

## **The Gospel: Reconciler or Segregator?** *Peter Preaches Joel's Prophecy at Pentecost (Acts 2)*

Introduction: Reconciliation and Segregation, Unifying and Dividing

“11:00am Sunday morning is the most segregated hour in America.” – Martin Luther King, Jr.

### 1. Scripture: Peter's Sermon in Acts 2

Luke-Acts Background:

Luke: Life and ministry of Jesus

Acts: Life and ministry of the Spirit and the church

Joel Background:

Likely a liturgical book, 3 major themes:

- a) Warning to repent or face judgment
- b) The coming “day of the LORD”
- c) Promise of the coming Spirit that will restore Israel

<sup>17</sup>“And in the last days it shall be, God declares,  
that I will pour out my Spirit on all flesh,  
and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy,  
and your young men shall see visions,  
and your old men shall dream dreams;

<sup>18</sup>even on my male servants and female servants  
in those days I will pour out my Spirit, and they shall prophesy.

<sup>19</sup>And I will show wonders in the heavens above  
and signs on the earth below,  
blood, and fire, and vapor of smoke;

<sup>20</sup>the sun shall be turned to darkness  
and the moon to blood,  
before the day of the Lord comes, the great and magnificent day.

<sup>21</sup>And it shall come to pass that everyone who calls upon the name of the Lord shall be saved.’

### 2. Four Areas of Segregation Reconciled in Joel's Prophecy

- a) Gender: men and women
- b) Age: old and young
- c) Class: sons/daughters and male/female servants (slaves)
- d) Ethnicity: sons/daughters and male/female servants (slaves)

### 3. The God that Reconciles

The heart of the gospel reflects the heart of God.

Brainstorm: Other biblical examples of reconciliation:

- a) Gender
- b) Age
- c) Class
- d) Ethnicity

#### 4. The State of Our Churches: Communities of Reconciliation or Segregation?

##### Factors Contributing to Segregation:

- a. Homogeneous Unit Principle > Reconciling Communities
- b. Consumerist Comfort > Radical Service and Hospitality
- c. Individualized Faith and Salvation > The People of God
- d. Pride and Fear > Humility and Love

##### Fallout:

- a. Churches can propagate segregation and disunity
- b. Churches are sidelined from reconciliation and social engagement
- c. Failure to reflect God and God's gospel

#### 5. Some Ways Forward

- Renewed vision of the God that reconciles and makes humanity whole
- Humility and lament
- Getting our hands dirty

#### 6. Gifts

- The heart of God
- The richness of the interdependent body of Christ
- Love, forgiveness, hospitality, healing, and community
- The kingdom of heaven

#### 7. Stories of Hope

#### 8. Questions

Christ, our Reconciler: Ephesians 2:13-22

##### Further Reading:

Christianity Today: Want to be Multiethnic? Get Ready For Discomfort (Corey Widmer, <http://goo.gl/26zwm3>)

Book: Becoming Human (Jean Vanier, ISBN 0887848095)

Book: Many Colors: Cultural Intelligence for a Changing Church (Soong-Chan Rah, ISBN 0802450482)

Book: Disunity in Christ: Uncovering the Hidden Forces That Keep Us Apart (Christena Cleveland, ISBN 0830844031)