

Acts: The Spirit, the Church and the Spread of God's Word

The Sovereign Plan of God

Acts 2:22-40

Grace Fellowship Church / Pastor Brad Bigney / June 2, 2019

Peter preached the first sermon after the church was launched in **Acts 2:22-40** and there are certain things he wanted to highlight for us to focus on.

I. He Wants You to See Who Jesus Really Is

A. The Life of Jesus Was Endorsed by God – to Prove that He's More than a Man

Acts 2:22 “Men of Israel, hear these words: Jesus of Nazareth, a Man attested by God to you by miracles, wonders, and signs which God did through Him in your midst, as you yourselves know”

The miracles were God's certification of Jesus being who He claimed to be. They were God's endorsement or seal of approval on His Son, Jesus. Verses like **Matthew 17:5** show us what God thinks about His Son.

The test of whether you are anti-God or not is whether you embrace God's endorsement of Jesus because God is hugely pro-Jesus.

B. The Death of Jesus Was Determined by God – as a Part of God's Sovereign Plan

Acts 2:23 “Him, being delivered by the determined purpose and foreknowledge of God, you have taken by lawless hands, have crucified, and put to death”

That verse is loaded with intentional, God-glorifying words that show God is absolutely sovereign and in control of what happened on the cross, while still holding people responsible for what they did.

God is sovereign, but people also make real choices, are responsible for what they do and will be held accountable for it.

It's the same thing you see in **Acts 4** when the early Christians were being persecuted but gathered together in a prayer meeting and cried out to God.

Acts 4:27-28 ““For truly against Your holy Servant Jesus, whom You anointed, both Herod and Pontius Pilate, with the Gentiles and the people of Israel, were gathered together to do whatever Your hand and Your purpose determined before to be done.”

Jesus knew that His death and resurrection was the very reason He'd come into this world! Everything else was simply a prelude to the horrific final hours of His life here on this earth. See **John 12:23, 27-28, 32-33**.

C. The Resurrection of Jesus Was Accomplished by God – to Conquer the Power of Sin

Acts 4:24 “Whom God raised up, having loosed the pains of death, because it was not possible that He should be held by it.”

Skeptics scoff at the resurrection saying it's not possible, but God says it's not possible for Jesus to be held by death and remain dead, because He is the author of life!

The resurrection of Jesus is never optional for Christianity, but it is the very foundation of it because it proves that Jesus is the Son of God.

Romans 1:4 “Declared to be the Son of God with power according to the Spirit of holiness, by the resurrection from the dead.”

II. He Wants You to See What the Bible is All About

Peter explains to the crowd to read the Bible through the lens of Jesus!

Luke 24:25-27 and **Luke 24:44** show us that Peter learned this from Jesus after His resurrection because Jesus had a Bible study with some of His disciples where He taught them that the Old Testament law, the prophets, and Psalms were all talking about and pointing to Him!

Luke 24:44 “These are the words which I spoke to you while I was still with you, that all things must be fulfilled which were written in the Law of Moses and the Prophets and the Psalms concerning Me.”

III. He Wants You to See What You Really Need Most – to Be Saved!

Acts 2:40 “And with many other words he testified and exhorted them, saying, “Be saved from this perverse generation.””

The most perverse, dishonest and evasive thing about our generation is the way it has twisted the truth of salvation in Jesus alone in the name of inclusivity by promoting many ways to God based on what you think is true for you.

Peter uses the imperative verb tense when he says, ‘Be saved,’ because he’s commanding them to do something that they cannot do for themselves by backing them into a spiritual corner of helplessness and hopelessness so that they’ll cry out to the only one who can save them – Jesus!

A. You Need to Think Carefully about Who Jesus Is

Acts 2:36 “Therefore let all the house of Israel know assuredly that God has made this Jesus, whom you crucified, both Lord and Christ.”

Christianity never expects you to stop thinking and to base your spirituality on preferences of feelings. Peter is calling us to think, to reason and to consider the facts.

Dig into the life and claims of Jesus and the evidence for the resurrection because you’ll never have certainty and security about your future and eternal destiny until you have certainty and security about who Jesus is.

B. You Need to Recognize Personally What Your Sin Did to Jesus

Acts 2:37 “Now when they heard this, they were cut to the heart...”

Three words in **v. 36** cut them to the heart – ‘whom you crucified.’ Peter wants them to feel the horror of what they did to Christ because it was their sin that Christ took on Himself on the cross.

At the heart of becoming a Christian, you stop thinking of sin as a general concept and start seeing it as a personal and painful reality in your own life and what it did to Christ and what He willingly did for you.

C. You need to Repent

Acts 2:38 “Then Peter said to them, ‘Repent, and let every one of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins; and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.’”

Repentance is the clarity of a new conviction that changes your thinking so radically that it changes the direction of your life dramatically.