

MINISTRY BY MAIL
Lutheran Conference of Confessional Fellowship
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Pentecost Sunday, June 5, 2022

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(Hymns found in The Lutheran Hymnal, CPH, 1941)
Hymns: 231, 224:2, 227:1-3, 229:1-4, 224:3.
Lessons: Exodus 23:13-17, Acts 2:1-41, John 14: 25-27.
Sermon Text: Acts 2:1-6.
Sermon by Pastor Robert Mehlretter

In the name of Jesus Christ, Dear Fellow Redeemed,

You all know the importance of getting important messages out to people. For example, when there is severe weather threatening us we really need to know. We have a National Weather Service and local media that want to get the word out so that people's lives can be saved.

Fifty days after Jesus rose from the dead, there was a situation when the followers of Jesus "got the word out" about Jesus. This wasn't a severe weather situation, but it was a matter of life and death.

Today, as we today look at that first New Testament Pentecost Day, we see

THE IMPORTANCE OF GETTING THE WORD OUT

- 1. The message about Jesus was given to Jews of many nations and languages.**
- 2. We have the same message to give to people.**

Pentecost was an Old Testament Feast day. Since this was one of the times when all the Jews were to appear at Jerusalem, there were Jews from all parts of the world in Jerusalem. These were devout, pious Jews. They were sincere in their worship of God and wanted to please God, or they wouldn't be in Jerusalem.

In the Old Testament this is called the "Feast of Harvest", or "Day of Firstfruits" because the firstfruits of the spring wheat harvest were presented to the Lord.

The people spoken of in our text generally would have been sincere, devout men, not hypocrites like the Jewish rulers. And remember that about 600 years earlier Jews were exiled to Babylon and Jews would also have done business in many nations. Having lived in foreign lands even for generations, they spoke the language of the people among whom they lived, using Hebrew only for Sabbath services.

What better audience to tell about what the Old Testament really meant?

Remember too that Jesus had taught his followers that he was the Messiah, the fulfillment of the Old Testament promises. He did this also in the 40 days between his resurrection and his ascension into heaven, starting with the disciples on the road to Emmaus.

Now Peter and other followers of Jesus have opportunity to tell others about what the Old Testament meant and how it was all pointing to Jesus Christ – in their own languages!

There was a sound of a mighty rushing wind. This could signal danger, but didn't. It drew people to the place where it could be heard, much as a severe weather siren may draw people outside if they can't see any severe weather in their neighborhood.

They also saw the appearance of tongues like as of fire resting on the heads of believers. This was fulfillment of words of the prophet Joel, as Peter explains in his sermon on this day. John the Baptist also had promised: "*after me will come one who is more powerful than I, whose sandals I am not fit to carry. He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and with fire.*" Matthew 3:11 (NIV) And now the Holy Spirit has come just as even Christ himself promised he would come.

People from 15 nations are mentioned, and Jews gathered in Jerusalem on this day heard – in their own languages – the marvelous things God had done. This included not only natural-born Jews, but also others who had converted to Judaism.

All the various members of this big gathering heard the disciples speak in their own languages and they were amazed, they marveled, they were perplexed, they asked one another about the meaning of the wonderful things they were witnessing.

The disciples were preaching the great and wonderful works of God, namely, that God had fulfilled the prophecies made to their ancestors, that he had sent his Son Jesus to redeem the whole world, and that this salvation was now being offered to all of them without exception.

But some refused to believe either the message or the miracle of speaking in foreign languages. They mocked and slandered the Christians and accused them of drunkenness.

Peter explained that this is what the prophet Joel had foretold in the Old Testament. ***“These men are not drunk, as you suppose. It’s only nine in the morning! No, this is what was spoken by the prophet Joel: ‘In the last days, God says, I will pour out my Spirit on all people.’”*** Acts 2:15-18 (NIV)

He then points to Jesus whom they, the Jewish people, had crucified. But he also tells them that God raised Jesus from the dead, using words from Psalm 16, written by King David, to show that this Jesus is alive and sitting at the right hand of God.

When the people heard this message – and we must realize that all heard the same message, ***“they were cut to the heart and said to Peter and the other apostles, ‘Brothers, what shall we do?’ Peter replied, ‘Repent and be baptized, every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins. And you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. The promise is for you and your children and for all who are far off--for all whom the Lord our God will call.’ With many other words he warned them; and he pleaded with them, ‘Save yourselves from this corrupt generation.’”*** Acts 2:37-40 (NIV)

God saw to it that the word went out to these devout Jews. They could then take this message home with them and tell others

It gave special meaning to their gathering at Jerusalem on those special days and times God commanded in the Old Testament. Celebrating this day now was no longer just following a rule from God through Moses that they had to obey year after year about coming to Jerusalem. They had come to Jerusalem and heard the message of eternal life through faith in Jesus from followers of Jesus. It is very likely that some of these very hearers had also been present at Jesus’ crucifixion, just as Peter’s sermon reminds them.

They learned that Jesus had fulfilled all the laws of God perfectly, sinlessly. And that God was going to impute that righteousness, that perfection to them. He tells them ***“Therefore let all Israel be assured of this: God has made this Jesus, whom you crucified, both Lord and Christ.”*** Acts 2:36 (NIV) He is the Christ, the Messiah, the Savior.

We live in a world today which needs that same message. We need to get the word out.

What does this message mean to us? What are we to do with this message? We, too, have the command to ‘get the word out’. Where do we hear that, you might wonder? We hear Jesus in the last words of Matthew’s Gospel commanding us to ***“go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you.”*** Matthew 28:19-20 (NIV) And Jesus had told his disciples just before he ascended into heaven: ***“you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth.”*** Acts 1:8 (NIV)

And that means we are to get the word out to all people in all nations, not just people who look like us or who live in our neighborhoods or happen to visit our church. Every human needs the Gospel of Jesus Christ to wash sin away.

Have you told anyone lately about Jesus Christ?

Has your life shown fruits of faith so that others might wonder why and then open the door to your telling about what Jesus has done for you and why you want to serve him?

There is certainly enough sin in the world to admonish. And people really need to know about comfort from sin – the Gospel. News reports suggest that suicides are growing more common, both among young people

and old people. But there is hope. When things look hopeless, we can turn to Acts chapter 16, where a jailer at Philippi was ready to kill himself. ***“When he saw the prison doors open, he drew his sword and was about to kill himself because he thought the prisoners had escaped. But Paul shouted, ‘Don’t harm yourself! We are all here!’ The jailer called for lights, rushed in and fell trembling before Paul and Silas. He then brought them out and asked, ‘Sirs, what must I do to be saved?’ They replied, ‘Believe in the Lord Jesus, and you will be saved--you and your household.’ Then they spoke the word of the Lord to him and to all the others in his house.”*** Acts 16:27-32 (NIV) The Word of God saved him. Suicide was not the solution. Not only does suicide cut off the assurance of eternal life, it causes great heartache for the friends and family left behind. Suicide isn’t an answer.

Jesus Christ is the answer.

Peter made it very clear in his sermon on this day that ***“God has raised this Jesus to life, and we are all witnesses of the fact. Exalted to the right hand of God, he has received from the Father the promised Holy Spirit and has poured out what you now see and hear.”*** Acts 2:32-33 (NIV)

It isn’t always necessary to stand up on that figurative soapbox but you can speak up. You can speak out against sin. You can speak about the hope you have in Jesus Christ for life after death despite the wickedness of the world and your own sinfulness.

And just as these followers of Jesus were mocked, mockery still happens today. We will be mocked for believing all of the Bible is truly God’s Word. Wherever the Spirit of God works through the Word, there are always some who accept the glorious truth, while others object, disagree and mock the Spirit of God that lives in the Christians.

So what are we to do to get the message out? What did Peter do? He told about Jesus Christ.

The world needs Jesus Christ right now, especially at a time when the world has so many bad things going on. A virus has been ravaging not only our communities and our state and our nation, but the entire world. The world is looking for all sorts of cures and preventions for this disease. Man’s medicines and shots aren’t the complete answer, for everyone still has to die an earthly death.

There are wars and rumors of wars. This is expected in the Last Days before Christ comes to judge the living and the dead.

But for the Christian earthly, temporal death is the entrance to eternal life.

Peter’s message – and the message that all these people from these 15 nations heard – is the message of eternal salvation through Jesus Christ. Peter – and the other speakers made it clear that ***“everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved.”*** Acts 2:21 (NIV)

The work of God the Holy Spirit brought blessings to people on this day: ***“Those who accepted his message were baptized, and about three thousand were added to their number that day.”*** Acts 2:41 (NIV) The Word of God had fruit. It was because of the work of the Holy Ghost. Credit does not belong with Peter and the other followers, but with God the Holy Spirit.

And so it is with our getting the word out. We give God the credit that others hear and may be saved. May God tell each of us on judgment day ***“Well done, good and faithful servant!”*** Matthew 25:23 (NIV) Amen.