

Sunday, April 27, 2025 | Filled

Week 6 | Acts 2:33-41 | “The Kerygma, Part 2”

Last week, we began unpacking Peter’s sermon on the Day of Pentecost. As we learned, Peter presented the very first “kerygma” [pronounced *keh-RIG-muh*], a fancy theological term referring to the gospel proclamation. In Peter’s sermon, all the building blocks of the gospel are present: (1) OT prophetic fulfillment; (2) Christ’s death, burial, and resurrection-ascension (3) the gift of the Holy Spirit; (4) the inauguration of the New Age; (5), the Second Coming of the Lord; (6) and, lastly, a call to repentance.

Given that Peter’s sermon includes all six elements, it is no exaggeration to say that this passage contains the *greatest* sermon ever preached. Peter’s words are a shining example of what a Spirit-inspired proclamation looks like.

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**READ:** Acts 2:33-41 (ESV)

<sup>33</sup> 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 yourselves are seeing and hearing. <sup>34</sup> For David did not ascend into the heavens, but he himself says, “The Lord said to my Lord, “Sit at my right hand, <sup>35</sup> until I make your enemies your footstool.”

<sup>36</sup> Let all the house of Israel therefore know for certain that God has made him both Lord and Christ, this Jesus whom you crucified.”

<sup>37</sup> Now when they heard this they were cut to the heart, and said to Peter and the rest of the apostles, “Brothers, what shall we do?” <sup>38</sup> And Peter said to them, “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. <sup>39</sup> For the promise is for you and for your children and for all who are far off, everyone whom the Lord our God calls to himself.” <sup>40</sup> And with many other words he bore witness and continued to exhort them, saying, “Save yourselves from this crooked generation.” <sup>41</sup> So those who received his word were baptized, and there were added that day about three thousand souls.

We’ll continue where we left off last week.

Peter makes four points:

i. Vs. 14-21 – The End of Days has appeared.

**So, what's the takeaway?** The old age is ending, and the new age is beginning.

ii. Vs. 22-32 – Jesus of Nazareth has arisen.

**So, what's the takeaway?** The resurrection-ascension affirms Christ's ministry and assures the Christian's eternity.

iii. Vs. 33-36 – The Lord of David has ascended.

**Vs. 33** – In light of the resurrection, Peter makes three points:

(1) Jesus was “exalted at the right hand of God.” The “right hand” was “often identified with the greatness, strength, goodness, and divinity.”<sup>1</sup> Did you get that? Divinity. For Jesus to be seated at the right hand of God means to rule alongside God, but it also means to hold a position equal to God.

(2) Jesus' received from the Father the promise of the Holy Spirit.' This promise, as foretold by the prophets and reiterated by Jesus in the Farewell Discourse, is a central theme in the New Testament. It is the assurance of God's continuous presence and guidance through the indwelling of the Holy Spirit in believers. Jesus Christ is the mediator of God, advocating on our behalf so that we might receive forgiveness and the 'promise of the Holy Spirit' (cf. 1 Jn. 1:1).

(3) Jesus “poured out this that you yourselves are seeing and hearing.” The crowd did not need to take Peter's word; they could see for themselves that the things he said were true by looking at the 120 disciples. What this crowd witnessed on the Day of Pentecost was proof that Christ had been exalted to the “right hand of God” and that the Holy Spirit had been poured out because of that exaltation. As Bock points out,

“As important as the resurrection is to show that Jesus is alive and vindicated, it is even more significant as an indication of where Jesus went (to God's right hand, to God's presence) and what he does from there (giving the gift of the Spirit).”<sup>2</sup>

**Vs. 34-35** – As he's done already twice before, Peter cites Scripture to prove what was taking place. Quoting from Psalm 110:1, he says, “For David did not ascend into the heavens, but he himself says, “The Lord said to my Lord, “Sit at my right hand, until I make your enemies your

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<sup>1</sup> Peterson (2009), p. 150.

<sup>2</sup> Bock (2007), p. 133.

footstool.”” Interestingly, this is one of the most oft-referenced OT passages in the NT (cf. Ac. 2:34-35; 1 Cor. 15:25; Eph. 1:20-22; Col. 3:1; 1Pet. 3:22; Heb. 1:3, 12-13; 10:13; 12:2). As John 3:16 is to believers today, Psalm 110:1 was to first-century believers. To show that David viewed his descendant as his superior, Jesus himself even quoted from it when debating the Pharisees (cf. Matt. 22:44; 26:64; Mar. 12:36).

As with Peter’s quotation of Joel, no Jew would deny that the Messiah would be a descendant of David. So much so that the phrase “Son of David” did not only refer to Solomon, David’s son, but was also synonymous with the title “Messiah” (cf. Lu. 18:38).<sup>3</sup> Scripture well attests to this principle (cf. 2 Sam. 7; Ps. 89:29-37; Isa. 9:5-7; etc.). By quoting from Psalm 110, a messianic psalm written by David, Jesus showed that David referred to the Messiah as the “Lord,” a title reserved for God alone.

But how could David refer to the Messiah as “Lord” if the messianic was supposed to be one of his *descendants*? A child was forever *under* his father's authority in some sense. No son, even one that becomes a king, would ever be considered above his father in the pecking order. Yet, here in Psalm 110, David talks about the heir to his throne as “my Lord.” No father, especially a Jewish one, would ever refer to their son in this way. When you stop to think of it, the phrasing is quite jarring. As Bock puts it, “Jesus’ point is that how can the great King David reflect such submission to a descendant? Who can be greater than Israel's great[est] king?”<sup>4</sup>

In Luke 20:41-44, Jesus presents the Pharisees with a question, “How can [the Jews] say that the Christ is David's son?” He then quotes Psalm 110:1 and then asks, “David thus calls him Lord so how is he his son?” The answer to Jesus' question was obvious: God would be the only being who would've been more significant than David. This is why David himself, in this psalm, talks about the one who would inherit his throne as “my Lord.” David knew that the Messiah would be God. “If Messiah is David’s Lord rather than his “son,” (vs. 44), then Messiah is the Son of God and transcendent Lord who sits at the right hand of God (vs. 42).”<sup>5</sup>

Therefore, anyone who willingly accepts the title “Son of David,” as Jesus did (cf. Lu. 18:38), is not only claiming the throne of the Davidic dynasty but also claiming to be God himself. Hence, Jesus’ point is that though the Messiah would be the son of David, David knew his heir would also be his Lord—i.e., Yahweh. Peter's point in Acts 2 is *almost identical* to Jesus's in Luke 20. The difference is that Jesus wanted to emphasize his superiority to David, while Peter wanted to emphasize Jesus' enthronement.

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<sup>3</sup> Edwards (2015), p. 582.

<sup>4</sup> Bock (1996), p. 1640.

<sup>5</sup> Edwards (2015), p. 585.

If you recall, he already made this point when he quoted Joel.

What **Joel** said: “Everyone who calls upon the name of the **LORD** shall be saved.”

What the **Jews** heard: “Everyone who calls upon the name of **[Yahweh]** shall be saved.”

What **Peter** meant: “Everyone who calls upon the name of **[Jesus]** shall be saved.”

Likewise, Peter does the same thing with Psalm 110, just as Jesus did.

What **David** said: “The **LORD** said to my **Lord**, “Sit at my right hand, until I make your enemies your footstool.”

What the **Jews** heard: “The **[Yahweh]** said to my **[Adonē]**, “Sit at my right hand, until I make your enemies your footstool.”

What **Peter** meant: “The **[Yahweh]** said to my **[Jesus]**, “Sit at my right hand, until I make your enemies your footstool.”

As might be obvious, using enemies as a “footstool” symbolizes total subjugation, conquest, or triumph (cf. Josh 10:24). Do not miss Peter’s point.<sup>6</sup> This is a Christology of the highest order. A proper Christology does not just mention the resurrection and the ascension; it must also acknowledge Christ’s sovereignty and his equality with God. All will **bow** before God’s presence, but only one, the Son of God, can **sit** at his right hand.

Jesus is King. And just as David acknowledged the superiority of his Messianic heir, so must all. Otherwise, the Messiah will make every one of his enemies an ottoman.

**Vs. 36** – At this point, Peter brings the threads of Psalms 16 and 110 together to make his audience **aware** of the danger they are in. He says, “Let all the house of Israel therefore know for certain that God has made him both Lord and Christ, this Jesus whom you crucified.” For God to have “made him both Lord and Christ” isn’t to say Jesus wasn’t already Lord and Christ; it is to say that God has shown, established, or brought about something (cf. Rom. 1:3-4).<sup>7</sup> As Psalm 110 predicted, Christ has ascended his throne, and presently, he’s subduing his enemies (cf. Ex. 20:30; Psa. 47:3; Matt. 28:19-20). Consequently, as Psalm 16 demonstrated, Christ is the Messiah, the “**Holy One**” who would not “**see corruption**” but would become the first fruits of the resurrection (cf. 1 Cor. 15:20). Considering this, to be charged with “**this Jesus whom you crucified**” would shake any rationale human being to their core.

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<sup>6</sup> Bock (2007), p. 134.

<sup>7</sup> Bock (2007), p. 136.

**So, what's the takeaway? My sin crucified my Savior.**

You may say, "How can I be held accountable for the actions of those who lived 2,000 years ago?" But that is reality. Though we are shaped by our individual actions, no one is an island unto themselves. We are products of our upbringing, culture, and time. Likewise, no generation is divorced from either the one that came before it or the one that comes after. Good or bad, all decisions have consequences, and those consequences can have a generational impact.

After all, do not all children carry the physical traits of their parents? Why should spiritual traits not work the same way? The greatest example of this is Adam's sin.

**READ: Romans 5:12 (ESV)**

Therefore, just as sin came into the world through one man, and death through sin, and so death spread to all men because all sinned.

We bear the consequences of our forebear's mistakes. Not only that, but we also bear the consequences of our own sins.

**READ: Romans 3:10-12, 23 (ESV)**

<sup>10</sup> None is righteous, no, not one; <sup>11</sup> no one understands; no one seeks for God. <sup>12</sup> All have turned aside; together they have become worthless; no one does good, not even one.

<sup>23</sup> for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God

It is true that we are not the ones who *literally* harmed Jesus. We did not betray him. We did not mock him. We did not beat him. We did not crucify him.

Nevertheless, because of Adam's sin, our own personal sin, and the sins of the whole world, Jesus had to die. All of humanity, past, present, and future, is culpable for the murder of the only truly innocent person who ever lived. **To paraphrase Thomas Brooks, that great Puritan preacher, our sin did "more mischief than all the devils in hell could have done."**<sup>8</sup>

Do not shrink from this thought, as unpleasant as it may be. Coming to grips with reality is foundational to the kerygma. Sin put Christ on the cross. And it just wasn't our forebears' sin; it was our sin that crucified that Son of God.

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<sup>8</sup> Spurgeon, Charles, *Smooth Stones Taken From Ancient Books: A Collection of Sayings from the works of T. Brooks*, (Oxford, 1859) p. 284, "When we consider that sin has slain our Lord Jesus Christ, O how should the thought provoke our hearts to be revenged on sin, for having murdered the Lord of Glory, and done more mischief than all the devils in hell could have done."

iv. **Vs. 37-41 – The Forgiveness of Sins has arrived.**

**Vs. 37** – “Now when they heard this they were cut to the heart...” “Cut to the heart” is an idiomatic phrase that describes a “feeling of sharp pain connected with anxiety, remorse, etc.”<sup>9</sup> Bock notes that Homer used the phrase to describe “horses stomping the earth with their hooves.”<sup>10</sup> This crowd was broken over the realization that they had crucified and killed their very Lord and Messiah.

Grief-stricken over their sin, the crowd comes to “Peter and the rest of the apostles” and asks, “Brothers, what shall we do?” And they asked what they could “do.” Did they really think they could do something? Or is this more of a hopeless inquiry? They knew that to do something as heinous as killing their God, Savior, and King gave them little hope that they could avoid retribution. This response is the same one provided by the general populace, the tax collectors, and the Roman soldiers after they heard John the Baptist preach (cf. 3:10, 12, 14).<sup>11</sup>

**Vs. 38** – After God’s word has been preached, there is no better question to ask than, “What shall I do?” Peter knew exactly what they should do: “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.” As is apparent, repentance, baptism, and the indwelling of the Holy Spirit are tied closely together here. But, if we’re not careful, we’ll get into some bad theology at this point.

So, we must understand three things:

- 1.) Peter is not promoting baptismal regeneration (cf. 3:19). That is to say, this passage does not say that salvation is dependent on baptism (cf. 10:47). We are saved by faith alone, not baptism by faith alone (cf. Eph. 2:8-9). But it is to say that those who truly repent will make their profession public via baptism. As Paul will say in Acts 26:20, “Repent and turn to God, performing deeds in keeping with their repentance.” Baptism, among other things, is “performing deeds in keeping with” a profession of faith. As Pete himself says in 1 Peter 3:21, “Baptism, which corresponds to this, now saves you, not as a removal of dirt from the body but as an appeal [a pledge] to God for a good conscience, through the resurrection of Jesus Christ.” In context, Peter compares Noah’s flood with Christian baptism. The ark did not save Noah; instead, his faith saved him, a faith expressed through the building of an ark (cf. Heb. 11:7). Likewise, baptism does not save anyone; it is powerless “as a removal of dirt [wickedness/sin/transgression] from

<sup>9</sup> BDAG, p. 523.

<sup>10</sup> Bock (2007), p. 141

<sup>11</sup> Bock (2007), p. 141.

the body.” Instead, only faith can save; it is the sort of faith in “the resurrection of Jesus Christ,” and that is then expressed through baptism.

Not getting baptized, yet still calling yourself a Christian, is like saying you're married when, in reality, you're still single. In both cases, the claim does not match up with reality. As I've often said, while baptism is not necessary for a person's salvation, it is essential for a person's sanctification. You cannot be a thriving Christian and live in disobedience to Christ's command to be baptized. One can hardly call themselves a disciple of Jesus if they've not followed one of the basics of the Great Commission (cf. Matt. 28:18-20).

- 2.) To “receive the gift of the Holy Spirit” is tied closely to baptism and repentance. But, from the perspective of Acts, it cannot be said that the Holy Spirit only comes after baptism; nor can it be said that the Holy Spirit only comes before baptism. In some scenarios, the indwelling of the Holy Spirit comes before baptism (cf. 9:17-18; 10:44-48; 19:5-6); but in others, the indwelling of the Holy Spirit comes after baptism (cf. 2:38; 8:12-17). This demonstrates the difficulty of gleaning normative practice from Acts. While there are truths to be gleaned, we'd be mistaken if we consider every detail as indicative of what the church should be rather than what the church once was.

**SIDE NOTE:** Notice also that the emphasis is on the “gift,” singular, of the Holy Spirit and not the gifts, plural, of the Holy Spirit.<sup>12</sup> All get the Spirit, but not all get the same gifts of the Spirit (cf. 1 Cor. 12:7-11). Even if the gift of tongues were operative today, not every believer would manifest that gift, just like, in the first century, not all had the same spiritual gifting.

So, while in the Acts, some people received the Spirit after baptism and some before, by the time Paul wrote Ephesus, which was around 60 AD (cf. Ac. 19), it was understood that “When you heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation, and believed in him, [you] were sealed with the promised Holy Spirit, who is the guarantee of our inheritance until we acquire possession of it, to the praise of his glory” (Eph. 1:13-14). From that point forward in the church's history, the indwelling of the Holy Spirit coincided with the moment of salvation.

- 3.) Of the three—Repentance, baptism, and the indwelling of the Holy Spirit—the common denominator is repentance. This is not only true in Acts (cf. 3:19; 5:31; 11:18; 8:22; 17:30; 20:21; 26:20) but it is also true of the large NT context (cf. Lu. 3:8; 5:32; 15:7;

24:47; Rom. 2:4; 2 Cor. 7:9-10; 2 Pet. 3:9). While baptism and the indwelling of the Holy Spirit are essential elements of the Christian experience, repentance is the primary issue at hand.<sup>13</sup> As Paul says in Romans 10:9-10, “If you confess with your mouth that Jesus is Lord and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved. For with the heart, one believes and is justified, and with the mouth, one confesses and is saved.” To be clear, repentance is more than simply changing one's mind; it is changing one's direction.

**Vs. 39** – Peter says, “For the promise is for you and for your children and for all who are far off, everyone whom the Lord our God calls to himself.” Don’t be mistaken, Peter was first and foremost talking about the Jews. The promise of the Holy Spirit and the forgiveness of sins was to the Israelites—the chosen people of God—and for their “children” and for every Jewish person in the diaspora (“all who are far off”). Gentiles such as us must remember that Christianity is rooted in and the continuation of Judaism.

However, by Acts 10, the Gentiles will be grafted into the Vine. And from that point moving forward, anyone, be they Jew or non-Jew, can be saved. “Everyone whom the Lord our God calls to himself” will receive the “promise” of the Holy Spirit and the forgiveness of sins if they call upon the name of the Lord.

**Vs. 40-41** – Luke gives two summary statements:

(1) So, we mustn’t assume that the message we have before us is exhaustive. Luke said he said “many other words” as he “bore witness.” It has been curated. But even though Peter's verbiage varied, his application was the same: “Save yourselves from this crooked generation.” We must die to the old generation to be born into a new generation. To avoid the coming judgment (cf. 2 Thess. 1:5-10), we must separate ourselves from this “crooked generation.” That though we may be in the world, we will not of the world (cf. Jn. 17:16; Rom. 12:2; 2 Cor. 6:14-18).

(2) Luke says that “those who received [Peter’s] word were baptized.” He then approximates that on the Day of Pentecost, “about three thousand souls” came to faith and were baptized. From 120 people to 3,000 in a single day.

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<sup>13</sup> Joel 2:12-14 (ESV), ““Yet even now,” declares the LORD, “return to me with all your heart, with fasting, with weeping, and with mourning; and rend your hearts and not your garments.” Return to the LORD your God, for he is gracious and merciful, slow to anger, and abounding in steadfast love; and he relents over disaster. Who knows whether he will not turn and relent, and leave a blessing behind him, a grain offering and a drink offering for the LORD your God?”

## So, what's the takeaway?

Genuine repentance is evidenced by genuine change.

**READ:** 1 Jn 2:4-6 (ESV)

<sup>4</sup>Whoever says "I know [Christ]" but does not keep his commandments is a liar, and the truth is not in him, <sup>5</sup>but whoever keeps his word, in him truly the love of God is perfected. By this we may know that we are in him: <sup>6</sup>whoever says he abides in him ought to walk in the same way in which he walked.

To repent is to radically reorient one's life toward the things of God; it is to "walk in the same way in which [Christ] walked." Genuine repentance is evidenced by genuine change. Nowhere in the Scriptures is repentance a mere intellectual assent. Of course, that is part of repentance, but that's not the whole of it, nor is it even the biggest part of it. To repent is to change. This does not mean we'll be made perfect immediately, but it does mean we will be perfected gradually. The process of sanctification takes time. As I've said many times, Christians will not be sinless, but they will sin less. But do not buy into the lie that all I have to do is say a prayer, and then I'm good. A prayer has never once saved anyone. However, repentance and faith in Jesus Christ, expressed through what is often called "the sinner's prayer," have saved many (cf. Rom. 10:10). repentance either impacts one's walk or is not repentance. We are not saved by a profession of faith. We are saved by a possession of faith. And those who possess genuine faith will exhibit real-life change.

### **Video Description:**

#### **Filled | Week 6 | “The Kerygma, Part 2” (Acts 2:33-41)**

SPEAKER: Ben Hyrne, Pastor

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### **Sermon Manuscript:**

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Season 40 | 6