

## Acts 2:37-47

### "A Radical Response"

Last week we heard the powerful preaching of the apostle Peter. It was the Day of Pentecost. Jews were in Jerusalem from all over the known world. The Spirit had been poured out, people had heard these Galileans (kind of the grammatically challenged of their day) speaking (perfectly) the wonderful works of God in languages (previously) they'd never known. It was blowing them away!

They'd heard the sound of the Spirit being poured out, they'd seen something that resembled tongues of fire resting upon each of the disciples. Some were amazed, others mocked, accused them of being drunk. Peter (upon hearing that) immediately stood up to address the unsupported allegation & bring clarification through the word of God.

& He explained the outpouring of the Holy Spirit in the last days. He spoke of miraculous dreams, visions & prophecy; signs & wonders in heaven above & in the earth beneath & assured them all of the promise of God's word that whoever called upon the name of the Lord would be saved... But that was only the beginning.

He wasn't about to stop at that. Why? Because for all that he had spoken, for all that he'd shared, he'd yet to speak of the sacrifice & saving work of *Jesus* on our behalf. So he grabbed hold of their attention & began to preach & proclaim to them the death & resurrection of Jesus. There he was, preaching powerfully, persuasively, explaining the scriptures accurately/irrefutably... & Though he was speaking to a crowd collectively, he brought each of them to a crossroad individually.

In essence he said, "Every one of you were wrong about Jesus of Nazareth. A man proven to be Holy *by* God through the miracles, signs & wonders *of* God that He performed in your midst as you yourselves *know*. Him you took, you tried & you crucified as a criminal, but God raised Him from the dead proving that He's *not* a criminal, He's the Christ! Therefore, being exalted to the right hand of God, & having received from the Father the promise of the Holy Spirit, He has poured out *this* which you now see & hear." (The sound of rushing wind, something like the appearance of tongues like fire upon the disciples, speaking the wonderful works of God in languages never before learned). Look at **Vs 36**, (read).

& Now here they are, Peter is looking at them, they're looking at him & in my mind you could've heard a pin drop. I mean, Peter just said that out loud! & I almost wonder if in his mind he was thinking, "I can't believe I just said that!" But this is the boldness of the Person & work of the Holy Spirit in his life. (& We were left wondering all week, how are these people going to respond? 😊).

## Vs 37

Wow! They've heard the gospel & now they're ready to respond. 2 Things about this. #1 I underlined the words, "Now when they *heard* this..." Peter preached to them the word of God. The bible is clear, "...*faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the word of God.*"<sup>1</sup> There's something about the word of God that has been infused w/that which gives birth to faith. I can't explain it, I don't pretend to understand it, but I thank God for it. It's as we read in Isaiah, "*For as the rain comes down, and the snow from heaven, And do not return there, But water the earth, And make it bring forth and bud, That it may give seed to the sower And bread to the eater, So shall My word be that goes forth from My mouth; It shall not return to Me void, But it shall accomplish what I please, And it shall prosper in the thing for which I sent it.*"<sup>2</sup> This is why we recommend that you use scripture when you're sharing w/people!

Because there's a certain "manufacture's guarantee" attached to it. Oh, you don't have to quote chapter & verse. Or even say, "It says in the bible" though there's nothing wrong w/that. ☺ But notice there were no disclaimers, no fine print. He didn't say, "My word will accomplish the purpose for which it's sent if the person really believes it's My word. But if they don't believe the bible then it probably won't work." God never said that. His word is like a fire that burns away the chaff, like a hammer that breaks the rock in pieces, like a well driven goad that sinks deep into the human heart. Peter preached to them the word of God & they were "cut to the heart..."

As the author of Hebrews said, "*For the word of God is living and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the division of soul and spirit, and of joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart.*"<sup>3</sup> God's word has this way of slicing us open (like the surgeon's scalpel) & exposing the thoughts & intents of our hearts. So it was no coincidence that God's word was central in the things that Peter proclaimed.

As was the gospel. He preached the sinless life, the death & resurrection of J.C. as the spotless Lamb of God who has taken away the sins of the world through the shedding of His blood upon the altar of the cross. Paul the apostle had this to say regarding the gospel, "*For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ, for it is the power of God to salvation for everyone who believes,*"<sup>4</sup> You can see where this is headed, can't you? Peter (under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit) hit them w/the ol' 1, 2. He blasted them w/both barrels!

<sup>1</sup> *The New King James Version*. (1982). (Ro 10:17). Nashville: Thomas Nelson.

<sup>2</sup> *The New King James Version*. (1982). (Is 55:10-11). Nashville: Thomas Nelson.

<sup>3</sup> *The New King James Version*. (1982). (Heb 4:12). Nashville: Thomas Nelson.

<sup>4</sup> *The New King James Version*. (1982). (Ro 1:16). Nashville: Thomas Nelson.

He shared scripture (the seed bed of faith) & gave them the gospel (the power of God to salvation)... They were being pummeled (practically beaten to life ☺) w/the good news, left & right!

But then, we also sense a desperation in *their* question don't we? Upon hearing the word of God; the gospel of J.C. they were cut to the heart; they realized they were responsible for the death of their own Messiah; the Holy One of God (as are we all)! If this was what *they did* to God's Messiah, what might *God do* (in turn) to them! They found themselves in an undeniable, irrefutable position. Guilty as charged, "what shall we do?"

This is the 2<sup>nd</sup> thing. #1 We saw scripture shared & the gospel given. Here we see the convicting work of the Holy Spirit in their midst... & You might take note, it wasn't the speaking in tongues that brought them to this place; the conviction of the Holy Spirit accompanied the preaching of the gospel, the giving out of the Word of God... God wasn't seeking to convince them through the gifts, He was seeking to convict them through the gospel.

This is one of the roles/responsibilities of the Holy Spirit. To bring conviction of sin. Jesus said, "*And when He has come, He will convict the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment:*"<sup>5</sup> He will bring that sense of guilt before God; that the way things stand, we aren't right & something needs to happen in order for us to be right in the sight of God. What is that "something"? That's what they're asking Peter... "What shall we do?"

### Vs 38-40

Listen, sometimes what a man *doesn't* say, is almost as important as what he *does* say. Peter didn't say, "You need to grab a bull, or take a lamb to the temple & offer a sacrifice to God, a burnt offering as it states in the law that your sins might be covered." He didn't say that.

What *did* he say? He said, "1<sup>st</sup> & foremost you need (every one of you) to *repent*." What does that mean? "Repent". Sounds like a hardcore old school preacher's word! ☺ The truth of the matter is that it's an essential aspect of the gospel. In fact, it's a descriptive word that describes what it means to come to Christ... Salvation doesn't just "happen" as we stand idly by... It's true that we can't save ourselves & that salvation is the gift of God. But we must *receive* that gift through faith, & one evidence of saving faith is... repentance.

The word "repent" simply means a change of mind leading to a change in direction. "You once thought Jesus was a blasphemer, a heretic & a criminal so you crucified Him. Change your mind and acknowledge Him as the Holy One of God, bow before Him & crown Him as Lord of all." "You thought Jesus worthy of the cross, now crown Him in your heart as Lord & Christ."

<sup>5</sup> *The New King James Version*. (1982). [Jn 16:8]. Nashville: Thomas Nelson.

I should also say this. Repentance doesn't mean "remorseful". Now; I believe that anyone who truly repents will be sorry for their sin. But many people are sorry who never change, never repent & are never saved. So simply feeling sorry isn't enough. I've got to change my mind, & change my direction. *You cannot turn toward God w/out turning away from that which He's against. Your life was headed away from God & toward destruction, to repent is to turn toward God & move away from those things that were destroying your life.*

So; we should see that Christianity is not a mindless kind of religion. The 1<sup>st</sup> thing it does is force you to *think* about things. Where you're at Vs where you need to be. Too many people don't take the time to think about the things that pertain to eternity. Or if they try to cope w/reality they need to numb themselves. *They find themselves at the bottom of a bottle or taking some kind of drug or maybe pursuing relationships, whatever they can do in order to not think about the direction of their lives.* God says, *"Come now, and let us reason together," Says the LORD, 'Though your sins are like scarlet, They shall be as white as snow; Though they are red like crimson, They shall be as wool.'"*<sup>6</sup> God says, "Hey sit down, let's *think this thing through*, you're headed down a certain path but it doesn't have to be that way. You can turn around & trust in Jesus... for the remission (taking away) of sin.

& I just want to make that clear here. Peter is *not* saying, "Repent & be baptized for the remission of sin." (As though baptism is a necessary act to receive forgiveness.) He's saying, "Repent, every one of you for the remission of sins; & you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. Then, be baptized in the name of J.C.." Here's the idea, "you've *blasphemed* Jesus, now *believe* in Jesus & in order to demonstrate outwardly the change that's taken place inwardly be *baptized* in the *name* of Jesus Christ." In other words, the proof of the sincerity of their repentance would be the demonstration of their outward identification w/Jesus through the act of being baptized in His name.

We need to understand that it was very rare (in that day) for a Jew to be baptized at all! *Gentiles* who were coming into the Jewish faith were baptized. What they're doing *here* is saying, "We are just as sinful & unclean as any Gentile & we need our sins washed away the same as anyone else & we're acknowledging that the cleansing of our sin takes place before God as we believe *in*, surrender our lives & submit *to* J.C."

In other words, they're not being baptized to *be* forgiven, but on account of the fact that they've *been* forgiven.

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<sup>6</sup> *The New King James Version*. (1982). [Is 1:18]. Nashville: Thomas Nelson.

We might say that baptism is part of the *fruit* of forgiveness, it doesn't lie at the *root* of forgiveness.

& Peter says here that anyone who believes, who puts their trust in J.C. will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.

### Vs 39

No distinction between the apostles and the rest of them, the promise was to them, their children & *all* (that's you & me) who are afar off. The promise is to any person, in any place at any time. If you're hearing God's word this morning & the Holy Spirit is cutting into your heart in way unlike you've known before & you're ready to repent of your sin & believe on the Lord J.C. then you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit as well.

BTW, let's take special note of Vs 40. You might be thinking, "Man, I can read this powerful passage in Acts Ch 2 in just a few minutes. Jeff; why do you take 40!?" ☺ Well, I want you to know that what you have here is the Holy Spirit inspired highlight reel of Peter's preaching that day. **The truth is that he exhorted them & testified to them, "w/many other words."** ☺ Saying, "Be saved from this *perverse* generation." (Which is every generation, we all need the salvation that's found in Jesus alone).

### Vs 41

Wow! From 120 disciples gathered to over 3,000 transformations & new born believers in what, maybe an hour? But this is the work of the Holy Spirit; salvation, transformation by grace through faith in the Person of J.C. Peter didn't save them, God saved them through the convicting work of the Holy Spirit. He made them *alive to God* in Christ Jesus (You might write it down & look it up 18r, Eph 2:1-5).

Interesting side note for ya. On the day the Law was given (Ex 32) 3,000 Israelites were killed (they had fallen into idolatry, the worship of the golden calf). On the day the Spirit was poured out 3,000 Israelites were given life. Paul told the Corinthians, "**our sufficiency is from God, who also made us sufficient as ministers of the new covenant, not of the letter but of the Spirit; for the letter kills, but the Spirit gives life.**"<sup>7</sup>

But what a catalyst for the spreading of the gospel. These people in from all over the known world, giving their lives to Christ on the Day of Pentecost & then heading back home w/the good news of J.C. & Him crucified for the sin of the world.

### Vs 42

<sup>7</sup> [The New King James Version](#). (1982). [2 Co 3:5-6]. Nashville: Thomas Nelson.

Let's not miss this. The church is now in its infantile state. These apostles are tasked w/doing whatever it takes to establish the single most solid foundation in the lives of these new believers as they possibly can. So take note of what's happening here. They aren't about the business of making converts, they're doing what it takes to make *disciples*.

What did Jesus say? He said, "All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth. Go therefore and *make disciples of all the nations*, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, *teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you;*"<sup>8</sup> & That's exactly what they're doing now.

They "continued steadfastly" that is, they paid devoted, persistent, loyal commitment to... #1 The apostle's doctrine, that is, they were constantly being taught the word of God, they gave heed to what the apostle's taught. Listen, where the Holy Spirit reigns there will be a love *for* & a devotion *to* the Word of God. They studied the Scriptures. There were 3,000 new believers that needed instruction in God's Word if they were to grow & become effective witnesses themselves (1 Pet 2:2). Jesus said, "If you abide in My word, you are My disciples indeed."<sup>9</sup> They weren't just *dabbling* in the word, they were *devouring* it. & Let's not think that they were so fortunate to have the apostle's doctrine & we wish we had it today. **You do! It's called the NT. They taught from the O.T., they shared the teachings of Jesus, they shared the revelation they received from the Holy Spirit (& that's what *we have* in the N.T. epistles).**

They paid persistent attention to #2 Fellowship. Koinonia; it means "to share" or have things in common. It goes beyond simply a sentimental feeling of oneness. Eating chips & guacamole w/each other (though that can be apart of it). True fellowship costs, it involves giving, sharing, investing into one another. When we come to church, I'm not here to take *from* you, I'm here to give *to* you of that which God has given to me. The consumer mentality of (what's in it for me) has really weakened the church today.

The mentality of "who's going to reach out to me, how can this place benefit me." That's toxic. There's a fundamental, healthy shift that happens when I go from, "what can I get out of it" to "how can I add to it", "what can I do to build up & encourage & bless the body"? It's when we invest in one another, share w/one another that we begin to fellowship w/one another.

The 3<sup>rd</sup> thing they were devoted to was the breaking of bread.

<sup>8</sup> *The New King James Version*. (1982). (Mt 28:18-20). Nashville: Thomas Nelson.

<sup>9</sup> *The New King James Version*. (1982). (Jn 8:31-32). Nashville: Thomas Nelson.

This goes beyond the fellowship aspect & looks to the remembrance of the cross. Just as Jesus broke the bread at the Last Supper & said, "This is My body broken for you." & He took the cup & said, "This is My blood, shed for you." Already, so early into the life of the church they were adamant about remembering (what just took place a couple of months prior) what Jesus had done for them upon the cross.

& 4<sup>thly</sup> They were devoted loyally to prayer. The corporate gathering isn't a place just for praising & preaching, it's also a place of prayer. A place where we openly display out dependency upon God...

So these are what we might call the fingerprints of a Spirit led church. There will be a devotion to the teaching of God's word, investing in one another, serving one another, encouraging/edifying/fellowshipping w/one another. We will remember regularly the work of the cross of J.C. through the broken bread & the cup & we will be a people of prayer... There will be a steadfast, single-minded commitment to this course of action. Everything else that happened in the early church was established & built upon this foundation.

**Vs 43**

There was a healthy fear of God among them. A sense of accountability to God, a responsibility before God. God is here, He's searching my heart & I need to be sober to that reality... God was on the move, doing incredible/impossible things through the apostles.

**Vs 44-45**

Now let me say that this was not communism, nor was it socialism. It wasn't, "What's yours is mine." It was "What's mine is yours". It was voluntary (not mandatory), temporary & motivated by love, not entitlement.

Most of these 3,000 were from other parts of the world. & They're staying in Jerusalem to learn of J.C. But they had no homes, no jobs (you get the idea). So they were doing what they needed to do in order to be hospitable, to help each other out & make it work so they could stay & be disciplined.

**Vs 46-47**

The church was unified, magnified & multiplied. & Check it out, they weren't meeting simply as part of a weekly routine. They were meeting *daily* (it's hard for some of you guys to meet w/us monthly) they were meeting at the temple & studying in home groups... every day. & Their experience was simple & joyful...

& The Lord was adding to the church daily those who were being saved.

When you're excited about something, when something is important to you, you talk about it. You point others to it, you highlight it. They were sharing their experience w/people. People were seeing change in their lives & in turn they too were coming to Christ.

What a radical response! May the Lord renew our passion for Him, a love for His word & His ways, that we might fellowship w/one another, that we might keep His work on our behalf in the forefront of our hearts/minds, & seek Him in prayer together. & May we be a people of praise in whom Christ is magnified & God is glorified.

### Prayer Points:

God may our lives shine bright for You! That we would be a people in whom You're magnified & glorified. That you might add to Your church through Your work in our lives. That we be excited about you, willing/wanting to share You w/others. We want to be spiritually healthy, growing in godliness, being about Your will for our lives.

& If God has spoken to your hear today. You came here maybe not knowing altogether what to expect but the word of God has somehow & in some way cut you to the heart today & you're ready to turn from your sin & believe in J.C. Then don't delay, do it now. Be saved from this perverse generation...