

Introduction

- A. Turn to Acts 2.
 - 1. It is difficult to find a more significant chapter in the Bible than this one. The entire Bible story revolves around the events of this day – Pentecost. Everything that goes before was pointing to this moment. In fact, when Peter sets out to explain the amazing miracle that had just occurred, he says that this is what the prophet Joel was talking about (Acts 2:16). All of Old Testament history was looking to this Pentecost.
 - 2. Everything that followed looked back to this event. Even our own decision to follow Jesus looks back to Pentecost. We confess what Peter preached about Jesus. We obey the commands Peter gave to the multitude gathered that day. Pentecost is the pivotal moment.
- B. But it wasn't just an event that changed the world; it changed forever the people who were there.
 - 1. This great multitude drawn together by the noise of the miracle was made up of people just like you and me.
 - 2. As they listened to Peter's sermon explaining the significance of this day, their world was rocked by a stunning reality that brought them to the most important moment of decision they would ever experience.
 - 3. But make no mistake; every man must face his Pentecost moment. We must confront the same stunning reality which will bring us to our own moment of decision.
- C. I want us to go back and consider this pivotal moment in Bible history. I want us to go back to Pentecost. I want us to consider once more the powerful truths that stunned Peter's audience and the moment of decision to which they were brought. I want us to consider the impact of these truths on us and how they change our lives forever.

A Stunning Reality

- A. There was a stunning reality with which Peter confronts the multitude that gathered on Pentecost. Jesus is at the heart of it all.
 - 1. There had been a lot of speculation about Him (John 7:12, 20, 26, 31, 40-41, 44, 48).
 - 2. But Peter will lay out the facts about who He is and what He had done.
- B. Peter will confront his audience with four indisputable realities.
 - 1. First, Jesus was **"attested to you by God"** (v. 22).
 - a. There should never have been a shred of doubt that Jesus was the Son of God and the promised Savior. God did not send Jesus into the world making these astonishing claims and expecting that people would blindly accept them. They were demonstrated to be true by the miracles that He performed. It is one thing for a guy to SAY he is the Son of God. It is quite another for the same guy to begin healing the sick, calming the sea and raising the dead.
 - b. These were not things done in secret (v. 22b). Everyone knew about them. They should have believed Him. Every last one of them should have fallen at His feet and worshiped Him, just as the blind man did (John 9:38).
 - c. But this is not what they did. In spite of the overwhelming evidence that His claims were true, these people did the unthinkable.
 - 2. Second, Peter says **"you nailed to a cross"** this one you knew to be from God (v. 23).
 - a. They could not pass blame to the Romans who actually carried out the execution. The truth was this was a plot by the Jewish leaders and the Romans were manipulated into helping them.
 - b. Peter is piecing together a mental puzzle for his audience and a horrifying image is beginning to emerge. God had sent them a Savior; and they had killed Him.
 - c. But a third critical piece is about to be added.
 - 3. Third, **"God raised Him up again"** (v. 24).
 - a. With these words Peter reaches the most critical part of the sermon. The death of Jesus was not the end of the story. God would undo their terrible deed by raising Jesus from the dead.
 - b. Peter would go on at some length citing evidence to back this claim. He points first to the Old Testament (vs. 25-31) noting how David had foretold that this would happen (v. 31). He would next point to eyewitness testimony (v. 32). The resurrection could not be denied because there were simply too many people who saw Him after He rose. Paul mentions five hundred who had seen Him at one time (I Corinthians 15:6). He also cites a third piece of evidence (v. 33). Everything they had just witnessed – the outpouring of the Spirit, the miracle, it was all the work of Jesus. And if Jesus did this, He must be alive. And not just alive...
 - 4. Fourth, Peter says Jesus has been **"exalted to the right hand of God"** (v. 33). The Jesus they killed is now beside God in heaven (v. 36).
- C. Imagine being in that crowd.
 - 1. There could be no disputing of the facts. They knew Peter was right.
 - 2. But if he was, they were guilty – guilty of killing their Savior, the Savior their nation had been waiting on for centuries.
 - 3. Can you imagine the grief and terror that must have seized the sincere within the crowd?
 - 4. It was a stunning reality as they came face to face with the facts about Jesus.
- D. It's not just a reality that they had to face; every person will have their Pentecost moment. At some point, we will have to face the facts about Jesus.
 - 1. I will have to come to grips with the fact that He claimed to be the Son of God and backed up that claim with undeniable proof. Even His enemies were forced to acknowledge His miracles. What am I going to do with that?

2. I will have to face the fact that I put Him on the cross. I was not numbered among the Jewish leaders who plotted against Him or even in the crowd that called for His crucifixion, but He was there because of me (John 1:29). How will I respond to this fact? It is a stunning reality.
3. How will I respond to the fact that He is alive, that He is reigning in heaven as my King, my Lord? It's not enough just to acknowledge that these facts are so. There is an unavoidable impact that should follow in the life of every true believer (Luke 6:46).
4. Like that crowd on Pentecost, every man must face the facts about Jesus. As we do, these truths will do to us what they did to the Pentecost crowd. The facts about Jesus brought them to the most important moment of decision they would ever face.

A Moment of Decision

- A. Verse 37 offers us a glimpse into the hearts of at least some in that multitude. Luke says that they were pierced to the heart.
 1. This language is similar to the language found in Acts 7. In this case, Stephen is preaching. In fact, he makes the same charge against the crowd that Peter makes on Pentecost (Acts 7:52). His audience does not respond well to his message (Acts 7:54). They would ultimately drag Stephen out of the city and kill him.
 2. However, the response of many in the Pentecost crowd was exactly the opposite (Acts 2:37). The message got to them. There could be no doubt about two things. First, Peter was right. There was no disputing the facts about Jesus. Second, they were guilty. The blood of Jesus was on their hands.
 3. They had to decide how they would respond. They had reached their moment of decision – the most important decision they would ever make.
- B. Rather than being angry, they seek an answer, a solution (Acts 2:38). What could they do about this horrific crime they have committed?
 1. Peter answers their question (v. 38).
 - a. Many in the crowd have already come to the point of belief. They would never have posed the question if they did not believe that what Peter was saying about Jesus was true.
 - b. To have their sins forgiven, they must repent (make the decision to turn from sin) and be baptized (immersed in water). If they did this, their sins would be forgiven and they would receive the gift of the Holy Spirit – the salvation promised by the Spirit (Acts 2:21).
 - c. I find it interesting that many in our day are dismissive about baptism. They treat it as some irrelevant detail that can be lightly dismissed. And yet, here it is, front and center, at this pivotal moment in Bible history. Not only this, but it is said to be necessary for one to have his sins forgiven and be saved.
 2. Keep in mind that our crowd is still facing their moment of decision. At this point, they've only been told what to do. They haven't actually done anything (Acts 2:40). We don't know how many were in the crowd, what we do know is that three thousand would make the right choice (Acts 2:41). At their moment of decision, they chose to believe and obey Jesus.
- C. But it is not just this crowd who had to make this choice.
 1. After Pentecost, this same message continued to be preached. The disciples took the message to the whole world. Every day there were people choosing to believe and obey Jesus (Acts 2:47).
 2. Every person today must face the facts about Jesus and make a decision. You and I have to do that.
 - a. I can reject Him, just like that crowd who heard Stephen's sermon. But keep in mind that this decision goes against reason; it is in spite of all the evidence to the contrary. It is a decision for which we will answer (John 12:48). I doubt we have a single person in our crowd who is interested in that option.
 - b. But the only other choice is to accept Him. But this means accepting Him for all that He is. It means accepting Him not just as the One who will save me from my sins, but accepting Him as my Lord. If this is my choice, then I must accept what He says about salvation (Acts 2:38). No quibbling about baptism. This is what He requires (Mark 16:16). But it means more than this. As Lord He has the right to rule in my life, to guide and govern my actions every day, in everything I do. No more quibbling and justifying when I encounter teaching from my Lord that requires change. He's the Lord, right? I have to do it!
 3. We accept Jesus for all that He is...OR NOT AT ALL!

Conclusion: We all have to decide about Jesus.

- A. Imagine you had been in the crowd that day. What would you have done? Would you have been counted among the unnumbered scoffers who rejected the message? Or would you have raised the number of saved to 3001?
- B. The truth is that some of us may be facing our Pentecost moment right now. Like that crowd, you know the facts about Jesus. You believe they are true. But you need to decide, you need to make your choice about Jesus. He tells you what to do (Acts 2:38). You've come to your moment. What will you do? Which side will you choose?
- C. Or perhaps you have chosen, but you have not allowed Jesus to be your Lord. If you need help allowing Him to truly reign in your life, we will encourage you.

- David A. Banning