

=LIFE OF PETER=

Lesson 9

Peter Preaches

AIM: to teach my pupils that God has two wonderful gifts ready to give everyone who will receive them.

POINT OF CONTACT: Ask your pupils to remember times they have given gifts, perhaps at a wedding, on birthdays, or at Christmas. A very short time could be given to discussion about the fact that members of the family, relatives, and close friends could be on a Christmas list and about the fact that thought is given to buying appropriate gifts for each. Ask your class to imagine how disappointing it would be if any of their loved ones were to say, “No, thank you! I don’t want your gift.”

INTRODUCTION: God has two most wonderful gifts that He would like to give to everyone. Peter knew what these gifts were. He had opportunity one day to preach a sermon to a large crowd and to tell them about these two gifts. He made it clear to them, however, that one of the gifts could not be given by God to anyone until the other gift had first been received. Peter also pleaded with his hearers to receive the first gift, and the second would be added.

Peter had been a witness to the fact that Jesus had risen from the dead. Peter had been one of the disciples—disciplined, taught ones of Jesus—who had seen Jesus’ glorified body, heard Jesus speak, seen Jesus eat after His resurrection. At the close of forty days after His resurrection, while the disciples watched, Jesus was taken up from them into Heaven. He ascended from the earth into Heaven to sit at the right hand of the Father. Acts 1:1-14.

I. PETER EXPLAINS A STRANGE EVENT. See Acts 2:1-8.

1. The event happened on the first Pentecost after Jesus’ resurrection and ascension.
 - 1) “Pentecost” literally means “fiftieth day.”
 - 2) The fiftieth day had a special significance for the Jewish people. On the day after the Passover Feast (the new grain having been harvested and ready for use) an offering of the first sheaf of the new harvest was made to God. Seven sabbaths after this day—fifty days after the Passover—was declared to be the Feast of Weeks, or Pentecost. Exodus 23:14-16; Leviticus 23:16-21.
2. The event happened while there was a crowd of Christians sitting together in a house.
 - 1) There were about one hundred twenty disciples.
 - 2) They were of one accord; they all had the same faith. They had trusted Jesus as their Saviour.
3. The event happened suddenly. It was a phenomenon from Heaven.
 - 1) There came a sound of a mighty rushing wind. The noise of the wind filled the house. The Holy Spirit was being poured out upon the disciples. (The Holy Spirit is likened to the wind in John 3:8.)
 - 2) Upon each Christian sat a tongue that looked as if it were made of fire. The tongues were cloven—they were divided part way up like the hoof of a sheep. (When fire came from God, a sacrifice had been accepted. Leviticus 9:24.)
 - 3) They were all immediately filled with the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit had been given to the disciples previously to be with them. John 14:17. They were now experiencing His outpouring upon them—His filling them. (Christians are admonished in Ephesians 5:18 to “be filled with the Spirit.” In the following verses we can see that Christians could crowd out the Spirit by making other melody in their hearts, other than that melody which would be unto the Lord, by not being thankful, by not being submissive to other Christians.)
 - 4) The evidence of the power that had come upon them was that they could speak in other languages besides their own.
4. Others saw only that the believers were able to speak in foreign languages “as the Spirit gave them utterance.” Acts 2:4c.
 - 1) They had something important to tell. Jesus had told His disciples to go into the whole world and to preach the Gospel. Many different languages were spoken throughout the world, and

the men who were given the command by Jesus “to go” were all of the same language—Galilæan.

- 2) People of many different nationalities were living in Jerusalem—Jews from every nation under Heaven along with heathen who had been converted to Judaism. The news “got out” around town that some strange thing had happened. The Jerusalem Jews who were originally from other countries came to see and hear for themselves. They wondered how this could be. They heard Galilæans tell wonderful works of God in their own language.
5. The twelve apostles stood before the vast crowd of people. (Judas had been replaced by Matthias, but Matthias was not named since.) The people had come to Jerusalem from the west, east, southeast, north, northwest, southwest, and northeast.
 - 1) They were questioning among themselves: “Behold, are not all these which speak Galilæans? And how hear we every man in our own tongue, wherein we were born?” Acts 2:7b, 8.
 - 2) Others standing near the devout Jews were scornful about the situation. They said that the men must be drunk and that is why they spoke that way.
6. Peter spoke.
 - 1) He calmed the crowd. He caused the people to pay attention to him.
 - 2) He said, “For these men are not drunken, as ye suppose, seeing it is but the third hour of the day.” (The third hour was from 6:00 a.m. to 9:00 a.m.) Alcoholic beverages would identify Jesus’ disciples with the Devil’s crowd and not with Jesus. The Devil is darkness and wickedness—Jesus is light and righteousness. See I Thessalonians 5:5-10.
 - 3) Peter told them they had seen Scripture fulfilled.” He quoted Joel 2:28-32. Peter told the crowd that they had seen the results of the infilling of the Spirit in the lives of Christians. They were recipients of the Holy Spirit’s power in the way that they needed Him—they were enabled to witness about Jesus to people of other languages.

II. PETER TELLS THE GOSPEL STORY. See Acts 2:21-36.

1. God had prophesied concerning Jesus.
 - 1) God had an eternal plan. Isaiah 46:10. He would send His Holy One into the world to die, but to conquer death and not to be conquered by death. Portions of Psalm 16 were quoted by Peter.
 - 2) God revealed His secret to man. Daniel 2:28.
2. It was Jesus Who fit the prophecy.
 - 1) Jesus was crucified and buried, and He rose from the dead. His body did not see corruption.
 - 2) He was mightier than King David. David was revered and held very high in the esteem of every good Jew, but he was just a man who died. The Jews even knew where he was buried.
 - 3) Peter could witness to the resurrection of Jesus.
 - 4) Peter could witness to the ascension of Jesus.

III. PETER PREACHES TO THE HEARTS OF HIS HEARERS. Read Acts 2:21, 23, 36, 38, 39.

1. He told them that wicked hands had crucified Jesus. He pointed out that they had crucified Him. (Of course, the whole world is guilty of the sin that drove Jesus to the cross. Romans 3:10-19.)
2. They were convicted in their hearts as they heard Peter preach. They asked, “What shall we do?” Peter told them to repent of their sins and at the time of their repentance to be baptized. Acts 2:38.
3. God’s gift of salvation and the Holy Spirit would be given to those who believe. Acts 2:21 and 38. (Even we who live now are included in this promise—Acts 2:39.)

IV. PETER SEES RESULTS FROM HIS PREACHING. Study Acts 2:41.

1. There were many who gladly believed his preaching.
2. They were baptized the same day that they believed.
3. There were about three thousand added to the church in that one day.

CONCLUSION: Just as Peter's audience was convicted when they realized that Jesus was crucified because of their wickedness, so everybody else ought to be convicted of his sin. It was the sin of all of us that caused Jesus to go to the cross. The gift of salvation comes from God at the time of believing in Jesus as Saviour; the gift of the Holy Spirit cannot come unless the gift of salvation has first been received. Every Christian has the gift of the Holy Spirit; not every Christian continuously seeks the infilling of the Holy Spirit and the presence of His power. Every Christian needs to be baptized; baptism does not make a person a Christian.