

Acts 2:38-39

“The Promise is for All”

Pentecost

June 4, 2017

Our Redeemer

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Grace, Mercy, and Peace be unto you from Jesus Christ our Lord and Savior.
Amen. Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ:

[Introduction] It is something we take for granted – the grocery store!
We don’t have to pluck chickens
– you can choose fresh or frozen chicken breasts at the grocery store.
You don’t have to grow your own onions
– although the Boenkens home grown onions are awfully good!

It can be an overwhelming experience at the grocery store.
The cereal aisle is a war zone battling for your attention,
and the butter aisle... It isn’t any better.
Kara laugh’s because I can spend a long time looking at the butter.

One of the brands – with it’s very name – makes a promise!
This butter supposedly combines good taste with good health
and is given the name Promise – Promise margarine.

The name, Promise, speaks of
commitment, a determination to deliver what’s advertised.

This same word, *promise*, is central to our text as well. Again it says something about dependability, about a guarantee, about something you can depend on.

Peter says to the Pentecost crowd, “*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*” (v 39).
You, your children, all who are far off. The Promise Is for All.

[The promise is for us]

Peter said to those who called Abraham their father, “*The promise is for you.*”

If there was any doubt in their minds
after the events of Easter
about the identity of Jesus,
Peter cleared the air once and for all,
and the coming of the Holy Spirit that day
testified to the truth of his message.

The one for whose blood they'd screamed,
the one they taunted and jeered and tormented, and, yes,
the one they put to death, was the Christ, the Messiah of God.

He was the one their fathers had longed to see.

And now that he had come onto the scene, they had put him to death.

OH How much like us they are!

Hear us singing our welcome to the Messiah in the form of Christmas carols:
"O come, O come, Emmanuel!" (LSB 357:1).

But note how long our welcome lasts – how quickly our song fades!

We hardly turn from the beauty of the Christmas tree
before Lent is upon us

and we sense our sinfulness and weep bitterly with Peter.

And then, so quickly, it's Pentecost, and Peter says, "This Jesus . . . you crucified."
Where have the last six months gone?

And you know . . . the Jews weren't alone in putting him to death,
for our sins as well as theirs

made that long, agonizing walk to the cross necessary for him.

And yet, with the Jews on Pentecost Day, we hear the unbelievable news:

"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" (vv 38–39a).

[***The promise is for our children***]

The promise is also for our children.

Peter says ***"For the promise is for you and for your children"*** (v 39a).

Despite all the things we can give our children,

this is one we ourselves are incapable of providing.

We cannot give salvation. Even Walmart, or better yet, Amazon doesn't have it.

Like us, our children are far from the Lord at birth,
covered with the sin that blankets all mankind.

But their souls are precious to the Lord,

and in his love he bathes them with forgiveness at the baptismal font.

Baptism... What seems like a simplistic, symbolic act to many is, in fact,
the forgiveness of sins to our children.

“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” (vv 38–39a).

The Spirit of God creates saving faith in their hearts,
and we trust the promise of him who is the way, the truth, and the life.
What joy to know that those we love as only parents can love
will be saved through all eternity!

[*The promise is for all*]

But the promise extends even beyond them, says Peter, ***“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”*** (v 39).

Comprehend this if you can. God freely offers redemption to *all* mankind!

There is no limit to his love, his forgiveness, his mercy in Christ.
He doesn't look forward to a few favorites with him in paradise
—David, Abraham, Moses... — Peter, James, and John.
No, he sincerely desires that *ALL* be saved.

He invites them to enjoy the fruits of redemption
through the message of the Gospel—full and free forgiveness in Christ.

That message of the Gospel was published at his birth as the angels sang to shepherds
in the midst of that dark and quiet Judean night,
but as soon as the message was delivered,
it was given to mankind to share.
The shepherds couldn't keep the news to themselves.
With exceedingly great joy they ran to tell!

The disciples after his death, resurrection, and ascension said
they *had to* witness to what they had seen and heard (Acts 4:20).

Our Lutheran forefathers, in their turn, brought the message to this country
when our nation was still young,
and today the responsibility is passed on to us.

And the Lord has given me the privilege and the responsibility
of reminding all the members of our congregation
of the importance of personal witnessing
in this age of the Church.

It relates back to our opening illustration, doesn't it?
People today hear the promises of advertisers until their ears ache.

Every new product carries its own individual promise:
this car will make you feel like a real man;
this perfume will make you feel like a real woman;
this course will qualify you for the career of your dreams;
this kitchen gadget will let you cook like the Iron Chef.
All empty promises. Even Promise margarine *MAY* have its deficiencies.

But the promise of the Father of all ages,
the promise delivered once to our forefathers,
the promise that was fulfilled in Christ,
the promise attested to by the Spirit,
the promise attached to belief in the Gospel and Baptism—
that promise never disappoints.
We are privileged to believe it
but we are also privileged to share it.

[Conclusion]

Understand, then, that the promise of Acts 2
intended just for the ancient Jews who heard Peter that day.

That promise is for us,
for our children,
and it extends out to all who hear the invitation of God in the Gospel.

My challenge to you – be a missionary.
Share what you have, the eternal promise of God, where ever you can!
This is your responsibility and mine.
It is also our joy. Amen.

Now to him who is able to do immeasurably more than all we ask or imagine, ...
to him be glory in the church and in Christ Jesus throughout all generations,
for ever and ever! AMEN!
