

## Acts 2:22-41

### "Responding To The Resurrection"

It was a morning filled w/mixed emotions (add confusion) to say the least. There they were, completely destroyed emotionally, hiding and in fear for their lives physically, worried that they might be brought on trial simply due to guilt by association w/J.C. The Shepherd had been struck & the sheep had scattered. The disciples were reeling and wondering what to do. The sun wasn't up but the Sabbath was over...

Joseph of Arimathea & Nicodemus had taken the body of Jesus & tried to prepare it, they wrapped it & placed a few spices in the wrappings but the truth of the matter is that time just wouldn't allow it. The Sabbath was approaching, so they did their best & then they laid Him in the tomb. The ladies followed them because they would return early Sunday morning to finish the job. However there was a problem, the stone had been rolled in front of the tomb, a seal had been set on it & a Roman troop had set watch over it.

The Sabbath was over, the sun wasn't up but the ladies decided to head to the tomb. One problem; "how are we going to roll that stone away?" They weren't strong enough, the disciples weren't brave enough...but this is where God just loves to enter the equation isn't it? He loves to make a way where there is no way, He loves to take those impossible odds, those impossible scenarios that are "stones" in our lives that we can't budge, that we can do nothing about & roll them away in such a way that causes us to say, "To God be the glory, great things *He* has done."

You know the story, the ladies impossibility was God's opportunity, we find that like you & me they worried a lot for no reason because God had it all worked out in advance. An angel had rolled the stone away, *not* so that Jesus could get out, but so that they could get in & bear witness to the empty tomb. ...

As they stood there, confused, unable to add it up (boom) 2 angels stood by them, light radiating *from* them (which as we might imagine terrified them) & they bowed their faces to the earth. The angel gives a word (almost of rebuke) to them. He says, "*Why do you seek the living among the dead? He is not here, but is risen! Remember how He spoke to you when He was still in Galilee, saying, 'The Son of Man must be delivered into the hands of sinful men, and be crucified, and the third day rise again.'*" And they remembered His words."<sup>1</sup> Well at the risk of stating the obvious, it was at that point that everything changed. Resurrection morning became a landslide of excitement, confusion & activity.

<sup>1</sup> The New King James Version. 1982 (Lk 24:5-8). Nashville: Thomas Nelson.

The guards ran to the Pharisees, afraid for their lives because Jesus was gone. The Pharisees promised to bribe the authorities on their behalf as long as they started a lie that the disciples stole His body.

But the soldiers ran this way, the ladies ran *that way*, coming to tell the disciples (who thought the women were delusional) but Peter & John got up & ran to the tomb. People were just scurrying all over the place.

2 of the disciples said, "Man, we gotta go, this is too much" & on their way to Emmaus Jesus appeared to them, shared the word of God w/them, explained to them all the scriptures that pertained to His suffering/death & resurrection. They didn't know it was Him but having invited Him to stay w/them when He took the bread & broke it their eyes were opened & they recognized Him & Jesus vanished... **Guess what they did? They ran back to Jerusalem & when they busted in the house the other disciples were all, "The Lord is risen indeed & has appeared to Simon!" They're all, "We know! He appeared to us to!"** Then as they were all freaking out about everything going on Jesus appeared in the room in the midst of them all & said, "Peace to you." But they panicked & thought they'd seen a spirit. Jesus invited them to touch Him; He ate w/them & loved on them.

& For the next 40 days Jesus would appear to them, teach them, encourage them & reveal Himself to them through expounding on the scriptures. Then He led them out as far as Bethany & He blessed them. He commanded them that they were to remain in Jerusalem until the Promise of the Holy Spirit had come. He said, **"...for John truly baptized with water, but you shall be baptized with the Holy Spirit not many days from now."**<sup>2</sup> Having spoken to them He ascended before their eyes & a cloud received Him out of their sight.

Flash forward 10 days; the disciples are eagerly, obediently waiting; the Day of Pentecost has fully come. There they were, gathered in an upper room, one heart, one mind waiting on the Promise when suddenly a sound from heaven as of a rushing mighty wind filled the house. **The Spirit comes upon them, is poured out on them & they begin to speak w/other tongues, in other languages of the wonderful works of God as the Spirit gave them utterance.**

Well as you might imagine it caused quite a stir. Some were mesmerized, others mocked as will always be the case when God is doing a work. Some will be mesmerized, others will mock.

<sup>2</sup> The New King James Version. 1982 (Ac 1:5). Nashville: Thomas Nelson.

Peter stood up, raised his voice and began to share how that the scriptures were being fulfilled right in front of them. How that God had said that He would pour out His Spirit on all flesh in the last days; that radical things that would happen, wonders in heaven, signs on the earth & that it would come to pass that whoever calls on the name of the Lord would be saved... Check it out, Vs 22, Acts Ch 2

### Vs 22-24

Bam! Talk about, "Drop it like it's hot!" Peter just unloads the gospel full force before the entire multitude. Notice what he says, he begins his address by getting their attention. He says, "Men of Israel, hear these words:" Peter had a message that he wanted people to pay attention to. He had something important to say & it's critical that his hearers not miss it. Even so it's equally important for you & me, do what you gotta do, tune in, pay attention, this is important.

Now as soon as he had their attention what did he do w/it? He confronted them immediately w/the Person of J.C. He said, "Hey Listen, everyone of you know the kind of life that Jesus of Nazareth lived. You know that He was approved of God because God used Him to perform all kinds of miracles & wonders & signs in *your* midst."

He said, "Him, being delivered by the *determined purpose* and foreknowledge of God, you have taken by lawless hands, have crucified, & put to death;"

Now we want to stop here for just a quick moment and point something out & that is this. The Crucifixion was no accident; the cross wasn't an obstacle that got in the way & had to be worked in. It was God's *set purpose*; it was God's plan from eternity past set in motion through His foreknowledge. What that means is that before the world was ever created the cross was always God's plan of redemption for mankind. In his epistle Peter put it like this, "...you were not redeemed with corruptible things, like silver or gold, from your aimless conduct received by tradition from your fathers, but with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot. He indeed was foreordained before the foundation of the world, but was manifest in these last times for you who through Him believe in God, who raised Him from the dead and gave Him glory, so that your faith and hope are in God.<sup>3</sup>"

So God's plan as it pertained to the cross was determined before the world ever was. However Peter points out that, that in no way justifies the wicked hands that took Him, tried Him & executed Him by nailing Him to a cross.

<sup>3</sup> The New King James Version. 1982 (1 Pe 1:18-21), Nashville: Thomas Nelson.

Does God's sovereignty excuse man's responsibility? No, you & I are responsible before God for the choices we make.

Peter says, "*You took Him & you put Him to death.*" Hey, that's pretty bold! 50 days earlier he was hiding behind a locked door; now he's openly accusing the people of Israel of executing the Son of God! (Of course what made the difference for him is the same thing that will make the difference for us, the power & the Person of the Holy Spirit upon our lives).

He says, "But God raised Him up, having loosed the pains of death, because it was not possible that He should be held by it." "You did your best to kill the Prince of life, but God raised Him from the dead because it wasn't possible for death to hold Him." **It's interesting when Peter says that God loosed the "pains of death" the word "pains" is more literally "birth pangs". In a sense the tomb became as it were a "womb" for Jesus from which He would become the "firstborn" from the dead, the 1<sup>st</sup> fruits of the resurrection...**

No more than a womb is able to keep a baby from being born could that tomb keep Jesus from emerging alive. Why? Listen, the bible is clear that the wages of sin *is* death; therefore Jesus *would die* because He would bear the sin of the world upon Himself. The bible says, "**For He made Him who knew no sin to be sin for us,<sup>4</sup>** But even though Jesus would bear our *sin*, He Himself never became nor never was a *sinner* therefore it was impossible for death to hold Him. Sin brings death, but if you're not a sinner how can death keep its hold on you? It can't. Here's the good news, in Christ death can't keep its hold on you either. Check it out, "**For He made Him who knew no sin to be sin for us, that we might become the righteousness of God in Him.<sup>5</sup>**" He made Him *sin* for us that we might be seen as *sinless* in Him.

That's what Jesus meant when He said to Martha "***I am the resurrection and the life. He who believes in Me, though he may die, he shall live. And whoever lives and believes in Me shall never die. Do you believe this?***<sup>6</sup>" In Christ death has no hold on us; oh this body may sleep; you can have this tent, there's a mansion that awaits me!

But Peter is driving home a point here & that is this; you can know that conclusively that Jesus is the Christ through the reality of the resurrection. That's what sets Him apart from any & every other "religious figure" that's ever lived. How do we know that His way, what He taught is the right way? He proved it through the resurrection, notice.

<sup>4</sup> The New King James Version. 1982 (2 Co 5:21). Nashville: Thomas Nelson.

<sup>5</sup> The New King James Version. 1982 (2 Co 5:21). Nashville: Thomas Nelson.

<sup>6</sup> The New King James Version. 1982 (Jn 11:25-26). Nashville: Thomas Nelson.

## Vs 25-36

See that? You can know assuredly that Jesus is both Lord & Christ through the fact of the resurrection.

You guys this is the 1<sup>st</sup> “sermon” every preached in the history of the church. What’s the topic? The resurrection of J.C. Peter shares the entire gospel, the crucifixion, the death & the resurrection of J.C. But the primary point that he hones in on & develops for his hearers is the resurrection.

He gives them 5 points to consider in his case: #1 (We’ve already seen) the Person of Jesus Himself, who He was, the life He lived & the fact (that they themselves witnessed) that God was with Him & moved miraculously through Him. His life & His Person demanded that death release Him. #2 The prophecy of scripture coupled w/the presence of David’s tomb. #3 The personal witness of all the disciples (the 120 who were there), #4 The supernatural events of Pentecost & #5 The ascension itself. All of these things prove the reality of the resurrection & the fact that Jesus is the Christ.

In Vs 25-28 Peter is quoting from the 16<sup>th</sup> psalm which is a psalm that David wrote. But Peter points out that David, being prophet was writing not of himself (because he was dead & buried & he could point to his tomb right there in their presence). But rather he was writing of the resurrection of the Christ. He says, “Look I don’t want to be crude but David’s soul *was* left in Hades (the realm of the dead) & his body *did* see corruption. There’s his tom right over there. Therefore David couldn’t have been writing about himself.” “He was speaking of the Messiah whom God would raise up, the One whom God raised up is Jesus whom you crucified.”

Not only that, David couldn’t have been referencing himself because he referenced the primary subject of his writing as the “Holy One”, David was a sinner & as such unholy, opposite holy. But Jesus, even though He was made sin, wasn’t a sinner, He was the Holy One of God; & since the “Holy One” the sinless One can’t be bound by death, the resurrection was inevitable.

Peter then looks around at the other 100+ disciples that are w/him & says, “We are all personal witnesses of Jesus’ resurrection; we know David was talking about Him because we all (including you) know His approved by God life prior to the cross; we know David’s prophecy but we’re all in the presence of his tomb, & we (that is the disciples) have seen the risen Jesus!”

He carries on, "Plus Jesus promised to send the Holy Spirit after He ascended to the Father (which, he said, you now see & hear [in reference to their speaking in tongues]) but unless He rose from the dead how could He ascend to the Father & send the Holy Spirit? **In the 110<sup>th</sup> Ps David prophesied the ascension when he said that the Lord would say to his Lord, "Sit at My right hand till I make Your enemies Your footstool."** Well, you can't sit there if you're not up there, so Jesus had to ascend to fulfill this prophecy.

So the life of Christ demanded the resurrection, the prophecy of scripture demanded it, they were in the presence of over 100 witnesses to it, the pouring out of the Holy Spirit ratified it which happened as the result of Jesus' ascension into heaven.

It's an open & shut case, it's a slam dunk, irrefutable on a personal, a prophetic & a practical level. That's how Peter can boldly say (Vs 36, read).

**Vs 37-41**

**These people are responding to the resurrection. Peter shared the gospel w/them & they were "cut" to the heart which means to "Strike or prick violently", or to understand it another way, they were convicted radically... Peter never made an altar call, they just responded, "What shall we do?"**

I want you to notice that when they were speaking in tongues there was no reaction like this, people were either mesmerized or they mocked. But when the gospel was preached they were cut to the heart. The work of salvation comes through the gospel of J.C. Paul said it like this, ***"For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ, for it is the power of God to salvation for everyone who believes,"*** Romans 1:16

**These guys were like, "My goodness, we've crucified the Christ, what can we do?" Really this is the result of all of us when we come to Christ, when God is working on us we want to be right w/Him, we realize we've sinned, we've separated ourselves from Him but we want to be right, what do we need to do?**

Peter says, "I'll tell you what you need to do, repent." Sounds like a harsh word that preachers pound out behind a pulpit doesn't it? Simply put it means to have a change of mind that's demonstrated through a change in direction. ***"You once thought Jesus was a heretic & a blasphemer worthy of death. You need to change your mind about that and believe on Him as the only begotten Son of God who bore the sin of the world for the sake of our forgiveness. No longer are you to reject Him, you're to receive Him for who He is."***

You see the gospel isn't based upon people cleaning up their lives & getting their act together. It's based upon a change of mind concerning who Jesus really is. The Christ (S.O.L.G.)

So understand that salvation won't just "happen" for you. It involves a responsibility on your end; that of repentance. Repentance isn't feeling sorry, it's changing your mind, changing your direction, no longer rejecting Jesus, but embracing Him as Lord; the Messiah.

Now let me state this, repentance isn't what we do *before* we come to God; repentance describes what coming to God is, you can't turn toward God w/out turning away from your sin... So really the word "repent" is a word of hope. It says, "Things don't have to go on like they have, you can turn to God." Many people wonder if things will ever change for them, if life always has to go on like it has. Hey, things can change & life doesn't have to be the way it is, you can turn from your sin & trust in J.C...Believe me when I tell you that at that point, things will change.

Then Peter says, "Once you repent for the remission of your sins, you need to be baptized in the name of Jesus." That is, make a public demonstration of your inward transformation & identification w/Jesus & His death, burial & resurrection on your behalf. You're not ashamed of Him, you will live your life openly & out loud for Him.

"For the promise is to you & to your children, & to all who are afar off, as many as the Lord our God will call."

So Peter exhorted them as I'm exhorting you to be saved from this perverse generation (which is every generation btw). Then they responded to the resurrection of J.C. and about 3,000 souls were added to the kingdom of God that day.

That's how they responded, I pray it's how you respond to. By turning from your sin, trusting in J.C. and receiving new life in Him.

If you've already received that life, then may you be refreshed & renewed through the power of the resurrection. & May you walk worthy of the calling w/which you were called with all lowliness and gentleness, with longsuffering, bearing with one another in love, endeavoring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace...

### Prayer Points:

Lord Jesus we thank You for Your love for us, being willing to take our sin upon Yourself being made sin for us that we might become the righteousness of God in You. You were made sin, that we might be seen as sinless before the Father by faith in You. We don't understand it but we praise You for it. We rejoice in the reality of Your resurrection of which we bear witness through our presence here today. Pour out Your Spirit fresh upon us that we might be granted boldness & bring glory to You.

If you've not responded to the resurrection through receiving Jesus than I want to open the door for you right here, right now. Jesus lived a sinless life & was made sin for us. He laid down His life upon the cross for the sake of our sin & 3 days later He rose again. He was crucified for our transgressions, He was raised for our justification. You know who you are, where you've been, what you've done & that when it comes to the accusation "sinner", you're guilty as charged. But through Jesus you can stand justified; released of guilt & given new life. If God is tugging on your heart strings; turn from your sin & trust in Jesus.