

Preaching that Produces Results

By Henry Mahan

Bible Text: Acts 2:22-39

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All right. If you will open your Bibles now to the second chapter of the book of Acts, the chapter begins with this statement. “And when the day of Pentecost was fully come.” When you hear the word “Pentecost” what comes to mind? Pentecost.

Well, first of all, we think of a feast of the Jews. Pentecost was a Jewish feast. There were several Jewish feasts, three of them come to mind immediately. There was the feast of the Passover which began in Egypt. The Lord gave this feast to the Jewish people to observe every year at the same time, the feast of the Passover. And he said, “When your children ask what meaneth this service, this feast?” You will say to them, “It is the Lord’s Passover. When he delivered us from Egypt he gave us the passover, the blood on the door. When I see the blood I will passover you.”

Christ is the fulfillment of that feast in that he is our passover. An then comes to mind the feast of the first fruits or the waving of the sheaf. The feast of the first fruits. Upon a certain day—and that day was Sunday—it was the day after. It was the first day after the passover sabbath on Sunday, the first day of the week. The Jews brought a handful of the first fruits of from the ground, the first oats or barley or wheat or whatever called the waving of the sheaf or the first feast of the first fruits. And this was waved before the Lord and they were saying on this first day of the week, on Sunday after the sabbath that the Lord hath given all things and everything that we have all is from God: the sun and the rain and the harvest and the wheat and all these things, the first fruits.

Well, Christ is the fulfillment of that feast because on Sunday morning, the first day of the week, he arose from the grave and became the first fruits of them that slept. Christ is the first to rise to die no more.

And then there is the feast of Pentecost. Pentecost is a word which denotes 50th. It is the 50th day after the passover. And on this day thy met together to renew their vows and dedicate everything to God. Now these people just went through the motions. They just went through the motions. These feasts had degenerated into an end in themselves. They thought when they observed the passover then they had God blessings or when they waved the sheaf, you know, that was...that was it or when they kept the feast of Pentecost that was it. They were just going through the motions, means unto themselves.

So when you think...when you see the word "Pentecost," that is the first thing you think of, a feast of the Jews. Then, secondly, many people think of this. "That's when the Holy Spirit came. That is when the Holy Ghost came." Many people only associate Pentecost with the Holy Ghost. If you look back at Acts one right across the page, verse eight. Before our Lord ascended to heaven he said to his disciples, "But you shall receive the power of the Holy Ghost, the power of the Holy Ghost after the Holy Ghost is come upon you. And you shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, Judea, Samaria and unto the uttermost parts of the earth."

That was significant. Pentecost was, this particular feast when the Holy Ghost came.

All right, verse three of Acts two said, "There appeared unto them cloven tongues like as of fire and it sat upon each of them and they were all filled with the Holy Ghost."

All right. Some people when you...I...my question was this. When you see the word "Pentecost" what do you think of? A feast of the Jews, the coming of the Holy Ghost. Some people think of supernatural gifts especially tongues when they mention Pentecost. In fact, there is a denomination called Pentecostals, Pentecostals who try to duplicate this particular thing here, this emotion and excitement and gifts and these events. They are called Pentecostals because they go back to the giving of the gifts and the speaking of tongues, other languages.

It says here in verse four, "And they were filled with the Holy Ghost and they began to speak with other tongues as the Spirit gave them utterance. And they were dwelling at Jerusalem Jews, devout men out of every nation under heaven. And when this was noised abroad the multitude came together and were confounded. They were amazed. They were troubled in their minds because every man heard them speak in their own language."

That ought to give you some clue to the tongues. They heard them speak in their own languages. It wasn't a gibberish like where you jar your jaws under here and say some silly words nobody understands. That's not...that's vulgar. It really is. It is vulgar. It is...it is...it is ignorance. For a man to stand in the pulpit or in a public worship service and utter a stream of words or syllables that nobody in there understands, not even he himself and calls it spiritual language, calls it praying in the Spirit or talking in the Spirit or speaking in tongues. That is plain vulgar ignorance. God is not within 10,000 miles of that trash. Is that strong enough? It is trash.

It is not a duplication of what happened here at all. These men were mightily endued with the power of the Holy Ghost and they spake other tongues, but it was other languages that people in Greek and Hebrew and whatever...I don't know all the different languages, Arabic or something. They understood what the people were saying in their own languages. And that is the gift of tongues. Certainly it is the gift of tongues.

But here is a thing that I think of and I ...when I see the word "Pentecost, Pentecost."

And, you know, somebody might say, “Well, brother Mahan, you shouldn’t be so strong in...in...in downing the charismatic movement in this...in these tongues. You ought to be careful. You might speak against the Holy Ghost.”

I am not the least bit worried. It is another Spirit. It is not the Holy Spirit, not the slightest bit. I am worried about a whole lot more things than that. I say they are con men. They are hucksters. They are deceived people. They are merchandisers of flesh is what they are. And those who support them are supporting error. That is as strong as I can make it. And that is the way I feel. Not the least bit concerned. I’ll tell you when I’ll get concerned about speaking against the Holy Ghost when I quit preaching the substitutionary work of Christ. That’s where the Holy Ghost business is, to reveal Christ, not for a bunch of religious people to play games with a bunch of silly gibberish and to lord it over one another pretending to be holier than somebody else.

But, you know what I think of also when I see the word “Pentecost” is that at this particular time there were many people converted, brought to faith in Christ here at this...let’s look over here at verse 41, verse 41 of Acts two. Listen to this. After this sermon...verse 41 of Acts two. “Then they that gladly received his word were baptized and the same day there were added to them 3000 souls.” Now I’ll tell you that was something. And this wasn’t... I got a book this week from Evangelical Press, a book by Erroll Hulse who is a faithful pastor in England, a faithful pastor and a faithful writer. The name of the book is *The Great Invitation*. And he deals in this book with this altar call that is going on in so many churches, the one for which Charles Finney, Billy Sunday, Dwight L. Moody and now Graham, Billy Graham is associated with. And he gave an example. He said that Billy Graham...see, Mr. Hulse is over there in England now, lives there, pastors there. And the information he has gathered about these campaigns and so forth is packed and he said recently our brother Kendall, brother R.T. Kendall, had Billy Graham preach for him on Sunday night in his church Westminster Chapel in London, Buckingham Gate. Seats about 1800, 2000 people. And Mr. Graham...it is one of the most prominent well known churches in England. R.T. Kendall has been pastor there six, seven or eight years, something like that.

But anyway, Mr. Graham was over there in England to see a doctor and he came over to Westminster to preach on Sunday night. You have been there. You know how big it is. It seats about 2000. He filled it. Of course, he always does. He always does.

But at the close of the service he gave an altar call. He calls it an invitation. Just as I am. Eighty people came forward. He was there one service, one message, one time, one visit and gone, 80 people. Now 80 people is a lot of people. There is about that many people in this center section right here now, 80 people. Everyone of these people came forward and made a profession of faith in Christ. They responded to his altar call, to his invitation to believe on Jesus, to be saved.

Now Mr. Hulse said in his book, “Mr. Kendall is not going to let 80 people slip through his fingers without a fight.” That is the way he worded it. He is going to try to conserve

the results. He said, "I followed up on it. And do you know how many of those people were baptized?" Those 80. Can you guess? One. One.

Where are the 79? They are where all the rest of them are, in a false refuge. That is where they are. Now that is not went on here. Peter never gave an altar call. Peter never had to had to counsel or station out there on the end of the aisle to walk forward or to grab somebody by the arm or pull them down. Peter preached Christ and these people were saved. Now that's what impresses me.

Now here is what I am saying. I want you to listen and listen good. What would you say is the dominating factor here at Pentecost? The dominating, controlling factor here at Pentecost. What would you say is the dominating, controlling factor?

This people were converted here. There are some people came to know God. There was a church established here. What was the dominating factor, the controlling factor? Well, the disciples were there. The apostles of Christ. But they didn't magnify themselves. Peter didn't say anything in this sermon about himself or John. He didn't say, "Now, we are glad to have with us Dr. John and Dr. James and all the other nine." They weren't pushed to the front here. They didn't magnify themselves as men do today.

I'll bet most of you can't even name the 11 apostles. Boy, these fellow today won't let us forget their names. I know them. I don't ever see them hardly on television, but I know their names. They are all over the front page. These fellows, these apostles didn't tell their life stories. They didn't organize an association. They didn't debate doctrine. You don't even know their names, but you know the name of him who they preached.

Did I get across my point? Secondly, the Holy Spirit was there, but there was no special attention given to the Holy Spirit. He empowered these men to preach Christ. Peter didn't say, "See me speak in tongues, everybody? Would you like to have this gift? I have a book here on how to be baptized with the Holy Ghost and speak in tongues." Peter didn't do that.

The great crowd was there from all nations. But there was no entertainment, no celebrities, no ceremonies and rituals. They just heard the disciples preach Christ and their own language.

I was with a preacher in Brevard, North Carolina last week. I want to tell you something else. I want you to hear these things and I want you to know about these things. I was with a pastor in Brevard, North Carolina last week. I preached Thursday, Friday, Saturday and twice Sunday. And for the last few years he had been preaching the gospel of God's grace, for years. He was a fundamentalist Southern Baptist pastor and so forth, you know where he was. And now don't misunderstand me. I am not preaching...I am preaching Christ this morning. I am not preaching Billy Graham. I am trying to show you some things.

Billy Graham was coming to that county for a meeting. This was two years before he was come, two years before he was to come. They started the advance work. All the pastors of the city. They canvassed the city. There was 80 and 50...there was 130,000 people in the county. They found out there were 50,000 or 80,000 were church members and 50,000 weren't. They did this thorough canvassing.

Each church...this pastor had 165 members. Each church was to furnish the pastor and one counselor for every 10 members. This was the organization. You were to have...he was to have 16 and a half counselors. So he got 17. It is kind of hard to have a half a counselor. So he got 17. He was a pastor and 17 counsellors, one for every 10 members.

It was their responsibility to go out and bring in the 50,000. They had maps of the city and each house where is it...there were church goers and already accounted for was white. And the other half was black. So they got all this...and this was started two years. And then over the period of the next few months they worked together and finally the counselors and the pastors were all brought together. One counselor for every 10 persons.

Now the pastors were told and the counselors that when they came to the services where Mr. Graham was to preach, that the counselors was to sit on the end of the row, a counselor for each 10 persons. If you have got 20,000 people there you have got 2000 counselors. Is my math right? Two thousand counselors. Is that correct, one for every 10? And when the invitation is given, when everybody stands and Mr. Graham gives the invitation and the choir sings, the counselors are to step out and walk down the aisle to get the thing going. This pastor told me this was his orders.

The counselors...so every time you see this vast horde in a football stadium or a great auditorium and the Just as I am starts and people start down the aisle, those are counselors. They get saved every night, 2000 of them, 3000 of them, 4000 of them. They come down to the front.

You see, this gets people to moving. This gets people to coming. This gets the folks motivated. This doesn't take...you don't need the Holy Ghost. You need plans and you need outlines and you need convoys. This is what you do.

And that pastor said, "I quit right then. That was my last meeting." He said, "I am not going to be part of a charade and call it God's business."

You say, "Does that go on, pastor?"

I am telling you the truth. Manipulation. Brethren, I tell you, that is evil. That is not of God and...

All right, the disciples were there. Great men, honored men. The Holy Spirit was there, the crowd was there. But the key factor, the one dominating principle at Pentecost as I read this sermon was the preaching of the gospel of Christ. The disciples preached Christ. The Holy Ghost glorified Christ. The crowd heard Christ. The...Peter was filled

with the Holy Ghost to preach Christ. Now let me give you this and listen to me in case I misunderstood.

What I am saying to pastors...as we sat and talked the other day, “I want to see something happen.”

I do, too. But I am not going to make it happen. God has got to make it happen. Salvation is of the Lord. Lift up your eyes and behold the fields are white already to harvest. Pray ye that the Lord of the harvest will send forth laborers into his field. I plant and plow and water, but God gives the increase.

I like to see people confess Christ, but I declare I am not going to manipulate people. I am not going to get into this trickery and tom foolery and psychology of bowing your heads while somebody hums or Martha plays this organ softly and the choir is humming and I get in a real spiritual voice and say, “Would you like to believe on the Lord? Meet mother in heaven would you raise your hand? Let us pray for you. God bless you. Would you raise your hand?”

That’s manipulation. Now if you really meant that...”Keep your heads bowed.”

Why are your heads bowed? No one looking around. Why not?

We want to make it as convenient as we can for people to make our false professions. If you really meant that while we stand, don’t anybody move, don’t anybody leave while we stand, would you come forward and meet me here at the front? I don’t want you to meet me. I want you to meet Christ. Have a confrontation with Christ.

Do you see what I am saying? And I tell you. You don’t know...you don’t even know in your own life and heart how much these fellows have influenced our day. This is a hard day in which to preach the gospel. People are brainwashed by that...what they have seen and heard. They are brainwashed by some of you right here are literally brain washed and tilted, you are tilted. And you are influenced—you don’t even know it—by these cunning, crafty, subtle messengers of Satan who manipulate people’s hearts and minds and bring them down to the front and make professions of faith.

Salvation is a new birth. It is regeneration from heaven. It is a spiritual life given by the Spirit of God. The Word of God is the seed. It is a confrontation with Christ. It is a bowing to Christ. It is a resurrection. It is a new life. It is God giving a new heart and new nature and bringing a man into vital, living union with himself through Christ. It is not a decision.

It will come as a result of God revealing Christ to a person’s heart. And he is not enlisting in your army. He is being brought to Christ.

Listen to Peter preach. Listen to him. I know...let me say this. We must pray for the sovereign Lord to shake the dry bones and quicken dead sinners. We must and shall

strive to be in one accord. I hear preachers preach on Pentecost and they spend the whole day on, "They were with one accord in one place." But you can be in one accord and support a candidate for president. Those people at those conventions get in one accord after 14 ballots. Being in one accord won't do it. You got to be in one accord about somebody. And that somebody has got to be Christ.

Yeah, we want to be in one accord. We want to be filled with the Holy Ghost. I want to be filled with the Holy Spirit. I want to preach the gospel in the fire of the Holy Spirit.

But I want you to listen to...it says here in verse 37, "Now when they heard this, when they heard this they were pricked in their heart." Do you see that verse 37? And when they heard something they were pricked in their heart. They didn't raise their hands. They didn't walk down an aisle. They heard something. What did they hear?

All right. Go back to verse 22. Let me just give it to you briefly. Listen to Peter preach. "You men of Israel, I want you to hear my words. I want you to hear my words. Jesus of Nazareth, a man..." Now, brethren, he is a man, fully, completely, totally in human nature a man. But he is a man approved of God. He is the God man. He is the God man. God was with him and God was in him. And he was a man. He was Jesus of Nazareth, born of Mary, worked in a carpenter shop, walked the shores of Galilee, was baptized in Jordan, died on the cross. He is a man, flesh of our flesh and bone of our bone, a man in subjection to God's holy law, in subjection to God's truth, in subjection to God's will. God sent him.

But he is the man Christ Jesus. He is God man. He is God in human flesh. The Word was made flesh and dwelt among us with no apologies as clear as I can say it. As Peter says it here, "He is God in human flesh." Approved of God. Appointed of God. Ordained of God. Among you and proved by miracles and wonders and signs which God did in the midst of you. Who did it? God did it in Christ.

And you know it. And you know it.

And he said, "If you believe not that I am he, you will die in your sins."

Now that is the first one. Have you heard that? They heard this. Jesus Christ is not some poor little defeated reformer. He is not on the same plain as Mohammed, Confucius and Gandhi and the rest of them. He is not just a man to be admired, a preacher to be listened to, a prophet or a healer. He is God in human flesh. He that has seen him has seen God. That is what I am saying. That is what Peter said.

All right. Look at verse 23. "Him being delivered by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God." What are we dealing with here? We are dealing with predestination, predestination, foreordination. We are dealing with a purpose.

This Jesus Christ, this God man, a man approved of God was delivered into your hands. He was put in your hands. He was designated to be placed in your hands by the

determinate counsel and foreordination of God that took place before this world had a beginning.

I don't know why...I don't know why preachers in my town, in my county, in my state, in my country and all over the world are afraid or are ashamed to clearly define that God is God, that he does what he will, when he will, with whom he will, that known unto God are all his works from the beginning, that this assembly here this morning is no accidental assembly. This is no meeting together of confounded and confused people. Everybody is here on business. God brought them here providentially on purpose. Not a gnat flies through the air without his providential purpose. That's exactly right. Everything God does he does on purpose.

And Jesus Christ came into this world in the fulness of time. God sent him just like God sent the sun this morning and sent the moon at night and sent the stars and the planets and sent all things, designated, delegated, consisting, moving by his will. Christ came at a perfect appointed time with a star hanging over his manger and an angel out there said, "Here ye." And he walked this earth doing what God gave him to do. He went to the cross and died at the particular time. And God delivered him by his counsel into your hands.

Now look at Acts 13. Turn over there a minute. I am preaching too long, but let me...let me deal with this thing a little bit. This is so important, the kind of preaching that produces results. Acts 13:26, listen. Let's just read verse 29. "And when they had fulfilled all that was written of him they took him down from the tree." They didn't really...they did. They met and said, "Well, he is dead now. You can take him down." But what God said is when they had fulfilled every word they spoke, every drop of spittle they hurled on him, every anathema they cast at him, every pain they caused him to bear, every drop of blood they caused him to shed. When they had fulfilled every jot and tittle that was written of him in the Old Testament, they took him down from the tree. They took him down.

All right. Look back at Acts two. He said, verse 23, "He was delivered by the determinate counsel and the foreknowledge of God and you have taken and you by wicked hands have crucified and slain."

Let me tell you something. Turn to Psalm 76. Now you...this will be a blessing to you if you will take the time to look at it, Psalm 76 verse 10. "Surely the wrath of man will praise thee." Do you see this verse? Look at it carefully. "Surely the wrath of man shall praise thee. The remainder of wrath shall thou restrain."

I have got it marked in the Bible in a yellow pencil. It is a vital Scripture. Do you know what it is saying? That these men who arrested Christ, Judas who kissed him with the kiss of betrayal, the soldiers who came and roughly grabbed him and took him down to the soldier's palace and beat him, they did what they wanted to do. They did what they desired to do. They did what their wicked hearts said. God just left them to themselves.

Their wrath...he said, "They spat upon him." Old Testament, "They plucked out his beard." The Old Testament said they would. They pierced his hands and feet. Old Testament said they would. They crowned him with thorns. Old Testament said they would.

How can God predict what a man will do? Just leave him to himself. He will do it. He will do it.

So this verse says here in Psalm 76:10, "The wrath of man shall praise thee." The wrath of man will accomplish God's will. That man that spat in the face of Christ, he hated Christ. He just cleared his throat and spat on him. That's the wrath of man. But he did what God determined before to be done. He just said, "Go on. Do what you will."

Now here is a river rushing or a stream. And here is a fellow with a mill who is going to grind some corn in the mill. He builds a mill on the side of that creek. And that water is rushing down through there so what he does, what the mill operator does he uses the water to turn his wheel, the water that he wants to use. What does he do with the rest of it? He restrains it with a dam. See here is the miller. He has got this big mill right on the side of the creek and there is the dam he has built. And he lets the water through as he is pleased to let it through. And what it does it turns his wheel and grinds his meal. And here is the flood of man's wrath and rebellion and evil. And almighty God, he says, "The rest of it he will restrain." He just dams it up. He just holds it back. But all in the world he has to get that man to do his will and turn his wheel and grind his meal is just turn loose at some of it. Just let her go.

Do you see what I'm saying?

The wrath of man will turn God's wheel [?] us, accomplish God's purpose. That's right. His wrath. He's just spewing and spitting, but he is turning that wheel, accomplishing God's will.

What about the rest of you spewing and spitting? He just lets her go on out there. Dams it up. Lets it go over, whatever he wills.

Oh, you don't dare preach that in this day, do you?

Yeah, you do if you want God to do anything. God sent him.

All right. Look at the verse 24 of Acts two, "Whom God raised from the dead." Christ is our life. It is not possible for death to hold him. He said, "Whom God raised having loosed the pains of death because it was not possible he should be holden of it." God raised him from the dead in testimony, in testimony of what he had done.

And then in verse 25 Peter says, "David spake concerning him." The prophets give witness of who Christ is. Moses said, "The Lord will raise up a prophet." Abraham said, "The Lord will provide himself a lamb." Jacob said as he blessed his sons, "A sceptre

shall not depart from Judah till Shiloh comes.” Job said, “I know my Redeemer liveth.” Jeremiah said, “He is the Lord our righteousness.” Micah said, “Bethlehem, you are just a little place, but oh, he is coming forth out of you who is going forth have been of old.” Zechariah said, “He is the branch.”

The Old Testament has no message and no meaning without Christ crucified.

And then verse 33 through 35 Peter said, “Therefore, being by the right hand of God exalted...” Who is Jesus Christ? The God man. What did he do? He did what God willed before to be done. He redeemed his people. Why did he do it? That God may be just and justifier. Where is he? At the right hand of God.

Verse 36. “Therefore, therefore, one message, one gospel, one hope. Therefore, let all of you know assuredly, whatever you do with it this is what you know, that God hath made that same Jesus whom you despised, that same Jesus, now, not another, but that same Jesus, the one whom he identified, the one whom he identified, he hath made that same Jesus whom we crucified both Lord and Christ.”

And they said, “What shall we do?”

Now what we are doing in our day is we are...somehow we are assuming that everybody out there is knowledgeable in the Bible and the gospel, who God is and what salvation is. We are just assuming. Well, we are assuming something that is not so. Our generation doesn't know any more than these people to whom Peter was preaching right here about Christ. And if we preach the preaching that produces results we are going to have to go back to preaching what Peter preached at Pentecost.

Jesus thy blood and righteousness my beauty are my glorious dress. Amid flaming worlds in these arrayed with joy I lift up my head. Bold shall I stand in that great day for who ought to my charge shall lay? Fully pardoned through Christ I am from sin, from fear, from guilt, from shame.

I know a fountain where sins are washed away. I know a place where night is turned to day. Burdens are lifted and blind eyes are made to see. There is a wonder working power in the Christ of Calvary.

Our Father, pray you would bless the message. Lord, thou knowest these are religious days, days of confusion, perversion, darkness. Lord, deliver us from this perverse generation. Deliver us from this religion of a sort, this religion of the natural man, this religion that uses the name of Christ and honors him not and knows him not, this religion of form and ceremony. Teach us the gospel. Give us the place and the heart to preach it. And give us the ear of the people to hear it. We pray for Christ's sake, in his name. Amen.