

Gospel Encounters in Acts

Peter's Bold Proclamation

Acts 2:14-41

Context: Pentecost

- Christ promises to send the Holy Spirit to empower the church to be His witnesses in the world.
 - **Acts 1:8** ⁸*But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you, and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth.*
- Jesus ascends immediately after this commission; angelic beings note that Jesus will return when the commission is complete (Acts 1:9-11; Matthew 24:14)
- Judas is replaced; requirement for the office of Apostle is made clear: a witness to the resurrection and authority given by God (Acts 1:22-26).
- An awesome scene unfolds as the Spirit comes (Acts 2:1-4).
- The disciples started speaking in other tongues (languages), receiving two responses:
 - Some were “amazed and perplexed” (Acts 2:12)
 - Some were “mocking” (Acts 2:13), asserting that the scene was due to drunkenness.
- Peter stands to deliver a sermon in response the question posed by the people, “what does this mean?” (Acts 2:12).

Context: Peter

- “The disciple with the foot-shaped mouth”.
- Knows Jesus’ identity
 - **Matthew 16:15–16** ¹⁵*He said to them, “But who do you say that I am?”* ¹⁶*Simon Peter replied, “You are the Christ, the Son of the living God.”*
- Full of zeal
 - **John 18:8–11** ⁸*Jesus answered, “I told you that I am he. So, if you seek me, let these men go.”* ⁹*This was to fulfill the word that he had spoken: “Of those whom you gave me I have lost not one.”* ¹⁰*Then Simon Peter, having a sword, drew it and struck the high priest’s servant and cut off his right ear. (The servant’s name*

was Malchus.)¹¹ So Jesus said to Peter, “Put your sword into its sheath; shall I not drink the cup that the Father has given me?”

- Inconsistent in his commitment
 - **Mark 14:27–31**²⁷ And Jesus said to them, “You will all fall away, for it is written, ‘I will strike the shepherd, and the sheep will be scattered.’²⁸ But after I am raised up, I will go before you to Galilee.”²⁹ Peter said to him, “Even though they all fall away, I will not.”³⁰ And Jesus said to him, “Truly, I tell you, this very night, before the rooster crows twice, you will deny me three times.”³¹ But he said emphatically, “If I must die with you, I will not deny you.” And they all said the same.
 - **Mark 14:66–72**⁶⁶ And as Peter was below in the courtyard, one of the servant girls of the high priest came,⁶⁷ and seeing Peter warming himself, she looked at him and said, “You also were with the Nazarene, Jesus.”⁶⁸ But he denied it, saying, “I neither know nor understand what you mean.” And he went out into the gateway and the rooster crowed.⁶⁹ And the servant girl saw him and began again to say to the bystanders, “This man is one of them.”⁷⁰ But again he denied it. And after a little while the bystanders again said to Peter, “Certainly you are one of them, for you are a Galilean.”⁷¹ But he began to invoke a curse on himself and to swear, “I do not know this man of whom you speak.”⁷² And immediately the rooster crowed a second time. And Peter remembered how Jesus had said to him, “Before the rooster crows twice, you will deny me three times.” And he broke down and wept.
- What changed?
 - Last actions we saw of Peter: Denial of Jesus and restoration.
 - Now we see a man full of boldness and without fear in evangelism.

I. The Foundation of Peter’s Boldness: The Word

- Notice: The bulk of Peter’s message is quoting and explaining Old Testament passages.
 - Acts 2:17-21 comes from Joel 2:28-32
 - Joel prophesied of a coming judgment for not only the nations, but unfaithful Israel as well.
 - He called for repentance, and spoke of a day when God’s Spirit would be poured out as an indication of the coming kingdom of God.
 - Peter is proclaiming that what they’re witnessing is the advent of this kingdom, instituted by the Messiah, Jesus Christ.
 - Acts 2:25-28 comes from Psalm 16:8-11
 - David writes speaking of God’s Holy One not seeing corruption.
 - In his death, David saw corruption; it would be one of his descendants who would defeat death.

- David was still in his tomb, but Jesus was not! The “Holy One”, the true king, is the one who was not able to be held by death.
- Acts 2:34-35 comes from Psalm 110:1
 - Psalm 110 details an inter-trinitarian discussion between the Son and the Father, recording the promise that the Father will hand all things over to the Son.
 - The Son is a king and a priest, executing judgment as God and ruling with power.
 - Peter finishes his sermon by powerfully proclaiming that Jesus is this ruling Priest-King; the prophecies are being fulfilled in Him.
- **Why would the Word of God give us boldness in evangelism?**
 - Scripture has the power to make people wise for salvation.
 - **2 Timothy 3:14–16** ¹⁴*But as for you, continue in what you have learned and have firmly believed, knowing from whom you learned it* ¹⁵*and how from childhood you have been acquainted with the sacred writings, which are able to make you wise for salvation through faith in Christ Jesus.* ¹⁶*All Scripture is breathed out by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness...*
 - Scripture convicts of sin.
 - **Romans 7:7** ⁷*What then shall we say? That the law is sin? By no means! Yet if it had not been for the law, I would not have known sin. For I would not have known what it is to covet if the law had not said, “You shall not covet.”*
 - Scripture speaks of and reveals Christ.
 - **1 Peter 1:10–12** ¹⁰*Concerning this salvation, the prophets who prophesied about the grace that was to be yours searched and inquired carefully,* ¹¹*inquiring what person or time the Spirit of Christ in them was indicating when he predicted the sufferings of Christ and the subsequent glories.* ¹²*It was revealed to them that they were serving not themselves but you, in the things that have now been announced to you through those who preached the good news to you by the Holy Spirit sent from heaven, things into which angels long to look.*
 - **Luke 24:25–27** ²⁵*And he said to them, “O foolish ones, and slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have spoken! ²⁶Was it not necessary that the Christ should suffer these things and enter into his glory?” ²⁷And beginning with Moses and all the Prophets, he interpreted to them in all the Scriptures the things concerning himself.*
 - Scripture produces faith in Jesus.
 - **John 20:30–31** ³⁰*Now Jesus did many other signs in the presence of the disciples, which are not written in this book; ³¹but these are written so*

that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that by believing you may have life in his name.

- Scripture never loses its power or efficacy.
 - **1 Peter 1:22–25** ²²*Having purified your souls by your obedience to the truth for a sincere brotherly love, love one another earnestly from a pure heart, ²³since you have been born again, not of perishable seed but of imperishable, through the living and abiding word of God; ²⁴for “All flesh is like grass and all its glory like the flower of grass. The grass withers, and the flower falls, ²⁵but the word of the Lord remains forever.” And this word is the good news that was preached to you.*

II. The Source of Peter’s Boldness: The Spirit

- As we look at this encounter, what can we learn about the role of the Holy Spirit in Peter’s evangelism?
- What is the Spirit’s role in evangelism?
 - The Spirit magnifies Christ in the proclamation of the gospel.
 - **John 16:13–15** ¹³*When the Spirit of truth comes, he will guide you into all the truth, for he will not speak on his own authority, but whatever he hears he will speak, and he will declare to you the things that are to come. ¹⁴He will glorify me, for he will take what is mine and declare it to you. ¹⁵All that the Father has is mine; therefore I said that he will take what is mine and declare it to you.*
 - The Spirit uses the proclamation of the gospel to convict of sin.
 - **John 16:8–11** ⁸*And when he comes, he will convict the world concerning sin and righteousness and judgment: ⁹concerning sin, because they do not believe in me; ¹⁰concerning righteousness, because I go to the Father, and you will see me no longer; ¹¹concerning judgment, because the ruler of this world is judged.*
 - **Acts 2:37** ³⁷*Now when they heard this they were cut to the heart, and said to Peter and the rest of the apostles, “Brothers, what shall we do?”*
 - The Spirit brings faith and salvation to people.
 - **Romans 8:15** ¹⁵*For you did not receive the spirit of slavery to fall back into fear, but you have received the Spirit of adoption as sons, by whom we cry, “Abba! Father!”*
 - **Ephesians 1:13–14** ¹³*In him you also, when you heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation, and believed in him, were sealed with the promised Holy Spirit, ¹⁴who is the guarantee of our inheritance until we acquire possession of it, to the praise of his glory.*
 - The Spirit washes and sanctifies believers by applying justification.

- **1 Corinthians 6:11** ¹¹*And such were some of you. But you were washed, you were sanctified, you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and by the Spirit of our God.*
- What does the Spirit do for the evangelist?
 - The Spirit gives us hope.
 - **Romans 15:13** ¹³*May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, so that by the power of the Holy Spirit you may abound in hope.*
 - The Spirit empowers gifts.
 - **1 Corinthians 12:4–11** ⁴*Now there are varieties of gifts, but the same Spirit; ⁵and there are varieties of service, but the same Lord; ⁶and there are varieties of activities, but it is the same God who empowers them all in everyone. ⁷To each is given the manifestation of the Spirit for the common good. ⁸For to one is given through the Spirit the utterance of wisdom, and to another the utterance of knowledge according to the same Spirit, ⁹to another faith by the same Spirit, to another gifts of healing by the one Spirit, ¹⁰to another the working of miracles, to another prophecy, to another the ability to distinguish between spirits, to another various kinds of tongues, to another the interpretation of tongues. ¹¹All these are empowered by one and the same Spirit, who apportions to each one individually as he wills.*
 - The Spirit grants supernatural ministry effectiveness.
 - **Acts 2:41** ⁴¹*So those who received his word were baptized, and there were added that day about three thousand souls.*
 - The Spirit helps us in our weakness.
 - **Romans 8:25–26** ²⁵*But if we hope for what we do not see, we wait for it with patience. ²⁶Likewise the Spirit helps us in our weakness. For we do not know what to pray for as we ought, but the Spirit himself intercedes for us with groanings too deep for words.*
 - The Spirit gives us power.
 - **Acts 1:8** ⁸*But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you, and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth.”*

III. The Confidence of Peter's Boldness: The Resurrection

- See Acts 2:29 – Peter was able to confidently assert that Jesus was the Messiah because he had seen Jesus resurrected!
 - **1 Corinthians 15:55–57** ⁵⁵*"O death, where is your victory? O death, where is your sting?"* ⁵⁶*The sting of death is sin, and the power of sin is the law.* ⁵⁷*But thanks be to God, who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.*
- Peter was able to say difficult things to his hearers (noting their sin, how they killed the prophets, etc.) without fear because the resurrection gave him certainty in the truth.
- Peter's hope in the resurrection rendered him hope-filled and fearless.
 - **1 Peter 1:3–5** ³*Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ! According to his great mercy, he has caused us to be born again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead,* ⁴*to an inheritance that is imperishable, undefiled, and unfading, kept in heaven for you,* ⁵*who by God's power are being guarded through faith for a salvation ready to be revealed in the last time.*

IV. The Sustainer of Peter's Boldness: The King

- **Acts 2:32–33** ³²*This Jesus God raised up, and of that we all are witnesses.* ³³*Being therefore exalted at the right hand of God, and having received from the Father the promise of the Holy Spirit, he has poured out this that you yourselves are seeing and hearing.*
- **Acts 2:36** ³⁶*Let all the house of Israel therefore know for certain that God has made him both Lord and Christ, this Jesus whom you crucified."*
- Peter has a right view of Christ's kingly authority, both over his own life and all of creation.
- Peter has a right view of Jesus' role as sole mediator between God and man.
- Peter has a right view of Jesus' kingly commission to proclaim the gospel.
- Peter has a right view of Jesus' authority to draw whomever He wills to himself.
 - **John 6:44** ⁴⁴*No one can come to me unless the Father who sent me draws him. And I will raise him up on the last day.*
 - **Acts 2:39** ³⁹*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."*

IV. Applications for Our Evangelism

- Know the Word of God. Be immersed in it yourself, and trust its sufficiency.
- Abide in Christ through the Word and prayer. The more you feed your faith, the more you'll have the buoyant hope that comes through the Holy Spirit.
- Don't shy away from the resurrection. The resurrection is the only reason we have hope to share!
- Trust in the kingly authority of Christ and surrender to His will. You are just the messenger!
- Pray for the Holy Spirit to help you. He loves to make much of Christ and will attend to the task!
 - Make every effort not to grieve the Spirit: **Ephesians 4:30** ³⁰*And do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, by whom you were sealed for the day of redemption.*
- Boldness comes through obedience, by faith. Pray for strength to be obedient.