

About 3000 Souls Were Added

Franklin Church of Christ
Edwin Crozier
January 22, 2006
AM Worship

Introduction:

We refer to the fifth book of our New Testament as **The Acts of the Apostles**. However, take note of **Acts 1:1-2**, "The first account I composed, Theophilus, about all that Jesus began to do and teach, until the day when He was taken up to heaven..." The **Gospel According to Luke** was about all that Jesus began to do. The implication is this second account (**Acts**) is about what Jesus continued to do after He was taken up to heaven. Granted this work was by the Holy Spirit, through the apostles. Yet, when we read what was happening in the early days of Christ's church, we are seeing the work of the Lord. The apostles and the early churches were His tools, but it was, nevertheless, Christ working. We must understand this because today is to be no different. We, as a local church and as individual Christians, are to be the tools of Christ. However, the only way we can be those tools is by following in the footsteps of those whose deeds have been recorded as examples for us. From **Acts** we recognize the greatest work we accomplish is converting the lost to Jesus. While **Acts** contains examples of worship and work for the church, the greatest examples of Christ's work are the repeated demonstrations of the lost being saved. If we want Christ to work through us in saving the lost, we need to learn from these exemplary conversions. What better place to start than with the first account of conversions on the day of Pentecost, 50 days after our Lord's resurrection, recorded in **Acts 2** when about 3000 souls were added to Christ's church?

Discussion:

- I. Our lives must attract the attention of those around us.
 - A. How can we deny that the great impact of the gospel began with the miraculous working of the Holy Spirit as seen in **Acts 2:1-12**? What would have happened if the apostles had just stayed in their "one place" and simply taught the gospel to each other? While the Spirit did not miraculously save anyone, the great display of spiritual gifts caused people to look and listen.
 - B. What do we learn from this? We need to be doing attracting attention. While many churches today are selling out to the social gospel, striving to attract attention through welfare programs, social outreach or entertainment, I believe we should still rely on the Holy Spirit to attract attention. Granted, there will be no displays of miraculous gifts, speaking in tongues, healing or miraculous prophesying. Those works of the Spirit were used during a specific time of the church's infancy and He no longer attracts attention through those means (**cf. I Corinthians 13:8-13**). Rather, we must shine the light of Jesus through our lives, causing others to glorify God (**Matthew 5:14-16**). We accomplish this by living out the fruit of the Spirit, walking in the Spirit, that is walking according to the Spirit's rule (**Galatians 5:22-25**). When we live by the Spirit's guidance, the Spirit, through our lives, will attract the attention of the unbelievers causing them to listen to God's message.
- II. We will always have detractors.
 - A. While in **Acts 2:12** many were amazed and wondered what the miraculous display of the Spirit meant, some refused to be impressed with it mocking and saying, "They are full of sweet wine" (**Acts 2:13**).
 - B. Even when we display the fruit of the Spirit, there will be detractors. We must understand this. I am afraid some brethren today want us to hold out for some kind of universal popularity. They believe there is some way for us to live and teach that will cause everyone to like us and no one to hate us. That just won't work. You would think that the people who lived by the beatitudes of **Matthew 5:3-9** would be universally loved. However, these same ones are the persecuted of **Matthew 5:10-12**. We just need to come to grips with it. Some people just aren't going to like us and they will even mock and falsely accuse us.
- III. Don't sugarcoat the need for salvation.
 - A. Those who seem to be looking for universal popularity get upset today when teachers and evangelists clearly point out error and sin. However, we have to realize the only way to bring people to Jesus for salvation is to get them to realize they need to be saved. Imagine what was going through the minds of people in Peter's audience when he spoke the words of **Acts 2:22-**

23, 36. Peter wanted everyone in his audience to know exactly why they needed the salvation Jesus offered. He didn't sugarcoat it, water it down or equivocate. "You nailed the Messiah to the cross," he said.

- B. I am certainly not suggesting we be hateful or mean. I am pointing out it is not hateful or mean to warn people of their standing before God. Sin has separated them from God (**Isaiah 59:2**). False gospels have not helped them (**Galatians 1:6-9**). If we thought somebody was breaking the law and would get arrested and go to jail, we would warn them. If we thought somebody was doing something potentially life-threatening, we would warn them. How much more should we warn them if we believe they are doing something that will condemn their souls to hell?

IV. We must teach Christ's gospel plan of salvation.

- A. As we have already learned from **Galatians 1:6-9**, there is only one gospel that saves. Every other "good news" is false and accursed. That means if people have obeyed a gospel that asked something else of them than Peter asked on the day of Pentecost, it is a useless gospel. When we encourage people to submit to Christ, we must not speak of moments of faith, praying through or saying the sinner's prayer. We must not speak of asking Jesus into our hearts or just accepting Jesus as our personal Savior. We have to talk about obedience God's way.
- B. In **Matthew 28:19-20**, Jesus said we make disciples by baptizing and teaching them. In **Mark 16:15-16**, Jesus said we must preach the gospel and those that believe and are baptized will be saved. In **Acts 2:38**, Peter demonstrated how that would be worked out. The people had already demonstrated or confessed their belief in **Acts 2:37**. When they asked, "What shall we do?" They were verbally admitting that Peter was right. Jesus was the Messiah and they had killed Him. Based upon this verbal confession of their faith, Peter explained what their options. They needed to repent and be baptized for the remission of their sins. That is, they needed to rethink their lives, turning from their sins and they needed to be immersed. Both of these things were to be done with express intention of receiving the remission of sins.
- C. We must not muddy the waters thinking just because someone has been immersed they have obeyed. The purpose is just as important as the action. We are to repent and be baptized in order to receive forgiveness. We are not baptized as an outward sign of God's earlier working. We are baptized believing that God is working through that baptism (**Colossians 2:12**).

V. The Lord will do the saving.

- A. We must understand that even when we have submitted to Christ, we have not saved ourselves. The Lord adds to His body. He makes that choice by His grace (**Acts 2:47**).
- B. Again, look at **Colossians 2:12**. Whose working was what provided salvation in baptism? Was it man's work that forced God's hand? Or was it God's work to cleanse man that made the baptism effective? We must obey, but it is God and God alone who does the saving.

VI. We must not stop at baptism.

- A. Sadly, too many focus on getting baptized. However, we need to understand that conversion doesn't equal baptism. Conversion equals life change. Before baptism as our initiating step of obedience, we lived one kind of life. Now that we are Christians, we must live a different one.
- B. As **Acts 2:42** demonstrates, once in Christ, we need to devote ourselves to the teaching of Christ as given through His apostles. We must be devoted to the joint participation and fellowship with Christ's children through association in the local congregation. We must be devoted to remembering Christ through the breaking of the bread. Finally, we must be devoted to worshiping God in prayer.

Conclusion:

This lesson is as much about what this congregation should stand for and teach as it is about what we as individuals must do. On the day of Pentecost, the Lord saved people through the working of His apostles. The Lord wants to work through us. For Him to do so, we must follow the example we see from these early saints and obey their teaching. Have you submitted to the gospel message they taught? If not, let the Lord work through us and this lesson. Submit to Jesus immediately, repent and be baptized for the remission of your sins and you will also receive the gift of the Holy Spirit, the promised salvation of God.