

“What must we do to be saved?” (5)

The last time we were together we saw how Peter gave one of the most powerful arguments concerning the Christ. He quoted from the prophets of old and showed them that they had been fulfilled in Jesus. And so to sum up his sermon on that day, he convicts them of their role in killing the Messiah. **Acts 2:36** “Therefore let all Israel be assured of this: God has made this Jesus, whom you crucified, both Lord and Christ.” It’s hard to imagine just how stunned some in Peter's audience must have been.

A woman was waiting in the check-out line at a shopping center. Her arms were laden with a mop and broom and other cleaning supplies. By her actions and deep sighs, it was obvious she was in a hurry and not happy about the slowness of the line. When the cashier called for a price check on a box of soap, the woman remarked indignantly, “Well, I’ll be lucky to get out of here and home before Christmas!” “Don't worry, madam,” replied the clerk. “With that wind kicking up out there and that brand new broom you have there, you’ll be home in no time.”

The Jews thought that they had heard the last of this Jesus, when they crucified Him. They were probably thinking, that’s that Jesus, the One who wants us to believe He was the Messiah, that’s Him dealt with, now we can get on and celebrate the Pentecost in peace and go home. But God had different plans, Peter full of God’s Spirit had different plans.

Think about it, the man whom the Jews recognized as a Galilean and likely viewed him as an uneducated person, had just presented a compelling argument in which he tells them that they murdered the Son of God. Out of all the crimes you could commit, killing the Messiah was to be the worst. Peter’s presentation was so powerful not because he was an intellect, not because he had a good education but because of the “Comforter,” or “Helper,” or “Advocate,” because of the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit used undeniable truths to show Jesus was the Son of God despite the Jews accusations to the contrary.

Jesus described the Spirit's work in **John 16:8-11**, He said, “When he comes, he will convict the world of guilt in regard to sin and righteousness and judgment: in regard to sin, because men do not believe in me; in regard to righteousness, because I am going to the Father, where you can see me no longer; and in regard to judgment, because the prince of this world now stands condemned.”

The evidence presented by Peter on Pentecost, as delivered to him by the Comforter, truly convicted many in his audience. In fact it was so powerful, Luke says in, **Acts 2:37** “When the people heard this, they were cut to the heart and said to Peter and the other apostles, “Brothers, what shall we do?”

Do you remember in **Matthew 16:19**, what Jesus promised to Peter? Jesus promised Peter, “I will give you the keys of the kingdom of heaven; whatever you bind on earth will be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth will be loosed in heaven.” And do you remember Jesus’ words on the cross in **Luke 23:34**? Jesus said, “Father, forgive them, for they do not know what they are doing.”

Well, both these passages find the beginning of their fulfillment in **Acts 2:38**. The Holy Spirit, through Peter, had already identified those in the crowd as those who had used lawless hands to crucify God's Son. Now talk about panic stations, they were probably waiting on heaven opening up and swallowing them whole because of what they had done. They were probably waiting on one of God’s angels coming down to slay them all because of what they done.

And it’s then that some of them start to panic and ask Peter, “What they must do to be saved.” And so Peter tells them what they must do to be saved in **Acts 2:38**, “Repent, and let every one of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins; and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.” Now can you imagine the Jews response to that?

There was a woman whose house was being burgled and so she bravely went downstairs to confront the man and when she saw him she shouted “**Acts 2:38**” and with that the man froze. And so she called the police and when they arrived they asked the man why he didn’t try to make a run for it and he replied, “Are you crazy, she said she had an ax and two thirty eights.”

But can you imagine what is going on in their minds? We have just killed the Messiah, who was God in the flesh and you’re talking about forgiveness!

We have just murdered the Creator of the Universe on a cross and He wants to give us a gift! No wonder Paul asks the question in **Ephesians 3:18**, “How wide and long and high and deep is the love of Christ.”

Now Peter says there are **two requirements** to receive this forgiveness of sins and the first one is **repentance**. Repenting involves a change of will, or mind. Jesus says in **Matthew 21:28-32**, “What do you think? There was a man who had two sons. He went to the first and said, ‘Son, go and work today in the vineyard.’ ‘‘I will not,’ he answered, but later he changed his mind and went.” Then the father went to the other son and said the same thing. He answered, ‘I will, sir,’ but he did not go. “Which of the two did what his father wanted?” “The first,” they answered. Jesus said to them, “I tell you the truth, the tax collectors and the prostitutes are entering the kingdom of God ahead of you. For John came to you to show you the way of righteousness, and you did not believe him, but the tax collectors and the prostitutes did. And even after you saw this, you did not repent and believe him.”

You see loved ones repentance is more than feeling sorry for what you have done, it’s more than feeling sorry for yourself. That’s the way the world repents, they say, ‘oh I’m sorry I wont do that again’ but then they go out and do it again, that’s why our prisons are overflowing with prisoners who recommitted their crimes. Repentance involves a deep sorrow for your actions.

It involves deep sorrow when you realize that you have deeply hurt God with your actions. **2 Corinthians 7:10** “Godly sorrow brings repentance that leads to salvation and leaves no regret, but worldly sorrow brings death.” When someone genuinely repents of sin they don’t want to go out and commit that sin again because they know that God doesn’t like it and they don’t want to hurt God.

Now Peter tells them the **second requirement** to receive forgiveness of sins. He commands them to be baptised. Now unlike the baptism of the Holy Spirit which the apostle’s and Cornelius’ household received. They were to be baptised in water. Now this isn’t what some would call a christening. Baptism is a dipping, plunging, immersing or overwhelming. The Jews had no problems in understanding what baptism was.

It is a funeral service, baptism is a burial. **Colossians 2:12**. “Having been buried with him in baptism and raised with him through your faith in the power of God, who raised him from the dead.” Peter tells us in **1 Peter 3**, that baptism is the means of one's calling on God to cleanse him based upon the death, burial and resurrection of Jesus. **1 Peter 3:21** “This water symbolizes baptism that now saves you also-not the removal of dirt from the body but the pledge of a good conscience toward God. It saves you by the resurrection of Jesus Christ.”

And notice also that repentance and baptism were to be done in the Name of Jesus. In other words they were to be baptized resting on His name, submitting to His authority, depending on Him as Savior and Lord. You see loved ones, Hell is not afraid of my name, hell is not afraid of your name, but Hell is terribly afraid of the Name of Jesus.

In fact Peter was going remind even more listeners a little later in **Acts 4** of that very fact. He says in **Acts 4:12** “Salvation is found in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given to men by which we must be saved.” But the point is, repentance and baptism under the authority of Jesus was to receive the promised result of the forgiveness of sins.

And Peter follows on and says in **Acts 2:38** “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.” Adam and Eve were truly blessed to have God walking amongst their midst in the Garden of Eden. The Israelites were truly blessed to have God dwell in the tabernacle. They were truly blessed when He dwelt in Solomon’s temple. But loved ones, these early Christians were going to be blessed even more.

Peter says when a person, repents and is then baptised for the forgiveness of their sins, they will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. In other words God was not going dwell in a tent or a temple anymore; He was going dwell within the hearts of His people. **Acts 2:39** “The promise is for you and your children and for all who are far off-for all whom the Lord our God will call.”

My friends that promise wasn’t just for the Jews and their children, it is for us and our children. That was one lesson that Peter had to learn, in **Acts 10** after the supernatural events of Cornelius and his household, Peter says **Acts 10:34** “I now realize how true it is that God does not show favoritism but accepts men from every nation who fear him and do what is right.” The Spirit is ready to give life to anyone who will submit to God.

Because when a person submits to the will of God through repentance and baptism, God comes to live in you in the form of the Spirit. And it's then and only then that an individual's body is his temple. **1 Corinthians 6:19+20** "Do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit, who is in you, whom you have received from God? You are not your own; you were bought at a price. Therefore honor God with your body." No repentance, no gift of the Holy Spirit. No baptism for the forgiveness of sins, no Holy Spirit.

And so Luke tells us following in **Acts 2:40-41** "With many other words he warned them; and he pleaded with them, "Save yourselves from this corrupt generation." Those who accepted his message were baptized, and about three thousand were added to their number that day".

And that warning and that plea stands just as strong today as it was first heard through the lips of Peter just over 2000 years ago. People need to save themselves from this wicked generation in which we live today. We need to remember that when we preach and teach from the word of God we are really preaching and teaching the very words of Christ Himself. And that day when Peter preached the very first gospel sermon, he was preaching the words given him by Jesus Himself.

You see when 3000 souls accepted Peter's words and were baptised, they were actually accepting Christ and His words. Jesus says in **John 13:20** "I tell you the truth, whoever accepts anyone I send accepts me; and whoever accepts me accepts the one who sent me." And because they received the Lord's words, they were added together in the kingdom.

Now let me just make a quick point about the kingdom or church. **If I wanted to learn karate, I would get a membership and join a club. If wanted to play bingo, I would buy a membership and join the bingo club.** That's not how it works with the Lord's church. The Bible says that you don't join anything, the Bible says that the **'Lord adds you to His church.'**

Acts 2:41 "Those who accepted his message were baptized, and about three thousand were added to their number that day." A few verses down Luke tells us in **Acts 2:47** that, "The Lord added to their number daily those who were being saved". You don't join the Lord's church, like it's some sort of association or club. The Lord adds you to His church.

It is so important to realize that the Lord is the one who is responsible for bringing forth fruit. I've heard too many preachers and teachers, taking credit for growth in the church, but blaming others when there is no growth. **1 Corinthians 3:6+7.** "I planted the seed, Apollos watered it, but God made it grow. So neither he who plants nor he who waters is anything, but only God, who makes things grow".

Now loved ones, what Luke records next for us is so important for us to understand and take note of. These baby Christians, just a few hours old begun to do something which would influence the rest of their Christian lives. Jesus said to His disciples in **Matthew 28:18-20** "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age."

And what we see happening next in **Acts 2** is that very thing, the apostles began to teach Jesus' disciples. **Acts 2:42** "They devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and to the fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer." Luke tells us that that there are **5 things** which dominate the life of Christian.

1. You need to sit at the feet of the churches teachers and learn. **2.** You need to be around others Christians as much as you can, not just on Sundays. **3.** You need to come together with other saints to partake of the Lord's Supper every week. **4.** You need to be praying. **5.** You need learn to give. **And what was the first fundamental truth they taught them?** The apostles taught them the importance of meeting together to learn from God's word. You start as you mean to go on.

A 17 year old student at **Walt Whitman High School in Bethesda MD--one of the best public schools in the nation--**says he knows it's wrong to cheat, but he does it anyway. So do most of his schoolmates, he says. He said he will go to any length to gain an edge, even using an advanced programmable calculator as a cheat sheet. His goal is to get accepted in an Ivy League school. He said, "Grades are that important. I don't want to mess up and be in a hole."

Loved ones, that should be our goal, not to cheat but to make Christ's teaching our priority. We can't just baptize someone and then leave them to it, we need to teach them, baptize them and then teach them again. Teach them the importance of obeying God's word.

We need to share with them that they can't be a strong Christian on their own; they need to be around other Christians to give encouragement and receive encouragement. We also need to let them know that our memories are pretty poor but we must never forget what Christ has done for us all by partaking of the Lord's Supper every first day of the week.

And we need to demonstrate how important communication with the Father is. **1 Thessalonians 5:17** says, **"Pray continually."** And that attitude should be the pattern for the rest of our Christian lives. Because when that is our pattern, you are going to love and enjoy being around those people who share in that same pattern.

Now to you and me these things which are happening here may not be a big deal, but put yourselves in the shoes of these Jews. They had never been involved in the breaking of the bread before. This is an obvious reference to the Lord's Supper, since there would be nothing remarkable about new Christians continuing to eat. Think about their past prayer life.

You see in Judaism, prayers were offered at stated times of the day, these first Christians offered prayers at any and all times, and in any and all places. And because of this holy example of living, together with the miracles worked by the apostles, this caused the surrounding community to be in awe.

Acts 2:43-45 "Everyone was filled with awe, and many wonders and miraculous signs were done by the apostles. All the believers were together and had everything in common. Selling their possessions and goods, they gave to anyone as he had need."

And notice another important lesson the apostle's taught them. They enjoyed each other's company and gladly shared their material possessions when anyone who had need. They taught them the importance of giving. Jesus says in **Acts 20:35**, **"It is more blessed to give than to receive."**

Loved ones we should be a giving people, not just of our lives to God, but also of our riches. You see, it's not so much the amount we give but the attitude within our hearts when we do give. Paul says in **1 Corinthians 16:2** **"On the first day of every week, each one of you should set aside a sum of money in keeping with his income, saving it up, so that when I come no collections will have to be made"**. Paul says I want you to set a side a sum of money within your income.

And a little later in **2 Corinthians 9:7**, he says, **"Each man should give what he has decided in his heart to give, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver."** You know God doesn't want us giving so much that we can't pay our bills and we end up starving ourselves, but at the same time if He has blessed us with a good income, He does expect us to give to the His work.

Now unlike the world today where we all live miles away from each other and we live such busy schedules, these first converts were in the temple daily. But they also spent time together on a daily basis, as **"breaking bread from house to house"** would seem to indicate. Their daily getting together and sharing of food was done out of hearts filled with **"extreme joy."**

Now we don't get together daily like these people did but loved ones that's what should happen when we meet together for worship and study. That's what should happen when get together to visit each other and share in fellowship meals.

When we get together the end result should be the same as these early Christians. **Acts 2:46-47** **"Every day they continued to meet together in the temple courts. They broke bread in their homes and ate together with glad and sincere hearts, praising God and enjoying the favor of all the people."** When these early Christians praised God for the forgiveness of sins and the community of believers of which he had made them a part of.

What happened to those who weren't yet a part of the church? The other folks who lived in Jerusalem found them to be an acceptable group and so Luke goes on to say, in the **2nd** part of **Acts 2:47** that, **"the Lord added to their number daily those who were being saved."**

When we get together for whatever the occasion and people see us enjoying each others company and they can see salvation in our lives, people are going to be attracted to the light. Because today as followers of our Jesus Christ, if we give ourselves over to daily study, sharing, meeting together and if our hearts are filled with extreme joy and simplicity.

If God wills, the results might well be the same, daily conversions as people come to us and ask, **‘What must we do to be saved?’**