

# Powerful Preaching #3

## Simon Peter

Peter was not a fault-free man. After adamantly affirming that he would stand with the Lord and drawing his sword in the garden, Peter denied the Christ three times (Matt. 26:31-35; Jn. 18:10; Lk. 22:54-62). Yet, Peter was one of the disciples closest to Jesus (cf. Matt. 17:1-5). There is no doubt that Peter loved the Lord, and the Lord loved Peter (Jn. 21:15-17; 13:1). In fact, Peter was privileged to be the first to preach the gospel to the Jews and Gentiles (Acts 2; 10). When he preached, the product was not that of the fallible man Peter, but that which was revealed by the Holy Ghost (cf. Jn. 16:13). Therefore, when we examine Peter's sermons, we can take full confidence in the fact that they are excellent examples of powerful preaching.

## Peter's First Sermon

Upon the first Pentecost after the resurrection of our Lord, the Holy Ghost descended upon the apostles (Acts 2:1-4). Some of the devout men who witnessed this began to murmur and mock the apostles, even claiming they were drunk (Acts 2:5-13). At this point Peter stands up to defend them and explain the events (Acts 2:14-15). He begins to explain what was happening by quoting scripture (Acts 2:16-21). Then Peter goes on to say,

Ye men of Israel, hear these words; Jesus of Nazareth, a man approved of God among you by miracles and wonders and signs, which God did by him in the midst of you, as ye yourselves also know: Him, being delivered by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God, ye have taken, and by wicked hands have crucified and slain: Whom God hath raised up, having loosed the pains of death: because it was not possible that he should be holden of it (Acts 2:22-24).

The apostle plainly pointed out that these religious men were wicked in their action of crucifying the Savior.

He further testified of the resurrection of Christ as was foretold by scripture (Acts 2:25-35). As Peter brought this point to a close, he makes three things clear (v. 36).

1. The God whom the Jews worshipped is the one who raised up Jesus.
2. Jesus is now, not only alive, but also Lord and Christ.
3. They were guilty of crucifying him.

Their reaction is recorded as thus, "Now when they heard this, they were pricked in their heart, and said unto Peter and to the rest of the apostles, Men and brethren, what shall we do?" (Acts 2:37). On the day of Pentecost, Peter drew the sword of the Spirit and stuck it in the hearts of men. Did he do it out of ill-will? hatred? malice? No. He did it so that their souls might be saved (Acts 2:38-41, 47).

### **Peter Before Annas & Caiphas**

In Acts 3, Peter and John healed a man and great attention was drawn to them (Acts 3:1-11). Peter took advantage of this opportunity and preached the resurrection of Christ unto the people (Acts 3:12-26). One of the religious denominations of their day was grieved about the matter and took Peter and John to the ones who had examined Christ and pushed for his death--Annas and Caiphas (Acts 4:1-6; cf. Jn. 18:13). When questioned about the miracle, instead of trembling in fear and worrying about the "politeness" of his response, Peter said,

Ye rulers of the people, and elders of Israel, If we this day be examined of the good deed done to the impotent man, by what means he is made whole; Be it known unto you all, and to all the people of Israel, that by the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, whom ye crucified, whom God raised from the dead, even by him doth this man stand here before you whole. This is the stone which was set at nought of you builders, which is become the head of the corner. Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved (Acts 4:8-12).

Notice that Peter again placed the blame at the feet of his audience by saying, "whom ye crucified...you builders" (Acts 4:11). His boldness was obvious (Acts 4:13).

After discussing the matter, it was concluded that the apostles would be threatened and released (Acts 4:15-18). Peter and John responded with force.

And they called them, and commanded them not to speak at all nor teach

in the name of Jesus. But Peter and John answered and said unto them, Whether it be right in the sight of God to hearken unto you more than unto God, judge ye. For we cannot but speak the things which we have seen and heard (Acts 4:18-20).

In other words, "There is not a chance on earth that you will silence us!" Even so, they prayed for MORE boldness (Acts 4:29).

### **Punishment For Powerful Preaching**

As Peter and others continued to labor in the kingdom of Christ, the religious leaders of the day were filled with indignation (Acts 5:17). Again, the apostles were put in prison, but were released by an angel (Acts 5:18-21). They were taken back before the high priest and questioned (Acts 5:22-28). Observe their answer.

Then Peter and the other apostles answered and said, We ought to obey God rather than men. The God of our fathers raised up Jesus, whom ye slew and hanged on a tree. Him hath God exalted with his right hand to be a Prince and a Saviour, for to give repentance to Israel, and forgiveness of sins. And we are his witnesses of these things; and so is also the Holy Ghost, whom God hath given to them that obey him (Acts 5:29-32).

The high priest and others did not want the blood of Christ upon his hands, but Peter was relentless in telling the truth--"whom YE slew!"

The reaction of the religious men was one of great anger (Acts 5:33). However, they were cautioned by Gamaliel, and, instead of killing them, were satisfied to beat the apostles (Acts 5:34-40).

### **Conclusion**

The same word which has power to draw men unto God, has power to disgust men (Acts 2:41; 4:2). Peter was bold to preach that word regardless of the reaction of his audience. Why? Because "we ought to obey God rather than men!" What an excellent example of powerful preaching!

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