

St Mary's Ferndown

Study Notes for week commencing 19th May 2008

“Repenting Together”

Acts 2 v 22 - 41

This passage describes the impact of the coming of the Holy Spirit on those outside of the group of believers. While the 120, or so, experienced a powerful experience of God's Spirit, it was the change brought about by Peter's sermon up to 3,000 other people which is the true demonstration of the power of the Holy Spirit. In particular, we are going to be looking at the place of repentance in the making of a believer.

Acts 2:36-37: It fell to Peter to explain to the crowd gathered outside the church building, when they wondered at the strange phenomenon of people talking at once in different languages. He therefore ends his sermon with the words “Repentance” of the new church.

Read Peter's sermon through, from v 14 to v 36, and see if you can identify the following points - 1) the pouring out of God's Spirit, 2) the death and resurrection of Jesus, and 3) the prophecies of David about the resurrection of the Messiah. Do not spend too long on this; it is just to give an idea of the content of the sermon. It is the crowd's reaction to it which is the subject of our study.

Acts 2:37 - 41):

What was the crowd's response to Peter's sermon? (v 37)

What did Peter tell them to do? (v 38a)

What did they do after they have done these two things? (v 38b & 39)

Do we have any similar experiences to speak of? Or could we speak of the way we come to faith in the present day?

The Place of Repentance: We set great store by the fact that eternal life is “free”, and we encourage people to believe in it. Surprisingly perhaps, there is a **condition** to our entry into this life and that is **repentance**. Look at Matt 4 v 17 and Luke 24 v 47. *What is the place of repentance in Jesus' ministry.*

The Bible Dictionary points out that there is “no salvation apart from repentance” (in other words, if you haven't come to the point of repentance then God's work of salvation in your life cannot really take place).

When did you last hear a talk or sermon on “repentance”?

What is repentance? Is it more than “being sorry”? Does it involve a conviction of our sinful nature? (see v 37b again)

So if repentance was the outcome of Peter's sermon, what was the primary purpose of the Holy Spirit? (see John 16 v 8 - 11 for an explanation of the Spirit's purpose)

An Exercise: Repentance isn't a “kill joy”, but it does have a cost. People can receive the gift of the Holy Spirit (v 38b and v 40) but something we may have to return to from time to time. Think of things in our lives which are unhelpful to the work of the Holy Spirit in our Christian faith. There is therefore the need to consider repentance as a stage of our lives.

In the privacy of your own home, or, if you can trust your group, write into words what you feel might be holding you back; perhaps things you have been clinging on to for some years, which needs to be let go so you can move forward in your Christian life and find a fullness which you have experienced before?