

## **“Pentecost, Act 2”**

**Psalm 46; Acts 2:14-24**

June 9, 2024

### Introduction

- Every once in a while, I'll run into somebody from my past.
- It's always a fun thing, really, because I have changed so much.
- You see, pastoring for me is really my second act in life
- What do I mean by “second act?”
  - o As I like to say, “I wasn't always a pastor.”
    - In fact, I was a number of things before I became a pastor but primarily, I had spent life as a chef.
      - Dropping out of college, much to my parent's chagrin, I attended culinary school in my early twenties
      - Became a chef and then, eventually, a culinary school instructor /
- So being here with you, it's really, “My second act.”
- You know, I think it's pretty common that people change careers now.
  - o Back when I did it, it seemed kinda strange but nowadays people are doing it all the time.
- It's been a blessing
  - o You know, I've gotten to meet and help scores of people.
  - o Done things that I never imagined I'd do
- Not everyone wants or necessarily needs a career change
  - o But we all need a new act in our Christian lives
  - o Why do I say that?
    - Look around!
      - Depressions and anxieties are riding at all-time highs and don't seem to be getting better.
      - Things like cheating on taxes, cheating on spouses, just generally unethical behaviors, it's on the rise as well.
      - Right now, what America desperately needs, is a revival in the classical sense.
        - o It's happened before, right here even at this church.
          - There was an evangelical explosion here in the 70's.
            - Many of you might well have come to know Cook's during that era.
- Revivals begin somewhere
  - o They don't just rise from the ether.
  - o They rise when men and women come alive at the Gospel message.
  - o It's a message that Peter began preaching waaaaaay back at Pentecost.
    - There, if we'll remember, the apostles had gathered in that room, waiting.
    - The Holy Spirit descends, as Jesus had promised, and then, BOOM, Peter's second act began with a bang.
- Peter
  - o Let's not forget who we're talking about here
  - o This is Peter
    - You know, “I do not know that man” Peter, the one who rejects Jesus no less than three times in the Temple courtyard, as predicted.
  - o Yet Peter is reconciled to Jesus in John 21 and begins his preaching ministry here, on Pentecost.
  - o Peter begins his second act here really.
    - Ands wow, what a second act

- Just imagine. You and I are both here because of the work of those earliest Apostle's and Disciples.
  - They don't share Jesus; we don't get here.

### Peter's Message

- What did Peter preach
- He preached a very simple, very direct message calling for men and women to repent of their sins and believe in Jesus Christ.
  - Specifically, Peter gives us a salvific account of exactly who Jesus Christ was and what Jesus Christ accomplished for us and for our salvation.
- *"Repent and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins, and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. For the promise is for you and for your children and for all who are far off, everyone whom the Lord our God calls to Himself. And with many other words He bore witness and continued to exhort them, saying 'Save yourselves from this crooked generation.'"*
  - That's Peter's message – Repent and be baptized for the forgiveness of your sins!
    - In exchange you will be blessed with the Holy Spirit
- The Holy Spirit
  - And the Spirit is going to do something with and in you
  - TESTIFY TO JESUS' LOVE AND CARE
- That's right, revivals begin when men and women somehow overcome that damned silence and begin joyfully proclaiming their savior in word and in deed.

### The Great Silence

- You know, the numbers on Christians in America are really shocking.
- Every ten years, there's a huge faith survey.
  - 63% of Americans self-identify as "Christians"
    - Pretty good?
      - Not really. In 2010, that number was 75%.
  - But of those 63%, only 3 in 10 actually attend a church regularly.
- Why is that?
- Look at views on evangelism in the last 25 years and you'll see.
  - Christianity in America has shifted largely to a self-help program with little interest in sharing the good news.
    - Mega Churches churn through people, offering just enough to keep people hooked for a very short time. Then, they wander off, figuring they've gotten everything out of it that they could.
      - That is to say that Christianity in America reflects more of our society than it does the Bible.
- Acts is all about the BOLDNESS of the church early on.
  - These were men and women who shared the Gospel as the center point of what they did.
- Make no mistake about it, Christianity is an evangelical religion.
  - There is no verse, no section, no part of our Bible that counsels silence when it comes to the Gospel.
    - The closest thing is that, ONCE WE'VE DECLARED THE GOSPEL, we can go, shaking the dust from our sandals, should someone reject it.

### The Reasons for the Silence

- So, what ultimately keeps you from leaving this service and calling your non-Christian friends to tell them about Jesus?
- Chances are, there's something that's keeping your tongue silent.
  - While I can concede that not every situation is benefitted by the sharing of the

- Gospel, few occasions meet that bar.
- That is to say that, predominately, we should be sharing the Gospel.
  - If we want those numbers to change, we're the ones that are going to have to do the work.
    - But it's JOYFUL LABOR.
    - Labor that we were really created to do.
      - That's right, our creation is wrapped up with our mission to share the Gospel.
- So, we've got to get to the bottom of this thing.
  - Why are we silent when the numbers keep going down and our pews become more and more empty?
- Reasons we don't evangelize.
  - Rejection.
    - You know, speaking of second acts, I just about became an insurance salesman at one point.
      - I'd gotten sick of cooking and was looking for a way out at one point.
        - Rejection got me, I knew I couldn't do it.
    - Fear of rejection is a crippling one.
      - Here's how you get over it.
        - You realize that NOT everyone WILL respond to the Gospel.
        - Not only that, you realize it takes, on average, about 30 invitations before a typical person responds to a message?
    - Rejection is part of the game and your faith needs to be strong enough to deal with it.
      - But how do you get there?
  - Second reason – fearful we don't know enough.
    - Yes, many of us are quiet because we think, well maybe we'll get started and they'll have some question I can't answer.
      - Best to be quiet.
    - This is a TERRIBLE reason to be quiet.
      - Chances are if you've got a smart phone on you, you'll be able to answer any query that comes up.
    - And, of course, there is ALWAYS a solution to this one.
      - You can take the time to learn more.
        - Sunday School
        - Sunday evening
        - Online anytime
  - Third reason – Hypocrisy.
    - You may well feel hypocritical because you're engaged in some kind of ongoing sin or just a deep-seated belief that you're not a good enough Christian to be sharing the Gospel.
      - First of all, get that notion of "Good enough" out of your mental toolkit.
        - Was Peter good enough?
          - He'd rejected Jesus at the worst possible time.
      - Don't lose sight of the fact that while we are all sinners, we who believe in Jesus Christ are forgiven sinners.
        - We're no longer shackled to sin.
        - We can change, turn, walk away.
    - Never forget, none of us are ever perfect. If we're waiting to be perfect to evangelize, we'll forever be silent.

- There are other reasons to be sure but none valid.

#### How to Evangelize

- Peter preached a sermon.
- You could do that, for sure.
- But there are maybe better, easier ways to do it.
- They all begin though with your relationship with Jesus Christ.
  - Unless you're fired up in your walk with Jesus, you'll always remain silent.
    - Read
    - Pray
    - Study
    - Meditate
    - Attend worship
- Be constantly kind.
  - Maya Angelou – People don't care what you know until they know you care.
- Be gentle
  - **1 Peter 3:15** – *“But in your hearts honor Christ the Lord as holy, always being prepared to make a defense to anyone who asks you for a reason for the hope that is in you; yet do it with gentleness and respect.”*