**The Book of Acts: Promises, The Promise Foretold, Acts 2:14-21**

* Easter Sunday!!!! What is the one dish that must be served at your Easter meal?
* What chore have you had on your to do list for over a week that you just haven’t gotten to yet? (gutter repair, redo plants, visit/call that crazy family member)

We often have things on our to do list that we just have trouble getting to. Maybe the project is intimidating and too much to handle, or we may even be hoping that someone else could step in to do it for us. Regardless of the reason, it persistently stays on our list much longer than we want it to. It's much easier to say to others (and to ourself) that you’ll do it later and then never get around to it.

That’s not how God does things. When God makes a promise, He always keeps it. Yet the fulfillment of those promises is often at a different time than anticipated and in ways that we don’t expect. There are even times that we don’t realize the promise was fulfilled at all. Regardless of if we notice or not, He always keeps His promises and His timing is always perfect.

* As we celebrate Easter today, share a promise that He has made to you and kept.
* In thinking about His promises and the world around us, what promise do you look forward to God fulfilling?

*Teaching:*

Last week we celebrated Palm Sunday. Matt and Jerimiah shared with us the promises made in the Old Testament in Psalm 118:35-26 and in Zechariah 9:9, and reminded us of the passage in Mark 11, in which God fulfills those promises with the triumphal entry of Jesus into Jerusalem. We are saved. We proclaim praise because Jesus is here and saving us!

As we look through Acts 2:14-21, we can identify the completeness of God’s answer to prayer and the fulfillment of His promises. All the promises of God are fulfilled in Jesus Christ. Let’s read through that together.

14Then Peter stood up with the Eleven, raised his voice and addressed the crowd: "Fellow Jews and all of you who live in Jerusalem, let me explain this to you; listen carefully to what I say. 15These people are not drunk, as you suppose. It's only nine in the morning! 16No, this is what was spoken by the prophet Joel: 17"'In the last days, God says, I will pour out my Spirit on all people. Your sons and daughters will prophesy, your young men will see visions, your old men will dream dreams. 18Even on my servants, both men and women, I will pour out my Spirit in those days, and they will prophesy. 19I will show wonders in the heavens above and signs on the earth below, blood and fire and billows of smoke. 20The sun will be turned to darkness and the moon to blood before the coming of the great and glorious day of the LORD. 21And everyone who calls on the name of the LORD will be saved.' [**Acts 2:14-21**](http://www.biblica.com/en-us/bible/online-bible/niv/acts/2/)

What a beautiful passage that teaches us so much about the promise foretold in Joel and answered through Jesus. In this passage, we see just one of the many examples of the word of God being fulfilled.

The Holy Spirit was given to those praying in the upper room. The followers of Jesus began to speak in the native language of all who gathered to celebrate the season of Pentecost. Though many welcomed what Jesus’ followers said about salvation through Jesus Christ, some who heard dismissed what Jesus’ followers had to say.

* In what ways does God empower us to tell others about the fulfillment of His promises through Jesus?
* How do you tend to respond when you are being dismissed?

The human response may be to respond with anger, by cowering in fear of a resistant crowd, or in other ways. Peter stands up and answers the crowd, recognizing that the message of salvation is greater than the messenger. You and I can take that to heart. We have a message of hope more important than our own needs or approval rating. We can point to the message of salvation regardless of how people respond because we know that message is greater than ourselves.

Peter’s voice cut through the voices of the crowd in verse 14 telling them to “listen carefully to what I say.” This call to pay attention, to listen closely, must have silenced the crowd because so many heard what he had to proclaim. The power to do so and to incite the crowd to listen is truly a mark of the Spirit.

This can be true in our lives as well. We must earn the right to be heard by building credibility as a Christian who is faithful, has integrity, and is worthy of trust. In living a life of humility and service, we build confidence in the message of Christ and let others see Him through our actions. Standing firm in our belief and acting on the Truth is the way of Christ and those influenced by him.

Questions to think about:

* What would it mean for you to say to someone, “Listen up. I have something important to say”?
* Are you someone people are willing to listen to? Why? Why not?

The power of Peter’s interaction with the crowd was centered in scripture and God’s provisions. The crowd was made of faithful Jewish worshipers. Peter did not point to his own wisdom, but instead pointed to scripture. This challenged them to rest on the word and power of God instead of the word of a human.

Peter explains a new era has emerged - a shift in human history. These are the last days, the age of the Messiah. These last days include an outpouring of the Spirit of God. He is fulfilling his promise to Abraham that all nations will be blessed through him – this promise is fulfilled through Jesus Christ.

The pouring out of God’s spirit is lavish and abundant. It is a spirit of power, signs, and wonders. God’s promise of the spirit being poured out points to the days of the return of Christ. This day of deliverance will be beyond anything we could every think or imagine.

The most crucial part to take in is verse 21. All who call on the name of the Lord will be saved. This hope to know God reminds us that Jesus has made the relationship with God accessible.

* For the hearers of this message, what different emotions and mental images might have come to the forefront when Peter quoted this passage from Joel?
* What would it be like for the Church (all believers) to live in an abundance of God’s spirit and power?

*Application:*

This new era was true for the listeners then and it is true for us today. We are living in the age of the Messiah. There is urgency that we live and breathe in the last days and this message is essential above all else. This message is for all people. We are not beyond His grasp. We are never beyond the full range God’s grace.

* What reminders could you put in place to keep the urgency of living in the age of the Messiah before you?
* How can we encourage you to live in the power and presence of the Holy Spirit this week?

*Prayer:*

Heavenly Father, thank you for being the ultimate keeper of all promises. You are truly King of Kings and Lord of Lords. Show us how to pray. Help us to be still and know you as our mighty God. May we rest in the deliverance, freedom and purpose that you offer. Amen.