

SUBJECT: Peter's Invitation
READING: Acts 2:38-43

Introduction:

The invitation is an important part of a sermon; it gives the hearers to answer the questions the sermon has raised;

Peter's introduction is strong; [Act 2:22-24](#)

- (22) Ye men of Israel, hear these words; Jesus of Nazareth, a man approved of God among you by miracles and wonders and signs, which God did by him in the midst of you, as ye yourselves also know:
- (23) Him, being delivered by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God, ye have taken, and by wicked hands have crucified and slain:
- (24) Whom God hath raised up, having loosed the pains of death: because it was not possible that he should be holden of it.

Some see the invitation as a time when people need to be **convinced** a decision is to be made. I've been in churches where the invitation was 4 or 5 verses long. This seems not to be Peter's practice or God's. And as for me, I rarely extend it more than 2 verses believing that the Holy spirit's work simply culminates in the invitation.

This seems to be the case with the invitation Peter extended; [Act 2:36-37](#)

- (36) Therefore let all the house of Israel know assuredly, that God hath made that same Jesus, whom ye have crucified, both Lord and Christ.
- (37) Now when they heard *this*, they were pricked in their heart, and said unto Peter and to the rest of the apostles, Men *and* brethren, what shall we do?

Whether it was remorse or guilt they sought for a way to make right **Men and brethren, what shall we do?** Like Paul when he cried out on the Damascus road, **"What shall I do, Lord?"** (Acts 22:10).

The Philippian jailer asked Paul and Silas, **"Sirs, what must I do to be saved?"** (Acts 16:30).

1. Their state of mind illustrates perfectly that of the convicted sinner.
2. Sensing their own guilt and possibly a fear of God's wrath showed forth a desire to be saved and a willingness to submit to God's will.
3. Such conviction of sin and repentance is a part of every genuine conversion.

Peter's response had the following parts;

1. **Repentance**; Peter now answers their question with the only correct answer: repent an ever decreasing element of the modern invitation.
 - a. *Metanoēō* (repent) is a rich New Testament term. It speaks of a change of purpose, of turning from sin to God (1 Thess. 1:9).
 - b. It is not simply a stating of the words as we might see in those who speak of faith and salvation that manifests no change of behavior! **The words of James are easily misunderstood; Jas 2:26 For as the body without the spirit is dead, so faith without works is dead also.**

- c. **Joh 3:5** Jesus answered, **Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God.**
- d. Although Peter's hearers feared God's judgment, true repentance involves more than fear of consequences. Commentator Albert Barnes rightly notes that "*false repentance dreads the consequences of sin; true repentance dreads sin itself*" (Barnes' Notes on the New Testament: Acts-Romans [1884-85; reprint, Grand Rapids: Baker, n.d.], 52. Emphasis in original).
- e. True repentance like true faith hates sin for what it is—an affront to God.
- i. Like faith repentance grows with the true believer.
 - ii. Repentance may begin with simply acknowledging the need to turn, **true repentance produces a turning from sin to righteousness just like true faith produces a life pleasing God!**
 - iii. Knowing that sin is evil and that God hates it motivates the truly repentant person to forsake it.
- f. It is difficult for us as gentiles to grasp the magnitude of the change facing Peter's Jewish hearers.
- i. They were part of a unique community, with a rich cultural and religious history. *The nation had rejected Jesus as a blasphemer and executed Him.*
 - ii. Now Peter calls on them to turn their back on all that and embrace Jesus as their Messiah.

- iii. Perhaps the nearest parallel is for someone raised in a family with strong Catholic roots. Receiving Christ means a desertion of the religious and strong family ties in favor of Biblical Christianity!
 - iv. It's a big deal but a necessary one if growth in grace, faith, and Biblical knowledge are to continue!
 - v. By calling on each of them to be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ Peter does not allow for any "secret disciples" *Baptism would mark a public break with Judaism and identification with Jesus Christ.*
2. The meaning of Peter's statement that baptism is for the forgiveness of sins has been much disputed. "...**be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins...**"
- a. **Those who teach baptismal regeneration—the false teaching that baptism is necessary for salvation**—see this verse as a primary proof text for their view.
 - 1. That view ignores the immediate context of the passage. *As already noted, baptism would be a dramatic step for Peter's hearers. By publicly identifying themselves as followers of Jesus of Nazareth, they risked becoming outcasts in their society.*
 - 2. Peter calls upon them to prove the genuineness of their repentance by submitting to public baptism.
 - 3. In much the same way, our Lord called upon the rich young ruler to prove the genuineness of his

repentance by parting with his wealth (Luke 18:18-27).

4. Surely, however, no one would argue from the latter passage that giving away one's possessions is necessary for salvation.
 5. True repentance, however, will inevitably manifest itself in total submission to the Lord's will.
- b. **Second**, such teaching violates the important hermeneutical principle known as *analogia Scriptura* (the analogy of Scripture).
- i. That principle states that no passage, when correctly interpreted, will teach something contradictory to the rest of Scripture.

And the rest of Scripture unmistakably teaches that salvation is solely by faith (cf. **Joh 1:12** **But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name:**

Act 16:31 **And they said, Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved, and thy house.**

Rom 4:5 **But to him that worketh not, but believeth on him that justifieth the ungodly, his faith is counted for righteousness.**

; Rom 10:9-10 **That if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved. (10) For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation.**

No mention of the ordinance of baptism being required to be saved in any of these passages!

- c. **Third**, this interpretation is not true to the facts of Scripture.
- i. Throughout the book of Acts, forgiveness is linked to repentance, not baptism as illustrated by the previous list of verses.
 - ii. In addition, the Bible records that some who were baptized were not saved (**Act 8:13 Then Simon himself believed also: and when he was baptized, he continued with Philip, and wondered, beholding the miracles and signs which were done.**
 - iii. The story of the conversion of Cornelius and his friends very clearly shows the relationship of baptism to salvation. It was only after they were saved, as shown by their receiving the Holy Spirit (Acts 10:44-46), that they were baptized (vv. 47-48). ***That passage clearly shows that baptism follows salvation; it does not cause it.***
- d. Perhaps one of the most convincing arguments is found In Paul's summery of the gospel; 1 Corinthians 15:1-4, **Moreover, brethren, I declare unto you the gospel which I preached unto you, which also ye have received, and wherein ye stand;**
(2) **By which also ye are saved, if ye keep in memory what I preached unto you, unless ye have believed in vain.**
(3) **For I delivered unto you first of all that which I also received, how that Christ died for our sins according to the scriptures;**
(4) **And that he was buried, and that he rose again the third day according to the scriptures:**

- a. It is unfortunate that some church movements among them the Catholics and the Carbellites (who call themselves the “The Churches of Christ” made popular by [Thomas Campbell](#).)
- i. There error stems from a interpretation of Acts 2:38 in the King James Version saying That Peter said unto them, **Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost.**
 1. Where the Baptismal regeneration crowd translate **for the remission of sins**, to mean that people must be baptized in order to be saved, **but this is not what the Bible teaches it contradicts other clear scriptures.**
 2. The Greek word eis (which is translated "for" in the phrase "for the remission of sins") can mean "on account of or "on the basis of; as a result of, or in light of."
 3. All of which are in agreement with the multiple clear interpretations.
 - ii. In Matthew 3:11 John the Baptist baptized on the basis that people had repented. **Acts 2:38 should not be used to teach salvation by baptism.**
 1. **If baptism is essential for salvation**, it seems strange that Peter said nothing about baptism in his other sermons.

2. In fact, the people in the home of Cornelius received the Holy Spirit before they were baptized! (Acts 10:44-48)
3. Since believers are commanded to be baptized, it is important that we have a clean conscience by obeying (1 Peter 3:21), but we must not think that baptism is a part of salvation.
4. Acts of obedience are truly works commanded of people once they are saved.
5. Making any of those acts a part of ones salvation violates and negates the clear teaching of the following two passages;

Ephesians 2:8-9 (KJV)

⁸ For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: *it is* the gift of God:

⁹ Not of works, lest any man should boast.

1Pe 3:21 The like figure whereunto *even* baptism doth also now save us (**not the putting away of the filth of the flesh, but the answer of a good conscience toward God,**) by the resurrection of Jesus Christ:

6. **Both of which are clear in identifying water Baptism as a work of obedience after salvation!**

Acts 2:40 “*And with many other words did he testify and exhort, saying, Save yourselves from this untoward generation*”

indicates that the Apostles continued to share the Word and to urge the people to trust Jesus Christ.

They looked on the nation of Israel as a "crooked generation" that was under condemnation [Mat 16:4](#) **A wicked and adulterous generation seeketh after a sign; and there shall no sign be given unto it, but the sign of the prophet Jonas**

The Spirit of God dwelling in every believer is truly the most enabling event concerning the work we are to accomplish as believers.

1. It empowers our witness; it enables our message of transformation!
2. Baptismal regeneration and The MODERN tongues movement lacks the Biblical credentials to be a work of God;
3. The work of God unites, the work of man divides!
4. The work of God can always be authenticated, the work of man leaves us in a wilderness of wondering if this is from God!

For the most part the contemporary church movement has moved on and in an effort to appeal to people's interest, the church today emphasizes a great many different programs, methods, and approaches.

- Small group activities, sharing, and "culturally relevant" Worship services, emphasizing music and drama, have become increasingly popular. Illustration from our own church family; sister Styles and the Elevation church!
- Secular psychology, time management techniques, and advertising strategies have all made significant inroads into the life of the church.

- Seminars on everything from how to have a good marriage to how to handle money abound.

Not all of those things may be harmful. Some, in their proper place, may even be helpful. *But what has too often been sacrificed in the flurry of activities and programs is the priority of preaching.*

1. While some moderns may bid it good riddance, **SUCH HAS NOT BEEN THE ATTITUDE OF THE CHURCH THROUGH HISTORY, starting with the early church.**
2. The first event of church history, following the coming of the Spirit, was Peter's sermon.
 - a. It led to 3,000 conversions and launched the church.
 - b. The book of Acts is largely the record of apostolic preaching.
3. Preaching has always remained central to the church's mission.
 - a. [Acts 4:2](#) records the displeasure of the Jewish officials that the apostles "were teaching the people and proclaiming Jesus and His resurrection from the dead."
 - b. Undaunted, *"And they, continuing daily with one accord in the temple, and breaking bread from house to house, did eat their meat with gladness and singleness of heart," Act 2:46*
 - c. After the first great persecution of the church broke out, *"Therefore they that were scattered abroad went every where preaching the word." (Acts 8:4).*

- d. [Acts 8](#) also records the PREACHING of Philip and Peter and John to the Samaritans, and Philip to the Ethiopian eunuch.
- e. It also describes the further PREACHING ministry of Philip ([v. 40](#)).

After his conversion, Paul began; **"straightway he PREACHED Christ in the synagogues, that he is the Son of God. began to proclaim Jesus in the synagogues, saying, 'He is the Son of God'"** ([Acts 9:20](#)).

[Acts 11:20](#) describes the ministry of; **"...some of them were men of Cyprus and Cyrene, which, when they were come to Antioch, spake unto the Grecians, PREACHING the Lord Jesus. (21) And the hand of the Lord was with them: and a great number believed, and turned unto the Lord.**

All the way to the very last verse, Acts records how the early church "continued to preach the gospel"

The early church's emphasis on preaching reflected that of our Lord. At the very outset of His ministry, **"From that time Jesus began to preach, and to say, Repent: for the kingdom of heaven is at hand."** ([Matt. 4:17](#)).

Mark records that "after John [the Baptist] had been taken into custody, Jesus came into Galilee, preaching the gospel of God"

In [Luke 4:43](#) Jesus said, **"I must preach the kingdom of God to other cities also: for therefore am I sent."**

The Reformation, which recovered the faith, was initiated and spread largely through the revival of preaching by men like Luther, Calvin, Zwingli, and Knox.

- **At the very core of the great strength of seventeenth-century Puritanism was its emphasis on sound biblical preaching.**
- **The Great Awakening of the eighteenth century was led through preaching by men such as George Whitefield, John Wesley, and Jonathan Edwards.**
- **The nineteenth century saw great evangelists, such as D. L. Moody, and great preachers, such as Charles Spurgeon, Joseph Parker, and Alexander Maclaren.**

A godly man, gifted by the Spirit to preach the Word, has no equal in the presentation of God's truth. It is the God-ordained method for evangelism and edification.

- **The weakness of the contemporary church is largely due to the decline in powerful biblical preaching.**