention:
 - “cut or pierced to the heart.” (2:37) meaning to pierce through.
 - A form of this word is used in John 19:34 where the soldier pierced the side of Jesus. This word means to prick or pierce without the idea of going through. The difference is that Jesus was wounded, but the people on Pentecost were mortally wounded.
 - Compare this to Genesis 3:15, God's words to Satan: “And I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your offspring and hers; he will crush your head, and you will strike His heel.” The contrast is clear, a strike versus a crushing blow. (Like two boxers)
 - Notice in Gen.3 the enmity or conflict will be between her offspring- Jesus- and Satan's offspring.
 - Who were Satan's offspring?
 - John 8:44, “You are of your father the devil, and you want to do the desires of your father. He was a murderer from the beginning....”
 - What did Peter accuse the crowd on Pentecost of?
 - Acts 2:36, “Therefore let all the house of Israel know for certain that God has made Him both Lord and Christ-this Jesus whom you crucified.”
 - Murder. Implying their father is Satan.
 - What is the conviction of the Spirit? It is an indictment of murder in the first degree. Each person participated in the killing of Jesus because of their sins. And we do too.

- “solemnly testified and kept on exhorting...” (2:40) (NASB)
 - The word “solemnly testify” is “testimony” with a prefix of *dia*, meaning through-diagonal, or dissect. Peter’s words were meant to penetrate and pierce and convict his hearers. The “testify” is what Jesus told Peter and the apostles they would do (Acts 1:8), i.e. to be witnesses. Now Peter was delivering his testimony in a piercing, solemn way-straight through the hearts of his hearers.
 - Exhorted them. Parakaleo, means to call for, invite to come.
 - Jesus told a parable in Luke 14:16-24 about people who were invited to the banquet but had excuses. The master told his servants to go to the highways and the hedges and compel others to come in. This is what Peter is doing.
 - Paul said, “Therefore knowing the fear of the Lord, we persuade men...” (2 Cor.5:11)

Conclusion:

Pentecost was a day of deep conviction and decision. Jesus had lived among them for three years, the city was clearly aware of the death of Jesus 50 days earlier, and that the body is not in the tomb. They have been told that Jesus fulfilled the prophecies and was now crowned king at the right hand of God, the Father. God poured out the Spirit according to prophecy and performed the miracle of tongues. What else is there to say? It is time to decide. Who will you side with? God who made Jesus both Lord and Christ or the murderer the devil? That is the choice. That is what Peter preached.

Lord’s Supper:

What followed after the conversion of 3000+ Jews to the Lordship of Jesus Christ is found in Acts 2:42-47. READ This conviction and decision led to worship, fellowship, sharing, learning, growing, experiencing the Life of Jesus in their lives and in community. They learned to celebrate. One way they did this was through the Lord’s Supper, the breaking of bread. How often in the ministry of Jesus did Jesus simply break bread with His disciples? When He did it with the Emmaus Road disciples they suddenly recognized Him. When He gave them the bread and fish on the beach they recognized Him. It was natural for Jesus to have a meal with His family. Today it is not natural for us to be having a virtual meal together-Maybe we should try a virtual pot luck too. But this is what we have to do today. Our lives have been changed. We are devoted to this. Prayers.