

Testimony

July 7, 2019

Acts 2:29-36

29 "Fellow Israelites, I may say to you confidently of our ancestor David that he both died and was buried, and his tomb is with us to this day. 30 Since he was a prophet, he knew that God had sworn with an oath to him that he would put one of his descendants on his throne. 31 Foreseeing this, David spoke of the resurrection of the Messiah, saying, 'He was not abandoned to Hades, nor did his flesh experience corruption.' 32 This Jesus God raised up, and of that all of us are witnesses. 33 Being therefore exalted at the right hand of God, and having received from the Father the promise of the Holy Spirit, he has poured out this that you both see and hear. 34 For David did not ascend into the heavens, but he himself says, 'The Lord said to my Lord, "Sit at my right hand, 35 until I make your enemies your footstool.'" 36 Therefore let the entire house of Israel know with certainty that God has made him both Lord and Messiah, this Jesus whom you crucified."

The book of Acts has 28 speeches, most of them given by Peter and Paul. The Scripture for today is a part of the bold testimony given by Peter. At the time the church is confronted by a crowd. Some of the people understand and some don't. Peter is confronted by people within the crowd that accuse him of drunkenness. This is a cue for his speech. He gives a sermon which is his testimony. We see a big change in Peter from the coward that denied even knowing Jesus to a bold and powerful witness.

Peter sets the background for his testimony by referring to someone the people know, believe in, and trust - the beloved King David. Peter is speaking to Jews. So, he connects Jesus with the Scriptures. It is from the Hebrew Scriptures that Jesus' life is understood. Peter claims that David was God's prophet with divine given insight into the future of Israel and the identity of the Messiah. What Peter does is he connects Jesus and King David. The logic is that Israel's great king did not ascend into heaven but Jesus has been resurrected. Peter's perspective is that the risen Jesus is the Lord over Israel. To make his point Peter associates Jesus with the Psalms. **Acts 2:31** 'He was not abandoned to Hades, nor did his flesh experience corruption.' **Psalm 16:10** For you do not give me up to Sheol, or let your faithful one see the Pit. **Acts 2:34-35** "The Lord said to my Lord, "Sit at my right hand, until I make your enemies your footstool.'" **Psalm 110:1** The LORD says to my lord, "Sit at my right hand until I make your enemies your footstool" (NRSV).

Peter ends his testimony with power and conviction. **Acts 2:36** "let the entire house of Israel know with certainty that God has made him both Lord and Messiah, this Jesus whom you crucified" (NRSV). To the people this is shocking. They killed the Lord and Messiah. They killed God's chosen one. The crowd is cut to the heart. The people are moved to repent and ask "What should we do?"

The Scripture lesson is in regards to what the people should do. The vocation, job, or responsibility is to be a witness to the risen Jesus. Peter does not stumble. The audience does not object. The mission is to "feed my sheep and make Disciples" (John 21:15-17, Mat 28:19). Do what Peter is now doing, offer the gospel with confidence. You get to present words of eternal life. Peter does not offer advice on daily living or get bogged down with petty issues. There are no feel good platitudes. Peter calls the people to repent and be baptized. What are we to do? Repent and baptized and then receive the Holy Spirit. Now, this is really big news. Once reserved for a select few the Holy Spirit is now available for all. This is a very big deal. Peter's testimony ends with empowerment of the Holy Spirit offered to all.

The Scripture connects to us because you have been impacted by the gospel. You have your own story to tell. Be bold in giving your testimony. I was talking with someone recently about a sermon that I had given and received some compliments. I confessed that I was afraid that I had lost balance and pushed too hard and stepped on some toes. So, I gave my testimony. The man said that he connects with testimonies and that he loves to hear testimonies. So, we talked about giving testimonies. Some denominations are better at giving testimonies than others. We Disciples are not very good at giving testimonies. But, the Christian church was built on testimony. John the Baptist gave his testimony. Various people that Jesus connected with and healed gave their testimony. The apostle Paul gave a powerful testimony. The one thing you have to do is repent and be baptized. After that one of the most important things that you can do for Jesus, his mission, and his church, is to give your testimony. Peter gave a very bold testimony. Spreading the gospel is a matter of giving your testimony. Your testimony is your life story: how the Lord has changed your life, how the Lord has impacted you, and how you love to serve the Lord. I can't tell you what to say and do. There is no set formula. Let the people see the love of the Lord in you and let the people hear about your love for the Lord.