

“REPENTANCE AND REMISSION”
NO. 3224

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*“And that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in his name among all nations,
beginning at Jerusalem.”*
Luke 24:47

[Another sermon by Mr. Spurgeon upon the same text is #1729, “Beginning at Jerusalem”.]

THIS verse is among our Lord’s last words to His disciples just before He left them to return to heaven. He wished to impress upon them the truth that it was His purpose and desire that their lives should be devoted to the preaching of His Gospel among all nations upon the face of the earth. In Christ’s own words, and throughout the New Testament, we find the greatest stress laid upon preaching. Preaching is the great battering ram that is to shake the gates of hell. Preaching is God’s chief method of winning souls unto Himself, “for after that in the wisdom of God the world by wisdom knew not God, it pleased God by the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe.”

We cannot too often remind this age in which we live of this truth, for this is a time in which it is supposed that rites and ceremonies, human learning and literature, and I know not what besides, may very properly be allowed to supplant the preaching of the Word. Yet our Lord has given no intimation of any change in His purpose and plan, on the contrary, His great commission is evidently intended to cover the whole of this present dispensation, “Go ye therefore, and teach (that is, make disciples of) all nations, baptizing them (that is, those who have been made disciples), in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost; teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world (or more properly, unto the end of the age). Amen.”

So, until this dispensation is brought to a close by the personal return of the Lord Jesus Christ, “repentance and remission of sins” are to “be preached in his name among all nations.” Blessed indeed are those who, in this land or anywhere else, have heard their Lord and Master say to them as He said to His disciples ere He left them, “and ye are witnesses of these things.”

As I have been called by His grace to be one of His witnesses, I will now try to put the text to practical use by preaching, first, upon *the subject*, and secondly, upon *the audience* here mentioned by our Lord.

I. First, let us consider THE SUBJECT OF OUR PREACHING as here stated by our Lord, “that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in his name.”

So the first part of the subject is *that repentance should be preached in the name of Jesus*. There is a very important point that must here be noted, and that is that *repentance is not to be preached, in the name of Moses, as a legal duty*. Undoubtedly, it is a legal duty, for everyone who sins against God ought to repent of doing so. Whenever we have broken any law of God, we ought to be sorry for having broken it. It is the natural, common sense duty of the creature, when he has disobeyed any command of his Creator, to grieve that he has thus grossly offended his Maker, and to resolve that, if possible, he will not do so any more. But it is not in this fashion, simply as a legal duty, that Christ has bidden His servants preach repentance, if we do thus preach it, our labor will be in vain, at least to a very large extent.

Nor are we to preach it merely as a matter of faint hope. There is, indeed, more than a faint hope for any man who is bidden to repent because he will suppose, naturally and properly, that the God who bids him repent must have some designs of love towards him. But we are not to preach to sinners in such a fashion as simply to make them faintly hope that they may be saved. You know that when Jonah passed through the streets of Nineveh, his mournful and monotonous message was, “Yet forty days, and Nineveh shall be overthrown.”

When that message was carried to the king, he laid aside his gorgeous robe, and put on sackcloth, sat in ashes, and proclaimed a fast for man and beast, and commanded his people to turn from their evil ways, yet he had no better hope than this, “Who can tell if God will turn and repent, and turn away from his fierce anger, that we perish not?” When they repented, God did have mercy upon them, and spared them, but we have to carry to sinners a far more hopeful message than that heathen king’s inquiry, “Who can tell if God will turn and repent?” Our Lord Jesus Christ has ordained that repentance should be preached in quite a different fashion than that.

We are not even to preach it after the manner of John the baptist, who preached repentance as a preparation for the coming of Christ. His message was, “Repent ye: for the kingdom of heaven is at hand.” To the Pharisees and Sadducees who came to his baptism, he said, “Bring forth therefore fruits meet for repentance,” evidences of a change of life, because there was One, far mightier than he, coming after him, whose shoes he was not worthy to bear. John was only sent to prepare the way for Him who should baptize with the Holy Ghost, and with fire.

There are some, nowadays, who seem to think that repentance is a sort of preparation for faith in Christ, but that is not as we understand the Word, as we will try to show you before we have finished our discourse. We have not to preach repentance after the manner or in the name of Moses, or Jonah, or John the Baptist, we have to preach repentance in the name of Jesus Christ. What does this mean?

First, it means that *we are to preach repentance as the gift of God.* Christ was exalted with His Father’s right hand, to be a Prince and a Savior, “to give repentance” as well as “forgiveness of sins.” Wherever there is real sorrow for sin, wherever there is an honest determination, by God’s grace, to cease from sin, wherever there is a complete change of mind with regard to sin—for that is what repentance means—that repentance has been produced by the Spirit of God, and it is as much a gift of the covenant of grace as even the pardon which comes with it is. This is the repentance which we are to preach in Christ’s name, and of which Joseph Hart so sweetly sings—

*“Come, ye needy, come and welcome,
God’s free bounty glorify;
True belief, and true repentance,
Every grace that brings us nigh,
Without money,
Come to Jesus Christ and buy.”*

You are not to seek to draw up repentance from the depths of your own heart, as you might draw up water from a well, but to ask Christ to work repentance in you by His Holy Spirit, through belief of the truth as it is recorded in the Word of God, or as it is set before you in the preaching of the Gospel. As you learn how terribly Christ suffered because of sin, that truth will, under the guidance of the Spirit of God, be the means of leading you to hate sin, and you will realize how the Holy Spirit, by enlightening the understanding, and influencing the affections, produces repentance even in that sterile heart which had never been previously softened and made fertile by the gentle dew and rain of grace.

So we are to tell sinners that God gives repentance, that it is one of the free gifts of His grace, and that whoever has it may rest assured that the hand of the Lord has been upon him for good, and that, in fact, the work of salvation has been already begun in his soul.

Further, to preach repentance in the name of Jesus also means that *wherever there is real repentance, it is the token of the pardon of sin*—not merely a hopeful sign, but the sure and infallible sign of pardon.

If any man’s heart be turned away from sin, if he prostrates himself in the dust before God because of his offenses, if he looks with true penitence to Christ upon the cross, crying, “Lord, remember me,” “Lord, save me,” “God be merciful to me a sinner,” it is not a question whether forgiveness may or may not be granted to him, it is a fact that he is already forgiven.

David’s words are still true, “The LORD is nigh unto them that are of a broken heart; and saveth such as be of a contrite spirit.” It was for such as these that Jesus suffered upon Calvary, so let the message ring out through every land beneath the cope of heaven that, wherever there is a soul that loathes sin and leaves sin, there eternal mercy has already commenced its gracious work, and that soul *is* forgiven.

I think also that to preach repentance in the name of Jesus means that *we are to preach it on the authority of Jesus*. We are not merely to bid men repent, and to try to persuade them to do so by various reasons that might be urged, but we are to take far higher ground than that, as Paul did at Athens when he said, “The times of this ignorance God winked at; but now commandeth all men everywhere to repent.”

The servants of Christ are not to preach repentance on their own authority, or even on the authority of the church of Christ, but they are to preach it on the authority of the church’s ascended Head. This was Christ’s own message, for we read, “After that John was put in prison, Jesus came into Galilee, preaching the gospel of the kingdom of god, and saying, The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand: repent ye, and believe the gospel,” so no true minister of Christ need be either afraid or ashamed to tell sinners, and the very worst sinners, that they should repent.

When Jesus went into the country of the Gadarenes, a man possessed by an unclean spirit met Him—a wild man, whom no mere human being could tame, a man who snapped the fetters and chains with which he was bound, a man who lived in the mountains or among the tombs, a man who was a terror to the whole countryside, and from whom all who could fled away.

Did Jesus fly from him, or pass him by as too bad to be cured? No, the fiat of omnipotence was, “Come out of the man, thou unclean spirit,” and though it was not merely one demon, but a whole legion of evil spirits that possessed the man, they all departed at Christ’s command, and the man himself was shortly afterwards found “sitting at the feet of Jesus, clothed, and in his right mind,” and soon, he too was taken into Christ’s service, “and began to publish in Decapolis how great things Jesus had done for him: and all men did marvel.”

In like manner, the true minister of Christ is not only to call upon the most moral and the most hopeful to repent, but he is to give the same message to the most immoral and the most hopeless. On the day of the Pentecost, when Peter had charged his hearers with putting Jesus to death, they were pricked in their heart, and said to the apostles, “Men and brethren, what shall we do?” Then Peter said to them, “Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost.” You know what followed, about three thousand of them gladly received Peter’s word, were baptized, and the same day were added to the church.

Our commission to preach the Gospel to every creature was issued by Him to whom all power in heaven and in earth had been given, it is therefore under divine authority that “repentance and remission of sins” are to be preached in Christ’s name among all nations. “Repentance and remission” are so joined together that wherever we find the one, we are sure to find the other. Where there is no repentance, there can be no remission, but where there is true repentance, that godly sorrow for sin that needs not to be repented of, there is the full and free forgiveness of all sins of the one who has thus sincerely repented.

According to our text, *this remission of sins is to be preached in the name of Jesus*. We have the authority of our Lord Jesus Christ for declaring that “all manner of sin and blasphemy shall be forgiven unto men,” and when Paul was preaching at Antioch concerning the resurrection of Christ, he put this truth very plainly, “Be it known unto you therefore, men and brethren, that through this man is preached unto you the forgiveness of sins; and by him all that believe are justified from all things, from which ye

could not be justified by the law of Moses.” We also are to preach, not as unauthorized persons who hope that what we say may possibly prove to be true, but as those who are proclaiming divine verities and certainties on the authority of the Lord Jesus Christ Himself.

As one of the Lords witnesses, let me tell you, my dear hearers, that there is promised to penitents *a full pardon* of every sin that they have ever committed, whether it has been a sin of thought, or word, or deed, whether it has been a sin of omission or of commission. This pardon makes a clean sweep of the accumulated heaps of defilement that have resulted from years of iniquity. It is a pardon *as great as it is full*, pardon for the most horrible and oft-repeated offenses, pardon for uncleanness, for theft, for blasphemy, even for murder if the murderer has truly repented. It is a—

*“Pardon for crimes of deepest dye,
A pardon bought with Jesu’s blood.”*

The blood of Jesus Christ, God’s Son, cleanses *from all sin* all who truly repent and believe in Him, it cleanses from the sins that banish men from the presence of their fellows, and from the sins that would banish them forever from the presence of the thrice-holy God. Yes, pardon is to be proclaimed in the name of Jesus for sins such as these, they are not too black to be forgiven by God, they are not too deeply ingrained to be washed out by the precious blood of Jesus.

And this great and full pardon is also a pardon *that is given instantaneously*. In a moment, the guilt of the penitent sinner is forgiven. To quote Hart again, “His pardon at once he receives.” The instant that faith is begotten in the soul, we are justified in the sight of God, and we can say with the apostle Paul, “Who shall lay anything to the charge of God’s elect? It is God that justifieth.” The believing penitent turns his weeping eyes to Christ upon the cross, gazes with mingled sorrow and joy upon the blood that flowed from His many wounds, places all his reliance upon the God-appointed propitiation, “the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world,” and in that very moment all his iniquities are gone forever. The Lord has blotted them out, and driven them away, like clouds that have been dispersed by a tornado, and that can never be found again.

This pardon is realized by the penitent sinner who receives it. “The Spirit himself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God.” Oftentimes, the sense of pardon comes upon a man like a piece of good news that makes him almost leap for joy, he never was thrilled with so wondrous an emotion before, he is half inclined to sing—

*“He hath lifted me out of the miry clay,
And set my feet on the King’s highway;”—*

but perhaps, instead of doing so, he bows himself before the Lord in solemn silence, feeling that he could never express the gratitude he feels for such amazing mercy. Or possibly, he finds David’s words just suited to his experience, and therefore he says, “Bless the LORD, O my soul: and all that is within me, bless his holy name. Bless the LORD, O my soul, and forget not all his benefits: *who forgiveth all thine iniquities.*” He realizes, as David did, that all his iniquities are forgiven, and with the royal psalmist he sings, “Blessed is he whose transgression is forgiven, whose sin is covered.”

Nor is this all, for *this pardon is one that is never reversed*. O sinner, if you do really repent of your sin, and believe in Jesus, the sinner’s Savior, you are saved with an everlasting salvation. Remember that you have to deal with a God who never changes, He gives to the guilty penitent full and free forgiveness, not a reprieve or a respite. Once washed in the precious blood of Jesus, you shall never go back to your sin so as to live in it, and to die in it, and perish. If you are truly trusting in Jesus, you are saved, not merely for today, and tomorrow, and next week, but forever. What says the Lord Jesus Christ Himself? “My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me: and I give unto them eternal life; and they shall never perish, neither shall any pluck them out of my hand.” Were *you*, my dear

hearer, ever pardoned by God for Christ’s sake? Then you are pardoned forever. But if not, I pray that you may repent and believe the Gospel this very hour.

Perhaps you say, “But all this seems so strange to me, you tell me that my sins can all be forgiven in a moment, and forgiven forever, and that I have nothing to pay for this priceless blessing, but am simply bidden to repent of my sin, and believe in Jesus.” Yes, that is all true, but I do not ask you to believe it because I say it, for I only repeat to you the message that I have received from the Lord Jesus Christ Himself through His Word and by His Spirit. He cannot lie, and it is He who says, “that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in His name among all nations.”

He has given the best proof possible that your sins can be forgiven in the fact that He died in the room and place of sinners. Jesus Christ, who was God as well as man, suffered as the Substitute of all who believe in Him, He bore their sins in His own body up to the tree, and away from the tree, and now, for all who truly trust Him, there is no condemnation forever.

“But,” says one, “I do not doubt that repentance and remission of sins are to be preached in Christ’s name, my difficulty is as to whether they are for me.” Well, that is a point that you must yourself settle under the guidance of the Holy Spirit. Have you really repented of your sin? Have you sorrowed over it as the great curse of your life? Have you hated it, and turned away from it, and sought to live as the holy God would have you live? Well, then, if the repentance is yours, the remission also is yours, for they go together in Christ’s own words “repentance and remission of sins.”

To hate sin because it slew Christ, to hate sin because God is so good that we ought not to sin against Him, to hate sin because God is so gracious as to forgive it, to weep over sin, not like a child who has done wrong, and so keeps away from his father, but like a penitent child who lays his head in his father’s bosom, and sobs out his grief there, and mourns that he has offended such a loving father, who is so ready to forgive him—this is evangelical repentance, and wherever it is found, there is also the remission of sins.

If you do not know, experientially, what it is thus to repent, breathe the prayer, “O Lord, show me the guilt of my sin, teach me to mourn over it, to loathe it, and leave it, let me see Your dear Son bearing its penalty on my behalf, and then assure me, by Your Spirit’s gracious instruction, that my sins, which were many, are all forgiven for Jesus’ sake, that so I may go on my way rejoicing as a sinner saved by sovereign grace.”

Those of you who were here last Sabbath morning [See sermon #925, Individual Sin Laid on Jesus] will remember that my text was, “All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way; and the LORD hath laid on him the iniquity of us all,” and you will also recollect that I tried to describe various characters to whom that verse applies.

I hope God gave comfort and blessing to some who listened to the sermon here, but oh! it was a joy to me to hear of one, far away in Scotland, who had been for years desponding and despairing, who was led to find rest and peace through reading the printed sermon. But why should not many more of you be blessed while hearing the Word as so many are in reading it? Poor captive soul, why should you not be set at liberty? Arise, and shake yourself from the dust, for in Christ’s name pardon is preached unto you if you will but repent of your sin, and trust Him to save you from it.

II. Now, secondly, we are to think of THE AUDIENCE THAT IS TO BE ADDRESSED UPON THIS SUBJECT, “that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in his name among all nations, beginning at Jerusalem.”

Why is this Gospel to be preached among all nations? Well, first, because all nations need it, and then, because the Gospel is exactly suited to all nations, and further, because God has a chosen number in all nations who will receive the Word, and be saved by it, and also because it shall be a witness against those in all nations who hear it but refuse to heed it.

Some nations were learned, yet when Paul was addressing the Greeks who were proud of their philosophy, and were continually seeking after wisdom, he preached repentance and remission of sins in Christ’s name—the same A B C doctrine of Jesus Christ and Him crucified that he proclaimed wherever

he went. And the greatest scholars of the present day, if they would be wise unto salvation, must stoop to learn the same Gospel alphabet, nay rather, they will be elevated as they acquire these elements and rudiments of heavenly knowledge, and become scholars in Christ’s school of grace.

Other nations were very ignorant. In the apostles’ days, there were some parts of the earth where the people were rude barbarians, without any knowledge of books and letters, yet the apostles went to them, and preached repentance and remission of sins, and the Gospel was simple enough for them to understand, and many of the heathen turned from their idols to serve the living God.

And in later days, many of the greatest triumphs of the truth have been won among the savages and untutored tribes of Africa, and India, and North America, and the islands of the southern seas. Ignorant and degraded as they were, many of them have become new creatures in Jesus Christ, living here to the praise and glory of God, and in due time going to join the ranks of the blessed above.

There are nations that worship God after a very imperfect fashion, although they know not Jesus Christ, whom He has sent to be the Savior of sinners. To these also we must preach repentance and remission of sins in Christ’s name, for no man can come unto the Father except by Jesus Christ, His Son. Men cannot know God until they see the brightness of His glory revealed in the person of Jesus Christ. To theists and polytheists, those who believe in one God and those who worship “gods many, and lords many,” we have but one message, even that which our Lord Himself delivered, “Repent ye, and believe the gospel,” and already, many of them, by divine grace, have repented and received the remission of their sins in Christ’s name.

There are three very important words at the end of our text, *“beginning at Jerusalem.”* John Bunyan has a masterly treatise upon this text, entitled “The Jerusalem sinner saved,” or good news for the vilest of men: being a help for despairing souls, showing that Jesus Christ would have mercy in the first place offered to the biggest sinners. Those of you who have his works will find the whole treatise well worth reading, but I am going to borrow some of his divisions, and speak upon them after my own fashion.

Bunyan’s first reason why Christ would have mercy proclaimed first to the biggest sinners is *“because the biggest sinners have most need thereof.”* A surgeon who is caring for the wounded on a battlefield, and who has several soldiers awaiting his attention, will be anxious first to attend to the man who is the most seriously hurt, and whose life seems fast ebbing away. He will leave for a while the one who has only a slight scratch or cut on his flesh, and devote all his thought and care to the man who is so terribly maimed and lacerated that it is a marvel how he manages to live at all. He will have him put in the ambulance, and taken at once to the field hospital, that his life may be saved if it is possible.

And oh! if among my hearers there are some great offenders, some who have sinned very terribly, some who have sinned against God and man, against their own bodies and souls, some who may be truly called, “Jerusalem sinners, the vilest of men,” I want to assure them first that my Master has sent me to preach specially to them, and to tell them that if they repent of their sins, many and great as they have been, they shall all be forgiven.

Bunyan’s second reason why Christ would have mercy preached first to the biggest sinners is *“because when they, any of them, receive it, it redounds most to the fame of His name.”* If a doctor cures someone’s finger that is only slightly injured, he may get the credit of it, yet no one will say much about it, but if there is a person who is suffering from a disease that is believed to be incurable, and a wise physician is the means of his restoration to health, how the whole neighborhood will ring with his praises! When someone else is very ill, friends will say, “You should send for Dr. So-and-so, you know what he did for that other poor man, perhaps he could do as much for you.”

And when the Lord Jesus Christ saves some black blasphemer, or some leader in vice and iniquity, how fast the news flies throughout the whole region where he lives! Why, even among the lowest of the low, when one of their boon companions is converted, you know how they talk about it. They say, “Have you heard what’s happened to old Jack?” “No, what is it?” “Why, you know that he used to be hail-fellow-well-met with us, first in all manner of evil, and now he has become a Christian!” That is sure to be repeated among all his old connections, and so Christ gets fame and honor through His great

work of grace, and therefore it is that He would have the biggest sinners specially bidden to repent and believe the Gospel.

Bunyan’s third reason is *“because, by their forgiveness and salvation, others, hearing of it, will be encouraged the more to come to Him for life.”* When sinners hear that some big black sinner has been forgiven by Christ, they naturally ask, “Then why should not we be forgiven?” A rebel city is besieged, and the king threatens to hang every traitor when he captures it. They do all they can to strengthen their defenses, and to beat off the besiegers, resolved never to yield.

But when one of their greatest captains is captured, and the king, instead of hanging him, sends him back to the city loaded with favors, and bids him tell his fellow rebels that if they will only open the gates, he will forgive them, and he will give them a royal charter for their city, and will be the patron of all their industries, what do they do? Why, sirs, they fling wide the gates, they ring the bells, and they beg the king to enter at once, and accept their loyal homage. You can easily apply the parable to your own case, I pray that many of you may do so now.

The time flies so fast that I cannot take Bunyan’s reasons in detail. His next one is that *when the biggest sinners are saved, they weaken Satan’s kingdom the most.* Catch the ringleaders, and you can soon break up the band. Often, one man can twist quite a number round his fingers, and make them do as he pleases. When he is converted, he brings his mates to hear the preacher whose word was blessed to him, and thus many are won to Christ, and Satan’s ranks are thinned.

Besides, *how it strengthens the church when great sinners are converted!* It was a great day for the churches of England when John Bunyan was saved, it was a glorious day for the apostolic churches when Saul the persecutor became Paul the preacher, and this will be a grand night for the Tabernacle church if the Lord will turn some great sinner here from the error of his ways, and enlist him beneath the banner of the cross. This is the kind of man who will lead the forlorn hope for Christ, and plant the victorious banner of the Gospel on heights of sin that seem inaccessible to ordinary Christians. Great sinners, when they are converted, are the men to do great exploits in the name of Jesus.

Further, when great sinners are forgiven, *it is a clear proof that the Gospel has power to bless other sinners.* When the elephants entered the ark, all the beasts outside could see that the door was wide enough to admit them also. As God’s grace saved the chief of sinners, that grace can save *you*, my friend, however great a sinner you have been.

There may have come in here tonight, as they often do, those who are not usually found in places of worship. My brother or my sister, for as such I regard you, sinner as you are, I have to tell you that if you will repent of your sin, and trust in Jesus as your Savior, you shall go out of this house justified, even as the publican went out of the temple of old after he had from the depths of his soul cried, “God be merciful to me a sinner.”

Thus have I tried to preach repentance and remission of sins in Christ’s name to the Jerusalem sinners, the very worst men and women here, but I must not close without also preaching in the same fashion to you who think you are not the worst sinners here. O you respectable sinners, you moral and amiable sinners, you also need a Savior! Though you would fain stand by yourselves and say, “God, we thank Thee that we are not as other men and as other women are,” yet Christ’s message to you is, “Ye must be born again.” You too need to be washed in the precious blood of Jesus, and therefore, in His name, I preach to you “repentance and remission of sins,” just as I have done to the greatest sinners here.

May the ever-blessed Spirit come to you, and take away your pride and your self-righteousness, and bring you down where you must come, just as publicans and harlots must come, to the pierced feet of Him who loves sinners, and receives sinners, and saves sinners, and who will receive you and save you if you will but trust Him! God grant it, for Jesus’ sake! Amen.

EXPOSITION BY C. H. SPURGEON

ACTS 2:36-47

You know that Peter had been preaching a plain, simple, straightforward sermon upon the death, crucifixion, and resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ. He who was once such a coward that he trembled before a little maid, now that he is filled with the Spirit, boldly charges this crowd with being murderers and deicides because their kind put to death the Lord of life and glory. If you turn to the thirty-sixth verse, you will see the effect of Peter’s plain preaching through the power of the Holy Spirit—

Verses 36-37. *Therefore let all the house of Israel know assuredly, that God hath made that same Jesus, whom ye have crucified, both Lord and Christ. Now when they heard this, they were pricked in their heart* [See sermon #2102, “Pricked in Their Heart”].

A little later in this same Book, we read of those who listened to Stephen’s sharp, sword-like sentences, “When they heard these things, they were cut to the heart,” and soon they stoned Stephen to death. To be “cut to the heart” is not enough, but to be pricked in the heart is to receive a mortal wound.

Happy is the man who has had his sin killed through having received a deadly wound from the sword of the Spirit, which is the Word of God. These people who heard Peter preach “were pricked in their heart,” and first, they were in doubt as to what they should do, but secondly, they were resolved that whatever they should be told to do, they would do at once.

37-38. *And said unto Peter and to the rest of the apostles, Men and brethren, what shall we do? Then Peter said to them, Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost.*

Nobody but a Baptist minister could have preached that sermon, at least, we shall have to wait a long while before we hear any other saying to a whole congregation, “Repent, and be baptized every one of you.” This is, indeed the full proclamation of the Gospel, and we have no more right to leave out the baptism than we have to leave out the repentance. “Repent, and be baptized *every one of you.*” Peter was not like those hyper-Calvinists who are afraid to give an exhortation to a sinner because he is spiritually dead, but he spoke out boldly to those who had asked, “What shall we do?” and said to them, “Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins.”

39. *For the promise is unto you, and to your children, and to all that are afar off, even as many as the Lord our God shall call.* [See sermon #2586, A Far-Reaching Promise].

This is a most blessed verse. The promise is to us, and to our descendants, not merely to our children, but also to our grandchildren, ay, and to our race as far as it yet may run, and the next clause, “and to all that are afar off,” proves that the promise is made to the far-off ones as well as to our children, with only this limitation, “even as many as the Lord our God shall call.”

40. *And with many other words did he testify and exhort, saying, Save yourselves from this untoward generation.*

Not, “save yourselves from hell,” that Christ alone can do for you, but “save yourselves from this generation” by coming boldly out from among the ungodly, taking upon you the distinctive mark of the Christian, and so separating yourselves from those upon whom the sentence of death shall fall.

41-45. *Then they that gladly received his word were baptized: and the same day there were added unto them about three thousand souls. And they continued stedfastly in the apostle’s doctrine and fellowship, and in breaking of bread, and in prayers. And fear came upon every soul: and many wonders and signs were done by the apostles. And all that believed were together, and had all things common; and sold their possessions and goods, and parted them to all men, as every man had need.*

What a notable instance this was of the power of divine grace! We should not usually suppose that the Jewish race would be given to any excess of making common property, but where grace came in the first flush of its dawn, see to what prodigies of liberality it excited the early believers. Would that we had more of this generous spirit nowadays!

46. *And they, continuing daily with one accord in the temple, and breaking bread from house to house, did eat their meat with gladness and singleness of heart.*

I believe that wherever two or three disciples of Christ meet together, it is competent for them to celebrate the Lord’s supper. That ordinance is not, as some think it to be, a church ordinance, to be confined to the official assembling of all believers, but wherever two or three are met in Christ’s name, there He is, and where He is, there may the emblems of His broken body and shed blood be partaken of in memory of Him.

47. *Praising God, and having favour with all the people. And the Lord added to the church daily such as should be saved.* [See sermon #1167, Additions to the Church].

May He do the like unto all our churches, and He shall have the glory world without end! Amen.

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