

Ac1701	<b>WHAT SHALL WE DO?</b>	<b>Acts 2.37-39</b>
		2017-08-20 Chodae Church

- <sup>37</sup> Now when they heard this they were cut to the heart, and said to Peter and the rest of the apostles,  
 “Brothers, what shall we do?”
- <sup>38</sup> And Peter said to them,  
 “Repent and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins,  
 and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. <sup>39</sup> For the promise is for you and for your children and for  
 all who are far off, everyone whom the Lord our God calls to himself.”

**Acts 2:37-39**

Brothers, what shall we do?

We talk a lot in church.

We talk to our friends and family.

We talk to the pastors and elders and deacons.

We talk about our lives, our businesses, our families, our entertainments.

We talk to God in prayer.

We talk about God to each other.

We listen to sermons about Jesus, about salvation, and about our responsibilities as Christians.

We attend Bible studies, and prayer meetings, and home fellowships.

What do we do?

Talking is a wonderful gift from God!

We can make sounds, and let other people know our thoughts and our desires.

It is necessary for friendship, for love, and for helping others.

It is necessary for teaching all sorts of things; especially the Good News of Christ.

I really enjoy talking with my kids.

However, you parents know that talking is not enough; there is also a time for action.

Many parents wonder, “How do I get my children to do their chores?”

“I’ve told them 100 times to keep his room clean, but they just don’t do it!”

Sometimes I check to make sure they understand what I want them to do.

Do you know that tomorrow is trash day? --Yes, Dad.

Do you know that you need to put the trash in the cans so I can take it to the curb? --Yes, Dad.

Do you know I want it done before I get home from work? --Yes, Dad.

And then, I come home and... what do I find?

Knowledge is not the problem, doing is the problem.

They know what they are supposed to do.

The problem is not knowledge but action.

A similar situation is found among Christians.

Most of us have a basic knowledge of Christian teaching.

Many of us know a lot about Jesus.

We hear in sermons every week the meaning of the Bible.

We hear about God's love and holiness, about judgment and sin, and about Jesus' work for us.

We hear about how we are supposed to live.

If there is a problem, it is usually not what we know it's what we do and don't do.

It is not our knowledge, it is our actions.

When Peter stood up with the other apostles and preached that first Christian sermon, the listeners responded,

1) They had an emotional response: "they were cut to the heart".

They felt remorse for their sinful ways.

In particular, they were full of sorrow because they had participated in the crucifixion of Christ.

2) They asked this question: "Brothers, what shall we do?"

That is, How do we make it right? What does God require us to do?

Peter tells them to do two things: "Repent and be baptized"

The two most basic actions of Christians are to repent and to be baptized.

There is a lot that could be said about baptism's meaning and why we need to do it.

That is a message for another day.

I want to say 4 things about repenting:

- 1) Talk about what repenting is.
- 2) Repenting is a demonstration of our faith.
- 3) Repenting is the foundation of obedience.
- 4) Repenting is a life-long activity.

## 1) What is repenting?

- a. First, I want to use the English word "Repenting" not "Repentance"

I will be talking not about the *idea* of repentance but the *action* of repenting

- b. The Bible sometimes refers to repenting as an emotion or feeling of Grief, Remorse or Regret

Example: in the text, the people hear that the man they crucified is the Messiah

We are told they were "cut to the heart"

You can imagine the regret they felt; sometimes that sorrow leads to true repenting

- c. Sometimes, the Bible speaks of repenting as changing one's mind.

That is what is going on in this passage: Before, you were God's enemy; now change your attitude.

- d. The Bible also speaks of repenting as "turning", making an "about-face".

Example: 1 Thessalonians 1.9: "you turned to God from idols to serve the living and true God"

Before, you worshipped idols, but now you have turned and are going in the other direction.

- e. So, when we repent, we turn from what we are doing and do something else.

We change our minds about things.

We turn from rejecting God, and embrace Him.

We turn from doing sinful things and do righteous things.

## 2) Repenting is a demonstration of our faith.

- a. Repenting is a response to sober truth.

Every New Years, people make resolutions about how they are going to change their lives next year.

Usually, it's about losing weight or exercising or something they know they ought to do but don't really want to.

This is not the same thing as repenting.

Repenting is more severe.

It is finding out you are going to die if you don't change your habits and changing them.

It is being judged guilty and forsaking your wicked ways.

In our passage, it is finding that you have been the enemy of God Most High and surrendering to His will.

It is finding that the things we worship are worthless and condemn us to eternal death and turning to serve the living God.

b. We find the truth in God's message.

When we hear God's word, we either believe it or we don't.

Of course, if we don't believe it, we will not repent of anything.

But if we believe it, we are hit with some very serious truths.

We are under God's judgment because of our sin.

In other words, we are condemned because our thoughts and behavior do not match God's requirement: which is perfect righteousness.

He has taken our guilt and evil and placed it upon His Son, Jesus.

Jesus was punished for our crimes against God's righteous law!

In Jesus' death on our behalf, we can be forgiven because our crimes are justly punished.

If we believe this, we must repent!

We must change the whole way we think about life.

We must change our behavior.

After all, if God has gone to such lengths because of our sin, how can we continue to sin?

c. How can we continue to sin?

Repenting from our sin is a core response of faith.

If you believe God's word, you must repent; you must revise your lifestyle, your speech, your worldview.

So, how can it be that so many Christians are no different from everyone else?

How can Christians say sin is a lifestyle choice?

How can there be “Christian” this and “Christian” that, when God’s word clearly condemns those behaviors?

Paul knew these kinds of people even in his day.

He wrote to Titus: “They profess to know God, but they deny him by their works.” Titus 1:16

It is obvious, “Not everyone who says ... ‘Lord, Lord,’ will enter the kingdom of heaven”.

Who will?

Jesus says, “the one who does the will of my Father who is in heaven”. Matthew 7:21

The one who does His will, is the repenting believer.

d. And so, repenting is one demonstration of our faith.

Jesus said, “the tree is known by its fruit”. Matthew 12:33

Repenting is the basic work we believers must do, because:

**3) Repenting is the foundation of obedience.**

a. By this I mean:

Before we believe, there may be many things we do that are good or even righteous.

However, deep down we are corrupted by sin in our beliefs, loves, and actions.

To obey God, we will have to repent of something, maybe a lot of things.

No one can say they have nothing to reject about themselves.

If we say we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us.

If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. 1 John 1:8-9

And so, true self-judgment and confession lead to repenting, which leads to obedience.

b. We want to know the Word of God, so we can make proper self-judgment.

We don’t want to live with improper guilt.

I have known dear brothers and sisters who tormented themselves over things they didn’t have to.

However, I think the problem we are more likely to suffer is overgenerous indulgence of sin.

In our super-permissive society, we have to be on guard against self-deception.

We have to guard against taking sin too lightly and permitting ourselves shocking freedoms.

I have known too many churchgoers who saw nothing wrong with their sins.

In fact, they often didn't have any idea they were doing something wrong.

And I have known churchgoers who refused to repent, even when they knew God's view of things.

Without proper repenting, there is no obedience.

Without obedience, we cannot please God.

"we ask and urge you in the Lord Jesus, that as you received from us how you ought to live and to please God, just as you are doing, that you do so more and more. For you know what instructions we gave you through the Lord Jesus. For this is the will of God, your sanctification. **1 Thess. 4:1-3**

c. Repenting is part of submitting to the rule of King Jesus.

Jesus is not a legend, or a dead man, or your buddy; He is the Lord of all Creation.

He is our elder brother, and we are His adopted siblings, so there is tenderness in His rule.

Nevertheless, our relationship to Him should be one of respect and submission.

His will is the will of God for you.

His rules are the paths of life.

When we resist obedience to Him, we are saying we are outside of His kingdom.

When we repent, and change our ways and thinking to His ways and teaching, we place ourselves under His command, and under the umbrella of His blessing.

**4) Repenting is a life-long activity.**

a. The process of repenting.

When I first believed in Jesus, I realized very soon that some things I was involved with were wrong.

I began a process of repenting of those things.

Some things were easy, and I turned from them without difficulty.

Other things were hard to turn from, but victory came afterward.

Yet other things I still need to repent all these years later.

And still other things I found out later on!

All this to say that repenting is a life-long activity, or a life-long process.

We improve, and grow, but there are always new and on-going struggles to obey.

I have talked to old saints, who walked with Jesus for many years, and they still confess they sin and have to turn towards God afresh.

b. First love and faithfulness.

The believers in Acts 2 had a wonderful fervor to their repenting.

They were cut to the heart, and cried out, Brothers! What shall we do?!

But how were they in later years?

Did they have the same passion about turning from sin to God?

We don't know.

But some of them suffered persecution, gave their lives for the gospel, and took the message to the ends of the earth.

They were faithful unto death.

That is the faithfulness we strive for.

c. Finally, so we don't forget: We don't merely turn from sin to nothing.

Yes, we turn from sin and wickedness, but we turn to God and righteousness.

Repenting is the act of replacing evil with good.

So, the Thessalonians turned from idols to God.

We turn from self-will to God's will, from rebellion to obedience, from unbelief to faith.

We turn from selfishness to generosity, from gossip to praise, from foolishness to wisdom.

We turn from anger to forgiveness, from isolation to family, from anxiety to joy, from fighting to peace.

We turn from nihilism to love and hope, from greedy endeavor to ministry and blessing.

Repenting is part of God's beautification project for us and our lives, as He transforms us in every way into people holy, and human, and full of grace and beauty.