

The Lordship of Christ

Acts 2:36-40 HCSB "Therefore let all the house of Israel know with certainty that God has made this Jesus, whom you crucified, both Lord and Messiah!" (37) When they heard this, they were pierced to the heart and said to Peter and the rest of the apostles: "Brothers, what must we do?" (38) "Repent," Peter said to them, "and be baptized, each of you, in the name of Jesus the Messiah for the forgiveness of your sins, and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. (39) For the promise is for you and for your children, and for all who are far off, as many as the Lord our God will call." (40) And with many other words he testified and strongly urged them, saying, "Be saved from this corrupt generation!"

Introduction

Before we begin unpacking this short but very powerful passage out of Peter's sermon I would like to point out a few amazing generalizations about it.

- A. Peter's courage.** Consider the incredible boldness he displayed in buttonholing a street crowd; laying upon them the guilt of an atrocity against God; when a short while before he had denied the Messiah before a couple of people – one of them a girl!
- B. Peter's tenderness.** He was able to balance the awful charge against them with tenderness. Like Joseph centuries prior, he let them know "you planned evil but God planned it for good to bring about the present result – the survival of many people."¹ Like Joseph, Jesus' people wanted to kill Him. As in Joseph's case, Hashem intervened and elevated the one who was oppressed. Also, as a result in both cases, many were to be saved. This is the kind of message Peter brought – bad news, good news.
- C. Peter's creativity.** Through the Holy Spirit, Peter was inspired to present that awful death in a unique way – by a Greek word in verse 24, *odin*, that signified labor pangs. In a remarkable mixed metaphor, death's agony became its birth pangs: death was in labor and unable to hold back the "delivery" of Jesus. By that word he was intimating to the crowd that the Messiah's death throes were the labor pains of a new life – indeed a whole new KIND of life – freely available for all.

I. Peter's summary

At the conclusion of Peter's amazing, Holy Spirit inspired sermon he said,

- **Acts 2:36 HCSB** "Therefore let all the house of Israel know with certainty that God has made this Jesus, whom you crucified, both Lord and Messiah!"

This should be either the explicit or the implicit point of every sermon! It should be the point of our conversations. It should be the point of our lives. Whether acknowledged or not it is the point of our existence...

- **Colossians 1:16-17 HCSB** because by Him everything was created, in heaven and on earth, the visible and the invisible, whether thrones or dominions or rulers or authorities--all things have been created through Him and for Him. (17) He is before all things, and by Him all things hold together.

II. The crowd's concerned question

Notice that the men and women who were present had listened to the sermon. They had kept awake as the Apostle preached, attended to his words, taken the message in, reflected on the significance of what had been said and applied it to their own circumstances and condition. Would that modern congregations would do the same!

¹ Genesis 50:20

Notice too that there was a heartfelt conviction of guilt. This is a critical point, a necessary prerequisite for salvation. We must come to the inescapable conclusion that we are wicked sinners in desperate need of a Savior. We are stubborn, recalcitrant rebels who must throw themselves prostrate before the feet of their rightful King and beg for mercy.

They recognized that though many of them had not necessarily been physically present on Mount Golgotha, their sinful behavior had just as surely nailed the Messiah to the cross as if they were the very Roman soldiers who had lifted his cross into position. They owned their sin and publicly confessed their belief that the Jesus of Nazareth was Lord of all. Again, would that modern congregations would do the same!

They asked the very practical question, "What shall we do?" Pierced through with the arrows of conviction, rent with spiritual anguish over their sense of guilt, accepting of their status as guilty sinners and rightly alarmed for their safety in regards to a righteous and holy God, they could not remain indifferent. They sought a means of escape.

III. The comforting reply

a. The challenge

Peter brought two issues to the table; two things which all men must face without exception: First the issue of repentance. Repentance means to alter one's way of thinking in such a way that a change of behavior is assured. If we don't actually experience a change of mind, heart and behavior, salvation is impossible. It never occurred. You may have had "faith" but in the words of James, it was dead.² The new man was stillborn.

Second, Peter affirmed the need for baptism. "Be baptized in the name of Jesus the Messiah" he commanded. The repentance, faith, and obedience, all inward conditions, must be outwardly expressed by submission to baptism. This public ritual is intended to be a material and visible representation of the person's decision to put away the filth of the flesh and to lay aside the works of the flesh in repentance.

- **1 Peter 3:21 HCSB** Baptism, which corresponds to this, now saves you (not the removal of the filth of the flesh, but the pledge of a good conscience toward God) through the resurrection of Jesus Christ.

It represents the cleansing from guilt and sin by being washed in the blood of the Perfect Sacrificial Lamb.

- **Revelation 7:14 HCSB** I said to him, "Sir, you know." Then he told me: These are the ones coming out of the great tribulation. They washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb.

It represents the spirit of submission to Christ which acknowledges Him as Lord.

- **Galatians 3:27 HCSB** For as many of you as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ.

b. The promise

"You will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit." The fact that they had positively responded to the Apostle's convicting message indicates that they had already been visited by the gracious presence of the Holy Spirit who Jesus said would convict of sin.³ What Peter was saying was that because they had positively received, and were willing to submit to what they had already been shown, more would be given to them.

They would experience more of the Holy Spirit as they were obedient to the Holy Spirit. Upon their saving faith they would become the Temple of the Holy Spirit, the Ruach' ha

² James 2:17

³ John 16:8

Kodesh would fill their spirits, instantly transforming their spirits into a new man and making progressive change in their souls (their minds, wills and emotions) possible.

IV. Conviction of Sin

- A. Who needs it?** Everyone, seeing as all have sinned.
- B. Where is it?** It occurs in one's spirit, in one's metaphorical heart, the core of one's being.
- C. What produces it?** The INSTRUMENT is the Word of God, but the AGENT is the Holy Spirit who applies God's Word to our consciences.
- D. Where should it lead?** It should lead to a sense of danger and a feeling of alarm over one's sins, which should prompt the cry "What can I do about this?"
- E. How is it removed?**
 - 1. Recognize your guilt
 - 2. Realize the danger you're in
 - 3. Be aware of your helplessness
 - 4. Desire Hashem's help
 - 5. Develop an eager hope
 - 6. Discipline yourself to humble compliance
 - 7. Discover a swelling faith

Conclusion

This generation, more than any, is characterized by angst, a deep feeling of foreboding marked by a lack of peace. Some of you may be struggling with a sense of guilt over your sins; over the lifestyles you have chosen. I want to tell you that the way out is not through purchasing more things. The path does not lie in never attending church; in denying the truth your heart already knows.

The only escape from conviction of sin is through submission. You need to submit to your rightful King. You need to slip out of the rebel camp and come with your hands held high above your heads to the citadel of the King. Submit to Him in absolute, unconditional surrender. Throw yourself on His mercy. Be willing to take whatever terms He gives. When you do you will know true peace for the first time in your life.

Study Questions:

- 1. In what ways is Jesus Lord?
- 2. What right does Jesus have to be Lord over our lives?
- 3. What is involved in surrendering to His lordship?
- 4. What are the alternatives to making Jesus the Lord of our lives?
- 5. Do you feel most Christians submit to the Messiah's lordship? Why or why not?
- 6. What can we do to show our response to Jesus' lordship?
- 7. What does it mean to humble ourselves under God's mighty hand (1 Peter 5:6)?
- 8. What is the connection between being humble and casting all our cares on God?
- 9. When do you keep cares and worries to yourself?