**Christ: Mighty Works of God – For All!**

**Acts 2:1-21**

Pentecost - 05.23.2021

Grace to you and peace from God our Father and our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. Amen.

Pentecost always raises a bunch of questions in the minds of people. One of the biggest is this whole speaking in tongues issue. Simply put, the disciples were granted the miraculous ability to speak in the different “tongues,” that is, the different languages of people present, languages which they had not previously studied and know. Tongue speaking is not a gift everybody receives, but only when people need to hear the “Mighty Works of God” in their own language, but nobody has the natural (learned) ability to do so.

Simply put, if someone claims to speak in tongues today, and nobody understands what they are saying – and nobody translates for the benefit of all – then they do not have the miraculous, Spirit-wrought ability to speak in tongues. Such folks are simply blowing their own horn, “Lookie what I can do!

Another question arises, “how could such a thing happen?” God did it! It is a miracle. He did the opposite at the tower of Babel, confusing their languages, God miraculously changed people so that whatever their common language had been, people no longer understood. He also made it so that there were groups that spoke the same new language. These scattered in groups all over.

They had not done as God had instructed in the garden to “fill the earth.” They were all hunkered down in one spot. God wanted them where He commanded them to go. So, He miraculously brought about their dispersion by confusing their language(s).

Lastly people ask, what are these “tongues of fire” that rested on each of them. Guess what, that is what we know about it, exactly what the text states. When the day of Pentecost arrived, they were all together in one place. And suddenly there came from heaven a sound like a mighty rushing wind, and it filled the entire house where they were sitting. And divided tongues as of fire appeared to them and rested on each one of them. And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other tongues as the Spirit gave them utterance.

There is much speculation about what the “tongues of fire” might have been… where they rested upon each of them…, and how such a thing could happen.

Let us not say anymore than that. Why? Because that is all our text reveals. And the most important thing to take place is not the tongues of fire, but the fact that were filled with the Spirit to speak. Yes, to speak in other tongues, but even more importantly, to speak and declare “the mighty works of God.”

What are the mighty works of God? Peter’s Pentecost sermon is a wonderful example of it, but that sermon comes after our text.

I think that sermon is important, and what we have recorded of that sermon begins with verse 22.

“Men of Israel, hear these words: Jesus of Nazareth, a man attested to you by God with mighty works and wonders and signs that God did through him in your midst, as you yourselves know—this Jesus, delivered up according to the definite plan and foreknowledge of God, you crucified and killed by the hands of lawless men. God raised him up, loosing the pangs of death, because it was not possible for him to be held by it. (2:22-24)

…Peter quotes King David from the Psalms, and then continues.

[David] Being therefore a prophet, and knowing that God had sworn with an oath to him that he would set one of his descendants on his throne, he foresaw and spoke about the resurrection of the Christ, that he was not abandoned to Hades, nor did his flesh see corruption. This Jesus God raised up, and of that we all are witnesses. 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. (2:30-33)

…again after Peter quotes David, he continues.

Let all the house of Israel therefore know for certain that God has made him both Lord and Christ, this Jesus whom you crucified.”

 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?” And Peter said to them, “Repent and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins, and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. 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.”

At that point, the passage continues by saying: And with many other words [Peter] he bore witness and continued to exhort them, saying, “Save yourselves from this crooked generation.” (2:36-40)

What are the mighty acts of God?

God created all that exists in the span of six 24-hour days?

God created Adam in His image – from the dust of the ground?

God caused Adam to fall into a great sleep and made Eve, his bride, from his rib?

God destroyed all in a flood?

God confused their languages at Babel?

God parted the waters and brought Israel through the Red Sea?

God had a large fish swallow Jonah and vomit him up alive three days later on dry land?

Indeed, all these – and others – are mighty acts. Many, including many Christians, see them as impossible and try to explain how they could happen by trying to come up with what appears to be logical explanations. To them, they are too mighty, and therefore must be untrue. And, it is only the feeble-minded simpleton, someone scientifically ignorant who would believe such things as miracles.

To God, these miracles were child’s play. All of them however God did to point to His greater and more mighty works.

That God would choose to save sinners…

That God would choose to be gracious to those to whom He gave life and who chose to be willfully, disobedient children…

That God would plan, from before the foundations of the world that His only begotten Son – the beloved Son whom He loves – would come in our flesh, and suffer the death we deserve in order to destroy sin and death? That is a mighty act of God.

At the end of today’s text, Peter boldly declares that Jesus is the Lord of whom it is proclaimed, that whoever calls upon His name, the name Jesus, God’s Christ, shall be saved.

You want another mighty act of God?

At the end of Peter’s sermon, those gathered together were pierced to the heart, and said to Peter and the rest of the apostles, “Brethren, what shall we do?” Peter said to them, “Repent, and each of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins.”

What does it mean to call upon the name of the Lord? It means to repent of your sins! To repent of your sins is to believe you are indeed a sinner. Do not hold anything back, do not try and claim that some things are not sins, repent of them. To call upon the name of the Lord is to lay yourself before God. You do not in any way try to trust in yourself, that somehow you are close to being good. You simply repent.

That is the mighty act of God – for only God can change a heart of stone into a repentant, believing heart. Only a mighty act of God can move someone to confess – AND BELIEVE – I am a poor, miserable sinner.

You think faith is not a mighty act of God? Seriously? How many people are unwilling to confess? How many people want to claim their place before God based upon themselves? People deny that what God declares to be sin, is sin. People compare themselves to others and declare how good they are. Others think that repentance is too easy, that God must require more of us that just repentance.

Repentance is not easy, especially if it is honest repentance. Honest repentance is soul-searching and embarrassing. Repentance goes deep and allows God’s Law to convict us of all sins, whether they be in our thoughts, words, or actions. Repentance makes no excuses. Repentance does not blame others; the world, or even Satan for leading us into sin. Repentance examines self and says quite simply, “mea culpa, mea culpa, mea maxima culpa – by my fault, my own fault, my own most grievous fault.”

Repentance is a mighty act of God!

Repentance sees our own sinfulness and desires it to end. Repentance desires us to purify our thoughts, cleanse our mouths, and straighten up our actions. Repentance trusts not in self, but in God’s Christ – that is what it means to “call upon the name of the Lord!” Repentance happens just like the miracle of Pentecost – the Holy Spirit changes hearts and minds and moves people to repentance in Christ Jesus.

Who is Jesus? He is the One God promised as the remedy for the problems that began with the first sin in the garden. Jesus is true God taking on human flesh in the womb of Mary, born sinless, the God-man perfect in every way, the Lamb of God without blemish – sinless and holy.

This Jesus the Nazarene, a man attested to by God with miracles and wonders and signs which God performed through Him, just as you yourselves know from the Gospels— this Man, delivered over by the predetermined plan and foreknowledge of God, was nailed to a cross by the hands of godless men and put to death. 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.

This is salvific event is the mighty acts of God, and took many generations to accomplish. It was as God planned from the beginning. Jesus is God’s Christ. He is the mighty acts of God, delivered over by the predetermined plan and foreknowledge of God, to be put to death, the sacrifice in the fullness of time to make atonement for sin – for your sin – my sin – for all sin.

Today God’s mighty acts continue to be fulfilled in you. God’s might act is the Spirit’s moving you to confess your sinfulness, believing you are a sinner for whom God’s Christ purchased forgiveness.

It is a mighty act of God that you trust that Christ’s blood covers your sins.

It is a mighty act of God that you crave a word of absolution spoken into your ears that you might have true peace and be saved.

It is a mighty act of God that you come to the table to eat Christ’s body, drink Christ’s blood, and bask in forgiveness and eternal life given in that meal.

It is a mighty act of God that you believe that you are baptized into Christ’s death, that sin and death have no more hold over you – and that you are made alive unto life eternal in Christ.

It is a mighty act of God that you have faith. It is a great miracle of God that you call upon the name of the Lord and are saved today and into eternity. Amen.