

**MINISTRY BY MAIL**  
**Lutheran Conference of Confessional Fellowship**  
[www.lutheranlccf.org](http://www.lutheranlccf.org)  
**Second Sunday after Easter, April 22, 2012**

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(Hymns found in The Lutheran Hymnal, CPH, 1941)

Hymns: 198, 189, 207, 201, 205.

Lessons: Psalm 14, Acts 2:14-40,

John 17:6-17.

Sermon Text: Acts 2:40.

Sermon by Pastor Robert Mehltrittter

In the name of Jesus Christ, Dear Fellow Redeemed,

We have celebrated the resurrection of Jesus Christ for a couple of Sundays now. Today let's look at another application of that resurrection. Peter does that in our sermon text: He very pointedly told his listeners on Pentecost, which is 50 days after the resurrection, and 10 days after Jesus' ascension into heaven, that they, the Jews, are the ones who killed the Savior of all mankind.

In concluding what is recorded of his Pentecost sermon, we read *"With many other words [Peter] warned them; and he pleaded with them, 'Save yourselves from this corrupt generation.'"* Today let us heed the admonition to

**BE SAVED FROM THIS CORRUPT GENERATION SURROUNDING YOU!**

- 1. Peter boldly preaches the truth about Jesus Christ.**
- 2. He admonishes his hearers to avoid all that is corrupt, and wicked, and evil.**
- 3. Christians today, too, must avoid all that is corrupt, wicked, and evil.**

*"And with many other words did he testify and exhort, saying, Save yourselves from this untoward generation."* (KJV)

On that first evening of the day Jesus rose from the dead, believers in Christ, including the apostles, were hiding from the Jews in fear. However, in Peter's Pentecost sermon 50 days later, he boldly preaches the truth of God's Word to the Jews, knowing that he could be and probably would be persecuted for saying what he did.

This happened not even two months after the Jews crucified Jesus, yet Peter is boldly speaking out against them. Today we are discouraged from speaking against anything or any one under the guise of "political correctness" or "religious tolerance". We are encouraged by the people of our generation to be tolerant of all manner of wickedness and unbelief and sin and the fruits of what God plainly calls sin. Yet we realize that many such who encourage tolerance are often intolerant of our religious convictions, which we firmly believe are not merely human opinions, but the will of God as recorded in his holy Word.

Peter boldly uses the Word of God as the source and background for his message, quoting both the prophet Joel and King David in Psalm 16. These were sacred scriptures for the Jews among his listeners, so the people would know that Peter was not just offering personal opinion. He points out that what is happening on that day is fulfillment of Scripture, and that Scripture plainly foretold the resurrection and ascension of the murdered Jesus of Nazareth. He speaks boldly about Jesus Christ, telling them: *"This man was handed over to you by God's set purpose and foreknowledge; and you, with the help of wicked men, put him to death by nailing him to the cross."* (Acts 2:23)

Peter's recorded words that lead up to their being *"cut to the heart"* include these: *"Therefore let all Israel be assured of this: God has made this Jesus, whom you crucified, both Lord and Christ. When the people heard this, they were cut to the heart and said to Peter and the other apostles, 'Brothers, what shall we do?'"* (Acts 2:36-37)

Peter's answer to that question reminds us of what Jesus said, of what John the Baptist said, and of what countless other witnesses of the Savior said since sin came into the world: ***"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."*** (Acts 2:38)

To repent means to be sorry for your sins and turn away from your sins. It means "turn your sinful unbelief to faith in Jesus, turn from your self-righteousness to trust in his redeeming work." The Word of God which Peter had preached and the promise of forgiveness in baptism had the power to work such repentance. Christ himself had commanded baptism before he ascended into heaven. And the gifts of the Holy Spirit include faith in Jesus as Savior and especially the forgiveness of sins. Hearers of the Word of God are saved by repenting and being baptized.

***"With many other words [Peter] warned them."*** Peter spoke many other words on this day which are not recorded in Scripture. Perhaps Peter had to answer questions and make further explanations, literally with other words, more than the words recorded.

***"And he pleaded with them, 'Save yourselves from this corrupt generation.'"*** "Save yourselves" is the familiar translation from both the KJV and the NIV. "Be saved" would be a more literal translation than "save yourselves," and it would help us remember that salvation is entirely God's gift. It is not something we accomplish or contribute to.

How could they be saved? Peter's words show the way of salvation, of rescue from eternal punishment. From Peter's words we see that baptism is a means by which God gives us his saving grace: It is ***"for the forgiveness of your sins."*** Acts 2:38 That forgiveness, earned by Christ's perfect life and death, is also given to us in baptism in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost. Notice that gift of the Holy Spirit is given in baptism. It is not something that comes separately or later.

Be saved ***"from this corrupt generation."*** "Corrupt generation" does not refer simply to the people of that time. Nor does it refer only to the Jewish people. It refers to all unbelieving people in every age. They are headed for damnation and Peter's words show the way of salvation, the only path of rescue from eternal damnation. Jesus Christ is the only way to eternal life, the only way to avoid eternal damnation. We today are still surrounded by a ***"corrupt generation"***. These exhortations, appeals, and admonitions also apply to us, too. The Greek word translated "corrupt" has the meaning of "crooked", and it refers to a warped piece of lumber which the carpenters must throw out as being useless. "Be saved" implies that the corrupt, crooked generation which surrounds believers is bound for destruction. For Peter's first hearers the word "generation" refers first of all to the entire succession of unbelievers with the Sanhedrin at its head.

These admonitions also apply to us. We, too, are to realize that the corrupt generation of people among whom we live are no friends of Jesus Christ, but rather his enemies and must be avoided. Christians are a minority in the world. According to one source, in the year 2000 only about 1/3 of all people in the world are Christian, and we know that many who claim to be Christian are not truly Christian. About 1/5 of the world is Muslim and about 16% have no religion or are identified as atheists. ([www.religioustolerance.org](http://www.religioustolerance.org))

How is it that we are to be saved from the corrupt generation of people surrounding us? We are "in the world", but we need not be "of the world". The answer is: separate from them and their wickedness. Have nothing to do with their evil deeds. ***"Have nothing to do with the fruitless deeds of darkness, but rather expose them."*** (Ephesians 5:11) In Revelation 18 the evil people of the world are personified as "Babylon" and John tells us: ***"And I heard another voice from heaven, saying, Come out of her, my people, that ye be not partakers of her sins, and that ye receive not of her plagues."*** (Revelation 18:4) Paul pleads in Romans 12:1-2: ***"Therefore, I urge you, brothers, in view of God's mercy, to offer your bodies as living sacrifices, holy and pleasing to God--this is your spiritual act of worship. Do not conform any longer to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God's will is - his good, pleasing and perfect will."***

We are not to be yoked together with unbelievers. ***"Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers: for what fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness? and what communion hath light with darkness?"*** (2 Corinthians 6:14 KJV) ***"Do not be yoked together with unbelievers. For what do righteousness and wickedness have in common? Or what fellowship can light have with darkness?"*** (2

Corinthians 6:14 NIV) When you are yoked together, you must be equally yoked. You must pull together. This is the picture of oxen being yoked together to pull together. No one would yoke a big strong ox together with a small, weak one. The KJV translators added the word “unequally” to emphasize that Christians dare not be yoked together with unbelievers. Paul asks ‘what do you have in common with unbelievers?’ Believers and unbelievers are as fundamentally different in their goals, their purposes, and their ways of doing things as light and darkness.

Especially in all matters of religion, we are to beware of false teachers. We are to keep away from them and from all who create divisions and put offenses in our way: ***“watch out for those who cause divisions and put obstacles in your way that are contrary to the teaching you have learned. Keep away from them.”*** (Romans 16:17 NIV)

We are to teach God’s law. We are to reprove, to rebuke, to point out wickedness, to show sin for what it is: soul-destroying cancer. Jesus on one occasion promised the Holy Spirit in these words: ***“But I tell you the truth: It is for your good that I am going away. Unless I go away, the Counselor will not come to you; but if I go, I will send him to you. When he comes, he will convict the world of guilt in regard to sin and righteousness and judgment.”*** (John 16:7-8)

When a drowning man is saved, he doesn’t plunge back into the swirling flood from which he has been saved. You have been saved by Jesus Christ. You don’t want to plunge back into the sewer of sin from which you have been redeemed and saved. Jesus spent time with sinners but he did not condone or tolerate sin.

Paul compares all believers to himself and points out God’s great work in bringing believers out of this corrupt generation: ***“As for you, you were dead in your transgressions and sins, in which you used to live when you followed the ways of this world and of the ruler of the kingdom of the air, the spirit who is now at work in those who are disobedient. All of us also lived among them at one time, gratifying the cravings of our sinful nature and following its desires and thoughts. Like the rest, we were by nature objects of wrath. But because of his great love for us, God, who is rich in mercy, made us alive with Christ even when we were dead in transgressions--it is by grace you have been saved.”*** (Ephesians 2:1-5 NIV)

Are we ashamed of the doctrines, the teachings of Scripture? Are we afraid to call sin what it is? Jesus says ***“If anyone is ashamed of me and my words, the Son of Man will be ashamed of him when he comes in his glory and in the glory of the Father and of the holy angels.”*** (Luke 9:26)

For example, are we afraid to say that abortion is a sin? Are we afraid to say that homosexuality – and every kind of sexual immorality – is a sin?

Are we afraid to say that Jesus Christ is the only way to eternal life?

Are we afraid to say that the Muslim religion, now one of every five people in the world, does not lead to eternal life? Are we afraid to say that any religion is a dead end religion which does not recognize that Jesus is ***“the way and the truth and the life.”*** [He plainly said that] ***No one comes to the Father except through me.”*** (John 14:6) Paul wrote by inspiration of God that unbelievers ***“suppress the truth by their wickedness”, “their thinking became futile and their foolish hearts were darkened”*** because ***“They exchanged the truth of God for a lie.”*** (Romans 1:18, 21, 25)

These are just some of the ways we may be saved ***“from this corrupt generation.”*** Search the Scriptures yourself for more, and for motivation, and for encouragement. But through it all we must speak the truth in love. We must preach the Gospel. We must not have an attitude of ‘I’m better than you and I’m going to heaven and you are not.’ We don’t want to become self-righteous, arrogant, smug, or proud of our salvation, as if we saved ourselves. Let us beware lest we become self-righteous about our salvation. It is God’s grace. But it isn’t just ours to hoard. It is ours to share. Remember the entire message of Pentecost: that believers were given the ability to speak in other languages shows the importance of sharing this message. May we share in every way we can. May we witness. We have seen the light. Lord, help us give this light away! Amen.