

# WEEKLY SERMON

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## Feasting on the Word

*Acts 2.14a, 22-32*

As child and a young teenager, I loved reading books. I regularly cycled a couple of miles into town to get books from the local library and I devoured them. Then came the formal study of English literature for GCSE and my love of reading was crushed. I confess I made it through the exam without ever reading one of the set texts – I watched a film adaptation instead! What can I say, ‘Pride and Prejudice’ didn’t appeal to 15 year-old me!

I think reading the Bible can be a bit like that for some of us. When we make it a requirement to study the Bible in a formal way, many of us are put off, just as I was put off reading widely by GCSE English Literature. The need to find ‘the right answer’ in ‘the right way’ can make us feel not up to the task and so we give up and watch a film or do something else instead.

Yet reading the Bible regularly is privilege that draws us deeper into our relationship with Jesus and helps to equip us to follow him through the twists and turns of life. We see this in the part of Peter’s speech to the Jerusalem crowd that is in this week’s reading from Acts. In this week’s section, and throughout the speech, Peter does not just speak of his experience of being with Jesus as he did ‘miracles, signs and wonders’ but draws upon his knowledge of the Bible to share the world-changing news of Jesus’ death and resurrection. Sometimes he does this in an implied way, such as when he speaks of Jesus being ‘handed over to you by God’s deliberate plan’. At other times he quotes directly from the Scriptures, such as when he recalls words from Psalm 16 ‘I saw the Lord always before me...’

Peter was familiar with the Scriptures because he spent time reading them and exploring them. It’s tempting to put him on a kind of pedestal and think that he was some sort of super-human but he wasn’t. He was a fisherman who often made rash decisions and said foolish things, including denying he even knew Jesus three times. He was no high-brow academic; on the contrary he was mostly an ordinary person trying to follow Jesus in his everyday life and to share the good news of the resurrection as best he could.

Part of what enabled him to follow Jesus and to share the great Easter story was that he took time to read the Scriptures as he could, not as he couldn’t. So this Easter, in the midst of so much enforced isolation, why not pick up your Bible and delve a little deeper a little more often than you have before into the Scriptures so that you too can be better equipped to follow Jesus and to share the good news of the resurrection? After all, the world needs modern day Peters like you much more than it realises.

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