

Series: You Are Sent, Vol 1  
Sermon: The Gospel of King Jesus  
Text: Acts 2.14-41

### Introduction

If you have a bible, go ahead and get it out. Turn to Acts 2. If you are newer around here at Mercy Church I want to say what an honor it is that you would trust us to come in here and explore God and faith. And if you don't own a bible, we have one for you we'd love to give as a gift to you so you can follow along throughout the week.

Today we continue our series through the book of Acts we are calling "You Are Sent." And one of the things we said in week one is that The Church is a movement. And really the most unlikely, unexpected movement in human history. When it arrived, people had never seen anything like it. It was peaceful – when persecuted they didn't fight. They prayed for their captors and they went to their deaths with joy. We saw last week it was the most multi-cultural community on the planet. Not only that, slaves and masters, men and women, rich and poor were treated as equals. This group was SO generous the roman leaders didn't know what to do with them because they cared for the poor and sick without an agenda.

Week 1 we said the church is a **movement**. designed by God to function as a movement of people you go forward with, not a place with services where you just sit and consume. Then last week we saw the **mover** behind the movement is the Holy Spirit. this rag-tag group of Galileans had such a mighty impact on the entire world is because God came down and resided in

them and chose to do his work THROUGH Jesus' followers. Today I am so, so excited to share with you the **message** of the movement. Acts 2. It's a relatively short message and at the end of it there is an extraordinary response.

Today I want to try and look at this first message and show you the powerful, simple gospel of Jesus Christ. Because it was this message that shook the world and turned it upside down.

The day Peter preached this: 3000 people responded in belief. And they went public with that belief through baptism. I'm going to give you the chance to go public the same way. To be baptized as a public declaration of your faith. On September 28-29 Mercy will have baptisms at all 3 services. One Saturday, Two Sunday. And this is your time and you need to take it alongside of others who will take it with you. I'll walk you through that towards the end of the message.

The gospel message. It is a holy thing in scripture. Peter himself in 1 Peter 1.12 says even the Angels long to catch a glimpse of the gospel that is given to people. So we will walk through the sermon and then I'll lay out the gospel for you. LET'S GO.

**14 Peter stood up with the Eleven, raised his voice, and proclaimed to them:**

Ok, I want to take a quick second. Not long. To talk about Peter, the preacher. Not long because Peter's message was about Jesus, not Peter. But I hope it encourages you, like it encourages me, that God uses Peter to preach the gospel for the first time. Because this guy had a history of NOT LIVING UP

TO EXPECTATIONS. He had some serious fails in his time following Jesus. At one point he was so naïve and prideful that he told Jesus he was wrong about why he came. Jesus! And Jesus says “Get behind me Satan!” Now, I know you’ve had some bad days...but has Jesus Christ ever called you Satan? That’s a bad day.

He’s got temperamental faith...He trusts Jesus enough to jump out of the boat when Jesus says to and he walks on water...yet when he feels the wind he starts to doubt and sink. He says I’ll NEVER DENY YOU...and then he denies him 3 times the night before his death.

THIS IS OUR PREACHER! Which is why I love it and I hope you do. Because God loves using a mess like you and me to show off his glory. You know why Peter has the courage to stand here? The Holy Spirit was in him. God is working THROUGH Peter. Which is how someone so wishy washy became so CONFIDENT in GOD that he delivers this incredibly powerful sermon that is incredibly offensive to the culture of the day. It’s how Peter performed signs and wonders. It’s how Peter led the movement forward and its ultimately how Peter had the courage to be crucified upside down in Rome for refusing to deny Christ again.

And this series...I’m telling you is revealing that the same power is available to you because the same Holy Spirit is promised to you if you are a follower of Christ. GRAB ONTO THAT. He’s the mover. Ok....

“Fellow Jews and all you residents of Jerusalem, let me explain this to you and pay attention to my words. 15 For these

people are not drunk, as you suppose, since it’s only nine in the morning. 16 On the contrary, this is what was spoken through the prophet Joel:

Let me explain the meaning of what you are seeing. Because some of you weren’t locked in but then you heard me say “drunk” and you are like wait what now? Who’s drunk?

Remember last week? Holy Spirit comes down and the disciples all start speaking in different languages. Proclaiming the gospel message in the languages of these people who have gathered from different corners of the world. It’s a remarkable scene you will have to go back and listen to last week’s sermon cause I can’t re-preach it here. But some people spectators are like...these guys have never been outside of Israel. There’s no way they are speaking all these languages. Must be drunken nonsense.

So Peter says they aren’t drunk. It’s 9am on a Sunday. And they say...Have you been to a panther tailgate? But Peter says this is God showing up to make good on what he said a long time ago. And then Peter quotes the OT book of Joel<sup>1</sup>. Here’s what Peter says:

17 And it will be in the last days, says God, that I will pour out my Spirit on all people; then your sons and your daughters will prophesy, your young men will see visions, and your old men will dream dreams. 18 I will even pour out my Spirit on my servants in those days, both men and women and they will prophesy.

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<sup>1</sup> Joel 2.28-32

Which is what is happening right now. Men and Women are prophesying. Not future telling, but proclaiming / preaching the gospel of God's saving work. And what will happen as we keep going through Acts is they will dream dreams and see visions. Peter is saying...The Last Days are here.

19 I will display wonders in the heaven above and signs on the earth below: blood and fire and a cloud of smoke. 20 The sun will be turned to darkness and the moon to blood before the great and glorious day of the Lord comes.

But the Last Days aren't over yet because we haven't seen all of this yet. Peter is saying we are living in the Last Days but not the last day. Christians will sometimes talk about this present age that we live in as the Already Not Yet. Christ has already made a way of salvation but has not yet come to rule the world. He is the King who is coming. He's not here yet. Which means there is time, limited time but time, where you can still receive his forgiveness!! And he finishes the Joel quote acknowledging what will happen to those who calls on God for salvation: 21 Then everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved.

They Will Be Saved! Which is a Christian-y word that we need to grip clearly today. The saving is from the judgment coming on all those who reject the one true God. So then he comes out of Joel and explains who Jesus IS. (could cut this section)

22 "Fellow Israelites, listen to these words: This Jesus of Nazareth was a man attested to you by God with miracles,

wonders, and signs that God did among you through him, just as you yourselves know.

**Jesus was a man** – Notice how Peter wants to really make a point here? He doesn't say Jesus of Heaven. He says Jesus of Nazareth. That's his hometown. Paul of Tarsus. Spence of Greensboro. He's got a backstory. And he's saying you were there for all of the miracles he did. You saw them. You saw **HIM**. Why does it matter that Jesus was a man? Because listen: The whole idea of the gospel is that Jesus died as a substitute for humans. So he had to be human to be a substitute for other humans. But he wasn't just any man. He was a man attested to you by God. And elsewhere Jesus is going to claim to be God. He was God in human form. Because only God has the power to take on the payment for everyone's sins.

23 Though he was delivered up according to God's determined plan and foreknowledge, you used lawless people to nail him to a cross and kill him.

God knew we needed saving from our sin. Jesus' crucifixion did not surprise Jesus nor did it surprise God the father. God set this plan in motion long ago. In fact, almost every step of his life, death, and resurrection are fulfillments of prophecies from long ago. YET, he doesn't let us off the hook. He says YOU used lawless people to nail him to a cross and kill him. God didn't kill him. We did. And...very important...HE DIED. He was put in a tomb. Dead. Not asleep. Not badly injured. He was hung on a cross until he breathed his last breath. Then a soldier stuck a spear in his side and blood & water rushed out.

It was a disgraceful humiliating execution. And it worked. He died. And I emphasize that so we can hear Peter's next words.

**24 God raised him up, ending the pains of death, because it was not possible for him to be held by death.**

I love Peter's simple statement. God raised him up. Know why? Because It was not possible for him to be held by death. He died...but death couldn't keep him. Peter is evoking this imagery like death is a prison. But it was just IMPOSSIBLE for the gates of that prison to hold Jesus. No...GOD will not be held by death. The curse of sin has no hold on our God. This, you see, is where we Christians get our hope from. We believe our God has power over death. He brings Jesus to life. And he promises NEW LIFE to everyone who believes. And we need new life. We need chains of sin broken.

Then Peter shows us how to understand the OT.

**25 For David says of him** (Peter is now going to quote a few verses from Psalm 16): **I saw the Lord ever before me; because he is at my right hand, I will not be shaken. 26 Therefore my heart is glad and my tongue rejoices; Moreover, my flesh will rest in hope, 27 because you will not abandon me in Hades or allow your holy one to see decay.**

**28 You have revealed the paths of life to me; you will fill me with gladness in your presence.**

Go look up Psalm 16. That's verses 8-11. Remember he's talking to a mostly Jewish audience who, while from every culture under the sun, would be unified in their familiarity with the Psalms. And Peter says let's think about what David

said for a second. "You will not allow your holy one to see decay." Logic says there is no way this could be about...David.

**29 "Brothers and sisters, I can confidently speak to you about the patriarch David: He is both dead and buried, and his tomb is with us to this day. 30 Since he was a prophet, he knew that God had sworn an oath to him to seat one of his descendants on his throne. 31 Seeing what was to come he spoke concerning the resurrection of the Messiah: He was not abandoned in Hades, and his flesh did not experience decay.**

Peter says David wasn't talking about himself. He was talking about the Messiah. A descendant of his who would die. Doesn't say he wouldn't experience death. Says he wouldn't be left there. Wouldn't stay long enough. but would not be left to see decay. Whoever the Messiah is...the grave would only be a brief pit stop. He won't be there long enough to experience any of death's lasting effects. His body won't be subject to the curse of death. In fact, he's going to reverse the curse of Death. Instead of decay, he's going to rise glorified. He looks better coming out of the grave than when he went in. Who was it?

**32 "God has raised this Jesus; we are all witnesses of this.**

Jesus. He's the one. He's the one who got out of the grave. **He went in crucified but came out glorified.** That's what Jesus Does. Reverses the curse of sin AND its effects. And because Jesus did this for us...the apostle Paul says this is where the POWER to walk in freedom from sin comes from FOR US! The RESURRECTION of Jesus is our RALLY CRY.

How can we who died to sin still live in it? 3 Or are you unaware that all of us who were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death? 4 Therefore we were buried with him by baptism into death, in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, so we too may walk in newness of life. -- Romans 6:2-4

It's where WE get the power to walk away from Sin. It's the thing we look at one another and remind each other of. We have new life! In BAPTISM you are declaring...MY OLD SELF IS DEAD! Hear this clearly: The gospel message is not that you need improvement. Jesus is not here because you are a Fixer-Upper in need of a good contractor. He's not a self-improvement coach. He's here to tell you that you need a whole new life. Not an overhaul. A new life. that the only way you will find the salvation your soul craves, the peace and meaning you keep searching for...the only way to that new life is the death of the old one. And in baptism...you go into the water, not the dirt, because Christ went into the grave for you. And then you come out sharing in that newness of life! And notice Paul says WE. Because when you receive new life in Christ you also receive a community of people who have done the same. We walk TOGETHER in that new life. When one stumbles, we pick each other up. We say "REMEMBER YOUR BAPTISM!" We need each other to say "Why are you trying to crawl back into the grave?" You have been set free from that! Anyways, that's a sermon for another time. Let's see how Peter lands this plane:

33 Therefore, since he has been exalted to the right hand of God and has received from the Father the promised Holy

Spirit, he has poured out what you both see and hear. 34 For it was not David who ascended into the heavens, but he himself says:

The Lord declared to my Lord, 'Sit at my right hand 35 until I make your enemies your footstool.'

Very important to the Christian message: He didn't just rise from the grave so he could die again later. Jesus (not David) ascended into Heaven. He's quoting Psalm 110 now. And the only way to make sense of the phrasing "The Lord declared to my Lord" is if God is talking to...God. And the only way that makes sense is if the man Jesus Christ is also God. So Peter says Jesus, fully God, fully man, ascends into heaven and sits down at the right hand of God the father. Where he will stay until he comes back to make all his enemies his footstool. Then Peter drops the mic with this:

36 "Therefore let all the house of Israel know with certainty that God has made this Jesus, whom you crucified, both Lord and Messiah."

Verse 36 is a very heavy word isn't it. KNOW FOR CERTAIN. HEAR AND TAKE IT IN. God has made this Jesus whom you killed both Lord over creation, and Messiah – The anointed one sent to bring salvation from sin to all mankind. And then he stops. And watch their response:

37 When they heard this, they were pierced to the heart and said to Peter and the rest of the apostles: "Brothers, what should we do? "

See what happened? They were "pierced to the heart." That's the impact of the message. What does it mean? It means that

what is happening is exactly what Jesus said would happen when the Holy Spirit came into the world. The Holy Spirit, he said in John 16.8, would convict of sin. Which means the Spirit would act like a lawyer...cross-examining you (The actual word convict is cross-examine) and exposing the inconsistencies in the beliefs you've built your life around. Exposing them to be false and insufficient so that you can finally be confronted with truth.

So the rest of our time is answering two questions: WHAT caused them to be pierced to the heart? And What did they do in response?

**Why were they cut to the heart?** Two things:

**1. They realized they had been wrong about Jesus.**

In their day, just as in ours, there were people who had a bunch of different opinions about who they wanted Jesus to be. Prophet they could admire, a Political ruler they could back, A fake they could dismiss...

But Jesus wouldn't allow any of that. He claimed to Be God. To be LORD and Messiah. He demanded his followers' submission to him as Lord. He offered forgiveness for sins! This was extremely offensive to the Jews and ultimately is what they crucified him for. He claimed to be sent BY God to save sinners and claimed that he was the ONLY WAY. And every step of the way people tried to quiet him down. But what Peter is saying happened in the Resurrection is that God made a declaration over Jesus once and for all that he is in Fact LORD. God. And he IS in fact Messiah. The **only** savior for your sin.

Here's the thing: Our culture would prefer we approach Jesus the same way today. That he was a good teacher or even a prophet. Or ONE option for worship. Christianity doesn't get offensive until it says NO, he's the ONLY option. And that gets real offensive.

You guys know who Bono is right? Fairly popular musician. Well, in 2005 he sat down with Michka Assayas for a series of interviews that became a book that is almost like a biography through conversation. Anyways, the guy says "Christ has his rank among the world's great thinkers, but Son of God, isn't that far-fetched?"

Bono: No, it's not far-fetched to me. *"The secular response to the Christ story always goes like this: 'He was a great prophet, obviously a very interesting guy, had a lot to say along the lines of other great prophets, be they Elijah, Muhammad, Buddha, or Confucius.'*

*But actually Christ says, 'No. I'm not saying I'm a teacher, don't call me teacher. I'm not saying I'm a prophet. 'I'm saying... 'I am God in the flesh.'*

*And people say: 'No, no, please, just be a prophet. A prophet we can take. You're a bit eccentric; but we've had John the Baptist eating locusts and wild honey; we can handle that. But (not God)! Not the Messiah! Because, you know, we're gonna have to crucify you if you say that.*

*And he goes: “No, no, I... actually am the Messiah.” At this point, everyone starts staring at their shoes, and says: ‘Oh, my God; he’s gonna keep saying this.’*

*So what you’re left with is either Christ was who he said he was – God incarnate, the Messiah – or a complete nutcase. I mean, we’re talking nutcase on the level of Charles Manson...I’m not joking here. The idea that the entire course of civilization for over half of the globe could have its fate changed and turned upside-down by a nutcase, for me that’s a little far fetched...”<sup>2</sup>*

Peter is pulling them to a point of decision. Did Jesus get out of the grave? And think about the setting. This is 2 months or less after the crucifixion and it’s in the same town where he was crucified.

And the people listening were pierced to the heart. Because they realized the resurrection couldn’t be a hallucination. There were hundreds of eye witnesses to his resurrection. Minimum 500 eye witnesses. It couldn’t be a lie. What do they gain from this lie? Certainly not power or money. All these apostles eventually die as broke martyrs for believing this.

So they were pierced. We were wrong about Jesus. We wanted him to be one thing but his resurrection makes him another thing. And the question I have for you is: Are you open to Jesus being who he says he is?

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<sup>2</sup> Tim Keller, *The Reason For God* (Dutton Publishing, NY NY 2008), pp. 229-230.

There’s a second reason they were cut to the heart. **They realized they were responsible for the death of Jesus.**

Peter lays the burden of guilt on his audience a couple of times

**23 ... you used lawless people to nail him to a cross and kill him**

**36 “...God has made this Jesus, whom you crucified**

Now obviously everyone in that crowd didn’t play an active role in Jesus’ death. Many of them weren’t even there. But he’s saying everyone there did play some role in it. In fact, in verse 39 he says this message is not only for them but for their children and for people all around the world. It’s for you and me. And it’s for Peter too. When peter sees him being beaten, he realizes that Jesus is being beaten for his own betrayal. And that pierces peter’s heart. And everyone listening to Peter now is coming to the same conclusion Peter did. “we did this.”

The bible says Jesus died for our sin. He was wounded for our transgressions. See when you are pierced to the heart you realize that what Jesus did...he did for you. It was for your rejection of him. Your rebellion against him. You choosing your way over his way. The way my old pastor used to say it: Before you are pierced you think of sin as breaking God’s rules, but after you are pierced you see sin as breaking God’s heart. You see God as a father calling his children home. You realize we resisted his son sent for us. And when his son persisted, we killed him.



Has this happened to you? For me it happened when I was 12 and in a setting very much like this. And the guy said simply: Your sin has condemned you to death apart from Christ. My sin. My rebellion. My caring more about what my friends thought of me than what Christ thought of me. My mocking Jesus to get laughs. My rebelling against my parents. I saw Jesus, beaten and bloodied, looking at me like Peter saw Jesus looking at him. This was for me. Has this happened to you? Listen – You have to deal with Jesus personally. You can't come to God on the faith of your parents. You can't come to God via attendance and participation in Christian programs. You have to see your sin for what it is.

#### **What did they do in response?**

38 Peter replied, "Repent and be baptized, each of you, in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins, and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit....41 So those who accepted his message were baptized, and that day about three thousand people were added to them. -- Acts 2:14-41

**Repent** – This means to turn. To decisively and permanently change directions. It's taking on a whole new view of God. I was wrong, I'm turning from that wrong way of seeing Jesus. You can't repent until you acknowledge that. But then, you turn and when you turn you receive the forgiveness the cross offers you. ISN'T this amazing – The very act of betrayal that put Jesus ON THE CROSS is also the act that gives you forgiveness. So when you repent, you see the WEIGHT of YOUR SIN and the GOODNESS of the CROSS! Your heavenly father who loves you,

and has been coming after you, has now made a way. And now you see this is what he's been doing all along. And you are ready to come home.

And listen: To Repent is also to recognize the Lordship of King Jesus. It's not about becoming a better person, or being a little more religious, it's about recognizing **he's in charge** and surrendering to him—and receiving his offer to be your Savior. That's **something you've either done** if you haven't. This is the line in the sand. You can't have him as savior and not as Lord. Have you done that? Too many people grew up in the "I'm a Christian because I grew up around Christianity. I'm not Jew or Muslim, must be a Christian." No. That's not how this works. You have to REPENT AND RECEIVE THE FORGIVENESS OF CHRIST. HAVE YOU DONE THAT? THAT is what I want to call you to today.

Then Peter said – BE BAPTIZED. Baptism is the public declaration of THAT belief. That you are crossing the line of faith. And saying YES, I believe! I believe many of you need to take that step. Whether you are crossing that line today...or maybe you crossed it years ago but you never made it public. It's Time!

Here's what's going to happen: TODAY I'm going to lead you in a prayer to receive Christ's offer of salvation. And then I want you to come talk to someone about being baptized. Whether you've been a Christian for 5 seconds or 5 years.



Prayer of Salvation: **Jesus, Today I am receiving you as my Lord and my savior. Thank you for dying for my sins. You are lord. I surrender everything to you. Amen.**

Spence – Thank you Jesus for all those that just prayed.

CARD – Fill it out. We are all going to stand up in just a moment. And you are going to take that card and make this your day. Again whether you've just decided to follow Christ or you've been following him for years but have never taken the step to obey Jesus through baptism.

