

Dear Believers who Praise the Lord:

**How are things going for you right now?**

Have you found it easy to praise the Lord in this worship service?

Sometimes it is easy to praise the Lord.

- We feel strong in the faith
- Things are going well for us
- The road is smooth like BB which they just paved the last few days

At other times it is not so easy to praise the Lord.

- We may be struggling with some issues
- We may have some doubts and fears about our future
- We may even question if God has been hearing our prayers

Last Sunday was Pentecost Sunday. It is the time in the church year when we remember what happened to the disciples 50 days after Jesus' resurrection and 10 days after His ascension into heaven.

- the disciples were gathered in one place in Jerusalem with other believers – 120 in all
- they were waiting for the coming of the Holy Spirit upon them as Jesus had told them when he had ascended into heaven 10 days earlier

Who were these 120 believers?

“One hundred and twenty frightened...self-centered, willful and discouraged men and women...” is how one Biblical scholar describes them. P. 56 The Communicator's Commentary

These men and women were like you and me. And yet, we see them filled with praise on that Pentecost day when the Holy Spirit filled their hearts.

What happened to them?

“...were transformed into new creatures. They were infused with supernatural power ---intellectually, emotionally, volitionally, and physically.” P. 56 The Communicator's Commentary

Now Pentecost was a special one-time event. It will not be repeated just like the resurrection will not be repeated. Yet, the Holy Spirit that filled the believers on Pentecost is the same Holy Spirit that fill us, too.

These believers praised the Lord and changed the world with the Gospel of Jesus Christ. You and I might say, “Well, that was fine for them, but they weren’t going through what I am enduring.”

May we remember who these disciples and other believers were before the Holy Spirit filled their hearts?

“The disciples were not a jolly, carefree band of believers before Pentecost. They had personal problems, relational difficulties and a hostile world to face without much confidence that they would have the courage to grapple with them.” P. 66  
The Communicator’s Commentary

Yes, it is true...those believers in Jerusalem were just like you and me.

- they were flesh and blood, so are we
- they struggled with sin, so do we
- they needed the Spirit’s help, so do we

Lloyd Ogilvie says: “When the Holy Spirit enters a human being, the mind is transformed, the computer of the brain is given new data, the will is released from bondage and the nervous system becomes the channel of supernatural energy.” P. 56  
The CC

The believers on Pentecost that day - all 120 of them – were filled with the Holy Spirit for praise and proclamation. The keynote speaker was the Apostle Peter who preached the sermon to all within the range of his voice that day in Jerusalem. The main part of that sermon is found in our verses before us today in Acts 2:22-36.

Praise and Proclamation go together for the life of a believer.

It was said: “The same Holy Spirit who produced unfettered praise in them is the source of our ability to praise in difficult times....Praising enables endurance...fortitude and an openness to the future.” P. 66 The CC

Sometimes we may think that our faith is not equal to the faith of the Apostles and the early believers found in the Bible. But listen to what the Apostle Peter says in his epistle:

## **A Faith Precious as Ours**

“To those who through the righteousness of our God and Savior Jesus Christ have received a faith as precious as ours.” II Peter 1:1

Peter says to you and me that we have a faith “as precious” or “of equal value” as his faith.

We have the same faith...in a sense...as an Apostle.

This faith in Jesus Christ causes us to praise Him!

We praise Him because as Peter says in this sermon found in Acts Jesus was...

- a man accredited by God to you by miracles, wonders and signs... v22
- raised from the dead v24
- exalted to the right hand of God v33
- Lord and Christ v36

And because all of this is true Peter quotes King David of the Old Testament in verse 25 “I saw the Lord always before me. Because he is at my right hand, I will not be shaken.”

I will not be shaken because...

- I know that my Redeemer lives
- I know that my Lord created me
- I know that my Lord paid for my sins
- I know that my Lord is right now preparing a place in heaven for me
- I know that my Lord is my refuge and strength an ever-present help in trouble.

V25-28 is Peter quote of David’s words found in Psalm 16.

David wrote these words expressing his confidence that God the Father would raise God the Son, Jesus, from the grave someday in the future after David would be long gone from this earth. David wrote these words about 1000 years before Jesus lived and died on the cross. But David was confident that Jesus would not remain in the grave, and because Jesus would rise again so would David and all those who believe in Jesus’ death on the cross for the payment of sin.

The people to whom Peter first preached this sermon to on that Pentecost Day knew all about Jesus. After all many of them lived in or around Jerusalem and they...

- heard about Jesus' arrest, trial and death
- heard about the so-called "rumors" that his disciples had stolen Jesus' body from the tomb to make it look like He had arisen

Peter tells them point blank - Jesus is Alive...He rose from the dead...He is the Messiah

In this sermon Peter gives us four proofs of Jesus' resurrection and 4 reasons why we are to be living a life of praise to our Lord and Savior.

### **Proof 1 The Person of Jesus Christ vv22-24**

Jesus was a real person and these people knew that... He...

- lived in Nazareth
- did miracles while on earth
- had God's hand upon Him

These people had seen, heard and watched Jesus life. Peter tells these people that the...

- death of Jesus was a crime v23 but the
- death of Jesus was also a victory v24

Billy Graham was asked once by the Konrad Andenauer, the chancellor of West Germany this question: "Do you believe in the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead?" Billy Graham responded: "Of course I do." Mr. Andenauer replied: "Mr. Graham, outside of the resurrection of Jesus, I do not know of any other hope for this world."

Because of the resurrection of Jesus

- we are forgiven by God
- we are reconciled with God
- we will spend eternity in heaven

### **Proof 2 The Prophecy of David vv25-31**

Peter uses David's words found in Psalm 16 to speak of Jesus.

- his soul would not remain in the place of the dead
- his body would not decay in the grave

### **Proof 3 The witness of believers v33**

Jesus appeared to around 500 people after his resurrection

- Acts 1:3, 22

- Were these people dependable?

Remember that before Jesus arose from the dead even the 12 disciples did not believe Jesus would come back to life. Mark 16:9-11; Acts 1:3

These disciples had nothing to gain by preaching a “lie” for their message that day on Pentecost and beyond...

- aroused official opposition to them
- led to their imprisonment and death

A few fanatics might be willing to believe and promote a “lie” for a time but not hundreds and eventually thousands in the early days of Christianity, furthermore the message of Jesus was backed up by miracles...He was both true God and true Man, Lord and Savior.

#### **Proof 4 The Presence of the Holy Spirit vv33-36**

Hear Peter’s logic in this sermon...

- the Holy Spirit is in the world - See him in our hearts
- The prophet Joel promised that one day the Spirit would come
- Jesus had promised to send the gift of the Holy Spirit to His people
- If Jesus is still in the grave, the Holy Spirit could not have been sent John 16:7

Peter then concludes this portion of the sermon with a declaration and an accusation...

- Jesus is your Messiah, but you crucified Him! V36 cf v23

Israel killed her own Messiah. But we are not guiltless either. For it was for our sins, too, that Jesus was crucified. Is there any hope for those who committed this crime? For us? V37

Yes...Peter says...v38f

- repent
- believe
- be baptized
- this promise of forgiveness is for everyone

Nothing will shake me...Why?

Because My Redeemer lives...and He gives me...

- rest Psalm 62

- strength Psalm 46
- hope Psalm 73
- love Psalm 13
- forgiveness Psalm 51
- life – eternal Psalm 16 Because he lives, I will live, you will live

The prophet Jeremiah once wrote: “The Lord is my portion; therefore I will wait for him. The Lord is good to those whose hope is in him... it is good to wait quietly for the salvation of the Lord.” Lamentations 3:24-26

“The Bible is not just a book of mysticism or spirituality; it is a book that also gives geographical truths and historical truths...it’s not just calling you to a feeling; it’s calling you to a real Person.” Lloyd Ogilvie