

# Real Conversion

## Grace Bible Chapel

Outline: The Acts of the Apostles – Acts 2:37-42

February 26th, 2017

**Context:** The message of Peter, prompted by the supernatural events of Pentecost, continues. He has laid out a clear explanation using the Old Testament Scriptures bringing all together in the words “know for certain that God has made Him both Lord and Christ – this Jesus whom you crucified.” Verse 37 informs us these were brought under great conviction by the Holy Spirit, and said “what shall we do?”

Peter uses (Vs. 38-40) the God given opportunity to point them to salvation. He includes the necessary actions present in true conversion. This presentation of the Gospel, as the first message following the work of the cross, serves as an instructive template for understanding God’s evangelism’s message. It further serves to demonstrate the results of true conversion (Vs. 41-42). A careful study is rich for personal instruction for each Christian’s approach to evangelizing the lost, and personal examination in light of the response of these in true conversion.

### **Broad outline of Acts (underlined is the immediate context).**

- VI. The Power Needed (Acts 2:1-6:7)
  - D. Salvation Message (Acts 2:22-42)
    - 1. Sovereign view (Acts 2:22-23)
    - 2. Scripturally based\_ (Acts 2:24-36)
    - 3. Saving response (Acts 2:37-42)

#### Key Words / Phrases

- baptized (2)
- repent
- saved from
- teaching
- fellowship
- prayer

### **Introduction:**

- I have noticed a new advertising slogan on TV/radio –used for marketing as something that “has changed my life” – pillows, bathtubs, foot message.
  - At same time – the salvation terminology in the church sphere has changed from conversion to things like: accepting Jesus, receiving Jesus, or any number of generic terms for a Christian - all without any life changing implication.
  - The themes / ideas describing a Christian have become so skewed & watered-down, there is no substantive understanding in many places of what being a Christian according to the Bible really means.
  - What is it really to become a Christian? – is it a profession, an assent to an idea, some particular ritual, a label that best ID’s my hope so, or is it a radical transformation of life - a conversion – in Scripture defined “born again.”
  - Our text today is perhaps one of the most important to answer the question – what is it to have “real conversion” – true salvation! Why this passage?
    - This is the first inspired evangelistic sermon recorded following the cross.
    - These individuals addressed are the very ones who crucified Christ – so their conversion is dramatically seen & stated as real.
    - This is Peter speaking under the control of the Holy Spirit – this is God’s revelation to us of what evangelism & true conversion looks like.
- Very Quick Contextual review –
  - This event is at Pentecost – a gathering of Jews at the Temple to celebrate Israel’s harvest 50 days after first fruits to thank God for His provision.
  - At this gathering God supernaturally brought the HS, as He promised, & with it rushing wind, fire, & strange vision (Vs. 2:2) followed by Christ’s band of followers supernaturally giving the gospel in their disbursed resident language.
  - It was so startling these gathered said together (Vs. 2:12) “**what does this mean**” which was the opening for Peter’s message.
    - A message presented with boldness, Scripture, point-by-point explanation – so these who had rejected Messiah were backed into a corner.

- This message serves as template for evangelism, preaching – knowing, like these, all people naturally reject Christ, but Peter, preaching the Word, has shown them their sinful hopeless condition.
- They didn't need a pep talk, or false assurance of God's love, or another law to be more religious – what is important this morning is to view this event, & what is shown by God as that necessary for true conversion.

### 3. **Saving response** (Vs. 37- 42)

#### a. **Spontaneous question** (Vs. 37)

- **Vs. 37** – “**heard this**” – heard what? The full explanation of Peter using the Scripture – preach the Word, “**faith comes by hearing**” – God uses, & only uses, the Word to bring His salvation. The Word rightly divided, or correctly applied.
  - “**Pierced to the heart**” – (stabbed) another way of saying convicted, to be convicted means to get in line with what God says about our sin. Conviction comes from the HS when the Word of God (truth) is presented (John 16:8).
  - Only true conviction can prepare the heart to submit to God's will!
  - Conviction comes when Christ is seen as Lord, & man as a helpless sinner.
  - These men cried out with the consciousness of their own sin & situation.

**Point:** If there is no conviction – true conviction, there can be no conversion – if all we have is religion, acceptance –like making a deal – buying a car, you decide it is in your best interest to purchase a certain car, shake hands, & sign – that is not conviction – that is not a transforming change.

- Conviction is seen by desperation / deep inside concern “**what shall we do?**”
- A coming to grips with the most important matter of any person after seeing their sin – what must I do to be saved?

**Point:** without a sense of my insolvable sin problem & desperation whereby I reach the end of my excuses & self effort, there can be no true conversion.

#### b. **Solution summarized** (Vs. 38) – Peter begins the only solution – an overview:

- **Vs. 38** – “**repent**” – metaneo – change one's mind & purpose differently - (Acts 17:30; 26:20), also same word used in Rev. of those on the earth during the tribulation (wrath) who do not repent – but blasphemed God.
  - “**Repent**” is seeing self the way God sees, changing direction, agreeing with God.
  - What is amazing? God has mercy on those truly repentant – but note – true repentance is essential – it is not mechanical & cannot be manufactured.
  - Peter says thru repentance & ID with Christ faith is demonstrated.
  - “**Baptized**” – is the physical act Christ commanded in accord with repentance, forgiveness, & a committed identification as a follower by faith, it is in “**the name of Jesus Christ**” – He is embraced as Savior & only hope.
    - Baptism doesn't save, it follows obediently by faith from salvation.
    - It is a symbol to the public of what has happened on the inside.
    - Peter did not make salvation easy for these convicted.
    - They must show the genuineness of their repentance by submitting to public baptism – no secret disciples, it meant a break with Judaism – it meant to be ID'd with the One, hated, rejected, & crucified.

**Point:** Summarized here is authentic transformation. These, who previously rejected Jesus, must change their mind, seek forgiveness, be publicly ID'd with Christ, & expect a change within – by the indwelling of the Spirit.

#### c. **Sovereign essential** (Vs. 39)

- **Vs. 39** – “**the promise**” – what is the promise? As the Spirit was promised in the last days (2:17-21) it can be, or will be for them also – see Acts 2:21 – “**calls on the name of the Lord**”

– the promise of God’s mercies to those who come to Him on His terms – notice it is open to all, but with this sovereign stipulation.

- **“as many...will call to Himself.”** – if anyone is called of God, will react as Peter has described, it is essential to understand, God is behind salvation – **“has called to Himself.”** Salvation is of the Lord, from initiation to eternity future!
- A biblical view of salvation includes human responsibility, but behind it all is the necessity of divine sovereignty – ie: the life of God had entered these.

**Point:** Eph. 2:1-2, As salvation is a supernatural work of God, it is always a matter of raising the dead in sin (all have a ruined nature) made alive to a new nature – made alive – something only God can do – all praise is His!

d. **Supernatural change** (Vs. 40)

- **Vs. 40** – **“many other words”** – Luke only records these essentials – but, he summarizes these additional words: **“be saved from this perverse generation.”**
  - Perverse – skolios – bent or crooked – describing all Christ-less generations.
  - Notice – not hell, but **“from this perverse generation”** – saved from the mindset, thinking, & ways of the unsaved world – ie: everyone’s natural way.
  - **“Be saved from”** – addresses the necessary change true conversion makes.

**Point:** Salvation is not just a label, or a tag-on to our lives in this perverse world – we are saved by God to think, act, live differently than the world – to live as lights reflecting Jesus Christ to those lost in the world’s system of thinking & living.

e. **Seen results** (Vs. 41-42)

- **Vs. 41** – **“so then”** – as a result of the preaching – **“those who had received his word”** – the idea is – those to whom the word made a difference – what did they do? They were first willingly baptized to be committed & ID’d with Christ.
  - By- the-way there is no hint here of hesitation – these had gone thru a transformation, a true conversion.
  - Very, very significant – not only was baptism a type of pledge in that day, & therefore so meaningful to these, but to be baptized publicly in that time could mean your life – or at the least persecution, the loss of your place in society.
  - Baptism was not just the inconvenience of getting wet, but a most serious public announcement of a new identity to these who would be called Christian’s.
- **Vs. 42** – What then followed & recorded by Luke would show the genuineness of the reality of their true conversion – the common experience of all truly saved.
  - Many churches are made up largely of unsaved people – superficial, really Christian in name only – remember the Words of Christ: **“You will know them by their fruits”** (Mat. 7:16). Not man’s idea of fruit, but God’s likeness!
  - Here is their radical change of life, change of thinking, & thereby change of doing: **“continually devoting,”** where was their interest? Where was their time spent? What did they want to be doing? – continually – what they gave themselves too – their focus, their concerns – here is what it looks like:
    - The first indication is the drawing together of people with like interest.
    - **“Apostles teaching”** (the Word today) – in contrast to attitudes of dragging people to church - they loved taking in the Word of God.
    - The Word is the essential priority above all other activities – a true church is a place where the Word is proclaimed accurately, non-compromisingly.
    - Seen as a duty & attitude - any Christian should count it a wasted day if he has not learned something new or refreshed himself in the Word of truth.
    - **“Fellowship”** – is also spiritual duty & attitude to be used to stimulate & encourage each other (1 Thess. 5:11), but more these obviously wanted to be around others of like mind – *birds of a feather flock together!*

- **“Breaking of bread”** – a reference to the Lord’s table - they not only adhered to the commandment to take the Lord’s table, but it was a desire – they wanted to worship the true God – they wanted that time to thank God, & to have self-examination for the purging of sin.
- **“Prayer”** – they not only felt the commanded duty to pray, they now had a relationship with God whereby they desired to converse with the Lord about everything. To get together & pray. Sadly, today prayer meetings do not exist, or are poorly attended – here it was a privileged priority!

**Closing:**

- None of these listed characteristics of this church were forced, no-one was beating them over the head, this was their heart, their new mindset.
- Here was a people who heard the Word correctly taught, came to conviction, repented to show their faith, & then began to live out the Christian life.
  - As the first effective message used of God to build His church, we have before us a template of the message, & the response of true salvation.
  - Why is the trend of the churches today not like this one – a Scriptural message, a repentant response, & a life rarely seen as truly changed?
  - I believe we have multitudes of deceived people in churches, on the Jesus bandwagon, but have not come to Christ - their lives are not transformed.
- When from pulpits there is no emphasis on knowing the Word of God, no emphasis on sin, & people are told all you have to do to be a Christian is pray a little prayer & follow a little formula – now you are saved, but there is no energy for Christ in the life – no real transformation!
  - It means nothing to profess Christ, if our lives do not back it up.
  - Do you really differ from the mind, outlook, & desires of the unsaved?
  - Do you love God’s Word & want to come together with other Christians?