

What Shall We Do

September 24, 2017

Acts 2:36-40

36 Therefore let the entire house of Israel know with certainty that God has made him both Lord and Messiah, this Jesus whom you crucified." 37 Now when they heard this, they were cut to the heart and said to Peter and to the other apostles, "Brothers, what should we do?" 38 Peter said to them, "Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ so that your sins may be forgiven; and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. 39 For the promise is for you, for your children, and for all who are far away, everyone whom the Lord our God calls to him." 40 And he testified with many other arguments and exhorted them, saying, "Save yourselves from this corrupt generation."

I feel good! Do you feel good? I hope you feel as good as I do. I always feel good in church during worship because I feel the presence of the Holy Spirit. It brings me peace, happiness, and satisfaction. I feel good because I am blessed! You and I have received this gift - the Holy Spirit - because the divine promise is not exclusive to Peter's audience in Acts. It is extended to the children, all of God's children, even those far away. It is extended to everyone that God calls. This means that the blessing is for us. We feel good because we are blessed by God.

Acts chapter 2 is Pentecost. The disciples speak in various languages that the audience can understand. Peter gives a very bold testimony, he tells the audience the reality of what they did to Jesus. You crucified him. You killed him outside of the law. God has made this Jesus, whom you crucified, both Lord and Messiah. Peter is in your face, bold, you did this. You killed God's chosen one!

It takes a specific characteristic of Peter's being, who he is, to be able to do this. The characteristics of Peter's personality have changed. As a disciple he said he would lay down life for Jesus but what he did is he denied having any association with Jesus. The difference is his frame of being at the time of the event. When he was with Jesus his focus was on the divine spiritual being. When Jesus was brutalized Peter's focus was on the self, as a human being, capable of experiencing the same pain and agony. Now there is a new characteristic of Peter where he can give a bold testimony. The difference is that Peter's perspective has changed due to the indwelling of the Holy Spirit. Peter's focus is now entirely different because his focus is now within the realm of his spiritual being.

The change in Peter is based on three different levels of his spiritual being. Each is based on the current events, knowledge, and individual spiritual being. When Peter made his proclamation that he would lay down his life for Jesus he was a developing disciple that had not experienced the negative consequences of discipleship. When Peter was scared for his own well being he was shocked by the things that were happening to Jesus. Now in Acts chapter two Peter is bold due to the indwelling of the Holy Spirit.

The contemporary lesson is how the Scripture speaks to us today. We are who we are and we respond according to the events, our knowledge, and our spiritual being. We respond to situations in life according to the events themselves, our knowledge and wisdom, and our spiritual well being. You are a changed person because you have received the Holy Spirit. You have your own personal experiences. At some point in your life you received a revelation that Jesus is the Son of God and pledged to change your life through a public confession of faith and got baptized.

I mentioned last week it is a challenge to live a godly life as opposed to a human life. I said it is not easy because the world is filled with temptation. We desire the things we like, want, and satisfy us. So, how do we get there? How do we replace human desire with the spiritual being? Well, it takes a revelation, realizing who Jesus is and who you are in your relationship with him. This revelation, knowledge, enlightenment, is a spiritual awakening. The spiritual awakening requires the individual to realize who you are. You have to reflect upon the self, do the inner soul searching, with an unbiased analysis. This is very difficult because we see the world through tainted lenses which are skewed towards our own favoritism. In the Bible the Pharisees (God's chosen people) did not see the evil they were doing. The religious leaders (God's chosen people) did not see the evil they were doing. The audience at Pentecost is probably part of the mob that shouted out exaltations to Jesus on Sunday when he entered Jerusalem and they are probably part of the mob that shouted "crucify him" on Friday morning. Only now, due to Peter's revelation and the indwelling of the Holy Spirit, do they realize the true self. God's chosen people went against God and killed the Messiah. This is an "ah-hah" moment in life. There is a sudden remorseful change when you realize you did wrong. Before you can get right with God you have to admit, honestly, sincerely, completely, you were wrong.

So, what do we do? The answer is to repent and be baptized. Repentance is the key. Repentance is sincere regret, having remorse. Repentance is more than simply acknowledging that you were wrong; repentance is a changed mind and heart. As such, you change your focus from the human self to a divine focus. If you did not change, you did not repent. If you live the same life, you did not repent. Repentance is a changed life that turns from human desire to God. Baptism is the outward sign of your repentance.

God does not take things away from you. Our God is not one that does not want you to have the good stuff that you want and enjoy. Our God fills you up with a spiritual well being that is so good the things of the earth don't compare. There is more joy in having a oneness with the divine, being one in the spirit, in tune with God, being a Jesus like being. There is more joy in that than anything on earth can provide. What shall we do? Well, you have already done it - repent and be baptized. But that is just the beginning. Give your life to the God that gives life.