

Resonate

BIBLE STUDY

“SIMON SAYS: PREACH BOLDLY”

Simon Peter experienced the supernatural. He is a visual representation of a life truly transformed by the Holy Spirit. His example can inspire us to live beyond ourselves by allowing the Spirit to live through us.



Today's Scripture:
Acts 1:3-11

The Word

Jesus was alive from the dead. In the forty days following His resurrection, He met with the disciples from time to time. On one of these occasions He told them an amazing truth.

Acts 1:3-5

³After his suffering, he showed himself to these men and gave many convincing proofs that he was alive. He appeared to them over a period of forty days and spoke about the kingdom of God. ⁴On one occasion, while he was eating with them, he gave them this command: "Do not leave Jerusalem, but wait for the gift my Father promised, which you have heard me speak about. ⁵For John baptized with water, but in a few days you will be baptized with the Holy Spirit."

Verse 3-5: Do not skim over this. These men were going to receive the Spirit. God Himself was going to indwell them. They did not understand what He was talking about. They were familiar with the Spirit from the Old Testament but they still could not comprehend the magnitude of what Christ was saying to them. They, at least, have an excuse, this had never occurred before. However, what about us? If we believe that Jesus is our Lord then we have the Spirit within us. Do you marvel at this? Or have we become so familiar with this concept that we forget this amazing truth? God is in us. The Creator of the universe somehow resides in you. It is a mystery that should leave us in awe. We should not grow accustomed to this amazing Gift. The disciples, at first, missed the importance of it.

Acts 1:6

⁶So when they met together, they asked him, "Lord, are you at this time going to restore the kingdom to Israel?"

Verse 6: The disciples were so focused on the present that they missed out on the miracle that was getting ready to take place. How much do they reflect each one of us? We want what we want now. They wanted an earthly kingdom. They did not realize that Jesus was going to establish a spiritual kingdom and that they would be the first ones brought into it!

Acts 1:7-8

⁷He said to them: "It is not for you to know the times or dates the Father has set by his own authority. ⁸But 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."

Verse 7-8: The same Spirit that came upon these disciples also comes upon us. This Spirit gives us power. This power enables us to be a witness in our world. If we are not being a witness to our world, then we are not living in the power of the Spirit. To be a witness does not mean that you have to stand up and give a sermon to thousands of people. A witness is someone who testifies to what he saw. If I was called to court as a witness in a case, then I would have to share the information that I know. That is all a witness is. You share what you know about Jesus to those in your sphere of influence. That is all it is. Yet, there is a Power behind this simplicity. This Power grabs a life from eternal destruction and holds him forever in eternal life.

Acts 1:9-11

⁹After he said this, he was taken up before their very eyes, and a cloud hid him from their sight.

¹⁰They were looking intently up into the sky as he was going, when suddenly two men dressed in white stood beside them. ¹¹"Men of Galilee," they said, "why do you stand here looking into the sky? This same Jesus, who has been taken from you into heaven, will come back in the same way you have seen him go into heaven."

Verse 9-11: These disciples were so overwhelmed that they just stood there. God sent two angels to give them a “heavenly push” in the right direction. That push can apply to us today. Jesus will return. He has given us the Spirit to be a witness to this world. When He comes back, can we say that we have been a faithful witness? Truly ponder this today.

Application

Praise God for being the Giver of the Spirit. Thank Him for the Power He has willingly given to you.

Write your thoughts about the truth that the Spirit, God Himself, lives within you.



Today's Scripture:

Acts 1:12-14, 2:1-11

The Word

Jesus has ascended into heaven. He has told them that they would receive the Spirit. The “how” and “when” of it all was still in question. He did not give the details. Unsure of what to do next, they what they could; they prayed.

Acts 1:12-14

¹²Then they returned to Jerusalem from the hill called the Mount of Olives, a Sabbath day's walk from the city. ¹³When they arrived, they went upstairs to the room where they were staying. Those present were Peter, John, James and Andrew; Philip and Thomas, Bartholomew and Matthew; James son of Alphaeus and Simon the Zealot, and Judas son of James. ¹⁴They all joined together constantly in prayer, along with the women and Mary the mother of Jesus, and with his brothers.

Verse 12-14: Have you ever felt “in-between”? You are just not sure of what to do next. You had a clear vision before but now you feel stagnant. There is no going forward yet you cannot go back. In these times of waiting, pray. Pray alone, pray with others, pray fervently. Do not give up hope. God will answer in His time.

Acts 2:1

¹When the day of Pentecost came, they were all together in one place.

Verse 1: It had been ten days since Jesus went to heaven. For ten days they prayed and waited, waited and prayed. I wonder if they questioned if anything would happen. Some may have held onto faith, others may have been losing it. But they came together for Pentecost and something amazing happens.

Acts 2:2-4

²Suddenly a sound like the blowing of a violent wind came from heaven and filled the whole house where they were sitting. ³They saw what seemed to be tongues of fire that separated and came to rest on each of them. ⁴All of them were filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other tongues as the Spirit enabled them.

Verse 2-4: Violent wind. Tongues of fire. Filling of the Spirit. Speaking in tongues. This is not your typical day! Let your imagination run wild. Picture hurricane force winds filling your living room. Your hair and your clothes would be wildly thrashing. You would probably hang onto furniture to keep yourself from being blown away. Suddenly

you see fire. What would be your first impulse? To get away. But the wind keeps you from moving. The fire seems to head towards you as if it is on a mission. Suddenly, God Himself is in you. How do you explain it? You just know because the Spirit Who is now in you is telling you. Before you can process what is going on, a crowd has gathered outside your door.

Acts 2:5-11

⁵Now there were staying in Jerusalem God-fearing Jews from every nation under heaven. ⁶When they heard this sound, a crowd came together in bewilderment, because each one heard them speaking in his own language. ⁷Utterly amazed, they asked: "Are not all these men who are speaking Galileans? ⁸Then how is it that each of us hears them in his own native language? ⁹Parthians, Medes and Elamites; residents of Mesopotamia, Judea and Cappadocia, Pontus and Asia, ¹⁰Phrygia and Pamphylia, Egypt and the parts of Libya near Cyrene; visitors from Rome ¹¹(both Jews and converts to Judaism Cretans and Arabs—we hear them declaring the wonders of God in our own tongues!"

Verse 5-11: When God wants to gather a crowd, He can! Jews from all over the known world at this time were in Jerusalem, having just celebrated Passover and now to celebrate Pentecost. Jews staying within the city were drawn together by the sound of the wind and fire. Other sounds permeate the air. The group who had received the Spirit was so excited that they kept talking in their new languages. The crowd was able to understand because they were hearing the words in their native tongue. What were they hearing? It was a declaration of the wonders of God. When you have the Spirit and live in the Spirit, then you are going to live a life of praise.

An ordinary day turns extraordinary. That is the Spirit at work. Have you experienced Him?

Application

Reflect on the power of the Lord. Let praise spring forth from your thoughts.

When have you felt like you were “in-between” in life? How did you handle it?

What does prayer accomplish during an “in-between” time of life?

The receiving of the Spirit led to praise. If you have the Spirit, your life should be marked by praise. Are you known as a person who worships God? How can you become more of a person who lives to praise the Lord?



Today's Scripture:
Acts 2:8-21

The Word

The Holy Spirit has ascended onto the group of believers. The sounds that occurred drew a crowd. Jews from all over the world heard the praise of God in their native language because the believers were equipped by the Spirit to speak in different languages. In this moment, two different thoughts form.

Acts 2:8-13

⁸Then how is it that each of us hears them in his own native language? ⁹Parthians, Medes and Elamites; residents of Mesopotamia, Judea and Cappadocia, Pontus and Asia, ¹⁰Phrygia and Pamphylia, Egypt and the parts of Libya near Cyrene; visitors from Rome ¹¹(both Jews and converts to Judaism Cretans and Arabs—we hear them declaring the wonders of God in our own tongues!" ¹²Amazed and perplexed, they asked one another, "What does this mean?"

¹³Some, however, made fun of them and said, "They have had too much wine."

Verse 8-13: This is typical in every situation. Some people view their circumstances in a positive, curious sort of way ("Amazed and perplexed, they asked one another, 'what does this mean?'"") Others go straight to the negative. ("Some, however, made fun of them and said, 'They have had too much wine.'"") How do you handle new situations? Do you investigate them with amazement or do you draw negative, hasty, false conclusions? Simon Peter addresses the entire crowd but especially shows a rebuttal to the negative ones.

Acts 2:14-15

¹⁴Then Peter stood up with the Eleven, raised his voice and addressed the crowd: "Fellow Jews and all of you who live in Jerusalem, let me explain this to you; listen carefully to what I say. ¹⁵These men are not drunk, as you suppose. It's only nine in the morning!

Simon Peter then goes on to explain what the people were experiencing. The explanation is from Old Testament Scripture.

Acts 2:16-21

¹⁶No, this is what was spoken by the prophet Joel:

¹⁷"In the last days, God says,
I will pour out my Spirit on all people.
Your sons and daughters will prophesy,
your young men will see visions,
your old men will dream dreams.

¹⁸Even on my servants, both men and women,
I will pour out my Spirit in those days,
and they will prophesy.

¹⁹I will show wonders in the heaven above
and signs on the earth below,
blood and fire and billows of smoke.

²⁰The sun will be turned to darkness
and the moon to blood
before the coming of the great and glorious day of the Lord.

²¹And everyone who calls
on the name of the Lord will be saved.'

Verse 16-21: There are two important points that we can learn. First, Simon Peter memorized Scripture. He knew these verses. At the time that he memorized them, he did not fully understand what they meant. Now, at this very moment, years after applying these words to his heart, these verses come alive. Are you memorizing Scripture? If not, come up with a plan to begin. If you can memorize commercial slogans or lyrics to songs, then you can memorize Scripture!

Another vital truth from this passage is equality. Everyone who receives Jesus will receive the Spirit. There is no discrimination based upon gender or race or age or economic status or past achievement. None of that matters. There is no hierarchy in the kingdom of God. He gives His grace to all. How the Spirit indwells us may be different, meaning that we each may have different spiritual gifts. The fact of the presence of the Spirit, however, is still the same. God is God. He is fully in you. You do not receive less than Him or more of Him. You are just in Him. Thus, we do not have the excuse of not being able to do something that God has called us to do. God Himself is in you. He can enable you to do anything He desires. (In fact, apply that principle to the above topic of Scripture memorization. God is in you. God wrote the Word. He wants you to know the Word. He can enable you to memorize the Word!) You are filled with the Spirit! Let your life reflect this amazing truth!

Application

Ask God to deepen your understanding of the truth that the Spirit indwells you.

Are you prone to negativity? Confess this to the Lord. How can negativity affect your life?

Are you prone to jump to conclusions? Confess this to the Lord. How can this trait affect your life?

What is the value of memorizing Scripture? How would this be beneficial to you?

Do you memorize Scripture? If so, please share your plan with others. If not, how could you begin to incorporate this discipline into your life?

Every believer has the Spirit. Yet, not everyone portrays this truth. If we are each given the Spirit, what keeps His Presence from being outwardly shown to the world by every believer?

What is stifling the Spirit in your life? Confess it now. How will you make changes?



Today's Scripture:
Acts 2:22-36

The Word

Yesterday, we studied the beginning of Simon Peter's first sermon. Now, we will look at the rest of it. Read the entire passage and then we will highlight just a few of the many applications learned in these powerful words.

Acts 2:22-36

²²"Men of Israel, listen to this: Jesus of Nazareth was a man accredited by God to you by miracles, wonders and signs, which God did among you through him, as you yourselves know. ²³This 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. ²⁴But God raised him from the dead, freeing him from the agony of death, because it was impossible

for death to keep its hold on him. ²⁵David said about him:

" 'I saw the Lord always before me.

Because he is at my right hand,

I will not be shaken.

²⁶Therefore my heart is glad and my tongue rejoices;

my body also will live in hope,

²⁷because you will not abandon me to the grave,

nor will you let your Holy One see decay.

²⁸You have made known to me the paths of life;

you will fill me with joy in your presence.'

²⁹"Brothers, I can tell you confidently that the patriarch David died and was buried, and his tomb is here to this day. ³⁰But he was a prophet and knew that God had promised him on oath that he would place one of his descendants on his throne. ³¹Seeing what was ahead, he spoke of the resurrection of the Christ, that he was not abandoned to the grave, nor did his body see decay. ³²God has raised this Jesus to life, and we are all witnesses of the fact. ³³Exalted 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. ³⁴For David did not ascend to heaven, and yet he said,

" 'The Lord said to my Lord:

"Sit at my right hand

³⁵until I make your enemies

a footstool for your feet." ' "

³⁶"Therefore let all Israel be assured of this: God has made this Jesus, whom you crucified, both Lord and Christ."

Verse 22-36: First of all, Simon Peter spoke truth. He did not gloss over the fact that some of the people in that crowd had also been a part of the mob that had screamed for Jesus to be crucified. He is honest and upfront with the people. This is a good lesson for us. Often our culture is so focused on networking and not burning any bridges that we do not confront sin. Instead, we deny it, minimize it, ignore it, justify it, or excuse it. But how are people going to discover their need for a Savior if they do not realize that they need to be saved from their sin? Simon Peter addresses the sin issue and then gives Jesus as the only solution.

Secondly, Simon Peter met his culture. These were Jews. They were devout or they would not have traveled many miles to come to Jerusalem for the Passover and then stay in town for the Pentecost. Because of who was in the crowd, Simon Peter discussed David. This man David had been a king of Israel about a thousand years before Simon Peter spoke these words. David was Israel's most beloved king. He was their biggest hero in history. This man as a boy had defeated a giant named Goliath and as a man had extended the borders of Israel. Simon Peter, knowing his people's love for David, informed them of one greater than David, Jesus Christ the Lord. We, too, need to be able to meet our culture where they are at. They do not speak "Christian lingo" so do not use it with them. Use mediums they are using. For example,

fifty years ago while other preachers were calling television the “devil’s box”, Billy Graham decided to hold a television crusade. Why? Because he realized that this was a medium that people used so why not proclaim the gospel in a way that would cause them to pay attention? How many lives have come to Christ because of one man’s willingness to meet his culture where it was at? We need to be able to do the same with those around us. Meet the people of your work, of your school, of your community where they are.

The third lesson that we will study deals with confidence. Simon Peter was not confident in himself, instead he was confident in who Jesus was and what Jesus did. His boldness did not stem in the fact that he was a good preacher because he did not know that he was one! He had never preached before, this is his first public speaking engagement. He was standing firm in Jesus. When people question our beliefs, we do not need to back down. Be confident in Jesus. They may disagree or laugh or ridicule; do not lose your courage. If it is placed in yourself, it will surely fail. But if you stand firm on the Rock, Jesus Christ, you will not fall.

Application

Request that the Lord teach you how to be truthful in your interactions, how to connect with your culture, and how to have confidence in God Himself.

Reread Simon Peter’s sermon again. Ask God to give you His insights into the passage. Write what you learn here.

How will you apply what God has taught you through this Scripture passage?



Today’s Scripture:

Acts 2:37-41, 1 Peter 3:15-16

The Word

After proclaiming the gospel message to people, they need to have the opportunity to respond. How this response takes place varies from situation to situation. But in the case of Simon Peter’s sermon, the crowd itself initiated their need to take action to change their lives.

Acts 2:37

³⁷When the people heard this, they were cut to the heart and said to Peter and the other apostles, "Brothers, what shall we do?"

Verse 37: Simon Peter's sermon would not have taken long to speak. His words were not planned out or prepared. They just flowed out of the moment. He was ready to share what he knew about Jesus. That is true for us as well. In fact, Simon Peter reminds us of this reality.

1 Peter 3:15-16

¹⁵But in your hearts set apart Christ as Lord. Always be prepared to give an answer to everyone who asks you to give the reason for the hope that you have. But do this with gentleness and respect, ¹⁶keeping a clear conscience, so that those who speak maliciously against your good behavior in Christ may be ashamed of their slander.

Verse 15-16: We must be ready to give an answer. If we are truly living for God, people will ask us questions about our reasoning behind our values, our decisions, and our priorities. Be ready to explain your hope in Jesus, how your belief in Him affects every area of your life. Let them know how this hope can be theirs as well.

Acts 2:38-39

³⁸Peter 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. ³⁹The promise is for you and your children and for all who are far off—for all whom the Lord our God will call."

Verse 38-39: Simon Peter, who had only received the Holy Spirit moments before, now leads the way for others to receive the Lord into their lives. He just shared with them what he knew about the Lord and it had a dramatic impact.

Acts 2:40-41

⁴⁰With many other words he warned them; and he pleaded with them, "Save yourselves from this corrupt generation." ⁴¹Those who accepted his message were baptized, and about three thousand were added to their number that day.

Verse 40-41: Three thousand people came to know Jesus in one day! All because one man was faithful to speak what he knew about Jesus. How about you? How will you be faithful to tell others about Jesus? What excuses do you have that keep you from it? Do you have a "bad" past? Only fifty days before Simon Peter spoke this message, he had deserted and denied the Lord. Do you feel like you don't know enough? Simon Peter was a fisherman. He was your blue-collared worker. He was not one of the religious "elite" but instead was one of the good ol' boys. All he did was tell the people Who he knew: Jesus. You can do the same.

Application

Spend time praising the Lord for the “day of His salvation” in your life. Ask Him how to join His work in reaching others with the good news about Jesus!

Who do you desire to tell about Jesus? Pray for that person now.

How will you work to be prepared to give an answer for the hope you have?

What excuses do you have that keep you from telling others about Jesus?

How will you turn away from the excuses and turn toward obedience to the call of God to share the good news?

What evidence is there in your life, or better to say, who is the evidence in your life that proves that you are telling others about Jesus?