

7. The Book of Acts 2:37-38

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(6-3-26)

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We have entered into Acts 2 which is divided into 3 main sections—

- 1) **The outpouring of the Holy Spirit**—verses 1-13
- 2) **Peter's first sermon as a Spirit-filled believer**—verses 14-41
- 3) **The practice of the early Church**—verses 42-47

We have already looked at the outpouring of the Holy Spirit and the disciples speaking in tongues—which led to the question asked by the multitude—“*Whatever could this mean?*” (v.12)

That led Peter to respond by saying—“*...this is what was spoken by the prophet Joel...*” (v.15) as Peter goes on to quote from the prophet Joel in verses 19-21—ending with the words, “*That whoever calls on the name of the Lord shall be saved.*”

Everything up to this point in Peter's message has been the introduction—now he gets into his sermon—a sermon that contains 5 main points:

- I. **Jesus' Life**—verse 22
- II. **Jesus' Death**—verse 23
- III. **Jesus' Resurrection**—verses 24-32
- IV. **Jesus' Ascension and Exaltation**—verses 33-35
- V. **The Application**—verse 36

Acts 2:37 (NKJV)

³⁷ Now when they heard *this*, they were cut to the heart, and said to Peter and the rest of the apostles, “Men and brethren, what shall we do?”

VI. **The Invitation**—verses 38-39

Acts 2:38–39 (NKJV)

³⁸ Then Peter said to them, “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. ³⁹ For the promise is to you and to your children, and to all who are afar off, as many as the Lord our God will call.”

A. **Repent**

The Greek word for **repentance** is *metanoia* which literally means—“*to have a change of mind*”—but a change of mind that leads to a change of direction or action.

It's important to note that the concept of **repentance** permeates the Scriptures in both the Old and New Testaments—let's just look at some of the N.T. examples:

1. *'Repent' was the first word out of the mouth of John the Baptist (Matthew 3:1-2)*

Matthew 3:1–2 (NKJV)

¹ In those days John the Baptist came preaching in the wilderness of Judea, ² and saying, "Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand!"

2. *'Repent' was the first word out of the mouth of Jesus (Matthew 4:17)*

Matthew 4:17 (NKJV)

¹⁷ From that time Jesus began to preach and to say, "Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand."

3. *'Repent' was the first word out of the Apostle's mouths (Mark 6:7,12)*

Mark 6:7, 12 (NKJV)

⁷ And He called the twelve to *Himself*, and began to send them out two *by two*, and gave them power over unclean spirits... ¹² So they went out and preached that *people* should repent.

4. *Repentance was an integral part of the gospel that the Church was commissioned to preach to the world (Luke 24:46-47)*

Luke 24:46–47 (NKJV)

⁴⁶ Then He said to them, "Thus it is written, and thus it was necessary for the Christ to suffer and to rise from the dead the third day, ⁴⁷ and that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in His name to all nations, beginning at Jerusalem.

5. *'Repent' was the first word of Peter's invitation on the Day of Pentecost (Acts 2:38)*

Acts 2:38 (NKJV)

³⁸ Then Peter said to them, "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.

6. *Repentance was an essential part of Paul's gospel presentation (Acts 26:19-20)*

Acts 26:19–20 (NKJV)

¹⁹ "Therefore, King Agrippa, I was not disobedient to the heavenly vision, ²⁰ but declared first to those in Damascus and in Jerusalem, and throughout all the region of Judea, and *then* to the Gentiles, that they should repent, turn to God, and do works befitting repentance.

Repentance is a word we don't hear too much anymore today in the church it sounds archaic and out of step with the culture—but make no mistake about it, there can be no salvation without repentance.

In fact, it's so much a part of the gospel that the word '*repent*' and '*repentance*' are often used in the N.T. as synonyms for salvation—

Luke 5:31–32 (NKJV)

³¹ Jesus answered and said to them, “Those who are well have no need of a physician, but those who are sick. ³² I have not come to call *the* righteous, but sinners, to repentance [‘salvation’].”

Acts 11:18 (NKJV)

¹⁸ When they heard these things they became silent; and they glorified God, saying, “Then God has also granted to the Gentiles repentance to life.”

2 Peter 3:9 (NKJV)

⁹ The Lord is not slack concerning *His* promise, as some count slackness, but is longsuffering toward us, not willing that any should perish but that all should come to repentance.

But where is that kind of preaching today?—it has been replaced by a modern, politically correct gospel. You see, it’s not fashionable to preach a gospel that demands that people give up their sins and worldly pursuits to deny themselves, take up their cross and follow after Jesus with all their hearts and lives (commitment).

- The gospel that we hear being preached today is—“*Come to Jesus and you’ll be rich. Come to Jesus and He’ll take away all the pain of life and make you happy.*”
- The gospel being preached today is, for the most part, a cross-less gospel where there’s no mention of repentance (the turning away from sin)—instead potential converts are being told: “*Just believe the facts about Jesus, pray the sinner’s prayer and you’re ‘go to go!’*”

Many pastors and preachers today are basically telling people that to be saved and go to heaven all they have to do is ‘add’ Jesus to their lives without any talk of repentance.

The implication being—

“You don’t have to worry about giving up anything (alcohol, drugs, sex outside of marriage...etc.) just add Jesus to your life without subtracting anything!”

But that is not the gospel that Jesus and the Apostles preached because that is not the true gospel!

And no, we don’t want to tell people that to be saved they must *first* give up the drinking and drug taking, the sex outside of marriage and all their other sins—that would be to preach a gospel of works when we know a person is saved by grace through faith (Ephesians 2:8-9)

It’s just that we need to communicate to them that they must be willing to turn from the sinful way they’re living to follow Jesus—if they’re willing God will give them the power to change as they walk with Jesus.

No one can be saved who isn’t willing and wanting to have the course of their life changed from rebellion against God to obedience toward God.

Jesus said (twice)—“*I tell you...unless you repent you will all likewise perish.*” (Luke 13:3, 5)

➤ “*How do I know if I’ve truly repented?*”

There will be certain ‘fruits’ in your life that will bear witness to the genuineness of your repentance.

Matthew 3:1-2, 7-8 (NKJV)

¹ In those days John the Baptist came preaching in the wilderness of Judea, ² and saying, "Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand!"... ⁷ But when he saw many of the Pharisees and Sadducees coming to his baptism, he said to them, "Brood of vipers! Who warned you to flee from the wrath to come? ⁸ Therefore bear fruits worthy of repentance... [i.e., 'brokenness, humility']

So true biblical repentance always involves change—not that you have to change *before* you can get saved, it simply means that your heart truly wants to see the direction of your life change— which is why you're receiving Jesus as your Lord and Savior!

I realize that, while it's true that sometimes change takes time (to quit smoking, overeating, looking at porn etc.)—true repentance desires it with all the heart and keeps seeking God for grace and strength to change.

My point is that it isn't just lip service!

The main misconception that many harbor under concerning repentance is that they equate it *only* with remorse and regret and not ultimately with change. Remorse and regret are rooted in *feelings* whereas true repentance is rooted in *action* (turning around and making a change).

"I want to change, I'm battling with "xyz" sin, I'm asking God to give me victory—but I still don't have victory—does that mean I'm really not repenting?"

The key word is '*battling!*' If you weren't saved, you wouldn't be battling the sin in your life.

Spurgeon—"*Dead men don't struggle.*"

It proves you have a new nature that is battling your old nature and that you have repented and are now in the *process* of repentance (change)...

Paul the Apostle addressed this very issue in 2 Corinthians 7 calling remorse or regret "*worldly sorrow*" if no change takes place—

2 Corinthians 7:9-10 (NKJV)

⁹ Now I rejoice, not that you were made sorry, but that your sorrow led to repentance [change]. For you were made sorry in a godly manner...¹⁰ For godly sorrow produces repentance *leading* to salvation, not to be regretted; but the sorrow of the world produces death.

Paul is saying that feelings of remorse or regret over your sins make you feel bad for what you have done—but in and of themselves don't lead a person to make any changes or provide restitution.

That's the difference between '*godly sorrow*' and '*worldly sorrow*'—godly sorrow is God-focused and worldly sorrow is self-focused.

Look at the results that godly sorrow produced in the Corinthians—

2 Corinthians 7:11 (NKJV)

¹¹ For observe this very thing, that you sorrowed in a godly manner: What diligence it produced in you, *what* clearing of yourselves, *what* indignation, *what* fear, *what* vehement desire, *what* zeal, *what* vindication! In all *things* you proved yourselves to be clear in this matter.

One pastor put it this way—

“Simply feeling guilty over what I have done is not repentance. In essence I haven’t even touched upon the sin itself, and Satan has effectively counterfeited the path that leads to repentance because it is so important to our walk with God. And it is possible for a Christian to remain in an attitude of regret and remorse for years and get nowhere in victory over sin—because God doesn’t work through regret and remorse—He works through repentance.”

Acts 2:40 (NKJV)

⁴⁰ **And with many other words he testified and exhorted them, saying, “Be saved from this perverse generation.”**

Dr. Luke (who wrote the Book of Acts) is telling us that Peter’s presentation of the gospel in verse 38 is only a synopsis—not the complete presentation of what he gave to the crowd that day.

The other important truths of the gospel are:

B. Jesus Christ is Almighty God—Lord of all

One of the essential doctrines that a person must believe if they’re going to be forgiven of their sins and allowed entrance into heaven is that Jesus is—Almighty God in human form—the Great I AM!

Exodus 3:13-14 (NLT2)

¹³ But Moses protested, “If I go to the people of Israel and tell them, ‘The God of your ancestors has sent me to you,’ they will ask me, ‘What is his name?’ Then what should I tell them?” ¹⁴ God replied to Moses, “I AM WHO I AM. Say this to the people of Israel: I AM has sent me to you.”

John 1:1–3, 14 (NKJV)

¹ In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. ² He was in the beginning with God. ³ All things were made through Him, and without Him nothing was made that was made...¹⁴ And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we beheld His glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth.

John 8:24 (NKJV)

²⁴ Therefore I said to you that you will die in your sins; for if you do not believe that I am *He*, you will die in your sins."

You’ll notice that the word “**He**” in verse 24 is in italics, which means it’s not there in the Greek but was added by the translators in an effort to help clarify what Jesus was saying. Only here it doesn’t help to *clarify*, it only serves to cloud and confuse what Jesus is saying about Himself!

What Jesus really said was, “**Therefore I said to you that you will die in your sins [go to hell]...if you do not believe that I am [‘Jehovah God’]—you will die in your sins.**”

This goes ‘*hand in hand*’ with another biblical proclamation concerning Jesus Christ—that He is not only Almighty God in human form, the Great I AM—but that He is also the Lord of all!

Acts 10:36 (NKJV)

³⁶ "The word which *God* sent to the children of Israel, preaching peace through Jesus Christ--**He is Lord of all--**

Romans 10:9 (AMP)

⁹ Because if you acknowledge *and* confess with your lips that **Jesus is Lord** and in your heart believe (adhere to, trust in, and rely on the truth) that God raised Him from the dead, you will be saved.

Salvation is inextricably linked to the doctrine that Jesus Christ is God Almighty *and* Lord of all!

The reason these go ‘*hand in hand*’ is because—as God He *created* all things, and therefore He has the right to *control* all things as sovereign Lord (Master) of His creation!

Colossians 1:16 (NKJV)

¹⁶ For by Him all things were created that are in heaven and that are on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or principalities or powers. All things were created through Him and for Him.

If you were created by Him—you were created for Him in the sense that salvation means surrender to Him as your Lord and Master. You can’t separate His divinity from His sovereignty because they are inextricably linked together to Who He is as God!

Jesus is God (that’s who He is)—but salvation only comes to those who believe He is God and then receive Him as the God and Master (Lord) of their lives—

John 1:12 (NKJV)

¹² But as many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become children of God, to those who believe in His name.

Believing in Jesus is essential if a person is going to be saved—but receiving Him as your Lord is where you make the commitment to Him that actually saves you! Folks, this is where faith as mere head-knowledge—becomes saving faith (a heart commitment)!

It’s important for the people we are witnessing to that they understand that to be saved they have to believe in Jesus Christ as Almighty God—that’s vital. But what we must also make sure they understand is that—not all faith is saving faith!

I was raised in the Roman Catholic Church, and I believed everything back then that I believe about Jesus now—and yet, back then I wasn’t saved. Why wasn’t I saved back then, if simply believing the facts about Jesus Christ was all that was necessary to be saved and get into heaven as some teach?

In his epistle, James tells us that even the devil and his demons believe that Jesus Christ is God Almighty, the Great I AM in human form—but that’s not going to keep them from hell.

Saving faith is not just believing the facts about Jesus Christ (Who He is and what He did)—to be saved a person must believe to the point of commitment—which is what it means to make Jesus your Lord!

If you would like to know more about what it means to be a Jesus-follower— please, reach out to us. It would be our greatest privilege to lead you into a saving relationship with Jesus Christ.

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