



## Sermon Text: Acts 2:37-41

Sermon Date: September 3, 2017

This Sunday we examined the necessity of responding to the gospel. When we emphasize God's sovereignty in salvation, we must not deemphasize the fact that the gospel demands a response. In Acts 2:37-41, we see Peter telling the crowd how they are to respond to the truth that Jesus is Lord and Christ.

### A RESPONSE IS REQUIRED

The first point Pastor Justin emphasized was that the gospel does not allow you to remain neutral: A response is required. A person can **reject** the gospel outright, believing that it is wrong or cruel or foolishness. A person can also **dismiss** the gospel. While they may agree with it in principle, they dismiss its importance for their lives right now. They will deal with it later at a more convenient time. Both of these responses have the same outcome—a person does not receive the gift of salvation. The third response is to **embrace** the gospel, which is what many in the crowd did on Pentecost morning.

### A BIBLICAL RESPONSE

Pastor Justin underlined three components of a biblical response to the gospel message that we can see in our text.

1. **Acceptance of the truth.** The crowd accepted Peter's message as true. They agreed that Jesus is Lord and Christ and that they handed him over to be killed. Their acceptance of the truth is what motivated their question, "Brothers, what must we do?" We too must accept what the gospel declares is true if we are to be saved.
2. **Allegiance of the heart.** Peter also called the crowd to repent. Repentance is a matter of allegiance. It is turning your loyalty from yourself and your sin and placing your allegiance in Christ. While repentance involves sorrow and contrition, it goes beyond that to turning your back on the world and turning to Christ.
3. **Identity of our lives.** Peter also called the crowd to repent and be baptized in the name of Christ. They were to identify publically with him, making their allegiance known. Baptism is a public declaration of one's faith in Christ and commitment to him. Not only did these first Christians identify with Christ, they also identified with Christ's followers—the Church (42-47).

### A GLORIOUS PROMISE

Everyone who responds to the gospel—accepting its truth, pledging allegiance to Christ, and publically identifying as his follower—are promised the forgiveness of their sins and the gift of the Holy Spirit. The promise of salvation is for all people, everyone whom the Lord calls to himself.

### THE HOLY SPIRIT ACCOMPLISHES EVANGELISM

Lastly, Pastor Justin ended by reminding us that the Holy Spirit accomplishes evangelism. Many times we think evangelism rests upon us—our wisdom, wit, and willpower. We have to know all the answers and convince people to be saved. But, we cannot convince anyone to be saved. After all, it is impossible to convince a spiritual corpse (see Ephesians 2:1). Only the Holy Spirit can bring life to spiritually dead people and awaken repentance and faith. This is why Jesus commanded the disciples to wait until the Spirit came. Like Peter we are called to bear witness to Christ, simply telling others who Jesus is, what he has done, and what that means for them. The Holy Spirit works His power through our simple, ordinary words.

### DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. What stood out to you from the sermon and the biblical text from this Sunday?
2. What are some incomplete (or incorrect) ways that we call on Christian's to respond to the gospel?
3. Why is it important to stress allegiance and identity (repentance and obedience)?
4. In what ways do you feel like success in evangelism rests upon you? Explain. Why is it important to really believe that the Holy Spirit accomplishes evangelism?