

Peter: Building Christ's Church
BIRTHDAY OF THE CHURCH

Tuesday, October 27

Reading: Acts 1-2

Acts 2:36 "Therefore let all Israel be assured of this: God has made this Jesus, whom you crucified, both Lord and Messiah."
37 When the people heard this, they were cut to the heart and said to Peter and the other apostles, "Brothers, what shall we do?" **38** Peter replied, "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"

After the resurrection, Jesus' disciples were still thinking about an earthly kingdom (see 1:6). However, Jesus had other plans. While the angels remind the disciples that Christ's earthly kingdom will come, Jesus wants them involved in building His church in the present. He gives them the "game plan" of starting where they are and expanding out to reach the world with the gospel.

The Church began on the feast of Pentecost when the Jews celebrated God's provision for them in the wilderness and His giving of the Law at Mount Sinai. In many respects, it was considered the birthday of the nation of Israel. On this day, God sent the Holy Spirit to permanently indwell Christ's followers and give them the power to witness.

It is Peter who is the first "preacher" of the gospel to the Jews gathered for the feast. He proclaims that Jesus' death and resurrection had been planned by God and yet they were still responsible for their actions (2:22-24). However, salvation was available to all who believed in Christ and repented of their sins. That day, 3000 people trusted in Christ. It was the birthday of the Church.

LESSON ONE: Jesus' charge in Acts 1:8 tells us several things about God's plan of evangelism:

- It is powered by the Holy Spirit. We cannot do it in our own strength.
- It is spread through witnesses - people who tell others what Christ has done for them.
- It is to begin right where you are - in your neighborhoods and communities (Jerusalem).
- It is to spread to neighboring areas and to people who are not like you (Judea & Samaria).
- The job is not finished until the whole world is reached with the gospel.

What part are you playing in God's strategy to reach the world?

Are you being a witness where you are right now?

How will you be involved in getting the gospel to others both at home and around the world?

LESSON TWO: Peter's sermon is full of quotations from Scripture. Do you know some key Bible verses you can use when sharing Christ with others? What are they?

LESSON THREE: The coming of the Spirit not only gave believers the power to be witnesses, it also gave them the power to live in community with one another. What does Acts 2:42-47 teach us about how a church family is to live life together?