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The Gospel Lived

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Acts 2:41-47

The new birth, a truly transformative event, is not a result of personal effort or work, but a divine act of grace (John 3). This powerful truth underscores the role of faith and repentance as gifts bestowed upon the regenerated, as the Bible teaches (Eph 2:8-9 & 2 Timothy 2:25, Acts 5:31, 11:18). This should fill us with hope and inspiration, knowing that our transformation is not dependent on our own strength, but on the divine grace of God.

Peter, in his Bible-based sermon, delivers a powerful message from Old Testament Bible texts, as we explored last week. In Acts 2:40, he continues with a direct and urgent appeal, using “many words” to witness and encourage those gathered in Jerusalem for the feast of Pentecost to repent, saying, “*Save yourselves from this crooked generation.*” This urgent appeal should make us feel the importance and immediacy of the message, urging us to take action and turn to God without delay.

Immediately, the impact of this belief is evidenced by their active obedience to the Lord’s instructions. Our text today shows that faith is not a passive intellectual exercise, but a dynamic and transformative force! This means that genuine faith is not just about accepting the basic facts about God. (Demons possess this kind of belief! James 2:19) Christ’s challenge and thus Peter’s challenge to us is to actively repent and follow Christ! **Matthew 4:17**, *From that time Jesus began to preach, saying, “Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand.”* **Mark 8:34**, *And calling the crowd to him with his disciples, he said to them, “If anyone would come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross and follow me.*

To be clear, obedience to Christ and His commands does not produce salvation. It is, beyond any doubt, evidence of salvation and our faith in Him as the Lord Jesus Christ! Romans 10:9-10

1 John 2:3–6, *And by this we know that we have come to know him, if we keep his commandments. 4 Whoever says “I know him” but does not keep his commandments is a liar, and the truth is not in him, 5 but whoever keeps his word, in him truly the love of God is perfected. By this we may know that we are in him: 6 whoever says he abides in him ought to walk in the same way in which he walked.*

I. Genuine Faith Results in Active Obedience (Acts 2:41)

Acts 2:41, *So those who received his word were baptized, and there were added that day about three thousand souls.*

- A. Baptism by immersion is the first step of Christian obedience.
- B. Baptism is a picture of a transformed life in Christ.
- C. Baptism is not a requirement of salvation but an act of identification and obedience.
 - 1. It is the “wedding ring” of the Christian life.
 - 2. It is the “jersey” of the Christian.
 - 3. It is the “flag” of the members of God’s kingdom.
- D. Baptism was necessary to be “added” to the fellowship of believers.

II. Genuine Faith Develops Deep Devotion (Acts 2:42)

Acts 2:42, *And they devoted [continually; not one time, but continuous] themselves to the apostles’ teaching and the fellowship, to the breaking of bread and the prayers.*

- A. Devotion to God’s word (the apostle’s teaching).
 - 1. **1 Peter 2:2**, *Like newborn infants, long for the pure spiritual milk, that by it you may grow up into salvation—*
 - 2. **John 8:31**, *So Jesus said to the Jews who had believed him, “If you abide in my word, you are truly my disciples.*
- B. Devotion to the Community of believers
 - 1. Fellowship is our spiritual duty to stimulate each other to holiness and faithfulness
 - 2. It is “partnership” or “sharing” (**1 John 1:3**, *That which we have seen and heard we proclaim also to you, so that you too may have fellowship with us; and indeed our fellowship is with the*

Father and with his Son Jesus Christ.

3. **1 John 2:9–11**, *Whoever says he is in the light and hates his brother is still in darkness. 10 Whoever loves his brother abides in the light, and in him there is no cause for stumbling. 11 But whoever hates his brother is in the darkness and walks in the darkness, and does not know where he is going, because the darkness has blinded his eyes.*
 4. **1 John 2:19**, *They went out from us, but they were not of us; for if they had been of us, they would have continued with us. But they went out, that it might become plain that they all are not of us.*
- C. Devoted to Christ and His Gospel (breaking bread)
1. The focus should always be on Christ and His sacrifice for believers.
 2. The breaking of bread refers to celebrating the Lord's supper.
- D. Devoted to Prayer
1. **1 John 5:13–15**, *I write these things to you who believe in the name of the Son of God, that you may know that you have eternal life. 14 And this is the confidence that we have toward him, that if we ask anything according to his will he hears us. 15 And if we know that he hears us in whatever we ask, we know that we have the requests that we have asked of him.*

III. Genuine Faith Engenders Reverential Fear (Acts 2:43)

Acts 2:43, *And awe came upon every soul, and many wonders and signs were being done through the apostles.*

- A. Awe (*Phobos*) – refers to fear or holy terror related to the sense of divine presence, to the attitude of reverence.
1. In Reaction to the deaths of Ananias and Sapphira. **Acts 5:5**, *When Ananias heard these words, he fell down and breathed his last. And great fear [phobos] came upon all who heard of it. Acts 5:11, And great fear [phobos] came upon the whole church and upon all who heard of these things.*
 2. In reaction to the attack of the demon-possessed man **Acts 19:17**, *And this became known to all the residents of Ephesus, both Jews and Greeks. And fear fell upon them all, and the name of the Lord Jesus was extolled.*
 3. In reaction to the raising of the widow's son (**Luke 7:16**, *Fear [phobos] seized them all, and they glorified God, saying, "A great prophet has arisen among us!" and "God has visited his people!"*)
- B. Wonder and Signs (Miracles) (Many seen through the book of Acts)

IV. Genuine Faith Causes Christ-like Humility (Acts 2:44-45)

Acts 2:44–45, *And all who believed were together and had all things in common. 45 And they were selling their possessions and belongings and distributing the proceeds to all, as any had need.*

- A. They were givers, not takers (44)
- B. They were selling assets and meeting needs (45)

V. Genuine Faith Ignites Daily Passion (Acts 2:46-47)

Acts 2:46–47, *And day by day, attending the temple together and breaking bread in their homes, they received their food with glad and generous hearts, 47 praising God and having favor with all the people. And the Lord added to their number day by day those who were being saved.*

- A. What the new believers and church did day by day
1. Attended the temple
 2. Celebrated communion.
 3. Shared meals
 4. Praising God
 5. Favor with all people
- B. What the Lord did day by day
1. The Lord added to their number