

CCH Sermon 7th June 2020 Acts 2:14-41 The Explanation of Pentecost

V36 I was recently sent a very helpful article by someone in the congregation which helped me to get my head around the impact of the Coronavirus. It said, don't think of this crisis as a **blizzard** (in other words a short snow storm) that will soon give way to clear weather. Don't even think of it as a **winter** (a season of several months that will soon warm up). He said think of it more like a **mini ice age** (something that is going to bring lasting impact: medically, economically, and perhaps in a positive way spiritually). This is a life changing event.

Last week with Johnny we looked at the **event** of Pentecost- the coming of the Holy Spirit in tongues of fire and rushing wind, as the disciples miraculously spoke in different languages to make Jesus known to the people of Jerusalem. Our next passage in Acts will show us the **effects** of Pentecost- the birth of the church.

But what did it all mean (The **explanation** of Pentecost)? That's what the bystanders were asking in v12. Was it a small event (a snowstorm if you like?) or just a season of strange happenings that would soon return to normality? Well in our passage today Peter tells us that this is cataclysmic! Something that impacts us today.

So let's look at our story under 3 headings, and the first is...

1) A NEW DAY HAS DAWNED (v14-21)

We finished last week (v13) with people looking at these everyday guys and girls from up North speaking with incredible power, and wondering what was going on. Some were saying "have they been on the booze" (v13). Well Peter stands up to put them right and to explain everything....

V14-15 *Then 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. These people are not drunk, as you suppose. It's only nine in the morning!*

I like that- maybe he's playing along with their banter. "We can't be drunk; the off licenses haven't even opened yet! No, let me tell you exactly what's happening, it's what the prophet Joel was on about hundreds of years ago".

Now we actually studied the book of Joel this time last year- you can find those sermons and PowerPoints on our website still. [Those of you who have been

tuning into HCRfm will know that this month on Tuesday mornings, I'm doing 5 podcasts exploring the lessons for Coronavirus from that little book]. Joel was talking in a time of national crisis, and calling the people to turn back to God to find forgiveness for their foolish rebellion before it was too late. And he looks forward to a special day which will be the last chapter in God's history books. "The last days". A day when the Holy Spirit of God comes not just on one or two prophets or kings here and there to do a job, but permanently on all God's people, male & female, old & young, rich & poor. A day of Salvation before it's too late (v21- *"everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved"*).

And Peter is saying, "that new day has dawned. This is it. A new day has dawned. The last chapter of God's history book is beginning today. The age of the Spirit, the age of Salvation. And you can see that's the case, because the signs that Joel predicted are happening". **No 1)** All God's people speaking God's truth (v17)- as seen in the people **No 2)** Signs and wonders in the sky (v19)- recently witnessed with the sky turning black and possibly the moon turning red when Jesus died. **No 3)** Signs and wonders on earth (v19) as tongues of fire rest on the disciples.

He's saying a new Day has dawned. This is a really important thing for us to grasp as well, because we are still living in this period of history. In God's diary, the time between Jesus' sending of the Holy Spirit, and the day when Jesus comes back is marked the last days. The era of the Spirit, the era of Salvation.

It's not that there was no saving of people, or no Holy Spirit before this, but now that God has acted decisively in the coming of his Son Jesus, God is calling people from across the world to respond rightly. We need to understand that this day marked a new dawn. A day of rescue. A day of power to change. A day of good news.

This is a massive day. ☞ If you are a Christian, you are living in the age where God himself is living in you to help you to live for him and speak for him. Don't make the excuse that your life is stuck and you can't change. You have the Holy Spirit. Don't make the excuse that you could never be the kind of person who could share their faith. You have the mighty Holy Spirit of God living in you.

☞ And if you aren't a Christian, please don't ignore Christianity saying "it's fine for you but it's not my thing"- If God put people on fire without them burning up and got Galilean fishermen to speak fluent Arabic, Turkish and Latin in one go, don't you think you something is happening, that you should listen in to?

A new day has dawned. So let's move to the main part of Peter's speech.

2) A NEW KING HAS COME (v22-36)

Now this is a long section, and you might want to dig deeper into the parts that we are going to skate over. But the summary is found in the final sentence in v36, this is where it is going. Like all good sermons, it has a punchline...

V36. 'Therefore let all Israel be assured of this: God has made this Jesus, whom you crucified, both Lord and Messiah.'

That's where this speech is going. Peter is working up to the point of proving something absolutely crucial about Jesus (by the way that "assured" word is similar to what Luke uses at the start of his gospel (Luke 1:4) to talk about the certainty of Christianity). He wants them back then and us today to get this. Listen up, be in no doubt, get this once and for all! **God has put Jesus on the throne of the universe.**

That's what he wants to prove. Jesus is the King, the Messiah, the Lord. Now that's not a snowstorm. This is not a passing sunny spell. This is cataclysmic climate change. This is something that affects every human being who has ever lived. God has put Jesus on the throne of the universe.

Your muslim neighbour, your atheist granny, your apathetic art teacher, your trendy teenager, your disinterested doctor, your hopeless hairdresser (not that you've seen her lately which is why your hair looks more like a haystack than a hairstyle). They all will bow before Jesus' throne one day. He's the one who's going to sort out the mess. He's the one who's going to save humanity. He's the creator, the ruler, the rescuer the judge.

We can't now say Jesus is a great hobby or a preference or a suggestion or a nice idea. A social media post to click "like"! Jesus Christ is LORD! He's not a religious pill for when you are feeling down, a pat on the back, or a life coach with a few religious top tips. He's Lord of the universe, bringing God's wonderful kingdom of generosity, grace and Kindness. Set yourself up against him and you are not only missing out on his wonderful grace, but you are setting yourself up against God.

God has put Jesus on the throne of the universe. Well how do I know that?

That's what Peter's talk proves. He refers to 4 stages in Jesus' life...

- His **life** (v22) – and we'll be looking at one of those miracles, wonders signs, done by Jesus when he raised a widow's son next week.
- His **death** (v23). Not an accident, but God's plan for rescue.
- His **ascension** (which he comes to in v33)
- But most of the passage (and actually most of the preaching in this book) focuses on his **resurrection**.

And though it seems a bit complex at first, his argument is actually very simple. Like in the first part he points to the Old Testament to prove what's going on, and the argument is this....

We know Jesus must be more than just a man, because he rose from the dead. That's a fact evidenced by these 12 men who are standing up at the front of the crowd this day. V24. You know that it was about as easy for death to hold onto Jesus as it is for a fisherman to keep hold of a slippery eel. Death has no hold on Jesus. He is the King of life, he is the world's Saviour.

How do we know that? If the key to the first point was Joel. The key to this point is David.

You see David talks about a deathproof person. V25-27.

Now here's Peter's point v29.

Although David uses "I" and "Me" language he isn't first talking about himself. Because he wasn't deathproof.

In fact Peter says, we can dig up the bones of David right here in Jerusalem (our good friend Nehemiah recorded the location of his tomb in Neh 3:16). So he can't have been this deathproof King.

No David was actually talking first of all about a descendent in his family tree. V30-31.

So God has got a King who is going to rule the world, who owns the universe (as we saw from Psalm 2 a few weeks ago) and the identifying feature for how to spot the Messiah is that he will be deathproof. He will kill death.

So v32. This King is Jesus.

If you missed all that, let me use an analogy.

▲ A few years after I left my school, the queen decided to come and open a new building. Now I don't know if you've ever seen the Queen, but she's very short. When you see her out and about, how do you know that it's her, and not an impersonator? Well let me give you 2 things. One the fact that you normally have official correspondence from Buckingham Palace beforehand telling you when she will come, what she will do, etc. And then the proof of the pudding is when she arrives (normally by royal helicopter, as in this case) she does everything she said she would do. And sure enough when the day came, she came it was exactly in line with all the official paperwork, and she did exactly what she was supposed to do. Smile, give the royal wave, and open the new building, aptly if not very originally named "Queen's Court".

Peter is saying, you need be in no doubt that Jesus Christ is the Ruler of the Universe. Why? 1) it was exactly in line with all the official paperwork- the promises of God spoken through David 1000 years earlier and 2) He did exactly what the Messiah was predicted to do in that paperwork, and actually what he **alone** can do. Smash through death.

So his life, his death, especially his resurrection prove a new King has come. And with no disrespect to the Queen (and she'd agree).. a King so much bigger than our British kind of monarch.

And finally- v33 his ascending to heaven and pouring out of the Holy Spirit all prove it further. V33-35.

So v36, be absolutely convinced that this world belongs to Jesus. A NEW KING HAS COME. We are all going to meet him one day and give an account for our lives.

And that is very good news, if you have come to him and made him your king! But I'm afraid that is very bad news if you were one of the people who killed him.

And that takes us onto final section: **3) A NEW RESPONSE IS REQUIRED (v38-41)**

There's a song by Eric Clapton, "I shot the Sheriff, but I didn't shoot the deputy". Why not shooting the deputy gets you off the hook when you've shot the main policeman of town, I don't know, but there we are.

Imagine if you shoot the sheriff, and he comes back from the dead! You are in big trouble. That's what these guys had done. Peter is talking to the Jews of Jerusalem less than 2 months after they had been baying for his blood before

Pilate, and getting the Romans to do their dirty work. They put him to death, and now he's alive.

▲ Have you ever had the experience of shredding the teacher when she went out of the room, only to turn around and find she is standing there? How small do you feel? Well do you see why these guys are so gutted? V37.

They are guilty of killing the Messiah. And I'm afraid that we are too. "Were you there when they crucified my Lord?" Answer yes.

God has made this Jesus King, and he has told us to listen to the government. But you think you know best, so you are actually saying you wish Jesus wasn't there.

It's late, you are tired, you've had a bad day, and there stands before you the choice of kindness to a member of your family. Do you know you are standing at a crossroads with the decision to turn right- to the Rule of Jesus. Or to turn left, Jesus I wish you were dead.

Each time I bend the truth to make myself look good, each time I don't bother to keep my word, each time I'm driving another nail in, because I'm saying this is how much I want King Jesus to be in control of my life.

We are guilty of murdering our maker. Of crucifying our King.

Well what on earth should we do? What can we do? Is there anything we can do?

V38 Peter replied, 'Repent and be baptised, 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.

There's an amnesty for all who say sorry and come back to King Jesus. If you turn back to him, he will gladly forgive your sins. Wonderfully this teacher doesn't stand there with a cane. He offers complete forgiveness and a new life!

Interestingly normally in the New Testament it's repent and trust in the name of Jesus, but here it's repent and be baptised, showing the importance of baptism for all true believers.

And wonderfully this new life isn't just for back then, it's for all the subsequent generations, including us in Huntingdon in 2020.

V39 The promise is for you and your children and for all who are far off – for all whom the Lord our God will call.'

Peter pleaded with them, just like he pleads with us today v40 to do the difficult thing of stepping aside from the trajectory our friends and neighbours are on “This corrupt generation”, and giving our allegiance to King Jesus.

V40 *With many other words he warned them; and he pleaded with them, ‘Save yourselves from this corrupt generation.’*

A new day has dawned. A day we are living in today. The day of the Spirit, the Day of Salvation. V40 save yourselves.

How do you respond?

Have you turned to Christ? Have you been baptised? As soon as we can let’s hire the One Leisure pool and have a big baptism, so that all who haven’t before can declare their faith in Jesus, and as they go down into the water die to their old life, and as they come up, rise with Jesus to new life.

☞ Some of you have done what v38 says. You have trusted Christ, and you have turned to him (and I hope demonstrated it in baptism whether as an infant or as an adult). You are conscious that even after coming to Jesus you have got a lot of things wrong. Well don’t be discouraged. Jesus has died to forgive you. The promise of the gospel is for you v39. And Jesus has given you his Spirit as a downpayment. When you fall, pick yourself up off the floor, because your King loves you and wants to help you change.

Dust yourself down and keep going. Don’t let Satan discourage you. He has plans to use you as a witness. That old friend, that sibling. They need to hear of Jesus. And who else is going to talk to them. Invite them to the quiz night, invite them back next week as we take a break from Acts to look at Luke. Pray for the Holy Spirit to give you strength to overcome your fears and do what these 120 were doing- speaking about Jesus.

☞ But some of you have never turned back. Maybe there’s a child or an adult listening today who has been treating Jesus at best like a figure of history at worst like a swear word, when he’s the ruler of eternity. But God has made him Lord and Messiah”. One day God will say “what did you do with my Son”?

If you are convinced that a **new day** has dawned, and a **new King** has come Will you do the only sensible thing and make this **new response**?

Please pray with me now... **Let’s pray.**