



Participant 09/23/2018

H

HIGHLIGHT: Acts 2:37-47

³⁷When they heard this, they came under deep conviction and said to Peter and the rest of the apostles: “Brothers, what must we do?”

³⁸“Repent,” Peter said to them, “and be baptized, each of you, in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins, and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. ³⁹For the promise is for you and for your children, and for all who are far off, as many as the Lord our God will call.” ⁴⁰And with many other words he testified and strongly urged them, saying, “Be saved from this corrupt generation!”

⁴¹So those who accepted his message were baptized, and that day about 3,000 people were added to them. ⁴²And they devoted themselves to the apostles’ teaching, to the fellowship, to the breaking of bread, and to the prayers.

⁴³Then fear came over everyone, and many wonders and signs were being performed through the apostles. ⁴⁴Now all the believers were together and held all things in common. ⁴⁵They sold their possessions and property and distributed the proceeds to all, as anyone had a need. ⁴⁶Every day they devoted themselves to meeting together in the temple complex, and broke bread from house to house. They ate their food with a joyful and humble attitude, ⁴⁷praising God and having favor with all the people. And every day the Lord added to them those who were being saved.

E

EXPLAIN

After the outpouring of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost, Peter stood up among the disciples and delivered a powerful sermon that affirmed Jesus’ deity, demonstrated how Jesus fulfilled Old Testament prophecy, proclaimed that He rose from the dead, exposed the people’s need for repentance, and focused people on the saving power of Christ. After hearing the truth about Jesus, we have no option but to respond to it one way or another.



v.37 “They came under deep conviction.” In Greek, this phrase is “they were pierced to the heart.” What Peter was preaching was such a painful thing to hear that Luke records their reaction with a word that may have been drawn from Psalm 109:16 and 22 to describe the sharp pain of anxiety and remorse. This is the feeling associated with recognizing one’s need for God to fix something they cannot fix themselves.

v.38 Peter’s response to the despondent crowd was the best news they had ever heard. “Repent and be baptized” is old news at this point. Repentance and baptism were staples of Judaism, taught by John the Baptist, and continued by Jesus, Himself. However, Peter’s response would have been fresh and unheard of for three reasons:

1) He called for “every one” of those in attendance to repent. While Jewish baptism would have been reserved mostly for Gentiles converting to Judaism, the baptism Peter called for is what Jesus taught: repentance and baptism for anyone at all, no matter what your religious affiliation. Repentance is not a religious action, but a personal response to the Savior Who died for you.

2) Peter called for them to repent and be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ. While this is a staple of modern Christianity, such an expression would have been entirely new to Peter’s audience. This repentance and baptism indicates that someone calls on the name of Jesus and seals their intention to be wholly identified with Jesus in everything He did.

3) Peter introduces the “gift of the Holy Spirit.” This gift is not something that would come sporadically or at a time later than when they placed their faith in Jesus, but happened at the very moment they did. It promised the same power the people had witnessed when the Spirit empowered the disciples at the beginning of Acts 2—to every single person who repented of their sins and placed their trust in Christ.

v.41 As mentioned above, Jews looked at baptism as something generally only for Gentiles converting to Judaism—it symbolized their break from their Gentile past and washing of their worldly defilement. So for Jews to have been baptized in the name of Jesus would have been “traumatic and significant for them in a way that we in our mildly Christianized culture have difficulty understanding” (Longenecker). Still, despite the stigma they would have endured in Jerusalem, at Passover, “about 3,000” followed through with it. This is an extraordinary testament to the power of the Holy Spirit.

v.42 “Breaking of Bread” signifies two things in Luke’s writing: taking Communion and simply sharing a meal together. These early believers habitually got together and dined—most likely using that time to encourage their unity in Christ. There are not many places in Jerusalem that fit 3,000+ people with space to eat, so this likely took place in individuals’ homes. They made the most of this time, fulfilling physical needs (hunger), communal needs (fellowship), and spiritual needs (Communion).



A

APPLY

1. **What stuck out to you or challenged you in what you heard in the sermon or read in the text?**
2. We saw how the Spirit empowered Peter to preach a message that extolled Christ for who He was. **When was a time you felt the Spirit guiding you in a decision or prompting you in an important time in your life?**
3. Go back and take a look at Peter's sermon, starting in verse 14. It gets pretty intense in some places. **What parts do you think were difficult for his audience to hear? Do you think Christians have watered down the message of the Gospel today?**
4. After preaching his message, Peter called for a response. **What two options do people have when hearing the Gospel? What happens in a person's life when they respond in those different ways?**
5. **What are some of the characteristics of the community of those who believed the Gospel that Peter preached? In what areas do you think your group does really well? In what areas can you work together to improve?**

R

RESPOND

Challenge your group to respond either privately or corporately to this question:

- **It is up to each person to individually respond to the Gospel either by accepting and believing it or by rejecting it. How have you responded to it? How does your life reflect that decision?**

Encourage one another through email, text messages, or coffee dates throughout the week to build up and encourage each other.

