

THE GOOD NEWS, CHRIST!
CH2:37-41

ILLUSTRATION

What is the best news you've ever heard? "Will you marry me? Yes." "I'm pregnant!" "It's a girl!" "It's a boy!" "You've got the job!" "The house is yours!" In life there can be many times where we can receive good news! But have you ever thought about, what is the best, good news?

Peter has been preaching the "Good News" from verse 14 and today we will see what kind of response it leads to.

Kerusso – Greek "To Preach, to herald, to proclaim". This is Peter's "kerygma" proclamation, as he wants his fellow brothers, the Israelites, who are meant to be the people of God, know that God worked in Jesus Christ – v22 x2, 23 x 2, 24, 30, 32, 33 + 36 (9 times in 15 verses)

In Peter's sermons between Ch2-4 (2:14-41; 3:6-26; 4:8-22), 6 themes are identified in his "kerusso", his preaching:

1. The age of fulfilment has dawned!
2. This has taken place through the birth, life, death and resurrection of Jesus Christ, of which a brief account is given, with proof through Scripture!
3. Jesus is exalted to the right hand of God, as Messiah, Head of the New Israel!
4. The pouring out of God the Holy Spirit is the chief sign of the beginning of the Kingdom, and the presence, power, and glory of Jesus!
5. The Messianic age will shortly reach it's conclusion, with the 2nd coming of Jesus!
6. A plea and appeal for repentance to be saved is always made!

The cause has been revealed, and it is Jesus v36!

THE CAUSE ALWAYS INVOKES A RESPONSE! V37

This is the third part of the Pentecost event: 1-13 the event: 14-36 Peter's explanation and now the crowd's response to the event v38-41. The event produces a reaction V37: The crowd is deeply impressed, indeed they're "cut to the heart". The verb "***katanyssomai***", the only reference in the New Testament, it refers to a sharp pain or a stab, often associated with emotion.

The remark about the "***heart***" shows sincerity and depth of the crowd's reaction and convinced the crowd of the truth of the Gospel, so much so, that they ask Peter and the other apostles (for all 12 were involved in the witness that day V38) what should they do.

THE CAUSE CAN BRING PEOPLE TO REPENTANCE OR REFUSAL! V38-39

Here is Peter's response to the crowd's question. V36 is the theological conclusion of the speech and v38 is the application. There are 3 basic parts i] repent ii] be baptized iii] receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. Thus here Peter presents forgiveness and the Spirit as the principal gifts of God that Jesus provides. ***He is the way into a life with God.***

1 Repent: this is the proper response. Repentance indicates a turning in direction. [See also Barclay who makes the point that originally the word meant 'afterthought', then came to mean 'a change of mind, which if honest demands a change of action']. ***The context here means to make a conscious turn towards God and God's action through Jesus***

[see ACTS 26:20]. The term is one of Luke's favourites to describe how one should respond to the offer of forgiveness. The Greek word can mean 'change one's mind' but the idea in Hebrew, however, is 'turn' indicating a change of direction. **Peter was telling the crowd to change direction from the attitudes that led them to crucify Jesus and look to God through Jesus for forgiveness. Thus repentance stresses the starting point of understanding the need for forgiveness.**

2 Each was 'to be baptized ... in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of sins'. Readers need care here for the text COULD suggest that people MUST be baptized in order to be saved. This is not what the Bible teaches and 2:38 cannot be used to teach salvation by baptism. The key word is 'for' [eis], but this may also be translated as "with a view to"; "on account of"; "on the basis of". [NB in MATT 3.11 John the Baptist baptized on the basis that people had repented. Also see ACTS 10:43 where 'forgiveness of sins' was given to 'everyone who believes in him'] **Though each is called on to participate in the rite of baptism what Peter is saying shows the key is the response to God, not the rite per se.**

In Jewish thought, the context of clean/unclean was common, and the washing imagery points to a cleansing that makes one clean so that God can be present. In the present context, the baptismal washing that comes with repentance signifies an inner cleaning that allows the person to be indwelt by the Holy Spirit. Also, water baptism was offensive to Jews, being something that Gentile converts to Judaism underwent. **Therefore, being baptized was to admit that no one could be saved by their Jewishness alone.**

Baptized 'in the name of Jesus Christ' reflects the language of 2:21, so Peter's remarks draw on what he has already proclaimed. Thus baptism is a representation of the cleansing that belongs to salvation, signifies the forgiveness of sins that Jesus brings and the new, clean life he provides. Peter calls each to be baptized in order to express a personal, visible turning to God.

3 The gift of the Spirit was now available to anyone who turns to embrace the call of God made through Jesus. All 4 references to the gift in Acts are to the giving of the Holy Spirit to those who respond to the preaching of the Church [see 2:38; 8:19-20; 10:45 and 11:17].

In the Spirit, is the enablement for the new life and for sharing the message. NB Baptism is not necessary to receive the gift of the Spirit [see 10:44] and this indicates how Spirit baptism signifies primarily the Spirit's washing and consequent presence, rather than representing an emphasis on 'tongues' speaking as a required evidence of salvation or a "second" gift of salvation. That is, one is baptized in the Spirit so that new life can come and flow out. In this verse the key response is repentance, which leads to

A) the public participation in baptism and the forgiveness that the rite signifies

B) also leads to receiving the Spirit.

THE CAUSE, WHEN ACCEPTED BRINGS GROWTH! V39-41

V39 Peter now notes the scope of the promise. In the original Greek the term 'for you' is the first term in the sentence, placed there for emphasis for the Jewish audience. The promise is also for children and those 'far off'. The language 'far off' echoes Isaiah Ch57:19 and possibly suggests that Peter was thinking of/alluding to the Jewish Diaspora.

The 'far off' language allows/suggests room for the expansion of the promise's scope as God's intentions emerge.

V40 Note that Peter has said far more than is recorded. The reference to 'corrupt generation' alludes to a generation that is ethically crooked, spiritually off the path of God [is this GB today?] and thus subject to God's judgment. There is a link here to 2:19-21 and the day of the Lord and the judgment that comes at the end.

V41 The result is significant. About 3,000 baptized and their souls added to the saved.

APPLICATION

The biggest need of humankind, is forgiveness, which can only be met by Jesus Christ. People have to make a decision, to accept the gift of forgiveness and the gift of God The Holy Spirit, or to reject Jesus' sacrificial death on the cross.

There is much here but probably the main issue is addressed to the unsaved who hear the Gospel message, because they should ask themselves 'what should we do'? The answer is that it's not enough to say sorry. As Peter makes clear, we MUST repent, ask God to forgive us and live a life worthy of the Gospel!

Jesus' offer, of forgiveness of sins, is the best, GOOD NEWS!