

Acts Chapter 2 v 22 -42

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- [0 : 00] But we're going to read Luke 19, and then Gene Brumby is going to come and give the children's stock. Luke 19, and we're going to look at the first ten verses.
- Very well known passage of Scripture. Jesus entered Jericho and was passing through. A man was there by the name of Zacchaeus.
- He was a chief tax collector and was wealthy. He wanted to see who Jesus was, but being a short man, he could not because of the crowd. So he ran ahead and climbed a sycamore fig tree to see him since Jesus was coming that way.
- When Jesus reached the spot, he looked up and said to him, Zacchaeus, come down immediately. I must stay at your house today. So he came down at once and welcomed him gladly.
- And all the people saw this and began to mutter, he has gone to be the guest of a sinner. But Zacchaeus stood up and said to the Lord, look, Lord, here and now I give half of my possessions to the poor.
- [1 : 10] And if I have cheated anybody out of anything, I will pay back four times the amount. And Jesus said to him, today salvation has come to this house.
- Because this man too is a son of Abraham. For the son of man came to seek and to save what was lost.
- Verse 22. Acts 2 verse 22. This is halfway through Peter's sermon at the day of Pentecost.
- And we're going to read from verse 22 to verse 42. So just those 20 verses. This is Peter addressing the crowd.
- Men of Israel, listen to this. Jesus of Nazareth was a man accredited by God to you by miracles, wonders and signs. Which God did among you through him as you yourselves know.
- [2 : 22] This man was handed over to you by God's set purpose and foreknowledge. And you, with the help of wicked men, put him to death by nailing him to the cross.
- But God raised him from the dead, freeing him from the agony of death. Because it was impossible for death to keep its hold on him. David said about him, I saw the Lord always before me.
- Because he is at my right hand, I will not be shaken. Therefore my heart is glad and my tongue rejoices. My body also will live in hope. Because she will not abandon me to the grave.
- Nor will you let your Holy One see decay. You have made known to me the paths of life. You will fill me with joy in your presence.
- Brothers, I can tell you confidently that the Patriot David died and was buried. And his tomb is still here to this day.
- [3 : 27] But he was a prophet. And knew that God had promised him on oath that he would place one of his descendants on his throne.

Seeing what was ahead, he spoke of the resurrection of the Christ. That he was not abandoned to the grave. And nor did his body see decay.

God has raised this Jesus to life. And we are all witnesses of the fact. Exalted to the right hand of God. He has received from the Father the promised Holy Spirit.

And has poured out what you now see and hear. For David did not ascend to heaven. Yet he said, The Lord said to my Lord, Sit at my right hand until I make your enemies a footstool for your feet.

Therefore let all Israel be assured of this. God has made this Jesus whom you crucified, both Lord and Christ. When the people heard this, they were cut to the heart.

[4 : 35] And said to Peter and the other apostles, brothers, What shall we do? Peter replied, Repent and be baptized.

Every one of you. In the name of Jesus Christ. So that your sins may be forgiven. And you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.

The promise is for you and your children. And for all who are far off. For all whom the Lord, our God, will call. With many other words, he warned them.

And he pleaded with them. Save yourselves from this corrupt generation. Those who accepted his message were baptized. And about 3,000 were added to their number that day.

They devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching. And to the fellowship. To the breaking of bread. And to prayer. We'll leave that there.

[5 : 38] And we'll come to that in a moment. I imagine that most of us here will have seen a newborn baby.

Well, we were all newborn babies once, weren't we? But you look at a baby and the conversation usually is, Oh, doesn't he look like his mum or his dad?

In the case of our youngest son, my word, he is ugly. And he was. The midwife said that. But as they grow up, we've got a lovely photograph of our youngest son swinging from a lamppost like he usually did.

And he's so charming, so delightful, so witty. He's a little cherub. And then, of course, he grows up and becomes ugly like his dad.

And... But you can see in all the children that we parent that there are characteristics, aren't there? And we...

[6 : 44] You know, you see your children growing up and they... And you think, gosh, it's just like my dad was, you know. And, you know, you see all these similarities coming through.

And I wanted to just put your minds on focusing on birth. Because what we've been reading is, indeed, what is sometimes called the birth day of the church.

And it was a momentous day. And what we see in Acts chapter 2 is a very... In embryonic form, almost, the characteristics of what the church was to be.

You see it in the people who were saved. You see it in the preacher who preached. You see it in the people who were saved and developed and moved on in their lives.

And the focus verse, really, is Acts chapter 2 and verse 37, where it reads that when the people heard this, they were cut to their heart and said to Peter and the other apostles, Brothers, what shall we do?

[8 : 01] What shall we do? Brothers, what shall we do? That was the cry that came out from the people on that day.

And one could almost say that this was the very birth point of the church. That here were these people crying out, What should we do? And then just moments later, many of them were saved and became Christians in, as it were, the New Testament church.

And so I just want to look at four things this morning and then try to apply them. The first thing is, well, when did this happen? The second point is just to look at what happened on the day of Pentecost.

What did Peter say? And what was the effect? Quite simple, isn't it? They're all friends of what, why, when and where. But what did happen?

And when did it happen? A good question is to start with. And I'm just going to go through some of the events when this happened, what happened, what did Peter say, and what was the effect?

[9 : 11] When did it happen? Well, it happened on verse 1 of chapter 2, on the day of Pentecost. The day of Pentecost. Pente means, Pentecost means 50th.

It was the second major feast of the Jewish calendar. The first one was 50 days before, which was the Passover.

And on this Feast of Pentecost, it was really a harvest festival. It was the offering of the first fruits. It was a Feast of Weeks, which was another day.

And it occurred 50 days after the Passover. So many of the people gathered that we'll read about may have well have hung over from that feast.

The people who came from long distances would probably have stayed for the while and would have known a lot, probably everything of what had happened at the Feast of the Passover.

[10 : 15] What happened on the Feast of the Passover? Well, 50 days after the death and resurrection, that's what the Passover was about. So the Pentecost was 50 days after the death and resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ.

The Lord Jesus Christ was the real Passover lamb. It wasn't the thousands of lambs that were slain. It was the one lamb, the Lord Jesus Christ, who was slain for the sin of the world.

This day of Pentecost was 50 days after Judas, the traitor, had killed himself. And we read that what happened on the day of Pentecost was that Peter, along with the other disciples, gather and they appoint Matthias as the replacement for the traitor Judas.

So it's 50 days after Judas had betrayed. It was also 50 days after the Jewish people had deliberately put Jesus to death and had said to Pilate some shocking words.

They said many things. But in Matthew's Gospel, you read that one of the things they all said was crucify him. And when Pilate said, well, what crime is he committed?

[11 : 43] They all said crucify him. But the most shocking thing, I think, that the people said 50 days before this day of Pentecost was, when Pilate said, well, I'm innocent of this man's blood.

It's your responsibility. They said, all the people answered, let his blood be on us and on our children. 50 days after the people had said this, let his blood be on us and our children, we have the day of Pentecost.

Well, what happened on the day of Pentecost? We're familiar with the story, aren't we? The verse 1 of chapter 2 is, the day of Pentecost came, they were all together in one place.

This is probably the upper room. In chapter 1 and verse 13, we find that that's where they gathered. That's where they gathered to elect Matthias as the replacement apostle.

And we read that something happens. When the day of Pentecost came, they were all together in one place. Suddenly, a sound like the blowing of a violent wind came from heaven and filled the whole house where they were sitting.

[13 : 06] They saw what seemed to be tongues of fire that separated and came to rest on each of them. All of them were filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other tongues as the Spirit enabled them.

So it's an amazing thing, the sound like the blowing of a violent wind. Can you get your mind around that? I don't think I can. You know what a sound of a wind sounds like?

Certainly we do. So if you've been here for the past week, it's not always like this, folks. But when you get the sound of a violent wind, it's scary, isn't it?

What happened? There were scenes like tongues of fire that separated and rested on each of the apostles. They started speaking in other languages.

And strange things happened. Amazing things happened. And at the same time, in verse 5 of chapter 2, there were staying in Jerusalem, God-fearing Jews.

[14 : 09] So we find that these people who come from every nation under heaven heard this sound. So it wasn't just located to the room.

It was something that appeared perhaps all over the city. And so these God-fearing Jews, these were the keen ones, the people who come probably for the Passover and now for Pentecost, they gathered together, probably in the temple area.

Because we know there's a large crowd of at least 3,000. So the temple area will be the only place in Jerusalem where they could gather in such a way.

And so this crowd gathers. And then the 120 who were in the upper room must have left the upper room and they go down and they start mingling with the crowd.

They start mingling with the crowd and they start speaking to them in their own language. And there are 15 nationalities or people types that are mentioned, 15.

[15 : 21] And so they start talking to them in their own language. So this gift of tongues was given and they go and use that gift to speak to this massive, massive crowd.

Well, the result was amazement. Well, the first thing, the first result was bewilderment. Verse 6, it says, when they heard this sound, a crowd gathered together in bewilderment because they heard them speaking in his own language.

Each one heard them speaking in their own language. The next thing we read is amazement. Verse 7, utterly amazes, not all these men were speaking Galileans.

You know, it's like, you know, these are all Whitbyites and they're speaking Spanish. You know, have you ever heard of that? Well, Colin Bollemarle's not here, so we're all right. But you see, you know, they knew who they were from, but they could hear them speaking in their own language and they were from all over.

We find that they were perplexed in verse 12, amazed and perplexed. They asked one another, what does this mean?

[16 : 36] And so there's bewilderment, there's amazement, there's perplexity, but there's also mockery. Mockery in verse 12 because in verse 12, it says amazed and perplexed.

They asked one another, what does this mean? Some, however, made fun of them and said, they have had too much wine. Too much wine. And we then read that Peter, seemingly totally unprepared to give this delivery, but filled with the Holy Spirit, he addresses the crowd.

And we find that he raises his voice. Sounds like he would have had to raise his voice because of the hubbub that was going on. And he raises his voice. And the first thing he does, the first thing he says, is he silences the mockers.

Peter stood up with the 11, raised his voice, addressed the crowd, fellow Jews, and all of you are in Jerusalem, let me explain to you, listen carefully to what I say.

These men are not drunk, as you suppose. So the first thing that Peter does, the first thing he says, is he silences the mockers.

[17 : 58] And that would be wonderful to see those who mock the gospel silenced. But here it happened. This great crowd, the great hubbub that had got on, and he silences them.

And then, quoting from Joel, chapter 2, he shows them that what they are witnessing is not a bunch of drunken people, but they're witnessing the fulfillment of prophecy 600 years before.

And it's quoted in full, and it ends, the sun will be turned to darkness, the moon to blood, before the coming of the great and glorious day of the Lord, and everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved.

And so the prophecy was that sons and daughters will prophesy, that young men will see visions, old men will dream dreams, that God was going to pour his spirit upon his people, and that everyone who called on the name of the Lord would be saved.

And he then goes on in verse 22, he says, Men of Israel, listen to this, Jesus of Nazareth was a man accredited by God to you by miracle signs and wonders which God did among you through him as you yourselves know.

[19 : 15] He then speaks of Jesus Christ, and he says, This is a man who was accredited to you. And he was accredited to you in miracles and wonders and signs, and you know it.

And so that's why it's not hard to imagine that most of these people would have been at the Feast of Pentecost, because they would have seen the miracles and the wonders and the signs and the way in which Jesus preached.

And then he goes on and says, Well, this man was handed over to you by God's set purpose and foreknowledge, and you with the help of wicked men put into death by nailing him to the cross.

And he says, Although Jesus died with the full foreknowledge and sovereign purposes of God, he says, You, you killed Jesus Christ. You killed him.

You nailed him to a cross. And you, not just Jews, but along with wicked men, and by that he means Gentiles, Jew and Gentile. You killed Jesus.

[20 : 21] You're responsible for his murder. Then he goes on in verse 24 to say that God raised him from the dead, freeing him from the agony of death, because it was impossible for death to keep its own.

You killed Jesus, but it was impossible for Jesus to stay dead. God raised him from the dead. And then he goes on in verse, he goes on and says, Well, you're responsible for the death.

Even though God raised him, you're still responsible for the death of Jesus. That terrible word in Matthew 27, Let his blood be on us and on our children.

Peter is nailing it metaphorically, and he's saying, It's on you. It's on you, and it's on your children too. They were responsible for the death of Jesus.

The blood that they mockingly said, It's on us, is being turned upon them by the preaching of Peter.

[21 : 36] But, Peter says this, verse 36, Therefore let all Israel be assured of this. God has made this Jesus, whom you crucified, both Lord and Christ.

Jesus is still in charge. So it happened on the day of Pentecost. The power of the Holy Spirit came.

Peter preached this amazing sermon. And what was the effect? Well, there were two direct effects. Verse 37, they're both there.

When the people heard this, they were cut to the heart. They were cut to the heart. They had a conviction of sin. They realized that their mockery of saying, His blood be on us, was, in fact, on them.

They were responsible. So they were cut to the heart. They realized that they had slain the one who was accredited by God to them by miracles, wonders, and signs who had been killed by them but who God had raised from the dead because it was impossible for Him to remain dead.

[22 : 54] So they were cut to the heart. And the next thing they responded with was, brothers, what shall we do?

What shall we do? We recognize the guilt of our sin. What shall we do? They had no recourse for any remedy.

They were desperate to put things right. They knew the conviction of the guilt of their sin. They wanted to put things right. So what are the two direct actions that Peter tells them to do?

He says it in the next verse. In verse 38, Peter replied, repent and be baptized. every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ.

Repent. There's nothing you can do actually but you can repent. You can turn away from that terrible, wicked act of slaying Jesus and you can turn to God and say, you're sorry, please forgive me of my sin.

[24 : 06] And you're to be baptized and here we read later on that they were baptized. But here the baptism is speaking of an outward demonstration of that faith.

That's what baptism is. It's not be baptized and you'll be saved. They were saved and then they were baptized. But their baptism was a recognition and their identification with their responsibility for the death of Jesus.

and it was an identification with the fact that they had repented of their sin. They repented and said to God they were sorry for their sin.

And Peter says, well, if you repent and are baptized, every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ, your sin will be forgiven.

Isn't that amazing? That's all they had to do because Jesus had paid the price for their sin.

[25 : 09] The Jews who had foolishly, and the Gentiles, who had foolishly brought the blood of Jesus on their own heads and upon their children's heads and now offered the forgiveness of sin.

Look what it says. Verse 39, the promises for you and your children and for all who are far off, for all whom the Lord our God will call.

So, the curse was upon their children but the offer of grace, the offer of free grace was upon their children as well for all to whom the Lord their God would call.

And the effect of Peter's preaching the effect of his call for them to repent and be back in grace. We read that in verse 41 that some accepted for all who my Lord our God will call.

About 3,000 were converted. We don't know how big the crowd was. Was it 10,000? Was it 4,000? Was it 30,000? We don't know. But some accepted the message and devoted themselves verse 42 to the apostles teaching and to the fellowship.

[26 : 32] So, what I want to do in the time that we've got left is to look at three things. Look at three things and try to apply what we've just gone through to ourselves.

and the first thing is that there is a reality to face. A reality to face. Just as the 3,000 who were convicted of their sins had to face up to their sin, so do we need to face up to our sin.

God's word is the great accuser. It's a great source of blessing and promise as we'll see. But it is God's word that is there through the work of the Holy Spirit to convict people of sin.

It's God's softening up process in a way. I've just been reading of Oliver Cromwell's battles written by a military man.

And Oliver Cromwell was very successful in his battles because he actually had a great care for the people under his charge. And if you look at the deaths on his side and the deaths on the royalist side, there is no comparison.

[27 : 54] Oftentimes he would have a victory of 2,000 people would be killed in the civil wars and only 50 would be killed on the royalist side.

And part of that was his tactic was to soften up the enemy. And the way he would do that if it was castled and he would bombard and terrify them.

But in the Battle of Worcester he led little entrapments. He would draw the people, the people who were in the city. King Charles II before he was made king in England was there and he came out and Oliver Cromwell sorted him and a whole band of people out and then some other people would come out.

He was softening them up. He was just chipping away at them. And that's what God's word does. God's word is the great accuser of our lives.

It's never pleasant. It's never pleasant to hear that you are a sinner. That we're all sinners. It's never pleasant to hear that.

[29 : 00] But what God is doing is softening us up. He's making us aware of our need to be saved from our sins. In Romans 3, this is what is concluded for Jew and Gentile for all people.

This is what Paul says. He says, we have all ready made the charge that Jew and Gentiles alike are all under sin. For as it is written, there is no one righteous, not even one.

There is no one who understands, no one who seeks God. All have turned away. They have together become worthless. There is no one who does good. That's in the sight of God.

Not even one. And that's not pleasant reading, is it? It goes on and says, there is no difference for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God.

If you want a relationship with God, if you want to maintain your relationship with God, sin is always the issue. And it's sin that needs to be dealt with.

[30 : 09] And so the reality that we have to face is that we need that conviction of sin. We need like those people in Acts 2, we need to be cut to the heart.

And it only happens through the work of the Holy Spirit. But we need it, and we need the Holy Spirit. You can hear a million sermons, but if the Holy Spirit is not convicting, it will do nothing.

But when the Holy Spirit works, he will convict. He came to convict the world of sin and righteousness and judgment. And when the Holy Spirit is not there, then there's all kinds of terrible things happen.

Let me just turn over to the page. This is Stephen being accused by the Sanhedrin for being a Christian, basically.

And Peter's sermon is a response to their accusation, and he says, look, basically, you've always disobeyed, all the way back to before Abraham.

[31 : 19] And he says this, he says, you stiff-necked people with uncircumcised hearts and ears. You are just like your fathers. You always resist the Holy Spirit.

Was there ever a prophet your fathers did not persecute? They even killed those who predicted the coming of the righteous one. And now you have betrayed and murdered him, you who have received the law that was put into effect through angels but have not obeyed it.

You know, that is Stephen, but the Holy Spirit is not there at work in the people who are hearing this. Because what we read next is this, when they heard this, they were furious and they gnashed their teeth at him.

So, hearing that you're a sinner is never good news and if you're furious and gnashing your teeth, you're gnashing your teeth at God. And the voidance of the presence of the Holy Spirit will only bring hardness.

And it's as if we prefer to live in darkness rather than light. And that's what it says in John's Gospel, that men choose to live in darkness, prefer darkness than light.

[32 : 41] And so the preaching of the Gospel, the preaching of sin is God's light trying to shine into your heart and all you're doing is putting a big block up. That's what's happening.

And because you prefer to remain in darkness. And why do you prefer to remain in darkness? Well, it's because your deeds are evil.

That's what it says in John 3. It says, this is the verdict, light has come into the world, but men love darkness instead of light because their deeds were evil.

Everyone who does evil hates the light and will not come to the light for fear that his deeds may be exposed. are you afraid? If you're not a believer here this morning, are you afraid that your deeds will be exposed?

That's what the preaching of the conviction for sin is all about. It's all about God speaking to you through the work of the Holy Spirit saying, I know what you like.

[33 : 44] I know what you like. God knows. And even though the person sitting next to you doesn't know what you're like, God knows. And one day your deeds will be exposed.

Isn't that what sells newspapers, all the tittle-tattle of an expose, of somebody's immoral living, usually? And, well, that's nothing compared to what will happen when God comes to judge our sin.

And the conviction of sin is when God says, I know. I know what you like. And when you respond and say, yes, Lord, I know. Thank you for showing me.

I repent and I trust in the provision of a Savior. That's happened to many people here, hasn't it? I was converted by going, kicking and screaming into a service.

And the man preached about the conviction of sin. And it was if he was talking to me, and it was his, I was the only person in that place and I was convicted of sin.

[34 : 57] I heard it before, and you've probably heard it before. But if you're not a believer and haven't known the conviction of the Holy Spirit in your heart, then you need to know that conviction of the Holy Spirit in your heart.

You won't be saved unless he works. So cry out to God, brothers, what shall we do? Is the cry of the people who heard sermons, Peter's sermon.

Reality to face. But the wonderful thing is there's a promise to receive. There's a reality to face. There's a promise to receive.

In Acts 2, we've read that promise twice. The prophecy from Joel quoted by Peter, verse 21, and everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved.

And then in verse 21, that's exactly what, that's verse 21, sorry, and then in verses 38 and 39, Peter replied, repent and be baptized, every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ, so that your sins may be forgiven, and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.

[36 : 09] The promise is for you and your children, and for all who are far off. So, wonderful promise, the promise of salvation, that our sins can be forgiven by calling on the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, calling on the name which is above every name, calling upon the name that is even now in heaven presenting and representing us before the Father.

Now, about 3,000 people, as we know, receive that promise at Pentecost, but that promise is there all the way through the scripture. It's actually reiterated in Romans.

In Romans chapter 10, we read that almost exactly the same thing in Romans chapter 10 and verse 9, it says this, it says that if you confess with your mouth that Jesus is Lord and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved.

What did he preach? He preached, you killed Jesus, but it was impossible to bring him for Jesus to stay dead. God raised him to life. And so, this is what Paul says, if you confess with your mouth Jesus is Lord and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved.

For it is with your heart that you believe and are justified and it is with your mouth that you confess and are saved. That's repent, be baptized, profession of sin, the profession of faith in Jesus Christ.

[37 : 44] And as the scripture says, everyone who trusts in him will never be put to shame. Same promise from Joel. for everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved.

And why is that? Why is it that we'll just be simply saved through understanding just by calling on the name of the Lord? Well, it's said it many times, haven't we?

It's a conviction of sin. But it's understanding what happened to that sin. What's happened to your sin if it's been forgiven? What will happen to your sin if you call on the name of the Lord?

Well, what will happen to your sin? It's already happened in history. Isaiah 53 says this about Jesus. Surely he took up our infirmities and carried our sorrows.

Yet we considered him stricken by God, smitten by him and afflicted. But he was pierced for our transgressions. He was crushed for our iniquities.

[38 : 46] The punish that brought us peace was upon him and by his wounds. We are healed. We all like sheep have gone astray. Each of us have turned to his own way and the Lord has laid on him the iniquity of us all.

Jesus Christ took the punishment of our sin and it was placed on him. He bore our sin in his body on the cross. That's what happens to sin.

So there's a reality to face, there's a promise to receive, life. But there's also a life to live. That's why I read verse 42 which probably rightly belongs not as a new paragraph but as a continuation of verse 41.

It says in verse 41 those who accepted this message were baptized and about 3,000 were added to their number that day. they devoted themselves to the apostles teaching and to the fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer.

Do you know it's easy to lose sight of the radical changes that the believers of Pentecost were about to face.

[40 : 02] It's the birth of the church but it was also the new birth for 3,000 people. So they had no idea like a baby is born. They've got no idea what's ahead or you're interested about this food and being clean and comfortable.

But here there is a radical change that is taking place that has taken place and will continue. These were God-fearing Jews, verse 5 of chapter 2, who had come from every nation under heaven.

And they were glued to their religion. The reason why they were there is they come from all over. So they were keen people. They were eager to do what was required of them to attend the feast.

And so they attended the feast. There were the social structures that were there for being a Jew and the community of Jewishness was there.

people. They were a people apart in that land. They were glued to their religion. But then we read in verse 42 that they devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching.

[41 : 19] That they were suddenly removed from being within one community to being placed in another community. They were no longer God fearing Jews in that sense.

They were Christians. Totally, totally different people. They had all the lots and lots of hangups. We know that. But nonetheless, they were changed and transformed.

And what they did, it says, they devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching. The word there means glue. They glued themselves to the apostles' teaching. They stuck to them.

They wouldn't go anywhere without them. A bit like Peter always following Jesus, almost tripping over Jesus. They glued themselves to the apostles' teaching. And they became a new fellowship.

A new people. But in gluing themselves to the apostles' teaching, to the breaking of bread and to prayer, what happened was it identified them out.

[42 : 27] It singled them out as being those who the enemies of God would oppose. It's not going to be long before the persecution comes and dispersion comes and poverty comes.

What happened after Peter, after Stephen preached his sermon and accused the people, saying you stiff-necked people, we find that they gnashed their teeth and were furious at him and then they killed him.

And that day a great persecution broke out against the church at Jerusalem and all except the apostles were scattered throughout Judea and Samaria. You know, the persecution came, dispersion came, poverty came, they lost everything, but they were glued to Jesus, to the apostles' teaching.

What a wonderful testimony to the reality of their faith is that they stuck with it. Forget the metaphor again, they stuck with it, didn't they?

They were Christians and they stayed that way. Do you know this terrible killing in yet another school, the chap who went around with a gun, the question he asked people, are you a Christian?

[43 : 48] And if they said yes, he said, well, go and meet God and shot them. You know, and they were singled out and died for their faith in that sense.

And in the same way, these people who glued themselves to the apostles' teaching were singled out. And we are singled out. We're not of this world. You know, and we are different and we're called to live a life that is different.

So how do we apply that to ourselves? What about us? How do, what is the answer to when we cry out, brothers, what shall we do? What shall we do?

Well, do we adhere to the apostles' teaching? Are we students of God's word? How often do you read your Bible? Do you read it every day? Or do you just hear it on Sunday?

You know, that's a very important thing to think about. If you don't read your Bible, you will not grow, or you'll grow very, very slowly. You know, the means of grace are God's word.

[44 : 55] And reading God's word will wash your mind, it will cleanse your heart, it will give you direction and insight into God's ways. So are you interested enough to, are you glued enough to Christ to even read your Bible every day?

What about coming to church on Sunday? You know, Sunday evening is a bit hard, isn't it? Why don't you come? You know, our minister puts the same amount of work in the Sunday evening service as he does in the morning.

You know, why don't you come? Why stay away? What does the world offer that is better than the fellowship of believers?

Are you glued to the apostles teaching? What about fellowship? What about fellowship? The stimulation that we, when we meet together, we are, we're there to encourage and benefit one another, the giving of ourselves, the sharing of our lives.

That's what fellowship means. sharing of our lives. Are we prepared to do that? Do we want to do that? Do we prepare the company of the world?

[46 : 15] What about the breaking of bread? It's a reference to communion. It's not a euphemism for tea. It's communion.

You know, tonight we're going to gather together, we're going to share in fellowship, fellowship, and then we're going to remember the killing of Jesus and the raising of Jesus to life.

Do you want to be there? You know, if you're a believer, do you want to be there? Or is it just too much trouble? These people singled themselves out, made themselves noticeable by devoting themselves to teaching, to fellowship, fellowship, to the breaking of bread, and to prayer.

Prayer. It's the hardest thing in the world, isn't it? And yet we're called to pray, perhaps 15 of us on Wednesday evening. You know, if you weren't there, why weren't you there?

What's wrong with coming to a prayer meeting? You know, it can be hard, often is. But if we are serious about the life that we are called to live, then we have got to be like these 3,000 that were converted, the embryonic church, who devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and to fellowship, to the breaking of bread, and to prayer.

[47 : 52] Paul says in Romans 12, he says, in view of God's mercy, we are to offer our bodies as living sacrifices.

That's what we're called to do. And may God help us to do exactly that. Our gracious God, we do thank you for the reality that each of us must face, the awareness of our sin and that repentance, that being cut to our hearts because of that knowledge that you give to us.

We thank you that wherever there is a conviction of sin, there is the wonderful promise that all who call on the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, will be saved. And we thank you that together, each one of us have that wonderful life to live, a life that exemplifies and glorifies the Lord Jesus Christ, our prophet, our priest, our king, our Lord, our life, our way, our end.

Oh Lord, will you come and give us that grace and strength and holy determination that we need to press on to the high calling of God, that there is still much work to do in all of our lives, in each of our lives, in the life of the church.

Oh, grant us that strength, we pray. Now may the God of peace, who through the blood of the eternal covenant brought back from the dead, our Lord Jesus, that great shepherd of the sheep, equip you with everything good for doing his will.

[49 : 36] May he work in us what is pleasing to him through Jesus Christ, to whom be glory forever and ever. Amen.