

Freedom Through Christ's Blood

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"As for you also, by the blood of your covenant Have set forth your prisoners out of the pit wherein is no water. Turn you to the stronghold, you prisoners of hope: even today do I declare that I will render double unto you." [Zechariah 9:11,12](#).

[Another Sermon by Mr. Spurgeon on the same text, is #2839, Volume 49— "PRISONERS OF HOPE"]

THIS morning, [See Sermon #1186, Volume 20—THE BLOOD OF THE COVENANT]. I tried to show that in consequence of the blood of the Covenant having been shed and the Covenant having so been fulfilled, Jesus Christ was brought back out of the prison of the grave, set at liberty and exalted to indescribable Glory in the highest Heaven. I then showed that Jesus Christ is the Representative of all His people— that when He was set free, they were virtually set free, and that when He returned into Glory, He went there as their Representative, taking possession of the heavenly places in their name, so that, in due time, where He is, there they may also be. I had not time, this morning, to make a fitting application of our subject. But happily for us, here stands another text, an older one, and yet most suitable to come after the other, so I will use it now.

Jesus Christ has been delivered from the bondage of the grave and I have to remind you, first, that there are other prisoners who have been set free through the blood of the Covenant. Secondly, that there are other persons yet to be set free through the blood of the Covenant. And then I shall close with a few words in honor of the secret reason of their liberation—the blood of the Covenant.

I. First, then, dear Friends, we have to notice that THERE ARE SOME PERSONS WHO HAVE BEEN ALREADY SET FREE THROUGH THE BLOOD OF THE COVENANT.

This leads us to consider where they were prisoners and to what they were prisoners. We are told, in the text, that they were in "the pit." That is where all God's people were once. You know that, in the East, they did not always take the trouble to build prisons—an empty well, or a place where they had been accustomed to hide their corn, or an underground, unused reservoir would serve for a prison. The poor prisoner was let down by ropes and the mouth of the pit or well was covered with a big stone—and there he was left to die. Generally the place was noisome and foul, a living grave rather than anything else. The position of a poor captive, sitting down on a stone at the bottom of a deep, dirty pit, is a very apt picture of the state of man by nature. When he is really awakened to a sense of his true

position, he finds that this is the very image of where he is. He is put in that prison by the Law of God. He feels that he has broken the Law and that the Law must punish him. Conscience builds huge walls harder than granite around him—and when he tries to find a way of escape, there is none that he can discover. He realizes that the Judge of all the earth must abhor iniquity and must punish sin. In addition to that, sin has put him in that prison, for, though he has mourned over his sin since he was even partly awakened, yet he cannot cease from sin any more than the Ethiopian can change his skin or the leopard his spots! Like the big stone over the mouth of the well, his tendency to sin and his corruptions shut him in. He cannot lift that stone—he is a prisoner to his own evil desires and depraved heart and, at the same time, a prisoner lawfully detained, under a warrant from the High Court of Heaven by the officers of Divine Justice.

Many of you, my Brothers and Sisters in Christ, can recollect the time when you were in that pit. I remember being in it for years and, oh, what a happy day it was for me when I was lifted right up out of it! It is a horrible place, that pit of conviction of sin. Nothing can be more horrible, out of Hell, than to have an awakened conscience, but not to have a

reconciled God—to see sin, yet not to see the Savior—to behold the deadly disease in all its loathsomeness, but not to trust the Good Physician and so to have no hope of ever being healed of our malady! Of all the miseries that can be endured in this life, this is one of the greatest.

This poor prisoner, shut up in a pit out of which he could not escape, could find no comfort. The text says it was a pit in which there was no water. I saw the Mamertine Dungeon, which might very well be likened to a pit—the entrance to the first vault is through a narrow hole, then another narrow hole from the bottom of that vault into the second one. But in the floor of the lower dungeon, in which Paul is said to have been confined, there is a spring which continually bubbles up—and I drank of the water—as cold and fresh and clear as any I ever drank. There was at least one source of comfort there, for, in the stifling heat of that horrible dungeon, there was some water. But when we were shut up in the pit by our own sin and by Divine Justice, there was no water there. Do you remember when you tried to drink at the cistern of human ceremonies and found that it was filled with brine which increased your thirst instead of slaking it? You sought next to drink of what you thought was the water of your self-righteousness—but you were like a pilgrim on the desert sands who sees the deceptive mirage—limpid streams and crystal fountains before his eyes, but when he presses forward to drink of them, he finds nothing there but the burning sand! Some of us were duped and deluded, for a while, with the vain hope of accomplishing our own salvation, but it all turned to nothing and we were still in the pit wherein was no water. Oh, what numerous devil's agents there are about trying to cheat poor souls who are in this pit with the notion that they can supply them with water in the pit and that they can remain there—that they can continue unforgiven and unrenewed—and still enjoy true comfort!

But that is an idle tale! No, more—it is a fatal delusion! There might as well be found water in Hell as true comfort for a soul that realizes its guilt and fears the thunders of the wrath of God, yet is not reconciled to God by the death of His Son. Apart from that Living Water which Jesus came to bring, such a soul is truly in "the pit wherein is no water."

And, dear Friends, there was a still worse point about our bondage. It was a thoroughly hopeless one, for we were not merely shut up in that pit for a short time, but we were shut up there to die! When a man is cast into a deep pit and the mouth of it is covered over with a stone—and his captors give him neither food nor water—he knows at once what that harsh treatment means. If they meant him to live, they would at least put him down with a crust of bread and a pitcher of water. But we were in a pit wherein was no water and we felt that there was nothing before us but "a certain fearful looking for of judgment and fiery indignation." I have known what it is to wake in the morning and wonder that I was not in Hell, and to go to my bed at night afraid to fall asleep lest I should sleep myself into eternity! When a man is in such a state as that, he feels that life is hardly worth living, and he could almost say with Job, "My soul chooses strangling and death rather than my life."

This is the position into which many who are the true children of God are brought—they are not all tried alike, for all are not made equally sensitive of sin and to some, faith comes much sooner than to others. But there are many persons who were thus shut up, but concerning whom the text now says, "By the blood of your covenant, I have sent forth your prisoners out of the pit wherein is no water." Notice that expression, "I have sent forth your prisoners." That is the blessing—we who have believed in the Lord Jesus Christ are in prison no longer. We are trusting in the blood of the Covenant and, therefore, there are no fetters upon us now, no stone walls, or prison bars, or terrors of conscience, or convictions of sin to frighten us now, for the Lord has said, "Their sins and their iniquities will I remember no more." There are thousands in this Tabernacle who were once in this prison, but they are out of it, now, and they can say, "Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ."

We are out of this pit by right. We did not break out of prison contrary to the Law of God—we have the right to be out because the debts for which we were imprisoned, are all paid—a full Atonement has been offered for the sins for which we were put in prison! There has been a complete expiation made, wide as the sin of all the Lord's people, and as vast as the demands of infinite and inflexible Justice. Every child of God is justly as well as graciously saved! It would be an eternal injustice if any soul for whom the Savior stood as a Substitute could die by the sword of Divine Justice. But that can never be—

"Payment God cannot twice demand, First at my bleeding Surety's hand, And then again at mine."

No, my blessed Savior—

"Complete Atonement You have made,

And to the utmost farthing paid,
Whatever Your people owed—
Nor can His wrath on me take place,
If sheltered in Your righteousness,

And sprinkled with Your blood." But, dear Friends, we are free by might, as well as by right, for that same Jesus who bought our liberty for us, has secured it to us. Those grim prison walls He has thrown down by His own pierced hands. Those black shades of darkness that surrounded us, He has chased away by His own glorious manifestation as our Sun of Righteousness! It is the Lord, the Liberator, who has set His people free! Therefore, if you are among them, rend the heavens with your joyful shouts, you liberated ones! By the blood of the Covenant you are set free by the almighty "Breaker" who has come to break down your prison walls and to make you "free indeed."

And, Beloved, we are now free forever, for the Lord says—"I have sent forth your prisoners." And when God sends us forth out of prison, who can send us back? When He says, "Let there be light," who can create darkness? When He says to me, "Be free," who can chain me up again? Let all the hosts of Hell surround me—as the Philistines surrounded poor blind Samson—my soul shall say with David, "They compassed me about; yes, they compassed me about; but in the name of the Lord I will destroy them." When Christ makes a man free, it is not with a temporary liberty, to last for a month, or a year—but Christ's emancipated slaves can never be enslaved again! Redeemed by His precious blood, the Redemption is not temporary, but eternal!

And, blessed be God, that freedom is freedom indeed! If you know what it is to be a Christian to the fullest, believing the true Gospel, not clouding its beauty, not putting upon yourself the old yoke of bondage, not mixing Judaism with Christianity, not bringing in human ordinances to make you the cramped and fettered slave of man—if you are the Lord's free men, then you are "free indeed!" "O Lord," said David, "truly I am Your servant; I am Your servant, and the son of Your handmaid: You have loosed my bonds." He who loves holiness and walks in the fear of the Lord all the daylong is the only true free man! He is the free man whom God's Grace makes free—all others are slaves! No earthly power can bring real freedom to the soul—it is Grace and Grace, alone, that brings it by the blood of the Covenant! And where that freedom comes, no form of bondage can make a man a slave. He may be owned by some cruel master and whipped to his work, but his soul is free! He may be shut up in a damp, dark dungeon, but he can sing there, as others have done before him—

"Stone walls do not a prison make, Nor iron bars a cage."

I cannot further enlarge upon this tempting theme, but I want every true child of God, everyone who has been set free by the great Liberator, to act and live like Christ's free man—not to go about fawning and crouching like a slave who dreads his master's lash, but

to walk uprightly, in both senses of that word, as a free man should, in the Presence of the Lord who has bought His servant's freedom at the incalculable cost of His own most precious blood. May the Lord graciously grant to you "access by faith into this Grace wherein we stand, and rejoice in hope of the Glory of God!"

II. Secondly, and briefly, THERE ARE OTHER PERSONS WHO SHALL YET BE SET FREE THOUGH THE

BLOOD OF THE COVENANT. Some of them are, I fully believe, going to be set free tonight! This is the favored hour in which the Lord is going to save them and set them free forever! They did not know this when they came in here, but the Lord had designs of love towards them in moving them, by His Spirit, to enter this House of Prayer an hour or so ago.

To those who are going to be set free I have to say this. By nature, you are in the state that I have been describing, though perhaps you are hardly aware of it. You are prisoners in the pit without water. If unrenewed in heart, you are in a state of alienation from God and of spiritual danger, destitution and misery! But, dear Souls, though this is the case with all of you who have not been born-again, there is this cheering Truth of God—though you are prisoners, you are "prisoners of hope." Wherever the Gospel is preached, there is hope for sinners and whoever hears it may take heart of hope. I am not now speaking merely about outwardly moral people, but I am speaking of any who have strayed in here and who have sinned grossly—drunkards, swearers, harlots—the very worst and lowest of persons. You are prisoners to

your sins, but you are prisoners of hope, for you are within reach of One who sets free from sin! The Lord Jesus Christ, whom we preach to you, saves His people from their sins! And I pray that He may come to you, in all the plenitude of His liberating power and set you free from your sins this very hour!

Though you are in this prison, there is a Divine command given to you—"Turn you to the stronghold." If you would obtain liberty from your sin, both in its guilt and in its power, you must look to Jesus, who is the Stronghold to which captive sinners are to turn! "Oh," you say, "this pit is truly horrible." I know it is, but the Lord Jesus Christ has come to roll away the stone from the mouth of it and, looking down to you, He says, "Turn you to Me, your only Stronghold. There is hope for you, you prisoners of hope, if you will but turn unto Me." "But," you say, "we have looked all around, but we have found no consolation. No man cares for our souls." There is One in Heaven who cares for your souls and who, because He does, has come to tell you that there is hope for the worst, the most hardened, the most despairing of you all! He bids you escape for your life and look not behind you, nor tarry in all the plain, but press on till you reach the Stronghold where you will be safe even when the wrath of God pursues you! "Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners."

"The Son of Man is come to seek and to save that which was lost." Whoever turns to Him shall live, whoever he or she may be!

"But I am so feeble," says someone. Then turn away from your feebleness to His strength. "But I am so sinful," says another. Then turn away from your sinfulness to His blood—the blood of the Covenant which washes black sinners whiter than driven snow! You are not to turn to yourself, nor to a human priest, nor to your own works, nor even to your prayers or your tears—all these are full of sin and worthless to give you acceptance in God's sight. But the Lord Jesus Christ is Divine—so look to Him and to what He has done—and especially to His great atoning Sacrifice upon the Cross, for if you trust to that by a sincere and humble faith, you will certainly be saved!

This declaration of hope in the Gospel is for the present moment. What says the Lord concerning it? "Even today do I declare that I will render double unto you." You are getting very old, but "even today" mercy is declared to you! You have been, perhaps, wasting the former part of this Sabbath, but "even today" is mercy declared to you. It is seldom that you go to a place of worship, but you are here tonight—and "even today" is mercy proclaimed to you! You had so provoked God that you thought He had cast you away. Well, you have probably gone to the full length of your tether, but "even today" does God proclaim that there is still hope for you—that hope which He has laid up in Jesus on whom He has laid all necessary help for you!

And what is it that He tells you today? Why, that He will render double to you! Do notice that. He will render double to you. You have committed great sin, but He will give you double mercy to wash out that double sin. But your heart is doubly hard—then He will give you a double portion of His Holy Spirit to soften it! But you feel a double tendency to sin—then He will doubly write His Law on the new heart that He will give you! But you are so desponding. Then He will give you double comfort. But you say that you feel so weak in prayer. Then He will give you double strength. But your faith is so feeble. Then He will give you double Grace to increase it. O Soul, if God says that He will give you all that you need, that ought to satisfy you! But when He says that He will give you double—double for all your sins—what wondrous Grace is that! If you put down a sin, God puts down two mercies. Put down another sin and He puts down two more mercies. "Ah," you say, "but I can keep on putting down sins forever, they are so many!" And my Lord can put down mercies forever and ever for, however many your sins may be, they can be counted—but His mercies are innumerable! I know that your sins can be counted, for they are all written in a book, but God's mercies cannot be written in a book—they are altogether countless. His mercy is immeasurably greater than your sin. David laid hold of that great Truth of God when he prayed, "Have mercy upon me, O God, according to Your loving kindness: according unto the multitude of Your tender mercies blot out my transgressions." I tell you, Sinners, if you are lost, it will not be for lack of mercy! If your sins destroy you, it will not be because the blood

of the Covenant has not power to wash away your sins. If you perish, it will not be because Jesus Christ is not able to save you. Why will it be, then? It will be because you have not believed on the Lord Jesus Christ, for "he that believes not is condemned already, because he has not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God."

I do pray the Lord that you may have reason enough and Grace enough given you to know that your eternal interests depend upon your believing on the Lord Jesus Christ. You have not to go and spin a righteousness which you are so fond of doing, but to come and take the spotless robe that Christ has woven. You have not to bring the money for

your own ransom, though you would like to do that, but you are to take the liberty which has been bought by Christ's precious blood and which is freely presented to every believing sinner, "for God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life." We who have escaped from the noisome pit, would, if we could, tempt you to also escape—we long that you may share the blessed liberty that we enjoy! Dear children, will you not follow your father and mother into Gospel liberty? Dear husbands, do you not desire to experience the holy joy that throbs in your wives' bosom? Good wives, do you not wish to have your husbands' Christ to be your own Christ? Brothers, would you like your sisters to be without you in Heaven? Will you not share with them in the blessings of eternal life? Oh, that we might all together come to Christ right now! For after all, whatever God has done for us, saints are still sinners, so we will come down to your level and each one, taking the hand of some poor fellow sinner who has never come to Christ, we will try to come together, now, and look up to Him. There is the Cross of Calvary and there is the Savior who hung there. O You blessed Jesus, we have no hope but in You! And these poor souls whom we have brought along with us, Lord, help them to look to You just now, even as we ourselves looked to You long ago! Clear their eyes even more than ours are cleared and may they, as they look unto You, find that—

"There is life for a look at the Crucified One"— life for them, life for them just now, life from the death of sin, life from condemnation, life to be had at once, by a glance at Your wounds and by simple faith in You! You wear the thorn-crown and it seems to us as if all Your thoughts were hedged about with thorns that they might be fixed on sinners. And Your hands are fastened wide open, as if You would never close them again, but hold them always open to welcome poor sinners! And Your feet are fastened as if You would always graciously receive all who come to bow before You. Yes, and Your dear heart was opened by the soldier's spear as if to make a way for guilty souls into Your inmost affection. Jesus, by Your Grace we come to You! Spirit of the living God, draw this whole houseful of sinners and saints and enable each one of us to say—

"There is a fountain filled with blood,
Drawn from Immmanuel's veins

And sinners, plunged beneath that flood,
Lose all their guilty stains!
I do believe, I will believe,
That Jesus died for me,
That on the Cross He shed His blood
From sin to set me free."

III. My last words—and they shall be very few—are to be IN HONOR OF THE BLOOD OF THE COVENANT.

To you who have believed in Jesus and who are now coming to His table, let me say—As we come to the Communion, let us think of the blood of the Covenant. If we are free men and women in Christ Jesus, it is because the blood of Jesus ratified the Covenant of our liberty. It is because God saw the blood and delivered us. Let me remind you of that beautiful verse in the Book of Exodus, from which I have preached more than once. [See Sermon #228, Volume 5—the

BLOOD and #1251, Volume 21—THE SACRED LOVE-TOKEN] The blood of the paschal lamb, as you know, was to be sprinkled on the lintel and the two side posts of the houses of all the children of Israel. And what did God say about it? Did He say, "When you stand outside your house and look up at the blood I will save you"? No, He did not say that, but, "When I see the blood, I will pass over you." It is God's sight of the blood of Christ which, at bottom, is the reason for the salvation of the redeemed! How I rejoice to think that although my faith-sight of the blood gives me peace, still, if that eye of mine ever gets dim, it does not imperil my salvation, for God's eye is not dim and it is always fixed on the blood of His Son! In sacred contemplation the Father surveys the Sacrifice of His Son with supreme satisfaction—and as He sees the blood, He spares us for His Son's sake!

But, then, dear Friends, the blood of the Covenant is also to be extolled because it is our sight of it that brings us peace. When we realize that Jesus died for us, there is peace in our soul. I do not know whether you are like me in this respect, but there are times when I, as it were, take the fact of my eternal safety for granted. But there comes a severe sickness, or deep depression of spirit. There comes a time when death has to be looked in the face and the sense of past sin rises vividly before me—and then it is a blessed thing to stand once more at the foot of the Cross and to look up to Jesus hanging there, and to say—

"My faith does lay her hand
On that dear head of Yours, While like a penitent I stand,
And there confess my sin."

And as I meditate upon that theme, despondency goes, pain is forgotten and I say, "Yes, yes, yes! I am safe! I am saved by the precious blood of Jesus! I do love Him and I would fall down at His dear feet and weep with mingled repentance and gratitude—repentance because I have sinned—gratitude because I have such a gracious Savior to put my sin away." Brothers

and Sisters in Christ, let us praise the blood because God sees it—and praise the blood because we also see it by faith!

Praise the blood, too, because when we really trust in it, it gives us liberty. If you get away from the blood of the Covenant, you get into slavery. But keep close to that and you are at liberty. In prayer, mind that you plead the blood, for that is the way to get the "double" spoken of in the text. The double blessing comes by the blood of the Covenant. If you need more Grace, plead the blood for it. There is one talisman that will open every vault in the treasury of God—the blood of the Covenant! You cannot be denied if you plead the atoning Sacrifice of Jesus Christ! Knock at Heaven's gate with the crimson token in your hand and as surely as God loves Jesus Christ—and He loves Him more than all of us put together love Him—He will honor His Son's great Sacrifice and He will say to you, "According to your desire and your faith, so be it unto you." There are some preachers who cannot or do not preach about the blood of Jesus Christ—I have one thing to say to you concerning those—Never go to hear them! Never listen to them! A ministry that has not the blood in it, is lifeless, "for the blood is the life thereof—and a dead ministry is no good to anybody! Leave out the atoning Sacrifice and it would be better for the people that the places in which a Christless, bloodless Gospel is preached, should be all burnt to the ground, for the atoning Sacrifice is the soul and life and marrow of Christianity! Rest in that and you are saved! But get away from that and you have wandered where peace and life and safety can never come! God Almighty bless you, for Jesus Christ's sake! Amen.

EXPOSITION BY C. H. SPURGEON: ACTS2:14-43.

Verse 14. But Peter, standing up with the eleven, lifted up his voice and said unto them, You men of Judaea, and all you that dwell at Jerusalem, be this known unto you and listen to my words. A great crowd had gathered in the street and the Apostles, under Divine Inspiration, addressed them in different tongues. Peter, as the leader, coming prominently to the front—"Peter, standing up with the eleven, lifted up his voice." They were 12 witnesses of the Resurrection of Christ from the dead, for they had seen Him after He had risen and had eaten with Him. They constituted a jury of 12 honest and true men. And Peter, as their foreman, "standing up with the eleven," gave their verdict!

15. For these are not drunk, as you suppose, seeing it is but the third hour of the day. At nine o'clock in the morning, it was not to be supposed that they had become drunk.

16-18. But this is that which was spoken by the Prophet Joel, And it shall come to pass in the last days, says God, I will pour out My Spirit upon all flesh: and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, and your young men shall see visions, and your old men shall dream dreams: and on My servants and on My handmaidens I will pour out in those days My Spirit; and they shall prophesy. Every member of the Christian community would be anointed by the Holy Spirit. The blessing would not simply be given to one here and another

there, but there would be a wonderful outpouring that should fall upon the whole multitude of Believers.

19-21. And I will show wonders in Heaven above, and signs in the earth beneath, blood, and fire, and vapor of smoke: the sun shall be turned into darkness, and the moon into blood before that great and notable day of the coming of the Lord: and it shall come to pass, that whoever shall call on the name of the Lord shall be saved. This is a wonderful connection in which to find such a promise as this—a darkened sun, a blood-red moon—yet "whoever shall call on the name of the Lord shall be saved." When the worst comes to the worst, prayer will still be heard and faith will lead to salvation! O matchless Grace of God! Is there not someone here who will call upon God's name, now, before that evil day comes in all its fullness? "Whoever shall call on the name of the Lord shall be saved." Oh, that everyone of you would lay

hold of that promise! It is said that drowning men will catch at a straw. This is no straw, but a gloriously strong life buoy! Only get into it and it will float you to Glory!

22. You 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 you yourselves also know. Note that Peter does not begin with the Deity of Christ. He will get to that soon. But, like a wise speaker, he commences with points upon which they were all agreed, or which they could not deny. He therefore calls Christ "a Man approved of God," and he reminds them of the "miracles and wonders and signs, which God did by Him" in their midst. They knew that God had thus attested His mission, so he appealed to them for confirmation. "As you yourselves also know."

23. Him, being delivered by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God, you have taken, and by wicked hands have crucified and slain. There is a wonderful blending in this verse of the predestination of God and yet the responsibility of man. I suppose our finite faculties cannot yet discern where these two things meet, but faith, in the absence of every other power, believes them both! The predestination of God does not alter the moral quality of the acts of wicked men. Man acts freely, as freely as if there were no Divine predestination—yet the free agency of man does not affect the foreknowledge and predestination of God.

24. Whom God has raised up, having loosed the pains of death: because it was not possible that He should be held of it. It was possible for Him to die, but it was not possible for Him to be held in the bonds of death!

25. For David— Speaking of Christ in the Psalm which, at first sight, might seem to refer to David, himself, but which was even by the Rabbis believed to also refer to the Messiah, and which we know did, indeed, refer to the Messiah!

26-27. Speaks concerning Him, I foresaw the lord always before my face, for He is on my right hand, that I should not be moved: therefore did my heart rejoice, and my tongue

was glad; moreover also my flesh shall rest in hope: because You will not leave my soul in Hell—Hades, the world of separate spirits.

27. Neither will You suffer Your Holy One to see corruption. David was speaking of Someone who, though He should die, would never in His body feel the natural effect of death, namely decay.

28, 29. You have made known to me the ways of life; You shall make me full of joy with Your Countenance. Men and brethren, let me freely speak unto you of the Patriarch David, that he is both dead and buried, and his sepulcher is with us unto this day. Peter craves liberty to speak with freedom and then he very shrewdly gives to David the high title of Patriarch, which is not generally given to him, so as to win their attention and approval—"Let me freely speak unto you of the Patriarch David, that he is both dead and buried, and his sepulcher is with us unto this day." And therefore he did not speak about himself in the words Peter was quoting!

30-32. Therefore being a Prophet, and knowing that God had sworn with an oath to him that of the fruit of his loins, according to the flesh, He would raise up Christ to sit on his throne; he seeing this before spoke of the resurrection of Christ, that His soul was not left in Hell, neither His flesh did see corruption. This Jesus has God raised up, whereof we all are witnesses. Peter points to the eleven around him. There they stood, steadfast in the midst of the surging crowd, assenting to the bold declaration of their leader.

33-35. Therefore being by the right hand of God exalted, and having received of the Father the promise of the Holy Spirit, He has shed forth this which you now see and hear. For David is not ascended into the heavens: but he says himself, The LORD said unto my Lord, Sit You at My right hand until I make Your foes Your footstool See how he builds up his argument with clear and cogent reasoning?

36. Therefore let all the house of Israel know assuredly, that God has made that same Jesus, whom you have crucified, both Lord and Christ. How those men must have started when he came to that which was the finale of his address, the point at which he had aimed all along!

37. Now when they heard this, they were picked in their heart The pointed Truth of God had gone home to their heart and they were wounded by it.

37. And said unto Peter and to the rest of the Apostles, Men and brethren, what shall we do? These may have been the same people who mockingly said, "These men are full of new wine." They began badly, but they ended well. I hope none of you have come here to mock. But if you have done so, and then go out pricked in your heart by the Truth of God you have heard, it would be better than coming in an attentive frame of mind and then going out unimpressed as so many do. God prevent it!

38. Then Peter said unto them, Repent "Change your mind entirely. Be sorry for what you have done. Repudiate what you have done by a holy repentance of it. 'Repent'—

38. And be baptized, everyone of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins. Peter urged them to repent and bade them confess their faith by being baptized in God's appointed way.

38. And you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. "You shall be sharers in this wonderful manifestation which has so astounded you."

39. For the promise is unto you, and to your children, and to all that are afar off, even as many as the Lord our God shall call. What promise did Peter mean? Why that promise in the 21st verse, "Whoever shall call on the name of the Lord shall be saved." That promise is also given to you, my Hearers, and to your children, and to all that are afar off, even in the most distant heathen land, for the "whoever" in the promise applies to everyone who "shall call on the name of the Lord." Do not, therefore, shut yourselves out, or try to shut others out, but believe the promise—call upon God and you shall be saved!

40. And with many other words did he testify and exhort, saying, Save yourselves from this untoward generation. Peter first bore witness to the Truth of God and then pleaded with his hearers to receive his testimony. All true ministers will both "testify and exhort." Some are always exhorting—they cry, "Believe, believe"—but they do not tell their hearers what is to be believed. Others are always testifying. They preach good doctrine, but they do not like to exhort sinners to repent and believe the Gospel. Each of these is a one-legged ministry! We must have two legs to our ministry and, like Peter, "testify and exhort saying, Save yourselves from this untoward generation." "Come out from those who crucified Christ! Quit the generation that is guilty of the blood of the Son of God! Put your repentance between you and them! Put your public Baptism between you and them—avow that you belong not to them, but to Him whom they crucified, and whom God has exalted!"

41. Then they that gladly received his word were baptized: and the same day there were added unto them about three thousand souls. They not only believed what he said, but they were glad to believe it, acknowledging that they had greatly sinned. And they rejoiced that there was a promise which covered even their sin—"Whoever shall call on the name of the Lord shall be saved." Then, having repented and believed, they were baptized upon profession of their faith, according to the true Scriptural order.

42. And they continued steadfastly in the Apostles' doctrine and fellowship, and in breakng of bread, and in prayers. They believed the doctrine that was taught by the Apostles and they had fellowship with them and with all other Christians with whom they were associated. They did not try to go to Heaven by some underground railway without confessing Christ, but having confessed their faith in Christ, they further manifested their devotion to Him "in breaking of bread, and in prayers." I do not know how many Prayer Meetings they had—they must have kept on praying, praising and preaching pretty well all day long.

43. And fear came upon every soul: and many wonders and signs were done by the Apostles.