

A Public Confession of Faith (Acts 2:37–47)

In a few moments, we're going to have some folks up here who have expressed a desire to follow the Lord in believer's baptism, and before being immersed in the water, they are going to give their testimony of faith in Christ. That is the basis upon which we baptize people, a credible profession of faith in Jesus Christ. And before we do that, I want to focus our hearts and our minds upon this passage of Scripture in Acts chapter 2, beginning at verse 37. This is going to show us by example the significance as well as the purpose of baptism. This is going to be a familiar passage to many of you. The event that is described here at the day of Pentecost, the birth of the church, is going to be well-known to many of you. Three thousand people got saved that day.

Acts 2, beginning at verse 37. We're going to read through the end of verse 47.

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

38 Peter said to them, "Repent, and each of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins; and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.

39 For the promise is for you and your children and for all who are far off, as many as the Lord our God will call to Himself."

40 And with many other words he solemnly testified and kept on exhorting them, saying, "Be saved from this perverse generation!"

41 So then, those who had received his word were baptized; and that day there were added about three thousand souls.

42 They were continually devoting themselves to the apostles' teaching and to fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer.

43 Everyone kept feeling a sense of awe; and many wonders and signs were taking place through the apostles.

44 And all those who had believed were together and had all things in common;

45 and they began selling their property and possessions and were sharing them with all, as anyone might have need.

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46 Day by day continuing with one mind in the temple, and breaking bread from house to house, they were taking their meals together with gladness and sincerity of heart,

47 praising God and having favor with all the people. And the Lord was adding to their number day by day those who were being saved. (Acts 2:37–47 NASB)

This is obviously a larger passage than I would normally take here on a Sunday morning, and while I might dive into more of the details in this passage if we were going through this in a series from the book of Acts, today we're just going to observe some things, four of them particularly, about these people who are being baptized on the day of Pentecost. We are going to note their conviction, their contrition, their confession, and then their consecration. Their conviction, their contrition, their confession, and then their consecration. Now normally you would hear a good outline like that and you would think, he's not going to waste all of those on one Sunday. He's going to stretch that out, and that would be four sermons. And it should be four sermons. But as much as it hurts my heart today, I'm going to go through all of these in our time here together, just kind of briefly noticing these four things about these folks who are baptized on the day of Pentecost.

This is the day that the church was born, and these four things that we observe about the candidates for baptism on that day tell us something about the function of baptism and the meaning of baptism in the early church. So let's note first of all their conviction in verse 37: "Now when they heard this, they were pierced to the heart, and said to Peter and the rest of the apostles, 'Brethren, what shall we do?'" Now the very first question that presents itself to us in the text is this question: why were they pierced to the heart? Now we are, when we begin at verse 37, we're sort of parachuting into the middle of this story and this series of events in Acts chapter 2. They were pierced to the heart. The reason for that is explained in the context when we see what else is going on. Now we obviously have to kind of jump in at verse 37. We're going to look at the response of the crowd, what happened that day, the baptism itself, what happened after the baptism. But in order to do that, we need to allude back to the rest of the context for that day.

This was the day of Pentecost, and the story begins back at the beginning of chapter 2. This was fifty days after the Passover/resurrection of Christ. It is ten days after Christ's ascension, and the disciples, according to His command and His promise, were waiting in the city of Jerusalem until the promise of the Holy Spirit was given. Then the Spirit is

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poured out and the disciples who were there, the believers, began to speak in tongues. That is not ecstatic babble that was not understood to anybody around them, but it was intelligent languages that they had never learned before. So they began to preach the gospel in the language of the people who had gathered in Jerusalem for the day of Pentecost in their own tongue, their own language, their own dialect so that the people who were there could understand the gospel. And some of them mocked them and said, “Well, you just—you're drunk.” And Peter then of course responds and said, “No, we're not drunk. It's nine o'clock in the morning. What you're seeing here is not the results of being filled with alcohol. What you're seeing here is the results of us being filled with the Holy Spirit.” They had a gift and an ability that the Spirit had given them to proclaim a message of repentance and judgment to the Jews who were standing there, so that having heard that gospel, they would respond to it. Peter and the apostles were simply doing what Jesus had commanded them to do back in Matthew chapter 28 when He said, “All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth. Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age.”

Now without all of the details of everything that Peter gives them and his response to them, beginning back in verse 18 and earlier, without getting into all the details of that, it is worth noting that the apostle Peter quoted and explained three different Old Testament passages. First, he quotes from Joel chapter 2, verses 28–32. You see that in verses 20 and 21. Joel 2:28–32 to show that the coming of the Holy Spirit was something promised and predicted in the Old Testament. So what they were seeing that day was something that God had already promised to them through the prophet Joel, and Peter is simply reminding them of that promise. What you're seeing here is not wine, it is the result of the Spirit being poured out. And because the Spirit is being poured out, this is the birth of the church, and He is now indwelling His people. You're seeing a glimpse of the ultimate pouring out of the Spirit during this coming millennial kingdom. What you're seeing here is the initial fulfillment of that promise from Joel.

Then he began—you'll notice in verse 21 that he concludes his little explanation of Joel chapter 2 there with that phrase from Joel, “And it shall be that everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved.” There is that promise there. And I think Peter intentionally quotes that because he wants to point the people to their need to be saved, to be saved from what? Their own guilt. And so then the next thing that Peter

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does is he indicts them for their rejection and their crucifixion of the Messiah. Look at verse 22.

22 Men of Israel, listen to these words: Jesus the Nazarene, a man attested to you by God with miracles and wonders and signs which God performed through Him in your midst, just as you yourselves know—

23 this Man, delivered over by the predetermined plan and foreknowledge of God, you nailed to a cross by the hands of godless men and put Him to death.

24 But God raised Him up again, putting an end to the agony of death, since it was impossible for Him to be held in its power. (Acts 2:22–24 NASB)

And then Peter, in verses 25–28, quotes from a second Old Testament passage, Psalm 16, to show that the resurrection of the Messiah was also predicted and foreshadowed in the Old Testament. So the resurrection—which they had heard about because the garden tomb is only a short walk from where Peter is preaching this sermon, and of course everybody in Jerusalem knew that the body was gone, that the tomb was empty, that the Roman soldiers were circulating this rumor that the body had been stolen by the disciples. So the fact that the body is missing and nobody can produce that is the news of the day. And so now Peter is indicting them for their own murder of the Messiah. Then he points to the Old Testament and says the resurrection of that Messiah was predicted in the Old Testament, Psalm 16, and then he quotes from a third passage from the Old Testament, Psalm 110, to explain that the ascension of the Messiah, something that had happened ten days prior, was also predicted in the Old Testament. His death, Him being handed over by you to criminals, and you put Him to death, that was predetermined by God, foreshadowed in the Old Testament, spoken of in the Old Testament (Isaiah 53). His resurrection (Psalm 16), His ascension to glory where He sits at the Father's right hand and waits for that day when His enemies will be made a footstool for His feet, and then He will come back and He will judge them and punish them in judgment and victory, that of course was predicted in the Old Testament as well (Psalm 110). So Peter is preaching from three separate Old Testament texts to show that they had killed their Messiah according to the predetermined plan and purpose of God, that God had raised Him from the dead and brought Him, ascended Him, to the Father's right hand, where He sits until He will fulfill all of the promises that He has made to the nation of Israel and to the Jewish nation.

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So even though Peter is saying, “The crucifixion of your Messiah was predetermined and foreknown by God,” he says to this crowd gathered there, “You bear the blame for it. You crucified Him. You put Him to death at the hands of wicked men.” He is indicting them for their murder of the Messiah, and they were convicted over that. Confronted with their sin, they felt the weight of their guilt and their transgressions and their sin before God, understanding now that the One whom they had crucified had been raised from the dead and was ascended to the Father's right hand and that He is coming again in judgment. The people now are made to see and understand their own guilt, their own moral culpability, and the judgment that is to come upon them for their sin of rejecting their Messiah and crucifying Him. Peter did not stand up and promise them their best life now, health and wealth and prosperity, or better living or anything else like that. Instead, he got up there and he presented the most unpopular message possible: You're guilty of killing your Christ, and He's coming again. And guess who is in His crosshairs? You, if you will not repent and trust Him. That was the message.

Now notice their contrition. Verse 37: “Now when they had heard this, they were pierced to the heart, and said to Peter and the rest of the apostles, [and here's their contrition] ‘Brethren, what shall we do?’” They are moved to action. They understand their guilt. They see it. Holy God, I am a guilty sinner. And now they are seeking a remedy for that condition. They want to be made right or to make something right. They're not suppressing their conviction and their guilt, just ignoring it and moving on and saying, well, I'll deal with this at some other time. I'll find a way of dealing with my guilt. I'll find a way of clearing my conscience. I'll make it right in some other way. I'll go do something to pay off my moral crimes. They have been convicted over their sin and now they're expressing their contrition and their willingness, their readiness, to be made right or to make right what it is that they have done. They want a solution for their guilt problem.

And listen, every believer who has trusted in Jesus Christ has come to this point in the equation. At some point, if you are a believer in Christ, at some point you have come to understand your own moral culpability before a holy God. That you have transgressed His law. That you have told lies, and Scripture says thou shalt not lie. And so therefore you're guilty of breaking that commandment. That you have lusted in your heart, that you have dishonored your parents, that you have stolen things, that you have taken the name of God in vain, that you have not worshipped and served God and God alone every moment of your life for your entire life. And therefore you have heaped up a weight of guilt before a holy God who sits enthroned in Heaven and will have His way

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with sinners on the last day. You have come to that place. You have come to understand, I am guilty. I deserve justice. I need mercy and grace. I deserve justice, but I need mercy and grace. And if I don't get mercy and grace and instead I get justice, I will be undone. I will perish everlastingly. I need God to extend grace to me and mercy to me, and I need to have all of my sins taken out of the way, my guilt removed, my transgressions forgiven. I need to be made righteous and right, and I need to be made clean from my sin, so when I stand in the courtroom of God's justice, I will not hear "guilty sinner, condemned. Depart from Me, you worker of iniquity, into the eternal fires prepared for the devil and his angels." I don't want to hear that. And I will hear that if I am not made right in a right standing with God. So how does that take place? Well, Peter has already explained to them by the predetermined plan and foreknowledge of God, you crucified the Messiah. He died as a sacrifice for sin, and then in fulfillment to Scripture, according to Psalm 16, He rose again, victorious over death, so that now death has been taken out of the way, and He has been exalted to the right hand of the Father, and that is the place from which He will grant faith and repentance to any and all who believe upon Him. So if you want to be made right with that God and have that sin debt taken away, you must have a payment for your sin. You can either stand in God's presence and bear the full weight of His wrath against you for your every transgression, or you can trust in One who stood in your place and bore that wrath in your place and rose again, offering a full and favorable sacrifice to the Father on behalf of any and all who will trust in Him.

And so now of course the only question is, What must I do to be saved? That's what the men are asking. What must we do? I wonder if there's a little bit of remorse also in their question. You've crucified the Messiah, He rose again, and He has ascended to the Father's right hand. And every Jew there would have been thinking to himself, Then what shall we do? Like, we've already gone too far. We can't undo that and bring Him back and embrace Him and accept Him. Well, Peter offers to them a solution, something to do that would in essence be embracing Him and turning from their sin. This is their confession, verses 38–41:

38 Peter said to them, "Repent, and each of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins; and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.

39 For the promise is for you and your children and for all who are far off, as many as the Lord our God will call to Himself."

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40 And with many other words he solemnly testified and kept on exhorting them, saying, “Be saved from this perverse generation!”

41 So then, those who had received his word were baptized; and that day there were added about three thousand souls. (Acts 2:38–41 NASB)

Now, there are, if you're familiar with this passage, there are two interpretive issues that we have to address, and I would love to be able to give an entire sermon to each one of these two interpretive issues, but I'm just going to give you a brief explanation of what the issues are, and then I think what Scripture teaches concerning them. The first is that verse 39 seems to suggest that infants should be baptized. “The promise is for you and your children and for all who are far off, as many as the Lord our God will call to Himself.” Why does Peter mention children in there in connection with the promise? The second question that needs to be explained is Peter seems to suggest that baptism is necessary for salvation—repent and be baptized in order that you may receive the forgiveness of sins. So of course that raises the question, Can one receive the forgiveness of sins without baptism? It seems to suggest that Peter is commanding and ordaining not only that infants be baptized, that children be baptized, but also that baptism is necessary for one to receive the forgiveness of sins. I'll deal quickly with each one of those. And listen, if you're here normally, then you know how much I want to stop and just camp on each one of these, because it's just, there's no way of doing justice to this in just the few minutes that I have. But if I didn't say anything about it, then the people here who believe in infant baptism would say, “See? The coward didn't say anything about it. And so he just wants to skip over that because he's too afraid to deal with the passage.” And people who think that you need to be baptized to be saved would say, “See? The coward just skipped over that because he doesn't want to deal with the passage that teaches that you need to be baptized to be saved.” So I'm not a coward, I'm going to deal with it, but not as deeply as we might hope.

First, let's talk about infant baptism. Let's ask three questions of our text. And here are the three questions. Number one, what is the promise that is spoken of? He says in verse 39, “For the promise is for you and your children and for all who are far off, as many as the Lord our God will call to Himself.” What is the promise that is being spoken of? Now, pedobaptists, infant-baptizers—now, listen, infant baptism, pedobaptism, is not a heresy. Not a heresy. I think it can lead to a heresy if you think that in the waters of baptism the infant is saved and eternally secure. That I think is baptismal regeneration. That can be a heretical position. But infant baptism itself is not a heresy.

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So the pedobaptist would say that the promise is the same promise that was given to Abraham and to his descendants back in Genesis 17 when the ordinance of circumcision was given to Abraham. He said, “This sign is for you and for your children,” meaning that Abraham and all of his children were to be circumcised. And so the pedobaptist would say here he's referring to now a new covenant promise—that is, baptism—which has replaced circumcision, and therefore since we circumcised babies in the Old Testament, we should baptize babies in the New Testament. That baptism now has replaced this because that's the promise that is intended here.

And I would just simply say to that, that that is nowhere in the context. Peter is not at all dealing with the subject of the relationship between the new covenant and the old covenant or the continuation of the promise to Abraham. That is not in Peter's view here. It's not what he is describing. In answer to the question, What is the promise being spoken of here?—the promise being spoken of is the Holy Spirit. Now all the way through this context, Peter has been talking about the Holy Spirit. Remember, that was the issue that was raised at the very beginning. You're drunk. Peter says, “No, it's the Holy Spirit, poured out on us in fulfillment of Joel chapter 2.” So in Acts chapter 2, verse 17—look at it. He says, “I will pour forth of My Spirit on all mankind.” By quoting the book of Joel, Peter is saying this is what was promised by the Father back by the prophets. Acts chapter 2, verse 33—having received from the Father what? The promise of the Holy Spirit. Acts 2, verse 38: “And you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.” In Luke chapter 24—also written by Luke, who wrote Acts—in Luke 24, Jesus said, “And behold, I am sending forth the promise of My Father upon you; but you are to stay in the city until you are clothed with power from on high.” Jesus there calls the Holy Spirit “the promise of My Father.” In Acts chapter 1: “Gathering them together, He commanded them not to leave Jerusalem, but to wait for what the Father had promised” (v. 4). So now, when Peter says this promise is for you and for your children and for all who are far off and any whom the Lord God will call to Himself, what promise is he talking about? An ordinance that is given specifically to one's children or infants? Or is the promise the Holy Spirit, whom Luke has already called the promise many times in the context? The promise is the Holy Spirit Himself.

Now second, who are the recipients of this promise? Look at Acts 2, verse 39 again: “The promise is for you and your children and for all who are far off, as many as the Lord our God will call to Himself.” So, Peter is saying, these are the people who receive this promise, the Holy Spirit. They are for you—that is, my immediate hearers on this day—for your descendants who come after you, and for any who are far off. That's how many

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people? That's basically everybody. But Peter doesn't mean not only everybody here and everybody's children, but everybody who might not be here and is far off forever. But Peter specifically restricts the promise specifically to as many as the Lord our God will call to Himself. So who are the recipients of baptism? Those whom the Lord our God calls to Himself. How do I know if the Lord our God has called somebody to Himself? The fact that they are born in a Christian home, or the fact that they turn from their sin, believe savingly upon Jesus Christ, trust in Him, and confess their faith in Him? That's how I know that one—at least that is a pretty solid indication that that is one who has called upon the Lord God. In other words, the electing, repenting, and work of faith is the evidence that God has called somebody to Himself. Those are the ones who were baptized. Those are the ones to whom the promise is made. So the promise is not given to all children without exception any more than it was given to all of Peter's hearers without exception or to all who are far off without exception. It was for any in any of those groups whom the Lord God would call to Himself.

Third question, who was baptized that day? Look at verse 41: “So then, those who had received his word were baptized; and that day there were added about three thousand souls.” Who do we baptize? Those who receive the Word. Not those who receive the Word and their children, but those who receive the Word. The one who has heard the Word, understood the Word, responded to the Word, the one in whom the Word has created faith and granted repentance, who has been brought to salvation. Those are the candidates for baptism. So only believers were baptized in the New Testament. That is the New Testament pattern and the New Testament teaching.

Second, is baptism necessary for salvation? Matt Waymeyer in his book *A Biblical Critique of Infant Baptism*, which is worth its weight in gold, says this—and I commend the book to you because he deals with this issue of whether baptism is necessary for salvation. He deals with the issues that are raised in verse 39. Here's what he writes: “This verse is difficult to interpret because it seems to indicate that water baptism is a prerequisite for the forgiveness of sins and the gift of the Holy Spirit. Since the Bible clearly teaches that man is saved by grace alone, through faith alone, in Christ alone, how can Peter imply that baptism is a condition for salvation?” Right? We affirm that man is saved by grace alone through faith alone in Christ alone, so how is it that Peter can say you need to repent and be baptized in order to have the forgiveness of sins? How do we resolve this?

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There are three ways, typically, three possible answers to this dilemma. The first is to say that the phrase *for the forgiveness of sins* in verse 38 can be translated “because of the forgiveness of sins.” In other words, you repent and then be baptized because your sins are forgiven. That's the first way that that is resolved. That means that basically their baptism was an expression of their confidence in the reality that their sins had been forgiven. Now that is a possible interpretation of that phrase. I don't think that it is the likely interpretation of that phrase. According to Waymeyer, there are only three verses in all of the New Testament where the word *for* can be translated in that way and possibly mean that, and all three of them are contentious. In other words, it's not clear in any of those three. So that is not my preferred interpretation of the passage.

The second possibility is that *for the forgiveness of sins* modifies the verb *repent* and not the word *be baptized*. In other words, that it should be translated “repent for the forgiveness of sins *and* be baptized”—period. Grammatically, that is difficult to work out in the New Testament simply because the way that the words are used and singular cases and plural cases and all that stuff. And I don't even want to get into that, not because I don't have time, but because I don't understand it myself. So that's obviously not my chosen interpretation of the passage.

There is a third possibility, and it is this. It is to take Peter's words at face value. If you were to be forgiven, you're going to have to be baptized. Now you say, but how do I reconcile that with my Protestant understanding of faith alone, grace alone, Christ alone? That is a problem for us until we realize this: that baptism was the public confession of one's allegiance to Jesus Christ. It is the public confession of one's allegiance to Jesus Christ. So Waymeyer writes this:

To be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ was to publicly declare one's allegiance to Christ and one's desire to follow Him as a disciple. For this reason, when Peter exhorted the Jews to be baptized, he was commanding them to express their allegiance to Christ, an allegiance that was indeed a necessary response to the gospel. In this way, the command to be baptized incorporated both the physical act of water baptism and the commitment to Christ that it symbolized. In the context of Acts 2 then, an unwillingness to be baptized would have exposed an unwillingness to obey the gospel and become a disciple of Christ.

Let me say that again. An unwillingness to be baptized in Acts 2 would have exposed an unwillingness to obey the gospel and become a disciple of Christ. In that sense, and for

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that reason, the Jews had to be baptized to be forgiven, for to refuse baptism was to refuse Christ and the salvation that He offered. In other words, the apostle Peter links baptism and faith so closely there as to almost not even draw a distinction between them. Because the faith that saves is a faith that will say, Be baptized? Absolutely. Whatever He commands, I will do. So if it's baptism, I'll do it. If it's stand out on the street corner and sing a song while spinning around in a circle, I will do it. Whatever He commands, I will do. My allegiance is to Him. He is my Lord. So what He commands, I shall do. Peter links baptism and faith so closely that to command them to be baptized is to command them to declare publicly in front of people who crucified their Lord their own allegiance to that same Lord and to do so in front of the eyes of all the Jews right there on the Temple Mount right outside the temple gate in front of a bunch of people who still to that day would continue to crucify Christ if He were there. And it is to tell them you must swear allegiance to Him, commit your life to Him, and your baptism is not just a washing of water that saves you. Instead, that baptism is the outward declaration that, yes, my faith is real and I placed it in the crucified Lord. Baptism itself has no ability to save, but baptism is the expression of repentant faith. So can one be saved without being baptized? Yes, because the act of baptism does not save anyone, but the New Testament knows nothing of an unbaptized believer. The thief on the cross was unable to be baptized, and he is the single notable exception to that.

Don't be confused by the fact that Peter does not mention faith here, because sometimes the Scriptures describe our response to the gospel in terms of repentance, sometimes in terms of faith. Faith and repentance go together, so they are the two sides of the same coin. You cannot be saved by repentance alone without faith, nor can your "faith" save you apart from that turning from sin. To believe savingly on Christ is to turn from sin. And to turn from sin is to turn savingly to Christ, because these two things go together. So James Dunn says, "Faith demands baptism as its expression. Baptism demands faith for its validity." All right? "Faith demands baptism as its expression. Baptism demands faith for its validity." So baptism is necessary not because it saves; it doesn't. But it is, listen carefully, the necessary response to the gospel. We say that it is necessary because if we don't say that it's necessary, then we have to say it is optional, and obeying Christ is not optional. Those are your two options. Either baptism is commanded and therefore it is necessary to be baptized as a believer, or Christ has commanded something that's just merely optional and you can take it or leave it at your own whim. Those are your two options. So Peter here is not suggesting that baptism saves you. He is saying that baptism is the necessary response to this proclamation

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because saving faith itself has baptism as its expression. So he is putting them together like that, not because being dipped in water saves you, it does not. Doesn't at all.

Let me give you an illustration of three separate men who might have been standing there to illustrate this point. Three separate men who might have been standing there in Pentecost Square that day. All three of these have heard Peter preach the gospel, they've understood this, and the first guy says, "I understand my sin, I turn from my sin, I'm believing upon Christ and Him alone, and I'm putting my faith in Him." And he does so, and he gets in line to be baptized, and he is baptized and walks away from there. Is that man saved? Yeah. I mean, he repented—I hope you guys understand the gospel enough to know this. He repented of his sin, he placed his faith in Christ and responded and was baptized. Is he saved? One hundred percent I would say that he was, right? Especially in that context when being baptized was nearly a death sentence. You're doing this in the eyes of people who just crucified your Lord fifty days ago, and they still hate you.

So the second man hears the same message and says, "I understand that, I'm riddled with my guilt. I place my faith in Jesus Christ, I turn from my sin." He gets in line to be baptized, he's waiting there, can't wait to get up to the head of the line, has a heart attack and dies right there in Pentecost Square that moment. Was that man saved? Yes, he was. So yes, he was saved, right? Because water baptism doesn't save you.

Third man says, "I've heard this message." He says, "OK, I'll repent, I'll trust Christ." And then Peter gets to the point where he talks about baptism and says, "Now you must be baptized." And the third guy says, "Yeah, I don't think I really want to do that. I'm just, I'm going to kind of—over here in the corner, I'll watch all this unfold." And he does not get baptized. Is that man saved? Yeah, anybody can say "I repent," anybody can say "I believe," but it is the believer who will obey. Who will obey.

So that illustrates, I think, the difference between that. Yes, you can be saved without baptism, but you cannot be obedient without baptism. You can be saved, but you can't be obedient. Very first command: be baptized. If you're not going to be baptized, if you're going to reject that command, your salvation is not in question. Your obedience is. But if that becomes the pattern of your life, that disobedience, then one has every right to question the legitimacy of your profession.

Now, fourth, we note their consecration. We won't take any time with this. Verse 42:

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42 They were continually devoting themselves to the apostles' teaching and to fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer.

43 Everyone kept feeling a sense of awe; and many wonders and signs were taking place through the apostles.

44 And all those who had believed were together and had all things in common;

45 and they began selling their property and possessions and were sharing them with all, as anyone might have need.

46 Day by day continuing with one mind in the temple, and breaking bread from house to house, they were taking their meals together with gladness and sincerity of heart,

47 praising God and having favor with all the people. And the Lord was adding to their number day by day those who were being saved. (Acts 2:42–47 NASB)

That was the evidence of their genuine salvation. They continued in fellowship, in worship, in breaking bread together, in exercising hospitality and meeting one another's needs, in praying together, in worshipping together, and in reading the Word together and devoting themselves to the apostles' teaching. Those who were saved that day by their faith and then baptized, those who were saved that day continued and consecrated themselves to a lifestyle of obedience to the Lord for His great work of salvation in their lives. They said, "His people are our people, His priorities are our priorities, His Word is our food, His life is our life." And so they began to live differently, and they gave themselves to an obedient life that began at that moment of faith and then immediately baptism.

Now I want to give a brief explanation of what you are about to see here. Those who desire to be baptized are going to tell you why they're being baptized. They're going to give their testimony at the microphone. And then they're going to come into the tank to be immersed. That's what the word *baptized* means by the way. It doesn't mean sprinkling or pouring, it means immersed, to be dipped into something. The immersion of the person in the water symbolizes their death, burial, and their resurrection in Christ. The believer is one who, having trusted in Christ, believes and trusts that His death was the death in their place, His burial was burial in their place, and His resurrection was resurrection in their place. And that because they identify with Him and because He has done all of those things on their behalf, they have died to sin, they

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have been buried with Him, and they've been raised again to newness of life. And so that's why we immerse people. We submerge them below the water to symbolize their death and their burial, and then we bring them up again to symbolize their resurrection to newness of life. And we do this in faith, recognizing that ultimately because we have died with Him, been buried with Him, and been raised together to newness of life, when He returns, He will resurrect us and He will raise us up again to life eternal and glorified bodies. So baptism then is a representation in the physical realm of something that is true of us in the spiritual realm, that we died in Christ, we were buried with Him, and we rose again in Him. Baptism proclaims our allegiance to Christ and our identification with Him. So those being baptized are doing so in obedience to the Lord who commands them to publicly identify with Him and confess their allegiance to that crucified and risen Savior.

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