

Main Idea: When the Word is truly preached, it produces three effects as demonstrated in Acts 2:37-41.

- I. The preached Word exposes sinners (37).
 - A. Biblical preaching produces conviction.
 - B. Biblical preaching produces a desire to change.
- II. The preached Word exalts the Savior (38-39).
 - A. Here’s how you must respond (38a).
 1. You must repent.
 2. You must give allegiance to Christ.
 - It must be personal.
 - It must be public.
 - B. Here’s what you will receive (38b).
 1. You will experience forgiveness.
 2. You will receive the Holy Spirit.
 - C. Here’s what makes it possible (39).
 1. The invitation is universal.
 2. The call is particular.
- III. The preached Word expands the church (40-41).
 - A. We must urge people to leave the corrupt society (40).
 - B. We must invite people to join a new community (41).
 1. They accepted the message.
 2. They were baptized.
 3. They became part of the church.

Make It Personal: Two questions to ponder...

1. Does Christ have my allegiance?
2. Does His church have my devotion?

Scripture Reading: Isaiah 55

When the Scriptures are preached as God intended, the Scriptures can accomplish what no human means could ever fulfill. Biblical preaching changes lives and destinies.

I’m here today as a testimony to that fact, and so are many of you. When I was eleven years old I was first exposed to biblical preaching. Oh, I’d been to church before. And I’d heard sermons before, but it had been in a church that sadly didn’t cherish the Scriptures, with a “preacher” that didn’t expound the Bible, but merely talked in vague terms about living a good life.

Yet at the age of eleven our family moved to a new town and a new church, and I began to hear biblical preaching. I listened week after week as the pastor presented the clear truths of God’s Word, paragraph by paragraph, line by line, word by word.

And God began to create unrest in my soul. The more I heard God’s Word, the clearer it became what was missing.

I needed a Savior. And amazingly, what I needed, God had provided for me. It was because the Bible was truly preached that I came to know Jesus Christ personally.

What happened in my life at age eleven happened on an even grander scale one day in Jerusalem nearly two thousand years ago. On the day of Pentecost, some three thousand people came to know Christ as a result of hearing a sermon that Peter preached.

We examined that sermon last week in our study of Acts 2:14-36. But we left off without seeing the effect the sermon had on the listeners. We’ll pick it up at that point now, and this is what we’ll see. When the Word was preached, it produced three effects in Acts 2:37-41.

^{**}Note: This is an unedited manuscript of a message preached at Wheelersburg Baptist Church. It is provided to prompt your continued reflection on the practical truths of the Word of God.

¹ For an earlier development of this text, see the Acts series preached at WBC in 2001.

And it does the same today. In fact, you can test a sermon to determine whether it's biblical by this criteria. When the Bible is preached as God intended, it produces these same three effects.

I. The preached Word exposes sinners (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?’”

Something amazing happened to the crowd. Fifty days earlier from the same location a mob cried, “Crucify Him!” Less than an hour earlier, the people in this crowd were oblivious to their spiritual condition. But now they're cut to the heart.

What made the difference? What was it that produced this effect? The writer of Acts, Luke, says in verse 37, “When the people heard *this*, they were cut to the heart.”

What was *this*? It was Peter's sermon.

Remember the context. There were several thousand people standing before Peter and the other apostles, probably in the temple court. The reason they were there is because of a sound they heard that had grabbed their attention—the sound of a violent wind.

The Holy Spirit had just come upon the followers of Jesus, enabling them to speak in *glossa*, or foreign languages. Jews from all over the world who were in town for the Jewish holiday, Pentecost, heard the Christians speaking in their native dialects. They were amazed and asked, “Are not all these men who are speaking Galileans? Then how is it that each of us hears them in his own native language (7-8)?”

Peter answered their question by preaching the sermon recorded in verses 14-36. It's was the church's first sermon had three ingredients. First, there was *clarification* (14-21). Peter told them, “This isn't spirits—these men aren't drunk. This is *the* Spirit, the Holy Spirit! He has come just as the Old Testament prophet Joel predicted.”

Then came the *confrontation* (22-35). Peter forced his hearers to face the crime of their rejection of Jesus. “Jesus was the Messiah! You put to death God's Anointed One, but know this. God endorsed Him, and for that matter, so did the Old Testament Scriptures.” In fact, if you examine Peter's entire sermon, you'll discover that he devoted thirteen verses to Old Testament quotations and the other thirteen verses to exposition and application. This was a *biblical* sermon!

Thirdly came the *challenge* in verse 36. “Therefore let all Israel be assured of this: God has made this Jesus, whom you crucified, both Lord and Christ.” Your assessment of Jesus was wrong. God's assessment is what matters. You crucified Him, but God declares Jesus to be both Lord and Christ.

Realize this. A person is in big trouble when his assessment of something conflicts with God's. When they heard *this*, they were cut to the heart.

So much preaching in our day is man-centered. If you want to determine whether preaching is truly biblical, look for these two evidences.

A. Biblical preaching produces conviction. “When the people heard this, they were *cut to the heart*.” They were “pricked in their heart,” as the KJV translators put it. The Greek verb *katanusso* appears only here in the New Testament. It means “to pierce,” or “to stab,” and depicts something sudden and unexpected.²

What is it that has the power to penetrate to the innermost depths of a person's life? What can cut to the core of an individual and produce intense conviction? God's Word can.

² John MacArthur, *Acts*, p. 71.

When God's Word is presented clearly, it changes the way we view ourselves. It causes people to see themselves from God's perspective. And for a sinner, that's a frightening (although necessary) experience.

May I remind you that there was no soft music playing in the background? Peter didn't tell any tear-jerking stories. He simply presented Jesus to the people by preaching the Scriptures. It's the proclamation of God's Word that produces conviction.

There's a second evidence of preaching that is truly biblical...

B. Biblical preaching produces a desire to change. The people said to Peter and the other apostles, "Brothers, what shall we do?" What does their question indicate? Not only were they under conviction, but they were ready to change. The message they heard affected not only their hearts, but their lives.

Know this. The preaching of the Scriptures soothes, yes. But at times it upsets. Indeed, biblical preaching has the power to comfort the disturbed and disturb the comfortable. In short, it exposes.

What a question they asked! "What shall we do?" Don't miss that they addressed this question to the other apostles as well as Peter. All twelve were involved in the witnessing that day (14), and Peter was addressed as one amongst equals.

That's a good question to ask after you've heard a sermon. When the crowds heard the preaching of John the Baptist they asked him, "What shall we do then (Luke 3:10)?" When the Philippian jailor discovered that Paul and Silas hadn't escaped during the earthquake, he asked, "Sirs, what must I do to be saved (Acts 16:31)?"

William LaSor is right when he says, "Preaching should appeal to the head and to the heart. But unless it also appeals to the will, it falls short of its purpose. It is not enough to sway the hearer's emotions or to satisfy his intellectual curiosity. That man must be led to want to do something. Otherwise, it is only entertainment."³

To put it bluntly, if your goal on Sunday is to go to a church that makes you feel *good* about yourself, then don't go to a Bible-teaching church. Why not? Because when the Word is preached, it exposes sinners. It reveals the truth to us about our condition. It's not that we *were* sinners. We *are* sinners who have offended a holy God.

Suppose you were on a passenger train clicking along at 60 mph. There's a party going on in your boxcar. Everyone is laughing and having a great time. In fact, you just commented, "I can't remember the last time I was having this much fun!" It was a real joy ride.

But suppose, unbeknownst to anyone on the train, that six miles ahead a bridge over a canyon is out—completely gone. In just six minutes the train will arrive at the spot and everyone will perish.

Answer this. Would it upset you if at that moment someone called you on your cell-phone and said, "Stop the party! The bridge is out! Get off the train or you'll die!"? Hardly. You'd be forever grateful for that message, wouldn't you?

I'm so thankful that someone loved me enough to tell me the truth, "You're on a ride that's heading for destruction. Get off before it's too late!" Sure, he interrupted my party, but he saved my life, literally and *eternally*.

Apart from the working of the Holy Spirit, we wouldn't want to hear what we desperately need to hear. We'd rather keep partying all the way to the canyon floor. But when biblical preaching occurs, the Spirit of God uses the Word of God to produce the conviction of God.

And know this. Until people are convicted of their sin they'll never see why they need the Savior.

³ William LaSor, *Church Alive*, p. 51.

This past week, Stephen Hawking died. Remember him? He was a Cambridge University physicist and best-selling author who “roamed the cosmos from a wheelchair, pondering the nature of gravity and the origin of the universe and becoming an emblem of human determination and curiosity.” I read an interesting article about him on MSN:⁴

Scientifically, Dr. Hawking will be best remembered for a discovery so strange that it might be expressed in the form of a Zen koan: When is a black hole not black? When it explodes.

What is equally amazing is that he had a career at all. As a graduate student in 1963, he learned he had amyotrophic lateral sclerosis, a neuromuscular wasting disease also known as Lou Gehrig’s disease. He was given only a few years to live.

But Stephen Hawking did not live just a few years. He lived five more decades, until he died this week at the age of 76. In 2011, just seven years ago, he said something in an interview that I’d like you to hear:

“I regard the brain as a computer which will stop working when its components fail. There is no heaven or afterlife for broken-down computers; that is a fairy story for people afraid of the dark.”

According to the article, having spent the best part of his life grappling with black holes and cosmic doom, Dr. Hawking had no fear of the dark. “They’re named black holes because they are related to human fears of being destroyed or gobbled up,” he once told an interviewer. “I don’t have fears of being thrown into them. I understand them. I feel in a sense that I am their master.”

Sobering, isn’t it? The creature says he is the master. And Hawking is just more transparent than most. All sinners think of themselves as being the master. That’s what sin is, rivaling *The Master*.

Here’s where preaching comes in. When the Word is preached as God intended, it exposes sinners. It confronts their cosmic rebellion.

But it doesn’t stop there. Biblical preaching does more than unveil our problem. It also shows us the remedy for our problem, in other words, how to get off the train that’s heading for devastation.

So in Acts 2 we see that the preached Word, first of all, exposes sinners.

II. The preached Word exalts the Savior (38-39).

James Denney said it well, “No man can give at once the impression that he himself is clever and that Jesus Christ is mighty to save.” Preaching that is biblical will expose sinners, but it won’t stop there. It will then exalt the Savior.

That’s what Peter did. Listen to the Christ-exalting invitation he extended to his audience in verses 38-39: “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. The promise is for you and your children and for all who are far off -- for all whom the Lord our God will call.’”

Peter exalted the Savior by clarifying three critical matters. First, he told them...

A. Here’s how you must respond (38a). Remember, the people’s question was, “Brothers, what shall we do?” Peter didn’t mince words. He told them that there was only one appropriate way to respond. In his answer, he used clear and concise biblical terms.

⁴ <https://www.msn.com/en-us/news/world/stephen-hawking-who-examined-the-universe-and-explained-black-holes-dies-at-76/ar-BBKbCI?li=BBmkt5R&ocid=spartandhp>

Which unfortunately doesn't happen today far too often. Before we examine the response Peter invited his listeners to make, think about the "fuzzy" terminology we often use. Here are some typical, though unbiblical invitations:⁵

"*Will you give your heart to Christ?*" The Bible never tells a sinner to give his heart to Christ. We are not saved by giving God anything, but by accepting His gift to us (Eph 2:8-9).

"*If you want to be saved, ask Jesus to come into your heart.*" That, too, is unbiblical. First of all, it conjures up confusing notions about Jesus entering into the organ that's pumping in my chest. But there's a more fundamental problem. Biblically defined, what is true of my heart? It is *corrupt*. I don't need for Jesus to come into my existing heart, but to give me a new heart.

"*Come to the altar now, and get washed in the blood.*" The altar is an Old Testament concept. The altar was in the Temple. The early church didn't have altars in the front of their church buildings. For that matter, they didn't even have church buildings! And though getting "washed in the blood" is a New Testament truth—we are redeemed by the precious blood of Christ (1 Pet 1:19)—this invitation is confusing. We must tell people *how* to experience Christ's cleansing.

"*Will you come and pray through to Christ?*" You won't find phrases like "praying through" and "letting go" in the biblical invitations. They imply human effort is required for salvation. It's not. Nowhere does the Bible tell us we have to plead with God and coerce Him to save us. In fact, terminology like "praying through" is often used by people who overemphasize the place of emotions in salvation, and insist that people need to keep praying until they "feel" like they are saved.

You won't find those kinds of invitations in Acts. In fact, if you scan the book of Acts you might be surprised how people responded when they wanted to become a Christian. There's no evidence of walking an aisle in a church building. You won't find anybody raising a hand for prayer. There's no invitation to repeat a prayer after a preacher. In fact, there's not even any record of someone bowing their head and praying to receive Christ as their Savior, although they undoubtedly did pray.

Most of these responses came from the American revivalism of Charles Finney and others, not from the Bible. If you want to see a biblical invitation, listen to what Peter told those under conviction in Jerusalem that day. He gave them two specific charges.

1. *You must repent.* The Greek word is *metanoeo*. It means to change your mind or purpose. The Hebrew word used as its equivalent in the Old Testament means "to turn" or "return." The biblical picture is that a person who has not repented is going away from God, going his own way, and acting contrary to God.

But when a person repents, he does a 180 degree turn around. He turns from his sin to God. To repent is to express a willingness to change one's thinking and living. To be precise, repentance is a gift of God just as faith is (Acts 5:31). That is, no sinner will desire to repent apart from the Spirit's working.

Sadly, "repent" is a neglected word in many evangelistic presentations today. Some suggest that we shouldn't tell non-Christians to repent. They just need to *believe*. But Peter did. For that matter, so did John the Baptist (Matt 3:2). And so did Jesus Himself (Matt 4:17).

When the crowd of convicted sinners asked Peter what to do, the first charge he gave them was to *repent*. That indicates that repentance is an essential component of genuine conversion.

⁵ Some of these invitations have been adapted from a section in the Awana training manual entitled, "Confusing Invitations."

Let me say it as clearly as I can. According to the New Testament, a person who does not repent is not a Christian. *You must repent*. That doesn't mean you change your life, but it does mean you know you need to change, and want to change, and you are willing to be changed. By the only One who can change sinners.

Which brings us to the second charge. And by the way these are a package deal, for you can't separate the two. Peter said, "Repent and be baptized, every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of sins." In other words...

2. *You must give allegiance to Christ.*

Before considering what Peter is saying, let's first establish what he is *not* saying. The question that always arises at this point is this, "Is Peter saying that you have to be baptized to be saved?"

No. Acts 2:38 doesn't teach salvation by baptism. Baptism doesn't save a sinner. If baptism is essential for salvation, it's odd that Peter said nothing about it in his other recorded sermons (Acts 3:12-26; 5:29-32; 10:34-43). In fact, in Acts 10 Cornelius and his household clearly received the Holy Spirit *before* they were baptized (44-48).

No, baptism doesn't save us. The water isn't magical. It doesn't literally wash away sins.

Why, then, did Peter exhort his Jewish audience to be baptized? To help us answer that, we need to put ourselves into his listeners' sandals.

It's hard for us to imagine the difficulty of the decision facing Peter's hearers. They were Jews. They'd been Jews all their lives. And they were devout Jews—remember, they'd spent money to travel from all over the world just to observe this Jewish holiday of Pentecost. As Jews they were a people with a rich cultural and religious history.

Most Jews were fiercely nationalistic. They banded together in their dream of getting rid of the Romans. They prayed for the day when God would establish His kingdom over the world—a *Jewish* kingdom. Just fifty days earlier they had crucified One they considered to be a barrier to their nationalistic goals.

So when they heard Peter say, "Repent and be baptized in the name of Jesus," they knew what he meant. They were familiar with baptism. They knew that to enter the waters of baptism would signify a change.

Some, no doubt, had been baptized by John the Baptist. But this would be different. Peter called on them to be baptized "in the name of Jesus Christ." What name? The name of the Person they had crucified seven weeks earlier. *That* name.

If they were baptized in *that* name, they would be ostracized by their people. They would become outcasts in their own society. They would be making a public break with Judaism. Yes, this would be a life-changing step.

Three pastors got together for coffee one day and found all their churches had bat-infestation problems. "I got so mad," said one, "I took a shotgun and fired at them. It made holes in the ceiling, but did nothing to the bats."

"I tried trapping them alive," said the second. "Then I drove 50 miles before releasing them, but they beat me back to the church."

"I haven't had any more problems," said the third. "What did you do?" asked the others, amazed. "I simply baptized and confirmed them," he replied. "I haven't seen them since."⁶

Let's set the record straight. Baptism is supposed to mean something, and in New Testament Christianity, it did. Faith was not a private matter like many consider it to be today. Would you notice two critical elements of baptism underscored here by Peter?

⁶ *Reader's Digest*, July 1994, p. 64.

•It must be *personal*. “Repent and be baptized, *every one of you*,” he said. This is a call for a personal response. I can’t be baptized for you, nor can you for me. Parents can’t make this decision for their children. It must be personal.

•It must be *public*. Anyone can *say* they’ve repented and believed in Christ. But the proof of the sincerity of a person’s repentance and faith is public baptism.

Baptism says you mean it. An unbaptized Christ-follower is a contradiction of terms. Sort of like, I want to follow Christ, but I don’t want anybody to know. My friend, if you have believed in Christ, the world is supposed to know.

If a Jew in Peter’s audience decided to be baptized he would be saying, “I was wrong about Jesus before, but by God’s grace, no longer. I believe He is both Lord and Christ, and from this day forth He will be *my* Lord.”

Let me say it again. The act of baptism doesn’t save anybody. A person is saved by faith in Christ’s work, not by his own works. Peter himself later clarified that for Cornelius, “Everyone who *believes* in him [Christ] receives forgiveness of sins through his name (Acts 10:43).”

Baptism isn’t necessary for salvation. It is necessary as the Scriptural means of expressing faith in Christ. To be baptized is to say outwardly what you’ve already said inwardly. “I believe in Jesus. He is my Savior and Lord. I want the world to know.”

Don’t miss this. To be baptized is to count the cost. To be baptized is to declare public allegiance to Jesus Christ.

Peter exalted the Savior next by clarifying a second matter. First, here’s how you must respond.

B. Here’s what you will receive (38b). Two gifts. If you repent and give allegiance to Christ, two things will happen.

1. *You will experience forgiveness.* “Repent and be baptized, every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ *for the forgiveness of sins.*” How marvelous! Our sins—no matter how many nor how heinous—our sins can be forgiven through Jesus.

Perhaps you’re listening to this message right now and thinking, “Is there really hope for me after all I’ve done. I’ve lived a sinful life, and I’ve rejected Jesus many times before. Is there hope for me?”

Dear friend, know this. Some in this very crowd were responsible for Jesus’ crucifixion. His blood was on their hands—literally.

Yet what did Peter offer them? The *forgiveness of sins*. And the offer is for you, too. Repent and place your faith in Christ and you will experience forgiveness. That’s not all.

2. *You will receive the Holy Spirit.* That’s what Peter said, “You will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.” Not *might*, but will. The gift of the Spirit is the Spirit Himself.⁷

Peter is saying, “Respond today, and what happened to us will happen to you, too. God’s Spirit will come and live in you as He does in us.”

So here’s how you must respond, and what you must do. Thirdly...

C. Here’s what makes it possible (39). “The promise is for you and your children and for all who are far off -- for all whom the Lord our God will call.” Notice two features of the salvation that God offers.

1. *The invitation is universal.* Who is the promise for? Peter says *all*. William Temple put it this way, “The church is the only cooperative society in the world that exists for the benefit of its non-members.”

Who can receive forgiveness of sins and the gift of the Holy Spirit? *All* can. Who is invited to be saved? According to Peter, *all* are. The invitation is universal. But something else is true of God’s salvation.

⁷ As F. F. Bruce explains, *Acts*, pp. 76-77.

2. *The call is particular.* Who did Peter say the promise is for at the end of verse 39? “For all whom the Lord our God will call.”

There’s a beautiful balance in Scripture. Who is invited to be saved? All are. Who will be saved? All whom the Lord calls. To be saved, God must do something for the sinner. He must call them, and *all* those He calls will put their trust in Christ and be saved.

I’m intrigued by what Peter just did. In an evangelistic message, Peter told unregenerate hearers about God’s sovereignty in salvation.

The Scriptures teach that in eternity past God chose an undeserving people for Himself (Rom 8:28-30; Eph 1:4-5). He promised He would save them.

We don’t know who the elect are, but God does. It’s our task to call all men to respond to Jesus. And know that God will save those whom He chooses to call.

Indeed, were it not for the effectual call of God, no one would be saved. But because God is the author of salvation, we can preach with confidence. Even as Paul did when he said from his prison cell, “Therefore I endure everything for the sake of the elect, that they too may obtain the salvation that is in Christ Jesus (2 Timothy 2:10).”

So we’ve seen two things. When the Word is preached as God intends, it exposes sinners and exalts the Savior. From the beginning to end, God is exalted in the salvation of His people. But we see a third effect of biblical preaching in Acts 2, one that’s often overlooked. When the Word is truly preached...

III. The preached Word expands the church (40-41).

“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 three thousand were added to their number that day.”

Talk about church growth! The church went from 120 to 3,000 as a result of one Christ-exalting sermon!

Ponder those statistics. In less than 24 hours Jesus’ followers won more converts than their Master did in three years of preaching! But that’s the very thing He told them would happen in John 14:12, “I tell you the truth, anyone who has faith in me will do what I have been doing. He will do *even greater things* than these, because I am going to the Father.”

When the Word is preached, it expands the church. Granted, that doesn’t mean that every time a sermon is preached there will be 3,000 conversions. Even Peter never saw those kind of numbers again. When it comes to fruit, the extent is up to God.

Yet of this we can be sure. When the Word is preached, God’s church will grow. God determines the pace, and God determines the place, but it will grow! Read the book of Acts and that’s what we’ll discover. Biblical preaching always results in the growth of the *church*.

Follow me. In Acts, whenever people responded to Christ, they were instantly plugged into the local church. What that means in practical terms is this. If we’re going to extend to people invitations that are biblical, we have two responsibilities.

A. We must urge people to leave the corrupt society (40). That’s what Peter did, “With many other words he warned them; and he pleaded with them, ‘Save yourselves from this corrupt generation.’”

The word “corrupt” translates *skolios* which means “bent” or “crooked.” It’s true. We are living in a twisted world. The world calls evil *good* and good *evil*. The world says it’s okay to terminate the life of an unborn child, and look at pornography, and harbor resentment towards a person who has wronged you.

But God says, “It’s not okay.” To the contrary, God says this society is *corrupt*, and we need to save ourselves from it, for it’s on the fast track to hell.

Realize this. You can’t become a Christian and continue to live like the world. To become a Christian is to become counter-cultural. You are choosing a life that goes against the grain.

And you’ll never make it on your own, nor did God intend for you to try. Which is why in extending an invitation we have a second responsibility.

B. We must invite people to join a new community (41). That’s what Peter did. “Those who accepted his message were baptized, and about three thousand were added to their number that day.”

I love how matter-of-factly Luke presents the results. Three things happened to the people God called that day.

1. *They accepted the message.* What message? Peter’s message about Christ. Having heard the message about Christ, there are only two options. You either accept it, or reject it. In fact, to *not* accept it is to reject it. To refuse to submit your life to Christ is to reject Him.

But in response to the Spirit’s call, 3,000 people accepted the message that day. They were saved. Then what did they do?

2. *They were baptized.* A. T. Robertson says that the numerous pools in Jerusalem provided plenty of space for the wholesale baptizing. They did what Peter had told them to do.

Have you? If you have accepted the message of Christ, have you made it public by being baptized? Thirdly...

3. *They became part of the church.* Luke says they were “added to their number that day.” That is, they became part of this new, counter-cultural community known as the church. Their whole life would now revolve around this community. Their identity would be linked to it.

In fact, according to verse 42 (a text we’ll develop next time, the Lord willing) they were *devoted* to the church. It’s sad, yet true. Far too often people view the church like they do a grocery store. It’s just a place you go to get some goods. So if the church down the street offers better “goods,” we go there. Or worse yet, if I don’t think I need any “goods” this week, I stay home.

Not so with our forefathers in Acts. When a person became a Christian, that person was added to the church. It wasn’t just where they went on Sunday. It was their life, and they were devoted to it.

That’s what our community groups are all about, beginning this evening.

Such is the powerful effect of the preaching of God’s Word. When God’s Word is preached, it exposes sinners, exalts the Savior, and expands the church.

Make It Personal: In light of that, there are two questions we need to ponder...

1. *Does Christ have my allegiance?* Have you repented, believed in Christ, and made a public profession through baptism? Are you living in allegiance to Him?

To become a Christian you must identify with Christ. But to live as a Christian, you must identify with the people of Christ. You need to be “added” to the church. Church membership is vital. So a second question is in order...

2. *Does His church have my devotion?* Christ loves His church. Do you?

Sing: *My Jesus, I Love Thee* (#364)