
Sermon Notes

June 4, 2017

First Congregational Church of Pomfret

Cut to the Heart

Acts 2:37

The Setting

- ❖ The Jewish Festival of Pentecost
 - 10 days since Jesus' return to heaven
 - 120 of Jesus' followers gathered in one place
 - probably continuing the pattern of prayer recorded in Acts 1
 - their prayer meeting interrupted by the sound of a mighty rushing wind and the appearance of divided tongues of fire resting on the top of each of their heads
- ❖ The crowd responds with amazement, perplexity and bewilderment
- ❖ *What does this mean?* vs. *They are filled with new wine.*
- ❖ Peter provides clear, content rich, Bible preaching
 - the Holy Spirit uses Peter's preaching to make a powerful impact on some in the crowd
 - v. 37, those who respond are *cut to the heart*

The Holy Spirit Cuts to the Heart

- ❖ Have you ever been "cut to the heart"?
 - cut = to be *pierced through, stabbed, pricked deeply*
 - the conviction of sin
 - deeds are evil
 - in violation of God's Word and God's Son
- ❖ The Holy Spirit uses God's Word to cut to the heart
 - Hebrews 4:12, Ephesians 6:17
 - the Spirit of God is the Spirit of truth
 - the Holy Spirit loves, honors, deploys, and empowers His life-giving Word
- ❖ The Spirit does His work, wields His sword, and pierces hearts in His own amazing way on that Pentecost morning
 - the Spirit leads the people to cry out, *Brothers, what shall we do?*
 - can you recall a time when you were "cut to the heart"?
- ❖ On the night before His crucifixion, Jesus describes how the Holy Spirit will *convict the world concerning sin and righteousness and judgment* (John 16:8)
 - by nature, we are incapable and unwilling to come to terms with our sin and believe in Jesus
 - only the Holy Spirit can convict us of our sin
 - we should pray: "Pierce my heart, O God"

Peter's Answer

- ❖ How does Peter respond to the heart cry of his hearers?
 - v. 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.*
 - the need for forgiveness and the gift of the Holy Spirit
- ❖ We must be realistic and honest about how far off the mark we are
 - if we let ourselves off the hook by comparing ourselves to others or by manufacturing our own standards, then we will fail to see how desperately we need God's forgiveness
 - there is no salvation apart from the forgiveness God offers you through Christ and Christ alone
- ❖ What does it mean to receive the gift of the Holy Spirit?
 - from the moment you claim Jesus' forgiveness and openly declare your desire to follow and live for Jesus, the Holy Spirit is at work in your life as a gift
 - receiving the gift of the Holy Spirit means God Himself comes to our lives where sin once ruled

❖ REPENT

- repentance is not just regret
- repentance means that you follow through on conviction by turning away from sin and turning toward God

❖ BE BAPTIZED IN THE NAME OF JESUS CHRIST

- those who receive the forgiveness of their sin **will** stand up and signify that change by being baptized
- baptism is the external expression of what we have already received and taken hold of in the name of Jesus
- baptism is an open identification with Jesus in His death, burial, and resurrection
- those who were "cut to the heart" on the day of Pentecost *were baptized, and there were added that day about three thousand souls.* (Acts 2:41)

Personal Application

1. Have you ever been "cut to the heart"? What did God use to bring that about? What changes took place in your life as a result of that?
2. Are you confident that you have received the gift of the Holy Spirit? What is the source of your confidence?
3. Do you demonstrate the fruit of repentance by turning away from sin and turning toward God?
4. Have you been baptized? If not, why are you refusing to obey God's clear command to you about this?