

"God's Love Story Sermon Outlines"

by Doug Hamilton

Section 32: "The Five Elements of God's Love Story of the Gospel" (Acts 2)

Following the resurrection and ascension of Jesus, the apostles waited at Jerusalem for the coming kingdom of God, the church (Acts 1:4). In less than a week after the ascension, Jesus would pour out His Spirit upon the twelve apostles on the Jewish day of Pentecost (Acts 2:1-4). In chapter 2 of Acts we find Peter's original presentation of the gospel of Jesus Christ. Within his message of hope were certain fundamentals required to relay the communication of the gospel. As previously discussed, the gospel of Jesus Christ is the pure message of God's Love Story. There are five primary elements of a gospel presentation. Studying Peter's sermon on Pentecost will reveal these essentials of that message of hope.

A) Confirmation

The apostles had the Spirit of God poured out on them and they fluently praised God in languages they had never studied (Acts 2:4). When tens of thousands of Jews heard and saw this miracle in front of them, they sought an explanation (Acts 2:5-8). Since "uneducated and untrained men" (Acts 4:13) cannot suddenly begin speaking fluently in foreign languages. The only excuse the doubters could muster was "They must be drunk." This simply made no sense, for drunks can barely speak at all. Besides it was only nine-o'clock in the morning. Peter dismissed their "logic" by explaining it was a miracle. The definition of a miracle is that which defies the natural laws of this realm with no plausible, reasonable explanation being put forth. Obviously this was the miraculous gifts of tongues and the interpretation of tongues (1 Corinthians 12:10).

What was the reason for this miracle to occur? It was for confirmation of the words which they were about to speak. The people knew they could put trust in the words of the apostles because God gave them authority to speak. This was the same authority which Jesus had. *Acts 2:22 "Men of Israel, listen to these words: Jesus the Nazarene, a man attested to you by God with miracles and wonders and signs which God performed through Him in your midst, just as you yourselves know"* Jesus' authority was "attested". Attestation means CONFIRMATION. One of the ways Jesus was confirmed was through His miracles.

- In Matt 11:2-5 the disciples of John the Baptist came to Jesus to ask if He was the expected Messiah. Jesus responded by saying, "Look at the miracles I am doing."
- John 10:25 Jesus answered them, "I told you, and you do not believe; the works that I do in My Father's name, these bear witness of Me."
- John 10:37-38 "If I do not do the works of My Father, do not believe Me; but if I do them, though you do not believe Me, believe the works, that you may know and understand that the Father is in Me, and I in the Father."
- The Apostle John wrote in *John 20:30-31* that the miracles of Jesus were "*written that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God...*"

Just like the words of Jesus were confirmed by the miracles, so also was the apostles teachings confirmed by theirs. The miracles jet-fueled the original believers.

- Mark 16:20 states that "*the Lord worked with them and confirmed the words by the signs that followed.*"

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- Hebrews 2:4 says the Apostles words by “*signs, miracles and wonders, and by gifts of the Holy Spirit*”.

This is why the first-century church was willing to die for the message of Jesus and taught through the apostles, for they knew it was confirmed. When soldiers arrived in the second century, demanding Christians to turn over their copies of the word, they were met with refusal. It was the same in all the others centuries since. When communist, Islamic and secular governments of the past and present attempted to confiscate Bibles, Christians refused to give them up. The message of the gospel was confirmed by Jesus and the apostles through miracles. That confirmation of the gospel is just as validated today as it was back then. We do not carry out the miracles ourselves, but tell of the miracles that did occur back then. There is an element of CONFIRMATION of the Gospel message.

B) Prediction

When the apostles were accused of being drunk, Peter offered an explanation. He quoted from the Book of Joel 2:18-22. In that passage Joel prophesied of the coming age of the Messiah. The age was to begin with an outpouring of the Spirit of God upon the people and would end in destructive power and judgment from God. In the end, the only ones spared would be those who converted to Christ. This prophecy was the foretelling of the coming Messiah, His coming kingdom and of the coming age. Peter was using the element of PREDICTION in his gospel presentation.

He did the same concerning King David in 2:25-ff. Peter explained from Psalm 16:10 that David prophesied of the coming “Holy One” would not be left in the grave. That “Holy One” was Jesus. This is the element of PREDICTION.

There are hundreds of prophecies in the Old Testament which predict the coming Savior. Here are just a few. Jesus was referred to as...

- 1) the bruiser of the serpent in Gen 3:15.
- 2) the descendent of Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Judah, Jesse and David (Gen 12:2-3, 26:4-5, 35:10-12, Gen 49:10; Isa 11:10; Jer 23:5).
- 3) the prophet among the people in Deut 18:15.
- 4) the child of a virgin in Isa 7:14.
- 5) the resident of Bethlehem in Micah 5:2.
- 6) the Son of God in Ps 2:7.
- 7) the receiver of gifts in Ps 72:10.
- 8) threatened infant in Jer 31:15.
- 9) the Deliver from Egypt in Hosea 11:1.
- 10) the follower of a messenger in Isa 40:3.
- 11) the Galilean in Isa 9:1.
- 12) the gospel preacher of Isa 61:1-2.
- 13) the Miracle Worker in Micah 7:15.
- 14) the Teacher of parables in Ps 78:2.
- 15) the Healer of the sick in Isa 53:4.

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- 16) the Rejected of His people in Ps 118:22.
- 17) the Rider of a donkey in Zech 9:9.
- 18) the Dweller of God's temple in Malachi 3:1.
- 19) the Betrayed in Psalm 41:9.
- 20) the Silent Accused in Isa 53:7.
- 21) the Sufferer of Thirst in Psalm 22:15.
- 22) the Mocked One of Psalm 22:8
- 23) the Beaten and Scourged in Isaiah 53:5.
- 24) the Pierced in Psalm 22:7-8; Zechariah 12:10.
- 25) the Resurrected One of Psalm 16:10.

This adds the intended power of the message which God desires. If you want your presentation of the Gospel to have power, then include the element of PREDICTION.

C) Resurrection

- Acts 2:24 "But God raised Him up again, putting an end to the agony of death, since it was impossible for Him to be held in its power."
- Acts 2:32 "This Jesus God raised up again, to which we are all witnesses."

The focal point of Peter's entire sermon was the resurrection of Jesus from the dead. Try to imagine this presentation without these two verses. Take away the resurrection and you remove the hope of God. The element of Resurrection is everything to the Christian.

- According to *1 Peter 1:21* God "raised Him from the dead and gave Him glory, so that your faith and hope are in God." Without the resurrection of Jesus we would have no hope at all.
- Hebrews 13:20 says that through the fact that God brought Jesus back from the dead is what equips us with the power to do His will.
- Ephesians 1:18-20 says that God's mighty strength was demonstrated in the resurrection of Jesus.
- 1 Corinthians 6:14 confirms that our resurrection from the dead is based in the resurrection of Jesus.

Without the Jesus being resurrected there would be no power to the gospel (Romans 1:4). It is always necessary to show others an empty tomb if we desire them to see God's Love Story in their lives. The element of the RESURRECTION is imperative.

D) Conviction

Peter made it clear to the listeners that they played a part in the crucifixion of Jesus. He made them take ownership.

- Acts 2:23 "...this *Man*, delivered over by the predetermined plan and foreknowledge of God, you nailed to a cross by the hands of godless men and put *Him* to death."
- Acts 2:36 "Therefore let all the house of Israel know for certain that God has made Him both Lord and Christ—this Jesus whom you crucified."

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Peter was forced the hearers of the presentation to take personal ownership of the crucifixion of Jesus. This is called the element of CONVICTION. We can see they accepted responsibility for their part in the execution of Jesus by their reaction. *Acts 2:37 Now when they heard this, they were pierced to the heart, and said to Peter and the rest of the apostles, "Brethren, what shall we do?"*

1. They were pierced in the heart.

- This statement was of a heartfelt pain concerning why Jesus had to die for them. Romans 5:8 states "...while we were sinners, Christ died for us." That was the reason why Jesus had to die, *for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God.*
- One might say, "I did not participate in the crucifixion of Jesus. I was not even born when that happened." We must understand that if Jesus died for our sins committed against God, then our sinning is the reason Jesus died. When we sin, we "*crucify the Son of God and put Him to open shame*" (Hebrews 6:6). Just like the recipients of Peter's sermon were pierced in their heart over their part in the crucifixion, we must also expect the same in this generation.

2. What shall we do?

- When one personally accepts their part of the crucifixion, they will be moved to make reparative actions. These recipients of the message on Pentecost did so, for they asked "*What shall we do?*" They knew they were separated from God and sought to rectify the problem.
- Does this principle apply to this generation as well? When a person sees their part in the crucifixion of Jesus, do they not also have the responsibility to correct the problem?

Without the element of CONVICTION, it simply will not happen. There can be no conversion without conviction.

E) Instruction

- The people already experienced the elements of confirmation, prediction, resurrection and conviction. They wanted to do something about the impending judgment from God. "*What must we do?*" They had a burning desire to make it right with God. Peter offered them the element of INSTRUCTION. What did Peter say they were to do? *Acts 2:38 Peter said to them, "Repent, and each of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins; and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit."*

1) Repent

- The word for repent means to "*think again*". The people were to "think again" about their standing with God, understanding that they were in need of forgiveness. When they woke up that morning the recipients probably thought they were perfectly fine with God. After the element of conviction was put on their hearts, they entered the early stage of repentance and needed to carry it all the way through to fixing it.

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- They needed to “think again” about how they were separated from God. They needed to “think again” about all they have done against Jesus. They need to “think again” and change their hearts to the concept of “God is right and I am wrong”. The need to “think again” and understand that they are expected to change their behavior. That is repentance.

2) Be Baptized

- The word for baptize means to immerse or dip into water. They were being instructed to take their repentance and initiate the process of dying to oneself. *Romans 6:5-7 For if we have become united with Him in the likeness of His death, certainly we shall also be in the likeness of His resurrection, ⁶ knowing this, that our old self was crucified with Him, in order that our body of sin might be done away with, so that we would no longer be slaves to sin; ⁷ for he who has died is freed from sin.*
- Just as Jesus was dead, buried and resurrected, they were to make themselves in His likeness. *Colossians 2:12 having been buried with Him in baptism, in which you were also raised up with Him through faith in the working of God, who raised Him from the dead.*
- It is at the point of baptism that we know our sins are washed away from our souls. *Acts 22:16 16 'Now why do you delay? Get up and be baptized, and wash away your sins, calling on His name.'*

What is the result from heeding this instruction? They would have forgiveness of the sins and the gift of the Holy Spirit. Simply put they would be presented faultless before God in heaven following their life in this realm. Without the element of INSTRUCTION in the presentation of God's Love Story could not happen.

Conclusion:

God wants us to be evangelistic in our approach to the world. He wants us to share the blessed plan of salvation to as many souls as possible. If we want to have the best opportunity to share this message with power, then we must mirror the elements of the very first gospel presentation. *We are told in Romans 1:16 that the gospel is the power of God unto salvation.* If the gospel is powerful, then we must present in a powerful way. We must have the elements of CONFIRMATION, PREDICTION, RESURRECTION, CONVICTION and INSTRUCTION. If we spread God's Love Story in such a way, He will most certainly continue to bless us.