

THE FIRST SERMON IN THE CHURCH
January 15, 2017 morning service
Acts 2:14-36

Take your Bible this morning and go with me to the book of Acts chapter 2. Thank you, choir, for sharing with us today. We are 14 Sundays away from Easter. During these 14 weeks I'm going to be preaching sermons about sermons in the book of Acts. I find ten major sermons recorded in the book of Acts. We'll look at the first one today at Pentecost and then in these weeks to come we will examine the sermons that are found in the book of Acts and preach sermons about the sermons in this marvelous book. You cannot read the New Testament and Acts especially without noting the importance of preaching. These ten sermons that we will look at in these weeks to come will mark that importance.

Jesus said in Mark 1:14, or Mark said about Him that Jesus came preaching. In II Timothy chapter 4 and verse 2 Paul told young Timothy, his protégé, "Preach the word." In Matthew 10 and verse number 7 Jesus said to the twelve when He sent them out, "As you go, preach." The infant church was built on preaching. Churches that are alive still have preaching. Now people make fun of that sometimes. They'll call you by that name. I have folks in this church that say, "What should I call you?" Well some say Pastor, some say Preacher, some say Brother Ted, some say Dr. Traylor. It's according to what they want most of the time by the title that they use. When I was just a lad, a kid of a boy growing up, when God touched you to call you He didn't call you to the pastorate or really call you to ministry. We would say, "He's been called to preach."

There was a farmer in our town when I was 17 that came to my father. My daddy told me this over Christmas. He said, "You know, that man came to me and said, 'You know, Mr. Traylor, I think you have a preacher in your house.'" When God touches you and calls you to be a pastor/preacher, then that becomes evident. It's good to have a keen mind. It's wonderful to be able to talk but without the anointing of the Holy Spirit and the gift of God within you, preaching can be dull and boring, pointless, lame. My mother said to me when I left home, "Go get ready because we've had enough boring preaching in the church. Don't be one of those." Well I try.

Preaching. Preaching. Paul said in I Corinthians 1:17 that Christ did not send me to baptize, rather to preach the gospel. Not in cleverness of speech so that the cross would be made void but he went on to say in verse 21 that since in the wisdom of God the world through wisdom did not come to know God, God was well pleased through the foolishness of the message preached to save those who believed. Preaching. Just say that word "preach" with me, would you? Oh, say it like you want somebody to do it. Yeah, that's what we're going to be looking at is preaching, that there's a place for preaching.

That's the reason that in the evangelical church this wooden stand is in the middle. There are other places that split the chancel and put the singer over yonder and the preacher over here and they bring the Lord's Supper table to the middle. We

don't do it that way. We keep what some call a sacred desk in the center and we elevate that because on that comes the word of God and the word of God is to be disseminated and explained and preached and exposed to the people and the people exposed to the word of God. Preaching is primary in the evangelical church and in Baptists in particular.

Well it was so in Acts and we come to find that they were gathered at Pentecost, that fourth great festival of our Jewish forefathers and when they came to Pentecost we find it there, coming the people together fifty days after the festival of the first fruits and when they were gathered in that upper room, you know what happened, that the Spirit of God fell and it came like a mighty, rushing wind. Now the wind didn't blow. It came like a wind. It was there and tongues were set down on them and they spoke the languages of people all across the world and there was great curiosity and confusion there. In the middle of that falling of the fire of God on His people and the birthing of the church we find in Acts 2:14 a sermon to explain it. The Bible says:

But Peter, taking his stand with the eleven, raised his voice and declared to them: "Men of Judea and all you who live in Jerusalem, let this be known to you and give heed to my words. For these men are not drunk, as you suppose, for it is only the third hour of the day; but this is what was spoken of through the prophet Joel [and then he quotes Joel 2:28-32]:

*'And it shall be in the last days,' God says,
'That I will pour forth of My Spirit on all mankind;
And your sons and your daughters shall prophesy,
And your young men shall see visions,
And your old men shall dream dreams;
Even on My bondslaves, both men and women,
I will in those days pour forth of My Spirit
And they shall prophesy.
'And I will grant wonders in the sky above
And signs on the earth below,
Blood, and fire, and vapor of smoke.
'The sun will be turned into darkness
And the moon into blood,
Before the great and glorious day of the Lord shall come.
'And it shall be that everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved.'
"Men of Israel, listen to these words: Jesus the Nazarene, a man attested to you by God with miracles and wonders and signs which God performed through Him in your midst, just as you yourselves know— this Man, delivered over by the predetermined plan and foreknowledge of God, you nailed to a cross by the hands of godless men and put Him to death. But God raised Him up again [that's a good place to say Amen], putting an end to the agony of death, since it was impossible for Him to be held in its power. For David says of Him [and then he quotes from Psalm 16:8-11, for David says of him],
'I saw the Lord always in my presence;
For He is at my right hand, so that I will not be shaken.*

*'Therefore my heart was glad and my tongue exulted;
Moreover my flesh also will live in hope;
Because You will not abandon my soul to Hades,
Nor allow Your Holy One to undergo decay.
'You have made known to me the ways of life;
You will make me full of gladness with Your presence.'*

"Brethren, I may confidently say to you regarding the patriarch David that he both died and was buried, and his tomb is with us to this day. And so, because he was a prophet and knew that God had sworn to him with an oath to seat one of his descendants on his throne, he looked ahead and spoke of the resurrection of the Christ, that He was neither abandoned to Hades, nor did His flesh suffer decay. This Jesus God raised up again, to which we are all witnesses. Therefore having been exalted to the right hand of God, and having received from the Father the promise of the Holy Spirit, He has poured forth this which you both see and hear. For it was not David who ascended into heaven, but he himself says:

*'The Lord said to my Lord,
"Sit at My right hand,
Until I make Your enemies a footstool for Your feet."
Therefore let all the house of Israel know for certain that God has made Him both Lord and Christ [both Lord and Christ, both Lord and Christ] —this Jesus whom you crucified.'*¹

Peter stood up and started to preach. He took a text from Joel and from the Psalms and he preached Christ unto them. When we see at Pentecost this marvelous message there are three focal points that we find in Peter's Pentecostal preaching. Three of them. Now I could take these verses and preach for all ten of these next ten weeks out of this one sermon but I'm trying to take that and lift up his message that flows through. People often say that sermons, some have six, some have four points, most will have three. One wag said, "Every sermon ought to have at least one point." Amen.

Well Peter here has some things that really rise out of what he's saying. He covers the gamut, I mean from creation to the end. He deals with the end times out of Joel and he deals with the crucifixion out of Joel. He deals with the coming millennium out of Psalms. He deals with a lot but there are three pertinent focal points of this sermon that I want you to see and they ought to be found in our proclamation today.

Number one. We see first of all the priority of the revelation of God. He takes Joel and he takes Psalms and he brings those texts to bear. Now here they are. People are speaking in tongues and the fire falling and like wind blowing and people are hearing languages. Peter is saying, "Listen. This is what Joel prophesied in this text." He said, "Look back in Joel 2 in verse 28 that your sons and your daughters, your young men, your old men, the bondslaves, all of them, I'm going to pour out My Spirit and you're going to hear then speak and dream and have visions."

¹ Scripture quotations taken from the New American Standard Bible®, Copyright © 1960, 1962, 1963, 1968, 1971, 1972, 1973, 1975, 1977, 1995 by The Lockman Foundation. Used by permission.

He talked about the sky. He turns to the future and the coming of our Lord. He turns back to the crucifixion of our Lord. It's the way prophecy often does. It'll jump a thousand years, just bing bong, and he's speaking into that but the primary thing to see is that he preached the revelation of God.

Psalms. He turns to Psalms and he preaches. He takes a text and preaches the Bible. Listen to me. Preaching that is not biblical is not preaching. My job is not to explain to you what I think. My job is to explain to you what I understand God has said to us. I've said this to you again and again when my grandmother Bowman heard I was going to be a preacher. I was a 17-year-old boy and she called me to her little apartment and she got her Schofield King James Bible, a big, black book about twice the size of this, a big letter edition. She sat me down in front of her and she patted the book. She said, "I hear you're going to be a preacher." I said, "That's my plan, yes, ma'am. I believe God's called me." She said, "This is the book." I said, "Yes." She said, "No, no, no. Listen to me, son. This is the book." I said, "Yes, ma'am." She said, "No, no. I want to make this clear." She said, "We don't care what you think. We want to know, what does the book say?" That haunts me. Not for fear that I would disappoint my grandmother but for fear I'd disappoint her God, my Savior.

The book. Friend, you can trust the book. Joel, Psalms, you can trust it all. All 66 books, you can trust it. This is the inerrant, infallible word of God, sharper than any two-edged sword and it will cut you between your soul and your spirit, between the joint and the marrow, between the thought and the intent of your very life. The word of God is sharp on the end and razor-like and it will deal with us. You can trust God's word. There's no book of greater value. No book that we need to read more. No book that we need to preach other than the word of God. Why do we trust it? Well I've shared this with you in days gone by but just as a reminder to you and a coming generation.

You know, I looked this week. I have stood right here in my life over 1,300 times. I've stood here. Every time I'm going to stand here, we're going to open this book because we preach the revelation of God. Why do we believe it? You know that little acrostic I've given you before. M-A-P-S. Maps. Every Bible, study Bible has got maps in the back. Why do we believe the word of God? M-A-P-S. Number one, because of manuscripts. There are over 24,000 manuscripts of scripture. You believe other books. You read Plato and there's just a little handful but the word of God, the manuscript evidence. You go back to the Dead Sea Scrolls itself. The update of Isaiah didn't bring it forward. It went back and affirmed again and again. The manuscript evidence is so powerful that this is the inerrant, infallible word of God.

A, archaeology. Every time we turn a spade of dirt over in the holy land. People for years argued with Daniel that there was no Belshazzar. Who in the world is Belshazzar? And then archaeology turned over a spade of dirt and there it was, evidence that Daniel was right all along. Belshazzar. You can find archaeological digs. Every time they dig in the dirt they are affirming, not disproving the word of God. There's manuscript evidence, archaeological evidence. There's prophecy. Oh my soul. Just the prophecies

of Jesus from his birth to his life, to his death, to his resurrection found in the Psalms alone. How did they know hundreds of years ago? The Spirit of God put in those men those prophecies to speak into us. Manuscripts, archaeology, prophecy. Then the “S” can stand for two words. One is statistics. The statistical evidence. The Bible was written over 1,600 years by 40 authors in three different languages on hundreds of subjects but with one topic and that topic is the redemption of man.

That’s why this book is here. From Genesis 1:1 all the way to the end of the revelation you find redemption, God reaching to man to save him is the story of this book. That “S” could also be science. We have a lot of our teenagers that’ll be in this next service. A lot of college students in the second service. Let me tell you, friend, the word of God is not a science book. When it speaks to science it speaks correctly. You don’t find errors in this book. It will speak truth into us.

So what did Peter do? First of all, you find the revelation of God. Secondly, his second major thrust in this sermon was not only the revelation of God but the resurrection of Jesus. He quotes from Joel and while he could make a lot of points his point is found in verse 24. “But God raised Him up again.” He raised Him. Then he goes to Psalms and when he speaks out of the Psalms we find that in verses 25 through 28 and then he applies the Psalm in verse 32 and says, “This Jesus God raised up again.” In the middle, in the middle of the people in the upper room at Pentecost the thrust was resurrection, resurrection, resurrection. He says seven things about Jesus in this text. He says that he was a man, Jesus, in verse 22. He was approved by God in verse 22. Verse 23 says he was crucified. You nailed him to the cross. He ascended in verse 33. He received the Holy Spirit, verse 33, and He was the promised One. He was Christ and Lord in verse 36 but that that he highlights more than anything is that that is found in verses 24 and 32 and that is the He raised Jesus from the dead.

We don’t serve a dead God. We serve a Christ that died and He got up. Let me tell you, friend, if Jesus arose it is a game changer. If Jesus can overcome death He can overcome your sin. If Jesus got up from the dead, then He’s still alive and He can come back again.

On Good Friday, Jesus was flogged 39 times with a cat o’ nine tails. He was injured so badly that by the time it was over His flesh was in ribbons and His organs were exposed. A crown of thorns was placed on His head and a 110-pound crossbar was placed on His shoulders. He was too weak from the beating to make it all the way up the hill so a bystander by the name of Simon of Cyrene was forced to carry the crossbar for Him. He was nailed to a cross where He was pronounced dead by a professional Roman executioner who verified His death by piercing the tissue surrounding His heart with a spear. This centurion was so impressed with the way Jesus faced death that he remarked, “Truly, this must be the Son of God.”

According to Jewish custom, Jesus’ body was placed on a stone table in a burial chamber which was a freshly prepared tomb hewn out of solid rock. He was washed with warm water and packed in 100 pounds of spices. His body was wrapped in no fewer than

three separate burial garments and a stone weighing nearly two tons was placed in front of the tomb's doorway. Pontius Pilate, the Roman ruler of Judea ordered a guard unit to make the tomb as secure as could be known by man. The guard sealed the stone to the tomb with clay packs and stamped it with Pilate's official signet ring. From what they had witnessed, Jesus' disciples were discouraged, scared, and in shock. And then the earth started to shake. The light from heaven was abundant. A stone was rolled away. You said, "Did anybody hear it?" Well when a tree falls in the woods – we don't know if the stone made noise when it rolled or if the finger of God said, "Let's just set it right over here."

Friend, He didn't move the stone for Jesus to get out. He moved the stone so we could look in. He got up. Peter stood in that room and he said, "He got up. God raised Him from the dead again. The one you killed, God raised Him." Jesus, in verse 32, God raised Him up again. Five people found the tomb empty. Over 500 people saw Him over the next 40 days. Let me tell you, good men might die for good cause but no man will die for a known lie. Men died for the name of Christ. They knew He got up. They had seen Him. They had encountered Him. He had changed and they were willing to lay down their life because He got up from the grave.

It is the message of Pentecost that Jesus, He was crucified and He rose again and Peter declared it to all who would listen. God raised Him from the dead. It is our message. I'm telling you, if Jesus didn't get up I ought to be playing golf somewhere today. If He didn't get up, I ought to be buying a ticket to somebody's ballgame. If He didn't get up, I ought to be with my family going on a picnic on this spring day in January. If He didn't get up, I shouldn't come here and put up with you and you put up with me. I'm telling you right now, friend, He got up, He got up, He got up! One of these days He's going to get up again off that seat of intercession and the Father's going to say, "Go get your children." He's alive forevermore.

Peter preached the revelation of God. He preached the resurrection of Jesus. Thirdly, then he preached the repentance of mankind. So Peter finished his sermon. There's a lot of dialogue today in theological circles about what to do when you finish preaching. Should you give an open invitation? Should you invite people to a crier's room or an inquiry room? Should you just say go and come back again? The invitation system is often abused, misused. I've watched men do it, you know, to little children. "If you love your mamma, come down." Well every child would respond to loving your mamma. I've watched emotional abuses in invitations. We don't always do it right but the gospel always has an invite in it. Always. Come and be saved. Sometimes the invitation starts before you get done. That's the kind I like. Let us pray and people start coming.

Well when Peter finished, verse 37 says when they heard this they were pierced to the heart and said to Peter and the rest of the apostles, "Brethren, what shall we do?" There was conviction and inquiry. Their heart was pierced and they asked the question, "Peter, what's next?" We've heard of this Jesus. What do we do? It's what the gospel does. It breaks our heart. It convicts us. I have people from time to time say, "Pastor,

you know, I understand this sin deal but I don't think I have such an issue. I know there are people that really have sin problems but I'm not like that." Oh dear friend, when the gospel comes, you'll be pierced to your heart because, you see, some people say, "You know, I was raised in church and my daddy was a good man and my granddaddy was a preacher." That's good. But now if you'll go on ancestry.com and just keep looking. Just keep looking. Everybody in here, your ancestry will take you back to a crooked farmer and a drunk sailor. That's Adam and Noah and that's everybody in here. Everybody. I know your momma's good but let me tell you, your great, great, great, great granddaddy was a crook and a drunk and you got some of that. They were pierced to their heart. They said, "We've sinned against God."

What shall we do? In verse 38 Peter said – here's a word you don't see much in preaching these days – "Repent each one of you and be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins and you'll receive the Holy Spirit." Repent. *Metanoia*. Change your mind. Turn from your sin toward God. Turn away from wickedness toward righteousness. Repent. Turn to God. Then make a public display that Jesus has died for you and raised. Some of you today need to repent and be baptized.

They were under conviction with inquiry. They then got instruction and exhortation and then Peter turned to obedience and addition. In verse 41 he says, "So then those who had received His word were baptized and that day there were added about 3,000 souls." Now I'd like to have been in that invitation. How do you have 3,000 additions in one service? Who baptized all those people? They boiled the water that day, didn't they? Well they had a multitude of leaders that would baptize.

Well last Sunday we had 31 additions to Olive just last Sunday. It was one of the large days, 31 people came, saved, moved their membership, different things. It was a great day. If we had 3,000 everybody that's here today would have to join. Just think about that. We'll have somewhere between 1,200 and 1,500 in each service. So that means on the first stanza all of you came and then on the second stanza of "Just As I Am" the next service came. I don't know how that worked but they kept calling people to repent and be baptized. Repent and be baptized.

I got a feeling the morning service ran into the evening service. They just had church. What a day. Pentecost. But you know, it's great that 3,000 people get saved. Wow. But did you know that the angels rejoice in the presence? God rejoices in the presence of angels when just one sinner repents. The day I got saved, 15 others got saved but oftentimes just one will come. When Spurgeon got saved only one came that day. He got gloriously saved. He was just a little boy, a teenage kid, and God saved him. There was just a handful of people there. I give the invitation at Vacation Bible School and boys and girls will come.

I was working Bible School as an 18-year-old boy. They called me to come down to a classroom and I sat down with some kids and I shared the gospel. A little boy said he wanted to get saved. Ms. Beardin – I'll stand in the judgment for this because I have

not forgiven her and I do not plan to. When that little boy got ready to get saved, Ms. Beardin came over and she put her hand on me. She said, "Okay, you've done good. Let's go get the pastor and he'll take care of it from here." She wanted me to do the work but not get the joy. You see, I was the B team and she wanted to bring in the A team. So they went down there and found the pastor where he was drinking Kool-Aid and eating a donut. Brother Lionel came and led that little boy to the Lord. It was a good day. I rejoiced. It doesn't matter who gets the credit or who gets to do it. I wanted to but I saw that day that God could even save a little boy if he'd trust Him.

In my first church I led Mr. Simmons to the Lord. He was the biggest drunk in town. God saved him. What a great day it was. One man got saved. I went to Henrietta, Texas and everybody told me about Mr. Edwards. He was the richest man in town. They said, "Somebody needs to tell him about the Lord." Mr. Edwards brought the first white faced Hereford cattle from Alabama to north Texas. He bought them from the man in Huntsville that the Huntsville Airport's named after. I went out there and sat down with Mr. Bryant and said, "Can I talk to you about the Lord?" He took off that white Stetson and said, "Yes, sir." I shared the gospel with a senior adult man. I was scared to death. He said, "That's what I want to do, preacher." I led that old man to the Lord. I gave the invitation the next Sunday and he walked down the aisle. I'll never forget it. I was just a kid of a preacher. I put my hand out. I said, "Welcome, sir, why have you come?" He said, "Well because you told me to." Praise the Lord.

I moved down to Dallas. There was an old boy with long, stringy hair that we led to Christ. Boy, God raised him up and used him mightily there in the middle of that metroplex. Then we came here and – we could tell stories. We'd be here til dark. Of course, I guess my favorite is the Sunday Eddie Echarri came forward. That old boy had been in Riker's Island up in New York in prison. He got shot at and shot up. He came here. Over in Passmore Hall, he used to sit up in the balcony. One Sunday he moved down on the floor and came forward. I said, "Eddie, why have you come?" He said, "I've come to try this Jesus you're talking about." He was a big man. We did not have a baptismal robe that would fit him. We baptized him in his pajamas. He came and wore a loose top. When he died I watched former drunks and addicts walk by his casket and kiss him on his face and thank him that he had told them that Jesus could change their life. He hadn't even been to Bible college but he'd been in Jesus school.

Invitation. I went with Eddie to the prisons to preach. They'd ask me to preach and then him give his testimony. I'd preach and the old boys would sit there and fiddle around. I was scared. Boy, when Echarri stood up he'd look at them and say, "I know who you are. I've been on that bunk. I've cried myself to sleep. Some of you guys are going to cry yourself to sleep tonight." He'd give the invitation and they'd just weep and get right with God. I said, "Lord, why can't I do that?" He said, "Well you ain't never been to prison." I said, "Good, let's keep that right there." But then the Spirit of God would press and He's say, "But you know, you've been some places he hasn't been and if you'll be as faithful in the background where you've been as he can be faithful where he's been I'll use both of you." They need the gospel down at the bank just like they do down at the jail. Over at the Wal-Mart just like they do at Riker's Island.

When you read that text on down to the end of that – do you know what happened after they got saved? They got happy. You find a word over in – rejoice, rejoice, rejoice, rejoice, rejoice. They had a happy spell. Let me tell you, when you're going to heaven, not hell, you get happy. Yeah, and people rejoice. Get right with God. You see, one of these days we're going to get it and when these folks get saved – somebody's going to shout and say, "Glory to God." They're going to get happy. Happy, happy. Sometimes we just say, "You know, we had church today." Really? Somebody checked out of hell and checked into heaven? You ought to at least smile. Amen? Say, "Glory to God." Raise one hand halfway.

My son sent me an email the other day and he said, "I dare you to use this in a sermon." So I'm doing it right now. He said, "See if you can work this quote in." I like Pentecostal worship more than Baptist worship hands down. So there you go. I don't even know what that means but I just stuck it in there, alright? What I'm telling you is there ought to be some joy when folks get saved and there was at Pentecost. Some of you are in this room today and never said yes to Jesus. We're going to sing a song right now. I want you to come. If you've never joined this church, we want you to come be a part. The Spirit of God pierces your heart and you say, "This is my day. I need to trust the Lord. I need to repent and be baptized and know the forgiveness of sin." I'm going to ask you to come.

We're going to sing about three stanzas. After these three stanzas I've got one more piece of the invitation so don't leave or you're going to wish you'd have stayed as we have an addition to the invitation on this good Sunday morning. Anybody here ought to get saved and come join today? Anybody? Just say Amen if you're coming. Anybody coming? Anybody? I see one or two hands. Alright. Let's stand together. If you're coming, come, come, come unto the Lord and unto His church as God is calling. You come. You come. You come.