

# PENTECOST – A POWER PACKED DAY

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## INTRODUCTION: (Acts 2:1-6)

- A. There have been some very powerful days throughout history whose infamy will live on until the end of time – There was some event which changed history forever or taught us very important lessons:**
1. Just within the lifetime of people present today, there have been some pretty powerful days!
    - a. If I were to give you some dates, I bet some of you would know exactly what happened
    - b. December 7, 1941 (Pearl Harbor), June 6, 1944 (D-Day), November 22, 1963 (JFK's assassination), July 20, 1969 (man walked on the moon), April 26, 1986 (Chernobyl), January 28, 1986 (Challenger Explosion), September 11, 2001 (Twin Towers Attacked)
  2. Other days we only know about through history books... Such as July 4, 1776 – Independence Day
- B. Some of the most powerful days in history are days which are recorded for us in God's word. This is especially true if you are thinking about their power in regards to spiritual things:**
1. The day of creation, the day of Israel's exodus, the day Jesus was born, the day Jesus died, the day Jesus arose from the dead, and the day of Pentecost when 3000 (likely more) were saved.
  2. It's this last day I want us to consider in this lesson. There were many Days of Pentecost, but one in particular was marked with power as had never been seen before... The Pentecost of Acts 2.
    - a. Joel had prophesied about this day as a day when God's spirit would be poured out on all flesh and that whoever would call on the name of the Lord would be saved **(Joel 2)**
    - b. Jesus had promised that this day would come – When it did the Holy Spirit would descend upon them, would be their comforter, and guide them into all truth **(John 14)**
    - c. Now the day has arrived with power! (Describe the scene in the upper room)
    - d. What a perfect day for this great event – It's the day of Pentecost and thousands of Jews from all over the world have gathered in Jerusalem to worship. On that day they heard a message that would change their lives and would change the world forever!
  3. But it wasn't just the miraculous pouring out of the H.S. which made this a power packed day... There were other powerful things which happened that leave us with powerful lessons today

## SOME NON-MIRACULOUS THINGS THAT MADE THIS DAY ONE OF THE MOST POWERFUL DAYS OF ALL TIME

### **A. First of all, it was a powerful day because there was powerful preaching:**

1. The miraculous way in which it was delivered was not the only powerful thing about this preaching, it was also powerful because it was scripture filled preaching **(Acts 2:16, 25)**
  - a. Peter was speaking by the direction of God and God could have simply had them say, "Jesus is Lord" and expecting everyone to accept and believe that, but God didn't do that
  - b. Joel prophesied about the kind of events which would take place when God would establish a new covenant with His people and David spoke about the death and resurrection of the Messiah
  - c. The Jews knew these scriptures well, they believed in them, and knew they were from God. They would be right in refusing to believe anything which contradicted these prophecies.
  - d. Peter could have focused the people on the miraculous gift of speaking in tongues and used that to spark faith in them, but he laid the scriptures out so their faith would be in what God said!
2. The preaching on the day of Pentecost was powerful preaching because it centered around Jesus, the cross, and His empty grave! **(Acts 2:22-24, 32-33, 36)**

- a. After giving a brief introduction to his sermon, talking about what is going on and issuing a great invitation to salvation, Peter quickly gets on the subject of Jesus of Nazareth.
- b. From the mighty wonders Jesus performed, to His death, and to His resurrection, Peter exalted Christ in his preaching so that Christ would be exalted in their hearts and minds.
- c. This kind of preaching exalted Jesus Christ in the hearts and minds of those who heard it:
  - 1) What was the point of this sermon? It wasn't just the miracles of Jesus or even His death or resurrection... The point is that Jesus of Nazareth is now both Lord and Christ!
  - 2) The point was to get people to see that Jesus is their Savior and that He is reigning as King... to get them to submit to His rule in their hearts & seek the salvation He offers
  - 3) When they came to see who Jesus was and what Jesus did for them they had no problem submitting to what God required in seeking salvation... Why? Jesus was LORD!
3. The preaching was also powerful because Peter and the rest of the apostles did not romanticize or water down the sin which the Jewish nation was guilty of, but spoke the truth boldly! **(Acts 2:36)**
  - a. Remember what this scene is like – There's thousands of people gathered here, they've already accused the apostles of being drunk, and now Peter speaks words of direct condemnation!
  - b. This could have easily turned into a mob scene – Later, the apostles would individually experience how easily a mob of people could turn against them and even get violent. We're familiar with how Paul was treated in places like Ephesus and Jerusalem – They sought to kill him!
  - c. Peter does not excuse their sin because of the hypocrisy of their leaders, for their being ignorant of the truth, or for the difficult consequences they would've faced for doing right.
  - d. Today people might tell Peter – "Preaching like that will make people mad, it will turn people off to the gospel, it will offend people..." → But it was this kind of preaching that pricked the hearts of 3,000 plus people all at one time! Paul was not unkind, but he was straightforward.
4. The preaching of Peter and John, as well as the rest of the apostles, was so powerful because people could recognize from it that they had been with Jesus **(Acts 4:10-13)**
5. We can learn from this Pentecost day the kind of preaching we should both seek and employ ourselves:
  - a. None of us should ever settle for anything less than scripture based and scripture filled Bible teaching and preaching. Today many are focused on entertaining and pulling at people's emotions through heart wrenching stories. We must demand scripture! **(2 Timothy 4:1-4)**
  - b. We must remember our responsibility in teaching the gospel – We are to preach Jesus! This does not mean we don't cover subjects like false doctrine, baptism, or controversial subjects, but in doing this what is our goal? It must always be to bring people to see Jesus! **(1 Cor 1:23)**
  - c. In preaching Jesus, we need the courage to be bold but tactful. Our goal should be to preach the truth in love! Many people are afraid of speaking the truth because it might make someone angry or drive people away. We must continue to preach the truth, regardless of how badly we think it'll hurt, and give people the chance to choose how to respond! **(Eph 4:14-15)**
  - d. Can people tell by the way we teach the gospel to them, and even the way we carry on discussions about religious things, that we have been with Jesus? People can tell if you truly are seeking to know Him or if you just know a bunch of facts about His life and teachings! **(Phil 3:10)**

#### **B. This Was Also A Powerful Day Because There Was Powerful Humility Displayed By The Hearers:**

1. We have emphasized the boldness of Peter in not watering down the impact of the truth, but the meek reception of the hearers is also commendable **(Acts 2:36)**

- a. When Peter said that "YOU" crucified Jesus they could have responded with denial because it was really the Romans who conducted the crucifixion or they could've responded by passing off the blame because it was really their Jewish leaders who demanded that Jesus be crucified.
  - b. Those who were listening to the preaching also could have responded with anger or resentment that Paul would be blaming them with such a spiritual crime as crucifying the Messiah.
  - c. Many might say: "You don't have to take such finger pointing at that! Peter has no room to talk, wasn't Peter the one that denied even knowing Jesus? You weren't the ones who did it!"
2. When they heard the convicting words of Jesus they were cut to the heart (**Acts 2:37a**)
    - a. The word translated "pricked" or "cut" occurs only in this place in the NT – It's difficult for either of these English words in our vocabulary to fully capture the weight of the Greek word used
    - b. It primarily means "to pierce or penetrate with a needle, lancet, or sharp instrument" and by application means, "to pierce with grief, or acute pain of any kind." It was used outside of the Bible to describe the way a spear punctures or a horse's hoof indents the ground
    - c. While this never talks about their belief or faith this statement reflects it – Perhaps for the first time they realized what Peter said both about them and about Jesus was true. The scales of skepticism and unbelief have fallen from their eyes & now they see Jesus in the light of truth!
  3. Not only were they cut to the heart, but these hearers were willing to do whatever the Lord required of them to take care of their problem of sin (**Acts 2:37b**)
    - a. Their question, "What shall we do?" shows more than their desire for salvation but this question is also a window into their souls... It reflects the humility and meekness within their hearts
    - b. Realizing their lost condition these people are willing to do anything and everything that God commands them to do! There's no waiting to see what God's commands are and then deciding if it's worth it, they put no qualifications on God's commands – It's full surrender!
    - c. Their response is refreshing, especially in light of the much different responses we hear today:
      - 1) Instead of asking, "What shall I do?" some say, "There's nothing for me to do, God has done it all for me!" – But this is wrong since Peter said there was something to do
      - 2) Instead of asking, "What shall I do?" some people say, "I know what I should do" and so they don't open their minds up to what God actually wants them to do.
      - 3) When people are seeking salvation there's no room for anything but to humbly ask the question, "What shall I do?" and listen to hear and accept whatever God's word says!
  4. One of the reasons why we may feel like we don't see as many powerful responses to the gospel as on this day of Pentecost is because humble hearts seems to be such a rare quality to find! (**James 1:19-25**)
    - a. One person receives the word of God with meekness, humbly examining the word next to his life to see what needs changing... The 2<sup>nd</sup> person receives the word with anger & just gets mad!
    - b. Because of the first person's approach to the word of God, he changes his life... Because of the second person's response to the word of God he never makes any real & meaningful changes
    - c. Also, all too often people hear God's word and walks away rejecting it because it simply does not make sense to them, maybe it's not what they expected to find, or it goes against what they've always been taught → Pride & preconceptions keep the truth hidden from their sight
    - d. We need the attitude of these people so long ago and simply ask the Lord, "What shall I do?" – It doesn't matter if it's about seeking salvation, marriage roles, anger, etc... Do we surrender?

### **C. This Was A Powerful Day Because Of The Powerful Invitation That Was Extended:**

1. The first glimpse of the powerful invitation extended by Peter is seen early on in his sermon when he boldly proclaims that whoever calls upon the name of the Lord will be saved (**Acts 2:21**)

- a. Joel had made this prophecy hundreds of years before... The Jews knew about this prophecy and longed for the day when it would be fulfilled in all its glory. Peter is saying, "This is that day!"
  - b. This is a powerful invitation because it is extended to WHOEVER – Who does whoever exclude? It's for everyone! Whether Jew or Gentile, male or female, pretty moral or greatly wicked!
  - c. This is a powerful invitation because it is an invitation to be SAVED – That one word brings feelings of relief & security doesn't it? Saved is what a person shouts when they've been pulled from a burning building... Saved is what one says after being rescued from drowning in the ocean!
  - d. Saved from what? Saved from being separated from God, saved from the guilt of their sins, saved from the eternal death due for their sins, saved from the clutches of the devil... SAVED!
2. This invitation is a powerful invitation because it's an invitation to have the forgiveness of sins **(Acts 2:38)**
    - a. Think about the boat these people see themselves in – They are sinners, God sends Jesus to be their Savior, they reject Jesus and crucify Him on a cross... Sounds like a hopeless situation!
    - b. But it's not hopeless is it? Peter tells them that forgiveness was still available! In an ironic twist, it was through the death of Jesus whom they crucified that forgiveness of sin was possible
    - c. Forgiveness, what a powerful word! Forgiveness meant that the debt had been paid, that the guilt could be removed, that the record could be erased. Forgiveness meant starting anew!
  3. This invitation did not just hold power for those gathered on that Pentecost day, Peter says that the same invitation has the same impact throughout all future generations **(Acts 2:39)**
    - a. Remember when Jesus was about to be crucified what the crowds shouted? They said, "His blood be upon us and our children!" If they only knew what they were really saying! Their children may not have been guilty of the act, but it was for everyone's sins that Jesus' blood was shed
    - b. You could also say it is only when Jesus blood was upon them and only when it was upon their children that they could be forgiven! God responded to their rejection with forgiveness!
    - c. The promise of forgiveness is now available – Not only to them and their children, but to everyone who was afar off – Who is this talking about? All generations to come for the rest of time!
  4. Including in the statement "those who are far off" is ourselves. The same powerful invitation that was available 2000 years ago is available for us today... Forgiveness & Salvation! **(Isaiah 55:1-3, 6-7, 12)**

#### **D. Finally, This Was A Powerful Day Because There Was A Powerful Response:**

1. Talk about powerful responses to the invitation... Upon hearing the powerful invitation, there were 3000 (likely more) people who faithfully obeyed the gospel of Christ in that one day! **(Acts 2:41)**
  - a. Some other versions capture the meaning of the original words here better when they say, "Then they which gladly received the word" → Some of the preaching hurt as they saw their sin & some felt good as they saw the available forgiveness – They received it all with a joyful spirit!
  - b. "Receiving the word with gladness" did not just mean accepting what Peter taught as being true... Receiving the word with gladness also involved the way they obeyed what was taught fully
  - c. **Illustration:** Teaching a Bible study with a person, them getting excited about it, answering the questions correctly, saying they believed it, yet wouldn't obey it... So close, yet so far away!
  - d. Just a few days before this, Jesus gave The Great Commission – This is it in action! Jesus had said, "He who believes & is baptized will be saved." Now we see people who "received the word" which shows they believed and we see them being baptized and being saved **(Mk 16:15-16)**
2. Earlier Peter had said, "Whoever calls upon the name of the Lord will be saved?" But what does that phrase mean? Men give all sorts of answers to that question, let's see what the Bible says! **(Acts 2:21)**

- a. We have no question what this phrase means. If calling on the name of the Lord is how a person is saved, then we can look for when these people were saved and see what they did in order to be saved. Whatever they did to be saved is what it means to call on the name of the Lord!
- b. They had been cut to the heart by the preaching... They believed the message of the gospel and were sorry for the death of Jesus, but it is obvious that they still are not saved **(vs. 37)**
- c. When Peter says, "Repent & be baptized for the forgiveness of your sins" they still haven't been saved yet, so they still haven't called upon the name of the Lord **(vs. 38)**
- d. Next Peter admonishes them: "Save yourselves from this crooked generation" – They still have not been saved so we can know they still have not called on the name of the Lord **(vs. 40)**
- e. Now at the end of this chapter it refers to these people as being saved **(vs. 47)** – What did they do to be saved? They had gladly received the word and were baptized **(vs. 41)**. Now we have an answer from God's word for what it means to call upon the name of the Lord!
3. Their powerful response did not end with their baptism, but they continued to respond to the preaching of the gospel powerfully through their continual devotion to spiritual growth **(Acts 2:42-47a)**
  - a. When these people became Christians, they took their commitment seriously... They did not haphazardly take a jab at being a Christian... it was something they did with all their heart!
  - b. They continued steadfastly in taking part in spiritual activity – There was teaching (apostles doctrine), the L.S. (breaking of bread), and then of course prayer. We usually read this and talk about how they assembled regularly, and they did, but it wasn't just about going to church... It was about engulfing themselves in things which would nourish them spiritually!
  - c. They didn't just respond by personal spiritual growth, but also by deepening their fellowship with one another. Whether by giving to one another's needs or by spending time together socially they also devoted themselves to building their relationships with one another
  - d. Responding to the gospel was not a one time event – They were constantly learning, constantly believing, constantly turning, constantly obeying, and constantly growing... It was a priority!
4. The same gospel can still produce the same kind of powerful responses today when it falls upon humble and receptive hearts **(Matthew 28:18-20; Col 1:21-23)**
  - a. Has the problem of sin changed? Has the gospel changed? Do we have a different sacrifice? Of course the answer to all of these questions is a resounding no! Well, if these things have not changed, the response God requires of us has not changed either – Repent and be baptized!
  - b. This same message is taught by example and by command throughout the remainder of the New Testament → This shouldn't surprise us at all since it is the commission Jesus gave to man!
  - c. We can't allow responding to the gospel to end there – Every time we hear God's word we must make a decision... Are we going to accept it in faithful obedience or reject it. Conforming our lives to His word, transforming ourselves to the image of Jesus Christ, is a life-long endeavor!
  - d. What kind of passion do you have for spiritual growth and strengthening your relationships with other Christians? Is it your priority in life or is it something you haphazardly engage in?