

3-27-21 Divine Interruption

Acts 10:34-48.

In Acts 10:34-48 we're going to hear a sermon that was preached to a very enthusiastic and eager congregation. Just as Peter the preacher was getting into the meat of his message, the sermon was not only interrupted, but it also came to a screeching halt.

I like the insight of Charles Spurgeon, "Oh that our sermons were incomplete for the same cause that Peter's was, for the Holy Spirit, who speaks better by Himself than by the most earnest voice, caused a divinely joyful interruption...Surely a sermon produced under such circumstances, leading up to such results, and interrupted so divinely, deserves to be reverently studied."

As I read these verses, I see the gospel all through it.

After this brief introduction, Peter establishes seven essential elements of the grace gospel. These elements stand in contrast to what we often hear people say.

- I'm sincere in what I believe. The centurion was sincere but not saved. (**Acts 11:14, "who will tell you words by which you and all your household will be saved."**)
- I'm working at doing good works. Good works are never good enough because no one is good enough to meet God's standards.
- I'm trying to clean up my life. Come to Him now and He'll do the cleaning.

1. The Gospel Brings Peace. (v.36)

- **Read verse 36.**
- It more literally reads this way: "gospelizing peace through Jesus Christ." This brings us back to the message the sleepy shepherds heard from the angelic choir in **Luke 2:14: "Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace among those with whom he is pleased!"**
- **Romans 5:10** declares we are enemies of God and are at war with Him. **Romans 5:1** says we can be at peace with God through Jesus: **"Therefore, since we have been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ."** In **Ephesians 2:17**, we see Jesus brings peace to those from a Jewish background and to those who are Gentiles: **"And He came and preached peace to you who were far off and peace to those who were near."**
- Once we're at peace with God, we can experience the peace of God and be at peace with others.
- This world is seeking peace, peace with mankind, peace within itself, peace with earth, peace with each other.
- Who doesn't want peace?
- The only peace we can have with God comes through the saving knowledge of Jesus Christ. Until we are His, there is no peace.

2. Recognize Jesus' Authority... He is Lord. (v.36)

- **Read** the last 7 words in **verse 36. "Jesus Christ He is Lord of all."**

- Jesus is Lord of Israelites and of Gentiles.
- **1 Timothy 6:15** says He is **“King of kings and Lord of lords.”** Listen. There is no way to be saved unless we confess Jesus is Lord.

On March 25th Pope Francis tweeted: *“Mary is not only the bridge joining us to God; she is more. She is the road that God travelled to reach us; and the road that we must travel in order to reach him.”*

Romans 10:9: “If you confess with your mouth that Jesus is Lord and believe in your heart that God raised Him from the dead, you will be saved.”

Acts 4:12, “Nor is there salvation in any other, for there is no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved.”

John 14:6, “Jesus said to him, “I am the way, the truth, and the life, No one comes to the Father except through me.”

- I need to catch myself, too often I have said, “make Jesus Lord of your life.” but, He is Lord, whether we submit to Him or not.

James Montgomery Boice: “We often hear the ‘Savior’ characteristics of God stressed – His love, mercy, goodness and so on – but the matter of His lordship is absent. The distortion is particularly clear in evangelism. In modern practice the call to repentance is usually called an ‘invitation,’ which one can obviously accept or refuse. It is offered politely. Seldom do we hear presented God’s sovereign demand to repent or His demand for submission to the authority of His appointed King, Christ Jesus.”

3. Consider the WORKS of Jesus. (all He did) (vvs.37-39)

- **Read verse 37-39**
- Peter tells Cornelius and his friends that they knew enough about the life of Jesus to submit to His Lordship. The phrase, **“you know”** is emphatic. Jesus ministered throughout the land of Israel and even into the surrounding countries.
- In **Acts 26:26** Paul says, **“For the king, before whom I also speak freely, knows these things; for I am convinced that none of these things escapes his attention, since this thing was not done in a corner.”**
- The word **“anointed” (Acts 10:38)** is the word for “Messiah” in Hebrew and “Christ” in Greek. Jesus is the long-awaited Savior, the one who fulfills prophecy and exhibits the very power of God. By the way, all three members of the Trinity are evident in **verse 38: “How God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Spirit.”**
- Jesus went about **“doing good and healing all who were oppressed by the devil.”** Jesus did good things and He delivered people from the devil.
- If you don’t know much about Jesus, read one of the four gospels. I recommend you start with Mark or John. Then when you’re done, read all of them. If you hope to know Jesus, you must first know about Him.

4. Believe that Jesus died on a tree. (v.39)

- The key part of the gospel is the crucifixion of Jesus Christ. Because of grace, He died in our place. Listen to the last part of **verse 39**: **“They killed by hanging on a tree.”** Peter picked up on this when he later wrote these words in **1 Peter 2:24**: **“who Himself bore our sins in His own body on the tree, that we, having died to sins, might live for righteousness—by whose stripes you were healed.”**
- By using the phrase, “hanging on a tree,” Peter is referencing **Deuteronomy 21:22-23**:

“If a man has committed a sin deserving of death, and he is put to death, and you hang him on a tree, 23 his body shall not remain overnight on the tree, but you shall surely bury him that day, so that you do not defile the land which the Lord your God is giving you as an inheritance; for he who is hanged is accursed of God.”

- Paul writes in **Galatians 3:13**: **“Christ has redeemed us from the curse of the law, having become a curse for us (for it is written, “Cursed is everyone who hangs on a tree”),”**
- Jesus took the curse which belonged to us by becoming the curse for us. The curse is reversed when we repent and receive Christ into our lives.

5. Believe God RAISED Jesus from the dead. (vvs.40-41)

- Aren’t you glad we don’t serve a dead Savior? Jesus has conquered sin, Satan, and death itself by rising from the dead, validating everything He claimed.
- **Read verses 40-41.**
- The reality of the resurrection is the foundation of the Book of Acts. **Acts 1:3**, **“to whom He also presented Himself alive after His suffering by many infallible proofs, being seen by them during forty days and speaking of the things pertaining to the kingdom of God.”**
- The book of Acts refers to Jesus’ resurrection 24 times. Jesus appeared to well over 500 people and even ate and drank with some of them to show He was raised from the dead bodily. Peter himself is one of those witnesses.
- The resurrection is the lynch pin, others have come and claimed to have eternal life but none of them have been resurrected. They are still dead in the ground!
- That is why the resurrection is the most disputed part of the Easter/resurrection story. Without Jesus resurrection, all of mankind is still lost in their sins. Jesus would still be the only one with access to heaven.

6. ADMIT and CONFESS YOU deserve judgment. (v.42)

- While some churches have stopped preaching about Hell or judgment, in **verse 42** Peter is given a direct order to preach that Jesus is the ultimate Judge:
- Because of our sins, each of us deserve judgment, condemnation and a sentence resulting in eternal separation in Hell.

- **1 Peter 4:5** says everyone will have to appear before Judge Jesus: **“They will give an account to Him who is ready to judge the living and the dead.”**
- Even believers will face a judgment.
- **2 Corinthians 5:10:** **“For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, that each one may receive the things done in the body, according to what he has done, whether good or bad.”**

7. Trust in Jesus Christ alone for forgiveness of YOUR sin. (v.43)

- The order here is important. If we don’t first believe in coming judgment, we won’t be interested in the coming of Jesus. If you know you are a condemned sinner, you’ll be eager to hear how you can be saved. Or to say it another way, you must know you are lost before you’ll want to be found. The bad news is bad, but that only makes the good news really good!
- **Read verse 43.**
- I love how all the prophets in the Old Testament pointed to Christ and to the message of forgiveness. Let’s pause and ponder the phrase, **“whosoever believes in Him.”** The offer of forgiveness goes out to those from a Jewish background and to those who are Gentiles.
- **Read Acts 15:9-11.**
- Forgiveness is available for Jew, Gentile, Samaritan, American, Armenian, African, prostitute, adulterer, Democrat, Republican, and Independent.
- Our biggest need is to be forgiven for our sins. If you struggle with feeling forgiven, savor these Scriptures.

Psalm 103:12: **“As far as the east is from the west, so far does He remove our transgressions from us.”**

Psalm 130:3-4: **“If you, O Lord, should mark iniquities, O Lord, who could stand? But with you there is forgiveness, that you may be feared.”**

Isaiah 38:17: **“In love you have delivered my life from the pit of destruction, for you have cast all my sins behind your back.”**

Matthew 26:28: **“For this is my blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many for the forgiveness of sins.”**

Luke 7:48: **“And He said to her, ‘Your sins are forgiven.’”**

Ephesians 1:7: **“In Him we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of our trespasses, according to the riches of His grace.”**

So, here’s the deal. You will either face Jesus as Judge or you will face Jesus as Justifier. You will either be condemned because of your sins or you’ll be commended because the Savior has forgiven your sins. You’ll either go to Heaven because Jesus has taken on your curse or you will be cursed forever in a hot place called Hell.

Romans 6:23: "For the wages of sin is death, but the free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord."

Application

I see four ways Peter's preaching was put into practice, even before Peter could finish. I'm reminded God doesn't need me or anyone else to accomplish His purposes.

1. The Holy Spirit seals our salvation.

- **Read verse 44.**
- The Jewish Christians who accompanied Peter had only seen the Holy Spirit poured out on Jews who believed in Jesus. They were flabbergasted to see the Spirit falling on Gentiles. Look at **verse 45.**
- The word for "amazed" means "to astonish, to be beside oneself, to throw out of position."
- This was what Peter testified in **Acts 15:7-8.**

2. Worship comes naturally from a forgiven heart.

- **Read verse 46.**
- **Verse 46** states these new believers were speaking languages they had never heard before, authenticating the gift of the Spirit being given to the Gentiles just as He was given to the Jews on the Day of Pentecost.

3. Baptism following conversion is the first step of obedience.

- **Read verse 47.**
- The expected answer is a hearty "no." Literally it reads like this, **"Surely no one will now venture to forbid."** Baptism is the next step after belief.
- I am looking to baptize right after the 10am Easter service. If you're saved and you've not taken the plunge yet...
- Baptism provides the believer with the opportunity to identify with Christ and His church.

4. Gathering to grow was a priority.

- **Read verse 48.**
- **"Then they asked him to stay a few days."** Peter was willing to linger to help them learn more about the Lord. He continued gathering with them so they could grow.
- Jesus did something similar after ministering to the Samaritan woman in **John 4:41-42: "So when the Samaritans came to Him, they asked Him to stay with them, and He stayed there two days. And many more believed because of his word."**

- Here's the definition of a disciple: "A disciple is a believer who lovingly follows Jesus and intentionally helps others follow Him."

I read a post a few months ago by Craig Thompson called, what is Keeping You from Church?

"The concern over COVID among vulnerable populations makes sense. Even the concern among others who may not be vulnerable, but who do not want to be vectors for transmission is understandable. However, we cannot live this way forever.

As it relates to attending Bible study and public worship, even if you aren't ready yet, you need to decide now what conditions will need to be met before you return to worship...Maybe you have a date in mind, "I'll return in the summer of 2021." Or maybe you're waiting until a vaccine is widely available...be careful if you do not have a line.

If your rationale for staying away from your church family hasn't been carefully defined, you run the risk of never returning to church. If you do not draw a line in the sand right now and determine when you will return to worship, you may never return. You will find other things to fill your Sunday mornings and commitment to your church will wax and wane.

He concludes with an honest admission from a guy he sat down with: "My wife and I have really gotten into a bad habit. I admit it. I don't have a good reason for not attending worship. It has just gotten really easy to get up and sit in front of our TV with a cup of coffee and listen to the sermon. Then, we get dressed and go to lunch. I know it is ridiculous. It's not OK. We have to change that."

Let's be honest; some of us are comfortable on your couch or at the camp site or on the lake. You aren't avoiding church gatherings out of concern for public health. If you're still going to work, you're sending your kids to school, you're eating in restaurants...you need to be at church."

Hebrews 10:24-25 says, "And let us consider how to stir up one another to love and good works, not neglecting to meet together, as is the habit of some, but encouraging one another, and all the more as you see the Day drawing near."

Let me say again. I realize some of you are not ready to gather in person and I get that. That's why we put our services online, livestreaming. But we miss you...and can't wait for you to come back. I would just appeal to you to make your decisions about gathering related to COVID, not about convenience.

If you want to be saved today, you can be...or maybe the Holy Spirit interrupted my sermon and you already trusted Christ!

God, I admit I don't have peace and I'm not at peace with others because I'm not at peace with You. I acknowledge Jesus is Lord of all, that He died in my place on the cross and He rose again from the dead. Because of my sins, I admit I deserve Your righteous judgment. I repent of how I've been living and receive Jesus Christ by faith. Please forgive me for my many sins and enable me to follow you faithfully for the rest of my life. Help me to grow so I can show You to others. In Jesus' Name. Amen.