

Guest Speaker Jerry Woychik

And the Early Church Grew

1. Peter knew how to address his audience. Who were they (v. 5 and 22)? How did he appeal to them (v. 25-28, also verses 29 and 34)? Using Peter's strategy and love for others, how can we better reach those around us?
2. Peter's message (actually God's message) was clear, powerful, and effective. What evidence do we have of this (v. 37)? Are our words and lifestyle "clear," "powerful," and "effective" enough to draw such a response from those around us? Think of one specific area in which you can improve either your testimony or verbal witness to bring it in line with the above three attributes and consider sharing it with the class.
3. Repentance is essential for salvation. Explain "repentance." What should always follow repentance and salvation (v. 38)? Have you taken this important step in your Christian life? If not, make a commitment now to obey and glorify God by taking this next step in your spiritual growth, and share this commitment with the class or someone else you know. Set the date and put it on your calendar.
4. The Holy Spirit is given to us at salvation (v. 38). What is one of the primary purposes of God giving us the Holy Spirit (see Acts 1:8)? See also Matthew 28:19,20 and John 15:26-27a. Are you fulfilling your God-given purpose?
5. Read verse 41. How do we know that the early church kept a record of their conversions and baptisms? (Is it reasonable to believe that thousands of people could be baptized in one day?) Why might it be important to be "listed" as a member of a specific church? What does church membership provide that "sitting on the periphery" does not? If you aren't a member of a local body of believers, please consider this important step in the days ahead.
6. In verse 47 we see a unique phrase that we don't often associate with witnessing: "having favor with all the people." How do you think they accomplished that—living for Christ and being respected, if not accepted, by everyone? It seems we either don't witness or we witness in the wrong way and turn people off. List specific, practical ways we can witness for Christ and not be offensive. (It isn't difficult to earn respect. Whether we are accepted or not is up to God.)
7. Who ultimately "adds to the church" (v. 47)? Does this cancel out the verses that command us to share our faith?

²²Men of Israel, hear these words: Jesus of Nazareth, a Man attested by God to you by miracles, wonders, and signs which God did through Him in your midst, as you yourselves also know—²³Him, being delivered by the determined purpose and foreknowledge of God, you have taken by lawless hands, have crucified, and put to death; ²⁴whom God raised up, having loosed the pains of death, because it was not possible that He should be held by it. ²⁵For David says concerning Him:

'I foresaw the LORD always before my face, for He is at my right hand, that I may not be shaken. ²⁶Therefore my heart rejoiced, and my tongue was glad; moreover my flesh also will rest in hope. ²⁷For You will not leave my soul in Hades, nor will You allow Your Holy One to see corruption. ²⁸You have made known to me the ways of life; you will make me full of joy in Your presence.'

²⁹Men and brethren, let me speak freely to you of the patriarch David, that he is both dead and buried, and his tomb is with us to this day. ³⁰Therefore, being a prophet, and knowing that God had sworn with an oath to him that of the fruit of his body, according to the flesh, He would raise up the Christ to sit on his throne, ³¹he, foreseeing this, spoke concerning the resurrection of the Christ, that His soul was not left in Hades, nor did His flesh see corruption. ³²This Jesus God has raised up, of which we are all witnesses. ³³Therefore being exalted to the right hand of God, and having received from the Father the promise of the Holy Spirit, He poured out this which you now see and hear.

³⁴For David did not ascend into the heavens, but he says himself:

'The LORD said to my Lord, "Sit at My right hand, ³⁵till I make Your enemies Your footstool."

³⁶Therefore let all the house of Israel know assuredly that God has made this Jesus, whom you crucified, both Lord and Christ.'

³⁷Now when they heard this, they were cut to the heart, and said to Peter and the rest of the apostles, "Men and brethren, what shall we do?"

³⁸Then Peter said to them, "Repent, and let every one of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins; and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. ³⁹For the promise is to you and to your children, and to all who are afar off, as many as the Lord our God will call."

⁴⁰And with many other words he testified and exhorted them, saying, "Be saved from this perverse generation." ⁴¹Then those who gladly received his word were baptized; and that day about three thousand souls were added to them. ⁴²And they continued steadfastly in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship, in the breaking of bread, and in prayers. ⁴³Then fear came upon every soul, and many wonders and signs were done through the apostles. ⁴⁴Now all who believed were together, and had all things in common, ⁴⁵and sold their possessions and goods, and divided them among all, as anyone had need.

⁴⁶So continuing daily with one accord in the temple, and breaking bread from house to house, they ate their food with gladness and simplicity of heart, ⁴⁷praising God and having favor with all the people. And the Lord added to the church daily those who were being saved.

Guest Speaker Loren Stoneberg

Read: Acts 3

Monday

1 — What is our current context? What is happening in the local church at Jerusalem right now? What is so significant about the actions of Peter and John in verse 1? Do our actions in our own local church mirror what we are seeing here?

Tuesday

2,3 — What do we learn about this lame man (see also 4:22) and about those who laid him daily at the gate? This activity opens a window into the spiritual condition of God's people at the time. How would you describe this condition (see Deut. 15:4; Matt. 23:23)?

Wednesday

4-10 — Why is Peter's attention to this man different this time than all the other times before? What is the imperative, or command, in this passage? Do we see the true nature of a genuine miracle here? What does a true miracle consist of?

Thursday

11 — What is the danger of the healed man's response? Is there any significant irony pertaining to where Peter, John, and the healed man are (see John 9 and 10)?

Friday

12 — What is the importance of having sermons recorded in Scripture? How does Peter begin his sermon? What does he bridge off of? How can we apply this to our own witnessing techniques? What are two key elements in this introduction?

Saturday

13-26 — What are the two main thrusts of Peter's sermon? In which person does he address his listeners: first, second, or third? What does he command his audience to do and why? Who is Peter's authority here? Who is the authority in your life and what impact does it have on your life?