

From Simon to Peter #24 - the Holy Spirit and Peter's Speech

by J. Glyn Owen

This sermon explores Peter's transformation through the Holy Spirit, emphasizing the importance of Spirit-controlled speech in effective communication of the gospel.

Duration: 40:19

Scripture: Matthew 24:35, Acts 2:17-41, 2 Peter 3:9

Topics: "Simon to Peter"

Description

In this sermon, the speaker discusses the supernatural event of Pentecost and its significance. He emphasizes how Simon, also known as Peter, successfully explained the meaning of Pentecost to the people in a language they understood. The speaker highlights how Simon transformed from being a talker to becoming a preacher of the gospel, with the power of the Holy Spirit guiding him. The sermon emphasizes the fulfillment of God's promises throughout history, particularly in the coming of Jesus Christ and the mighty works of God displayed in the book of Acts.

Transcript

The subject this morning is the Holy Spirit and a man's tongue or a man's mouth. The man being, of course, Simon Peter. His life and pilgrimage, spiritually, we have been considering now for some time.

I would like to read, in a sense, the basis of our meditation this morning, the fourth verse in Acts chapter 2. We are not concerned to expound this verse in its entirety, but we shall be looking at it and something, at any rate, that emerges from it. We read of those who were there on the day of Pentecost, that they were all filled with the Holy Spirit. And they began to speak with tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance.

They were all filled with the Holy Spirit. And they began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance. Now the last glimpse we have of Simon Peter in the gospel, is that which we were gazing upon last Lord's Day morning.

We saw that in John chapter 21, he is described as a man, who has learnt his lessons the hard way. By the time Simon Peter comes to John 21, he has been greatly humbled. He's been deflated.

His pride and his arrogance and pomposity. These things are very much in the past. All there is much left still, that the grace of God has to deal with.

But one thing is evident. Simon is not the man he was. There's been a mighty transformation already.

He is able now to look at things far more objectively, less dispassionately. Above all else, he's able to see himself in a different way. And this is a great thing in a man's life.

When he can look at himself objectively. That is unquestionably a matter of growth in grace. When I can look at myself honestly.

It's one of the most difficult things to do. Even when we can look at other people objectively and wisely and dispassionately. It's exceedingly difficult to examine ourselves with the same honesty and objectivity.

But Simon Peter has come, we believe, to that point. So that he no longer professes what is not true. When the Lord Jesus asked him whether he loved him.

Simon Peter, do you love me with a love of the agape order? Whereas he might a little earlier have said. Oh yes of course you know that I love you far more than these chaps do. You don't have any of that now in John 21.

Because the man knows himself. And knowing himself he will not anymore go beyond the lines of propriety. He only confesses and professes what he believes to be true of himself.

Now in the wake of all that. The man who had denied his Lord three times. Is pardoned.

Is forgiven. Is given peace with God and peace with his son. And not only that he is reinstated as a leader among the twelve.

And recommissioned to go out into the world with the tidings of the gospel. Now when we come from the gospel to the book of the Acts of the Apostles. We notice that the transformation in Peter is still more obvious.

It's almost unbelievable. Pentecost marked a remarkable change in the life of Simon Peter. Now we must not minimize this.

Honesty requires that we acknowledge it. That we look it straight in the face. That we come to terms with it.

And that we think precisely what has happened and why. Graces already present and gifts already present. Now seem to come to full bloom.

Now as time were available we could really enumerate some of these. Some natural gifts that Simon had and he had quite a few. Now after Pentecost they seem to come to full bloom.

But not only that. They're harnessed. They're ordered.

They're held together as it were by a mighty hand. And they're used not for Peter's glory. But for the glory of his Lord and the extension of his church.

And to the praise of the Lord Jesus Christ. But over and above that. Not only are the gifts that were already latent and some of them natural.

Not only have they come to life and come to full bloom. But there are gifts that Simon never had before. Which are lavishly dispensed and lavishly given by the Spirit.

So that here is a man in the book of the Acts of the Apostles. Who is endowed as it were with the whole panoply of God. Necessary for the fulfillment of his ministry.

Here is a man who is armed for the task. Ready for the job. Prepared as Paul tells us for every good work.

Peter has strangely mellowed. I think if I had to choose one word to describe the difference between Peter and the Gospels. And Peter in the early chapters of Acts.

I would want to use this word. He has strangely mellowed. And you notice that whereas previously he was so terribly impetuous.

Now he has become strangely, uncannily wise. He is one of the wisest of the disciples. We shall come to that later on.

He has mellowed spiritually. He is wise and he is courageous. The one who flinched to acknowledge his relationship to Jesus Christ.

Before that fire in the high priest's courtyard. Is quite a different man now. When there is need for speaking Simon is ahead.

And though he is still standing with the eleven he is a mouthpiece. And over and above that let me say. Something which is unbelievable about the Simon that we have been considering.

He has become balanced. Now balance is a difficult thing to gain for anybody. We all think that we are balanced.

But other people don't think we are. And I suppose Simon might have thought that he was a balanced sort of man before. But other people didn't.

Neither do the Gospels present him as such. Not even the Gospel of Mark which probably came from Peter. But here in the book of the Acts.

He is balanced. In his thinking, in his action. Everything somehow falls into proper place.

In other words the man is under control. And nowhere is that more evident. Than in the way he speaks.

In his use of the tongue. In his use of the mouth. In his use of the mechanisms of speech.

Now this very startling phenomenon appears before us in two ways. In the first place, Peter like the majority of his friends if not all of them. Received an all together new ability to communicate with men.

In a language that he had never learned. Do you remember how the Persolites and the Jews that came home to Rome. That came back from Rome and other places to Jerusalem.

Do you remember what they said. We hear them speak. Each of them speaking in our own dialect.

In the languages wherein we were born. Simon along with others was given the capacity. To utter a language.

To speak in a dialect. In a language that he had never naturally learned. And there was no need for an interpreter.

The people got the message. Now this is supernatural. But secondly.

He was equally successful in explaining the significance of the. Of the happening of Pentecost. In a language that the people understood.

Sooner or later the people asked what do these things mean. And Simon begins to explain to them now. Not in a foreign tongue.

But in a common tongue probably Aramaic. And he is as successful in speaking his normal Aramaic. As he is in speaking in an unknown tongue.

And the message gets across. And you remember what happens. The thousands are gathered in the gospel nest.

So that this man who had always been a talker. Has at last become a preacher of the gospel of grace. There is a difference between a talker and a preacher.

A preacher of the gospel. A herald of the gospel. A commissioned apostle of Jesus Christ.

With a spirit of grace upon him. And the word of God like a fire within him. What is more he has become a fisher of men.

Our Lord's promises may carry a while. But his every promise is true. Follow me he said to Simon.

And you shall become a fisher of men. And here in the book of the Acts of the Apostles. We see Simon the old time fisher of fish.

Casting out the gospel net as a fisher of men. And the thousands are drawn to land. What a change.

Now let us try very briefly to analyze this double miracle in relation to Peter's tongue. Or mouth. Obviously I have this morning to confine myself to one or two.

What I deem to be cardinal aspects of this speech. And I think that we have the key there in those words. That they were filled with the Holy Spirit.

And they spake as the Spirit gave them utterance. Two things mainly I want to say. I want us to look at the Spirit as the controller of those whom he fills.

And the Spirit as the communicator of truth. Through those whom he has filled. Now everything else I want to say this morning.

Will be gathered around these two main thoughts. The Holy Spirit of the controller of those whom he fills. That's the key word.

They were filled. The Spirit's fullness involves control. Whom the Holy Spirit filled.

Came necessarily under the Spirit's control. Now that relates to the entire person. This is a very common phenomenon.

I don't suppose I need to explain it. If you're filled with grief you're controlled by it. If you're filled with joy you're mastered by it.

If you're filled with wine. As some people charge the disciples on this occasion. Well the point is you're out of normal control.

You're under an alien control. And when the Bible speaks of a man being filled by the Spirit. He means that man is under the control of the Spirit.

Mastered by the Spirit. Now this of course relates to the entirety of the personality. It relates to the entire person.

So this morning we are particularly concerned. With the speech mechanism of the people concerned. Their mouths.

Their tongues. That Peter and others spoke on the day of Pentecost. Spoke in a language that they had never spoken before.

May I say, without I trust speaking disparagingly of this gift. I don't mean to do that. But that in and of itself is secondary.

I don't mean to speak disparagingly of this particular gift. But what I do want to say is this. That Peter and his friends spoke in an unknown or another tongue.

Is really secondary. The primary factor is this. That Peter's lips and speech mechanism.

That these things were so much under the control of the Spirit. That he spoke what the Spirit wanted him to say. Now in an unknown tongue.

Now in our image. The first half speaking the wonderful works of God. In an unknown tongue.

The second half explaining the whole phenomenon in his native Aramaic. But in each case you see. Peter's tongue was under control.

Peter's lips were under control. Peter's mouth was under control. The whole speech mechanism was under the powering omnipotent control of the Spirit.

Now let us take serious cognizance of this fact. You see men may be influenced by the Spirit. Who are not filled by the Spirit.

Men may be born of the Spirit. Who are not filled by the Spirit. And you may recognize the difference.

Men may be influenced by the Spirit. But they're not controlled by him. My dear fellow Christians.

Our churches are full of men and women. That have been influenced by the Spirit of God. But our churches are so utterly impotent.

Because so few are filled. Now the Spirit's control involves the mastery of the tongue among other things. How do you know when a person is filled with the Holy Spirit.

The Spirit of God. Well this is the key. This is the God.

That a man is so obviously under the mastery of the Spirit. That he does the work of the Spirit and of no one else. Be it in speech.

Be it in any other way. But says someone. How do we know the will of the Spirit.

How do we know when a man works according to the Spirit's will. Well the simple answer to that of course is according to the Word of God. This is why you see the church of today is not really in a position to judge.

Who is filled with the Spirit and who is not. Because our knowledge of the Word of God is so childish. And so inadequate.

We really do not know how to judge this kind of phenomenon. Now again I do not mean to disparage the gift of the Spirit of God. Whereby a man speaks in a tongue that is not his own.

I don't mean to do that. I don't want to do that. I would not grieve the Spirit of God by doing that.

But let me say that the fact that a man speaks in tongues. Does not necessarily mean that he is filled with the Spirit of God. Now this may be a terrible thing to say to someone.

But you see glossolalia. Speaking in tongues was a pagan phenomenon. Long before it was a Christian one.

And there are people who speak in tongues today. Inspired by spirits other than the Holy Spirit. The old titaness of Delphi fifth century before Christ.

Used to gather thousands of people to hear her speak in an unknown tongue. And she used to speak of the oracle of the God. Later in many of his plays tells us of the same phenomenon.

And you have many many illustrations of this today. In an utterly pagan setting. So that the mere fact of speaking in an unknown tongue.

Does not prove that I have the Spirit of God at all. Let alone in its fullness. And yet here in the book of the Acts.

This is the Spirit of God who is responsible. But the thing that makes up sure that Simon Peter. Was filled with the true Spirit of God is this.

He does what Christ required him to do. And what the Spirit inspired him to do. And the Scripture proves upon it.

In other words everything that Simon does here. Is born out of Scripture. Is confirmed outright in the light of Scripture.

There is an objective test of the subjective experience. Now as a matter of fact you know. This surely is one of the greatest miracles of grace.

That a man's mouth, a man's speech, a man's tongue, a man's lips. Should come under the sovereign control of the Spirit of God. Now I don't suppose I need to dwell upon this.

But you know it's a sheer miracle. What if everybody that you and I meet for just one week. What if everybody we met.

Were really men and women with their tongues under the control of the Spirit of God. What a different world this would be. You remember what the apostle James tells us about the tongues.

He says that it is humanly uncontrollable. And I can never help wanting to read this passage. When I read of the gift of tongues in the book of the Acts.

Let me read to you from James in a modern translation. What an immense stack of timber. Can be set ablaze by the tiniest spark.

And the tongue is in effect. It represents among our members the world with all its wickedness. It pollutes our whole being.

It keeps the wheel of our existence red hot. And its flames are fed by hell. Beasts and birds of every kind.

Creatures that crawl on the ground or swim in the sea. They can be subdued and have been subdued by mankind. But no man can subdue the tongue.

It is an intractable evil. Charged with deadly venom. Oh how wonderful this phenomenon is then.

Of a man like Simon Peter. Whose lips are under control. Whose tongue moves at the impulse of the spirit.

Who is so controlled by the spirit. That he only utters what the spirit wants him to say. Now in one language.

Now in another. Are you filled with the spirit of God Christian? Is your tongue under control? Let me tell you. If your tongue is not under control.

You do not know the gift of the fullness of the Holy Ghost. For fullness means control by the Holy One. Nothing less.

And of course. The spirit control involving mastery of the tongue was. A very remarkable miracle in relation to Simon Peter.

Whereas it is generally a supernatural work of God. To bring any man's tongue under his sovereign and sanctifying control. Some men's tongues appear to be more difficult than others to control.

And Simon was a case in point. Peter's tongue was a very loose tongue. Now you know tongues like that.

They wag without any command. They move before the mind of thought what they ought to say. And Simon's tongue was a racy tongue.

It was a loose tongue. It was a wild tongue. He always spoke.

Scripture tells us. That he spoke in the most solemn occasions. And he didn't know what he was saying.

But his tongue moved. He talked. And there are talkers like that in the church of Jesus Christ.

As well as in the world. They are just talkers. They were born talkers.

They can't be quiet. They need to study to be silent as the word of God says. But study as they will.

They don't seem to be able to do it. Peter's tongue was a runaway tongue. A deadly tongue.

And yet even so. At this moment. It was under control.

Let me repeat. So much under the control of the spirit. That the spirit could speak an entirely new language.

Via that mouth. As well as explain the meaning of Pentecost in Aramaic. A common tongue via the same mouth.

The spirit controlled Simon's mouth. Oh my good people. Permit me to put it as challengingly as I can.

Is your mouth under control? Now in vain do we make great professions about the spirit of God. If our tongues and our mouths are not under control. The control of the Holy Ghost.

The Holy Spirit that controls. Now very briefly. The Holy Spirit that communicates.

Here we envisage the wonderful phenomenon of God communicating with men. You see our God is a communicating God. Oh my if time permitted.

I'd like to go back to 1 Kings chapter 18. You see the Baals could not communicate. You remember Elijah and Montano.

My what those prophets of Baal would have done. Just to get a word from Baal. From their God.

They can't talk. You can shout at them. They don't hear you.

You can offer sacrifices to them. They can do nothing. You can tear yourself to pieces and bleed yourself to death.

They don't even see you and they certainly can say nothing. But you see our God is a communicating God. And if we are in touch with a God of the Bible.

We are in touch with a God who communicates. Now this is the genius of our faith. He is not a silent God.

He is not a Dagon. Set up in a temple that we go to see. And run away from with a memory of what he was like.

He is a God who speaks. God communicating with men is one of the great features of the Christian gospel. Jesus Christ is the word made flesh.

Was there a more delightful utterance than that. He is the word of God. He is the mind of God.

He is the reasoning of God. What is happening in Jesus Christ is that God is talking. And he did just that silent and listen what he is saying.

God is talking to men. An unspeakably wide chasm has separated men from God. So that in ecclesiastical circles we hear a lot of talk about the problem of communication.

Now anybody in the communicating business knows how difficult it is. There is a generation gap. There are cultural gaps.

There are so many gaps that separate us from one another today. And it is extremely difficult for an old man like me. You know what to say about that.

To communicate with people that are just 10, 15 years younger. Such is the chasm between people. And parents can't communicate with their children.

This is a major problem. Now if anybody should know his child. Boy or girl.

It should be mom and dad. They taught the little one to talk and to walk and to pray. They nursed the little one to sleep.

They should know. And yet there is a chasm between mom and dad and the little one. A problem of communication.

But now will you notice. Here there is no problem of communication in the book of the Acts. Here Simon Peter and he can't speak the language, the dialects in which they were born.

And yet he can communicate with them. How? Oh my good people let us get this. God did not mean us to communicate the gospel by dint of our own natural powers.

But by the Holy Spirit controlling our mouths. Controlling our speech. Controlling our tongues.

Controlling our wills. Controlling our whole lives. But I'm especially concerned this morning with our mouths.

Holy Spirit controlling the mechanism of speech. Is God silent today because some of us are not under control yet. And some of our myths are just running wild.

Now the content of the spirit communication via Peter is twofold. And I'm going to be very brief with this. It's twofold.

But what I want to stress in and through all this is that it's the message of the spirit. Not Peter's message. What's getting through via Peter's mouth is not something that Peter concocted.

It's not even Peter's sermon. It's a message of the spirit. It's the word of God.

It's the message that the spirit would communicate to these men at this time. And it's coming via Peter's mouth because Peter's mouth is under control. Now this message is twofold.

You read this letter. First of all speaking generally it was the mighty works of God. Or in the 80's the wonderful works of God.

The wonderful works of God. This is very general. Probably in this context it refers especially to this.

That the God who made a promise hundreds of years ago to the prophets. Has not been asleep. And is not asleep.

But is now alive. And is fulfilling his ancient promise. Oh there's nothing more wonderful than this.

You see God making a promise and then the centuries go by. Suddenly. He moves into history.

He breaks in. And he fulfills that promise just as it was given. How wonderful works of God.

And the evidence is all around us. Here in the book of Acts. I love Isaac Watson's hymn.

You know it. You should be singing it at the close this morning. Begin my tongue is of some heavenly theme.

And speak some boundless thing. The mighty works on mightier name of our eternal king. Then listen.

Tell of his wondrous fame. And sound his power abroad. Sing the sweet promise of his grace.

And the fulfilling God. And brave as an eternal brush. The mighty promise shines.

Nor can the powers of darkness raise those everlasting minds. His very word of grace is strong as that which built the skies. The voice that rolls the stars along.

Speak for the promise. You know that wonderful. The voice that rolls the stars along.

Speak for the promise. Oh mighty God. He makes the promise.

And he fulfills it in the fullness of the time. As in the birth of the savior. And so also in the coming of the Lord.

Now that's the message in general. Some wonderful works of God. But more particularly.

The mighty works of God. Tensure in Jesus Christ. Now this is told.

Why is it the Pentecost has happened now? Well God promised it long ago. Yes yes. That God first would do something in his son.

Jesus Christ our Lord. So that Peter goes on to explain. This event is really due to what Jesus Christ is.

And what Jesus Christ has done. Let me just read to you a few verses. As I come to a close.

How do you explain this phenomenon? Well Peter. Jesus of Nazareth. A man attested to you by God with mighty works.

And wonders and signs which God did. Through him in the midst of you. As you yourself know.

This Jesus. Delivered us according to the definite plan. And foreknowledge of God.

You crucified and killed by the hands of lawless men. But God. Being therefore exalted at the right hand of God.

And having received of the Father the promise of the Holy Spirit. He has poured forth this that you now see and hear. It is doing to Peter.

And then he ends like this. Let all the house of Israel know assuredly then. That God hath made him both Lord and Christ.

This Jesus. Whom you crucified. How do you explain the phenomenon of Pentecost? What is the message? Well the message is this.

That God by his Son has come to save the last. The one that came was poor or vain to die. In the place of sinners he died.

Wicked men slew him and nailed him to the tree. But God raised him from the dead. Neither was that all.

God raised him up to his own right hand. And when he arrived there he fulfilled the promise. Of which he had spoken to his disciples.

That when he would go to his Father he would ask. And he would send forth the Holy Spirit apparently. Apparently.

Now he's arrived. Now he's in the place of power. So the message is this.

God hath made that same Jesus both Lord and Christ. Let me remind you the message came through. To those who were listening on that first day of Pentecost.

Like a thunderclap. They saw the scriptures opened up by this. Ordinary man called Simon.

The scriptures explained it all. The scriptures came alive. They saw their own sin in crucifying and rejecting Jesus of Nazareth.

And they saw their only way of salvation. By turning from their sins. And embracing the Saviour.

And in penitence and in faith coming to him. And acknowledging him as Lord and Messiah. And a thousand things.

My good friend. Why is it that God is silent today? Now I know there's no easy answer to that. There's no flippant answer that I dare give from this Roslyn today.

There are times when God is silent. Because he is in judgment sitting over the nation. There are times when the word of God is not declared in its power.

Because the judgment of God withholds that word from the people that have despised. Who tried actors and sportsmen and clowns. Far more than they do the preacher of the gospel.

Of the gospel of the preacher. And there are times when the judgment of God is so much over the land. That he withholds his word.

Wait a moment. There are also times when God is not heard speaking. Because men's lips are not under his tongue.

Men have never been subdued. They've never been harmed. They've never been humbled.

They've never been mastered. They've come the easy way into the church of God. And they walk the easy way along what they deem to be the Christian path.

But they've never been mastered. Are you under control? Could it be that the spirit of God. Moistens muscles this morning because.

Some of us. Can't be filled. Because fullness means control.

Oh Lord have mercy upon me. God have mercy upon us all. And show us again.

What can be done in a situation where men. Feeble as ourselves. Come totally.

But I'm thinking especially now in terms of the mechanism of speech. Come under the power and dominion. God still has a message for this generation.

Can he utter it to you? To me? Let us pray. Oh heavenly father we bow before thee with awesome wonder. And a sense of sharing.

Having to confess that more often than we are. Eager to acknowledge. Our lips have been so involved with trivialities.

And our mouths. With petty things. Sometimes even untruths.

Or having only a semblance of truth. That we could not at such times be the mouthpieces of the holy one. Forgive us.

Forgive us we pray. Oh spirit of God come upon us. If it please thee.

Fill our lives. That we should be mastered. To the end.

That we should be employed. In being communicators. Of the spirit communication.

Hear us oh holy one. In Jesus name. Amen.

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