



Acts – Can I get a Witness?
Wk. 6 The Evangelistic Harvest at Pentecost
By Pastor Jody May 09/18/2022

Acts 2:36-41 ESV

³⁶ Let all the house of Israel therefore know for certain that God has made him both Lord and Christ, this Jesus whom you crucified.

³⁷ Now when they heard this they were cut to the heart, and said to Peter and the rest of the apostles, "Brothers, what shall we do?" ³⁸ And Peter said to them, "Repent and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ 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, everyone whom the Lord our God calls to himself." ⁴⁰ And with many other words he bore witness and continued to exhort them, saying, "Save yourselves from this crooked generation." ⁴¹ So those who received his word were baptized, and there were added that day about three thousand souls.

[INTRODUCTION] When we receive bad news it demonstrates what one believes in; it reveals our idols.

Maybe you're like me and bills tell you that you don't have enough money, that means we don't believe God will/can provide.

Psalms 50:10 *For every beast of the forest is mine, the cattle on a thousand hills.*

Maybe you watch a lot of sensationalized news and notice that everything on there is scarring you, (crime rates, inflation, global warming, overreaching politicians) perhaps that means you don't believe God can protect/keep you.

Psalms 23 – The Lord is our shepherd we shall not want, even in the valley of the shadow of death His rod and staff comforts me as He is continually providing for me in the presence of my enemies.

Maybe you have come out of the COVID era and your terrified of getting sick, not because you have never been sick before but your worried over whether this might be the time COVID is going to get you! Drives you to vax, revax, and yell and be nasty to people who won't get vaxed! Perhaps that means you don't think God cares enough to cure you/or that He is able to.



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Psalm 107:19-20 ¹⁹ Then they cried to the LORD in their trouble, and he delivered them from their distress. ²⁰ He sent out his word and healed them, and delivered them from their destruction.

Here's the pressure that we are all facing today: we get no help from the world on **how to deal with stress**. Their answer for coping with worldly stress is to pursue things that make you forget your worries. That means all the world can offer is the stress of trying to make yourself feel better, in order to face the stress you get in this world. **The offer is stress to relieve stress?**

That means it is up to you to provide for those distractions to help you cope. I don't have enough energy, money, or time to do enough to keep me from worrying about the world and I would assume neither do you. **What I do have though is God's Word**, which never lacks power, I can always get my hands on it, and I can choose to believe what it says. That has been my only relief from worry folks, and it can be yours to.

Ephesians 2:8-9 ESV

⁸ For by grace you have been saved through **faith**. And this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God, ⁹ not a result of works, so that no one may boast.

The gospel offers the **gift of faith** to relieve us of worldly stress, not your own works. There is something available to you right now that helps deal with those feelings of anger, anxiety, and despair you may be feeling and it is the same thing the spirit brought to you the first day you were awakened/saved, your faith. Faith is what drives a person to do unbelievable things, faith is what lifts people out of despair, and it is faith that will help you stand in the face of your accuser. Today you are going to witness the first congregants of the first church, and I want you to notice they were all **BAPTISTS (v.41)! ☺**

Ok maybe notice that secondly, but **first** I want you to notice that they were all **experiencing a very powerful faith**, and it was making **them take actions**, they were not ok with standing still and being victims; they had been empowered. That is what HS living looks like, it is receiving the faith to help you take on this world all in Jesus' name! **Active Faith is the antibody for Chronic Stress!**



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Jesus' brother was there that day at Pentecost, he witnessed what the gift of faith had done for those first believers. Over the years he witnessed this gift of faith empowering his people, the church, to do amazing things and endure persecution and made a comment about it in his own epistle.

James 2:18 & 26

¹⁸ But someone will say, "You have faith and I have works." **(James replies)** Show me your faith apart from your works, and I will **show you my faith by my works.**

²⁶ "For as the body apart from the spirit is dead, so also **faith apart from works is dead.**"

James is like look, Faith is not a stagnant, malign, lump of ideas in your brain, it is working in you to produce something all the time. Faith is one of the most empowering things you can have because its' source is based outside of you, it doesn't rely on you to make it powerful:

Hebrews 11:1 ESV

Now faith is the assurance of things hoped for, the conviction of things not seen. **(God's Kingdom)**

Faith is knowing and experiencing things that **you cannot see**, it is alive, it grows as you age, and it is what brings life to your heart **(Illustration of Charlee running into the home stretch yesterday)**. The first converts had it and it fueled their lives, and if you are a Christian in this room today you should be experiencing this too, and if you are not this is your chance to hear about how one goes about receiving it.

Point of the Day:

Faith Leads to Action!

What you truly believe in is demonstrated by how you react to this world. Do you put stock in what the world believes in or are you putting stock in



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scripture says? Does the faith you have right now in God point back to a credible conversion? Are you still living today with an affection for Christ as that first day when you realized your need for Him? The Faith that preserves you until the day the Lord calls you home is the same faith you received on the day you were spiritually born. Let's look at our ancestors and relive what they experienced, let's receive encouragement and learn what we can do to foster this faith is in us.

1. Faith leads people to **Realize** what has been done.

³⁶ Let all the house of Israel therefore know for certain that God has made him both Lord and Christ, this Jesus whom you crucified.

³⁷ Now when they heard this they were **cut to the heart**, and said to Peter and the rest of the apostles, "Brothers, **what shall we do?**"

In review on what Mike was preaching about last week, the explanation of Pentecost, here's how Peter summed up all that OT history and God's efforts in the redemption of His people: (v.36) *God has made him both Lord and Christ, this Jesus whom you crucified* – They guy you all just killed was the one that was going to save you from your angst, anger, and fears (stress). Now that you have killed Him you are also liable for His death, the only man without sin to have ever lived.

Two parts to that condemnation, the sin you were born into, the original sin of Adam, the condition of Total Depravity, the fact that you could not escape that sin, this man Jesus was the **ONLY** answer for that

2:21 - *And it shall come to pass that everyone who calls upon the name of the Lord shall be saved.*

Second part to that condemnation, you killed him:

2:23 - *this Jesus, delivered up according to the definite plan and foreknowledge of God, you crucified and killed by the hands of lawless men*



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The Reaction: “They were cut to the heart” (v.37), conscience-stricken or remorseful,¹ unlike the Sanhedrin these devout Jews could see their fault because they heard the truth. That makes you read that question there in v.37 a little different **“Brothers, what shall we do?”** That’s not a simple statement that is the declaration of despair! These men you need to remember are not your average religious types:

2:5 - *Now there were dwelling in Jerusalem Jews, **devout men** from every nation under heaven.*

These were men that understood the law, they understood the need to be rescued, they understood the need of a Messiah, they understood that Salvation would be coming through a man, they understood now in this moment that the temple life and their devotion to Judaism would not cut it. There was now no way for them to save themselves anymore, they were at this moment in their eyes dammed, and what’s more they have blame in it, for their people, their ruling class were the ones that did the act.

Funny thing about the Gospel, the **first realizations** we have in our lives is not how wonderful God is but how terrifying our situation really is! Faith brought to us by the HS usually starts with the **reality we have no hope but for Christ**. Faith is gifted to you, and it has a chain anchored in the Kingdom, but the first realization it brings is that any self-faith in your works is a damnable offense.

Perhaps this morning you know someone that has been in and out of church forever, but they never seem to stick. Oh, they go through some sorrow, they endure some hard times, they get tired of the world, but when they come back to the church it is never a long stay. That is because their belief was most likely not a saving faith it was only skin deep. That may be hard for you to hear because I may be describing a loved one, I know. But unless they realize who Jesus is, that He is a Lord and King and **surrendering to Him means the admittance of your treason**, they are likely to leave again.

Let me remind you about the Gospel, that you are not powerless, no, the HS is with you, you are called to pray, to intervene, ask questions, and share with

¹Peterson, D. G. (2009). [The Acts of the Apostles](#) (p. 154). Grand Rapids, MI; Nottingham, England: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company.



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them the scripture for that was how these first converts came to saving grace.

Having scripture stored in their minds is how the HS had plenty of Gospel Kindling to light a spiritual awakening fire causing them to believe. We call that **REGENERATION, and that always must come first before saving faith.** You keep praying and **don't be discouraged** for those you care about, and if it's you I described as the '**non-sticker**' then it's time for you to put down roots in a Bible teaching church, around Bible consuming people, and have Christ centered conversations so you may find Him.

Faith does **lead** to **action** and the first action for everyone in here is either **realize** the HS is with you and double down on your prayer and witness OR realize your plight without Jesus is hopeless and how your sin must be dealt with. Now, when you find Him, this is where it will lead you.

2. Faith leads people to **Repent** and follow Christ.

³⁸ And Peter said to them, "**Repent** and be **baptized** every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ 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, everyone whom the Lord our God calls to himself." ⁴⁰ And with many other words he bore witness and continued to exhort them, saying, "Save yourselves from this crooked generation."

I gotta say I like the spunk that Peter has here, he sees what the message has done to them, he sees how the word of God has cut them to the quick (Heb 4:12) and He moves in on them to make a decision because true **Faith always Leads to Action.** This is not an emotional play to get someone to walk an aisle, the Spirit will save whom He will, but Peter sees himself as the new mouthpiece calling people to repent in place of JB (Mat. 3:1-6). JB called for repentance as a sign of the coming of the kingdom and Peter is initiating a new type of baptism demonstrating the Kingdom has arrived.



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Briefly I want you to notice two actions that Peter calls people to because true **Faith Leads to Action**. Peter doesn't mince words he shoots straight and from the hip:

1st – Follow Christ, with your whole heart! It's not like, *would you consider today, /* he doesn't start with, *Jesus gets you,* no, the first point is that you must get Jesus, so the call is to follow Him! **(How about people hear Jesus' narrative first)**

REPENT - μετανοέω (*metanoēō*). vb. **to repent, change one's mind.** *In the NT, generally refers not simply to changing one's mind but to turning back to God.*² It didn't matter how devout these men were, until you come to Christ and follow Him as the only way to God, you are actually going away from Him. There are **not multiple** ways to God, all religions do not take you to heaven, there is only one name under heaven by which people can be saved from sin, death, and hell and that is through Jesus (Acts 4:12).

BAPTISM - To show the world that repentance is real that you have actually changed your mind, Peter says now you publically get baptized. Repentance and a confession of faith in Christ in the book of Acts was always followed by Baptism by immersion (e.g., Acts 2:41; 8:12, 38; 9:17-18; 10:48; 18:8)³. It would mean that these men who were devout would make a claim in that public act, in their religious capital of the day, by snubbing their noses at the people they had just traveled hundreds of miles to see.

The same people they were to pay respect to, to experience their help in worship, they are called to participate in a public act by declaring to them that Jesus was the right choice, this act is much like protesting. That means they will publically CONDEMN the Sanhedrin for their acts against Jesus. It means their Baptism was one of not just spiritual declaration but a social, and cultural one as well.

² DiFransico, L. (2014). [Repentance](#). D. Mangum, D. R. Brown, R. Klippenstein, & R. Hurst (Eds.), *Lexham Theological Wordbook*. Bellingham, WA: Lexham Press.

³ Snyder, B. J. (2014). [Baptism](#). D. Mangum, D. R. Brown, R. Klippenstein, & R. Hurst (Eds.), *Lexham Theological Wordbook*. Bellingham, WA: Lexham Press.



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Baptism meant for them death to the temple, death to their social circles, death to their names kept in the temple by the priests as saved Jews. BUT it meant eternal life in the name of Christ! **TRUE FAITH always leads to Action** and their first action was to turn their backs on their old ways of life.

I paint that picture so you would also see this. Peter is not offering this as a depressive and scary scenario but he is offering a true joy. He believes in this Salvation, it is better, it is the new way, and people should want to jump into it! Look at what Repentance brings you:

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**, everyone whom the Lord our God **calls** to himself."

It offers forgiveness of sins (v.38)

It offers God's continual presence (v.38)

It offers Salvation to your descendants (v.39)

If offers to whomever God calls, it is not controlled by men! (v.39)

That right there is worth leaving everything behind! The temple and its' traditions looked like soiled rags now to Peter and to anyone that had been given the gift of faith.

Here's the second action that Peter calls his men to:

2nd Drop the world like a BAD HABIT!

⁴⁰And with many other words he bore witness and continued to exhort them, saying, "Save yourselves from this crooked generation."

CROOKED - 5021 σκολιός (*skolios*), ἄ (*a*), ὄν (*on*): adj.; ≡ Str 4646; TDNT 7.403–
1. LN 79.90 **crooked** (Lk 3:5+); **2.** LN 88.268 **unscrupulous**, corrupt, morally crooked (Ac 2:40; Php 2:15; 1Pe 2:18+)⁴ Where we get the word scoliosis.

⁴ Swanson, J. (1997). [*Dictionary of Biblical Languages with Semantic Domains: Greek \(New Testament\)*](#) (electronic ed.). Oak Harbor: Logos Research Systems, Inc.



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Living a righteous life is living a path on the straight and narrow the current generation is living on twisted path.

(Temple Life) The calling is that this generation will not get you where you need to go. There is also possible a hint here that by AD 70 as Jesus foretold this current generation of temple worship and leaders would be destroyed. Not only could their tainted and phony temple religion not get you to God but that it goes to a dead end, it will actually die out. You can still travel to Jerusalem today and stand at a wall, the last vestiges of that temple, where people will still stand and cry for it is literally God's sign of a dead religion.

Peter's call is to drop the world, like a bad habit, **true faith calls for action!**

Look, where might you be tempted to fall back into works of righteousness? Perhaps social justice issues feel attractive to you? Look, in love know that was the same offer of the pharisees back in 1st century. Sprinkle your faith with external and visible acts of social righteousness and then make yourself feel better than others. That's a dead end too and it is so crooked.

Brings us to our last point here, there is one more way that **Faith leads to action**, and it was described by Jesus' brother James, a Faith that is shown by works.

3. Faith leads people to **Relay** to others the change in their life.

⁴¹So those who received his word were **baptized**, and there were added that day about three thousand souls.

So, these devout men, put away their old life. They **realized** their sin, culpability, and need of a Savior. They have **repented**, they have turned back to God but that means they are dropping their old ways like a bad habit, and now they are demonstrating that publically. They have chosen to publically denounce their old faith of believing that human priests could offer their animal sacrifices for sins, and they accepted the once and for all sacrifice of Jesus as a payment for their sins.



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Hebrews 7:27 ESV

He has no need, like those high priests, to offer sacrifices daily, first for his own sins and then for those of the people, since he did this once for all when he offered up himself.

They have accepted the better offer, it is time to Relay this act to the world for that is the first act for any true Christian, to publically display your obedience to the one that matters above all.

[CHALLENGE & APPLICATION]

A Couple of things for you to Realize today:

(And you see here is the why you need the spirit.) If you are a Christian in this room, first you should have been baptized as an adult declaring to this world whom you follow. That is your first duty as put forth by the Apostles, adult Believer Baptism. You need to show that whatever system of religion, whatever belief your family had as a child, you are called to make a public declaration of faith by immersion to demonstrate your fealty to God. That's #1.

Secondly, we need to be aware that not only is baptism a public declaration but it helps with your ability to live by Faith.

1 Peter 3:21 ESV

²¹Baptism, which corresponds to this, now saves you, not as a removal of dirt from the body but as an appeal to God for a **good conscience**, through the resurrection of Jesus Christ,

Baptism is also a way to make a statement to God that says look I can't offer anything other to you other than my allegiance, it's not going to be perfect but right now I want you to know, along with this world, you rule in all of my life. When you are baptized with that desire God provides for you a **good conscience**, an awareness of what is wrong and a fondness for doing what is right. It helps you never forget what it means to be a Christian.



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When I was a young man, there was one a thought in my head that told me you cannot go over all the way to the dark side. No matter how hard I tried I could not abandon my faith, and you know what told me that? My Baptism. It meant something, it relayed to me that people verified in my life the signs of my faith, it verified that I had made a commitment to follow God come what may, and it verified that I no longer belonged to this world, but I was bought with a price.

This is why we are Credo Baptists, it our Creed, we have been buried with Christ and raised to a new life, we are not our own!

Today perhaps you need to repent and follow Jesus then I am also going to call you to turn from this world and follow Him. Stop worrying about what you will lose and celebrate more what you will gain!

If anyone has questions about adult believer's baptism, there is a PDF in the bulletin you read it today and let's follow our Lord in His example. And if you have been living a life where it shows that the world is stressing you out, let me call you to remembrance of the vow that Christ gave to you, portrayed on the CROSS, and remind you of the vow you gave Him. Take hope in the way you have chosen and practice a faith that leads you to Action, that should show the world that you have indeed found a Savior.

[PRAYER]

[COMMUNION]

[BENEDICTION]

Go in the name of the Father, that provided for us a once and for all sacrifice in His Son.

Go in the name of the Son, that is the author and perfecter of our Faith.

Go in the name and power of the Holy Spirit, that gives the gift of Faith and calls us to repent, be baptized, and relay this to the world as our witness.