

2014

Lent 5 • Ezekiel 37:1–14 • April 6, 2014

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Easter Sunday • Acts 10:34–43 • Ezekiel 37:1–14 • April 20, 2014

In this pericope, Peter portrays Christ's resurrection as God's vindication of his identity and his work. In the resurrection, God gives assurance that Jesus is Lord and the judge of the living and the dead. The resurrection also gives assurance that through his name sins are remitted (cf. Lk 5:20–25). The Jews who rejected Jesus did not believe that he was anointed with the Spirit and that "God was with him" (Acts 10:38), but instead believed that he had an evil spirit (see Lk 11:14–20) and regarded him as one who did not keep the law (see especially Lk 6:1–11). They also did not believe that he could forgive sins (Lk 5:17–26). These reasons were reflected in their taunt at the cross: "Others he saved; let him save himself, if he is the Christ of God, the chosen One" (Lk 23:35). But God showed that Jesus was his chosen One by raising him from the dead (cf. Acts 2:22–36), and that good, redemption, and forgiveness come through him.

Peter shows that the good news is not only for the "sons of Israel" but for anyone from any nation (Acts 10:35–36). To this point, Jesus has been identified usually with Israel's redemption (e.g., see Lk 1:54; Lk 1:58; Lk 2:8–11; Lk 24:21; Acts 1:6). To be sure, the universal reach of God's blessings through Christ had been signaled (e.g., see Lk. 2:32; Lk 7.2–10; and Ac 1.8), and God had promised this even to Abraham (Gn 12:3, 22:18). But the realization of God's impartiality comes to light at this point in the narrative.

Notes for preaching

When Peter preached, his hearers spoke in tongues and praised God (Acts 10:46). An appropriate goal for this sermon is that your hearers will also praise God for his favor upon them.

You can do this by including your hearers in this story, just as Peter included Cornelius into the story of Christ. “Including your hearers” means assuring them God had demonstrated his impartiality to each of them by bringing each the preaching of the gospel and in the administration of the means of grace. “Including your hearers” also means promising them the good that the risen Lord will do and the redemption he will provide when he comes once again. Tell your hearers to expect Jesus to do for them what he did “starting in Galilee” and when he was “in the country of the Jews and in Jerusalem.”

In doing this, be clear about Jesus’s death and resurrection as the reason for faith and hope. The theme is summarized in Psalm 118:22, “The stone the builders rejected has become the head of the corner.” Some who saw and heard Jesus firsthand did not believe but instead killed him. God, however, raised him from the dead, justifying the faith and the hope of all who believe in him.