

ACTS Launch – “The Gospel”(Acts 2:22-41)

For the week of October 4, 2015

Testimony

Have a volunteer share their testimony. Take 5-10 minutes.

Why This Was a Great Sermon

Peter's first sermon was probably his best. It is perhaps, aside from our Lord's sermons, the greatest ever preached. Greatest because of the place it occupies in the history of redemption (it is the inaugural sermon of the age of grace), greatest by its pure results (there were 3,000 converts), and greatest by virtue of its being a model for apostolic preaching.

It was a great message because it was *simple*. First, he answered their question. Second, he told them about Christ. Third, he enlisted commitment. The sermon was great because it was *scriptural*. It abounds with God's Word. It was great because it was *Christ-centered* (vv. 22, 23, 32). Finally, the sermon was great because it was *practical*. It began by answering the question “What does this mean?” (v. 12) and ended by answering the question “What shall we do?” (v. 37). And to think that just fifty days earlier, Peter had committed the greatest denial of Christ in history.

1. What makes a great sermon to you? When you hear someone speak what draws them to you? What doesn't?

Tell the Story

Summarize or tell the story of Acts 2:22-41 to the group. Next, have everyone open their Bible and read the passage. Discuss any details missing from the telling of the story and reading of the story. Finally, have everyone close their Bibles and as a group rebuild the story from scratch.

2. Peter states in verses 22-35 the central theme of the Christian message. Some form of this message is preached over and over in Acts. What is it?

3. Why is what happened on the cross so important to Christianity? Why is it so important to you? How would you explain your answer to that question if it was posed by someone with no understanding of Christianity?

4. Peter tried to convince Jews about Jesus by showing how scriptures they already accepted supported his claims. Would this approach work today? Why or why not? Describe how you have personally engaged someone about Jesus Christ.

5. Read Acts 2:37. Were you ever "cut to the heart" (severely troubled and made sorrowful) by something regarding Christ? What was it and what did you do?

6. Read Acts 2:38. Describe repentance in your own words. Why is repentance an essential part of conversion? How is repentance mentioned in the following passages (Acts 5:31, 11:18; 2 Timothy 2:25)?

And the result was...

Peter states in verse 38 to repent (a 180 degree change of direction in a person's life) and be baptized (which identifies us with Christ and with the community of believers). Three thousand people believed and were baptized, which for a Jew was a traumatic step. Just how traumatic is difficult for us to understand in our Christianized culture, but in Jewish culture baptism was a rite for Gentile converts that symbolized a break with one's past and the washing away of all defilement. And now there were 3,000 new believers who need to be discipled. What to do? Let's read how next week in verses 42-47!

Leaders: Next Week

1. Ask for a volunteer to share their testimony.
2. Ask everyone in your group to be ready to summarize or "tell the story" of Acts 2:42-47. The passage is short but yet shows us a blueprint for church life. Everyone should clearly understand this passage.

Prayer

- Spend time in your group updating your previous prayer requests.
- If there was one person you would like to hear the powerful message of salvation whom would that be? Share the name (first name only) with your group. Pray as a group for these individuals. Pray for boldness and opportunity in each of our lives to share the gospel with others.