

THE CHURCH'S KEYNOTE

Text: Acts 2: 22-36.

Intro: In Acts 1:8 we have the four basic ingredients for the Church's ministry to the world:

- (1) "We" - the messengers, men and women who knew the Lord.
- (2) The power: the enabling power of the Holy Spirit.
- (3) The message: "witnesses unto me"; i.e., Christ, His person and Work.
- (4) The extent: beginning at Jerusalem it was to include the whole world.

Tonight I want to consider further the message, the keynote message, that which Peter preached on the day of Pentecost.

What a masterpiece it is! And what tremendous results it produced! It is worthy of the thoughtful consideration of anyone who sincerely wants to know the truth about Jesus of Nazareth.

The setting: This was Jerusalem where all of the facts concerning the life and death of Christ

were well-known. So far as we know the proclamation of His resurrection had not yet reached the outside world. (Jesus had appeared only to His disciples, and no witnessing to the world had yet been done.) So in the place of His rejection the work begins.

What was Peter trying to accomplish? It was certainly not the kind of a situation that you could prepare for (although these must have been truths which the disciples had considered together with the Lord).

I. The purpose of the message (stated at the end) - Acts 2:36.

He wanted to prove that Jesus Christ was all He claimed to be, and especially that His resurrection was the final, indisputable proof.

- A. That He is LORD - deity, and sovereign. ^(2:22) Man, yes, but also LORD!
- B. That He is CHRIST - the Messiah, the Hope of Israel, the fulfillment of OT prophecy.

To do this He begins with certain truths which they knew, and proceeded to tell which they did not know, supporting it with the Word and with personal experience, climaxing the message with its significance on the events of Pentecost.

II. The message:

A. The facts known (2:22, 23).

Everyone knew:

- (1) That Jesus had performed miracles (v. 22).
- (2) That He had been crucified (v. 23). Many of them had called for His death.

What they did not know was the significance of these events. And so Peter explains them from the divine point-of-view.

His ability to perform miracles were evidence that He was "a man approved of God" — an outward demonstration of His divine mission.
Cf. Jn. 3:1, 2.

His death. If He were Lord, if He were the Messiah, how could men put Him to death?

He had been "delivered up according to the definite plan and

foreknowledge of God" (RSV). When God placed His Son into the hands of men, when His Son came, this is what they did!

What courage it took for Peter to say these words to this crowd in this place! "If..."

- B. The heart of the message (v. 24):
 "Whom God hath raised up,
 having bowed the piers of death"

Note how Peter is bringing God before this crowd.

Remember: It was just as difficult for them to accept this fact as it would have been for us, but the force of it came on the force of truth she knew.

If God were in His miracles and in His death (and think of the unusual things which happened), then it is at least conceivable that there could be something to the claim of His resurrection.

- C. The proofs:

1. The word of prophecy from David's 16th Psalm (vv. 25-31).

Peter's argument was that He had

To be raised because David said He would be.

After all, they certainly believed David!

and, said Peter, David could not have been talking about himself because we know where he is buried. "His sepulchre is with us unto this day!"

He saw this before, Peter explains, and spoke of the resurrection of Christ.

This is the ~~less~~ evidence - cited above even personal experience, because in things related to God experience is meaningless unless it can be supported by the Word.

2. The witnesses of the apostles and disciples (v. 32).

Cf. Acts 1:2 b,3. See also 1 Cor. 15:5-8.

How many witnesses does it take to establish a fact? Cf. 2 Cor. 13:1; Deut. 17:6; 19:15.

Christ was seen in resurrection by over 500 at one time!

See how Peter reiterates these truths to the Gentiles in Acts 10:38-43, esp. vv. 40, 41.

Why not to all? Cf. Luke 16:30, 31. Brown says, "for it was not fitting that He should subject Himself, in His risen condition, to a second rejection in Person" (V, 71).

Cf. our Lord's words to Thomas in Jn. 20:29.

We have seen Him, Peter says.

3. The wonders of Pentecost and (2:33-35) unfulfilled prophecy.

Where is He now? At the right hand of God - "until..." Again Peter goes to the Word: Psalm 110.

Fulfilled prophecy encourages us to believe the unfulfilled.

And what we are seeing, Peter says, is further proof because this is what He promised to do - to send the Holy Spirit.

Concl: And so it is all here. No wonder the people ^{were} "cut to the heart" (RSV).
(over)

The silence was overwhelming! What should they do?

Could God forgive the very ones who were responsible for His death?

Oh, yes! And that day 3000 of them turned in faith to Jesus Christ.

Have you? Can you dispute such evidence? He will will redeem you if you will only recognize Him as Lord and Christ - the One who came to redeem you from your sins.