

# Church at DBAP 2013 // Acts 2:22–41

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## Welcome...

- Hello, **Summit Church**. I feel like this is one big family reunion...
- **Typically, we meet in places** all around the Triangle—but from time to time we come together because we are **really one body**; one family; with one mission: making Jesus famous in our city!
  - **Sound system:** means making Jesus famous in Zebulon
  - Can't come? Open windows, we'll bring CABP to you!
  - One church, every location
- My name is J.D., I am one of the pastors here, the primary preaching pastor, and **I get the privilege of explaining** what is behind all of this, and why we're so committed to it.

## Introduction:

One of the things that have puzzled historians for years is **why Christianity spread** so fast in its earlier days.

- The **group Jesus left behind** was relatively **small**, and they weren't very **influential** people—they were fisherman and carpenters.
- And Christianity **didn't advance through conquest**. For the first 400 years no one really picked up a sword in defense of it.
- It **didn't make its followers rich**. In fact, it usually led to them losing their homes and fortunes.

In fact, it produced communities unlike any the world had ever seen:

- **Peaceable** (there were lots were persecuted religious groups in those days; only Christians refused to fight back, praying for the forgiveness of their captors and going joyfully to their executions)

- **That welcomed the outcast** (they had the first **multi-racial** communities on the planet; they **taught that all people** were of equal worth in the eyes of God: **Jews/Gentiles; rich poor; masters/servants; men/women**)
- **Generous... (Julian—**who was not a Christian, lamented...)

*But where did that all come from?*

Kenneth Scott Latourette, a professor at Yale—said,

*“The more one examines the various factors which seem to account for the extraordinary victory of Christianity, the more one is driven to search for a cause underlying them all. It is clear that at the very beginning of Christianity there must have occurred a vast release of energy virtually unequalled in history... Nothing else could explain the surge of the early Christian movement.*

*What caused this release of energy...lies outside the realm in which modern historians are supposed to move.”<sup>1</sup>*

But then he goes on to say, “But before I am a historian, I am human... How can I close my eyes to the obvious explanation that something supernatural happened?”

I want us to look at the 1<sup>st</sup> message ever preached and try to show you what it was that released that energy.

- This message, relatively short and to the point, led to an **extraordinary response**: 3000 people were baptized in one day as the symbol they were going **all the way** with Jesus.
- I'm going to give you the **chance to respond** the same way: to be baptized as a public declaration of your faith, if you never have.

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<sup>1</sup> Keller, T. J. (2013). *The Timothy Keller Sermon Archive*. New York City: Redeemer Presbyterian Church.

- You say, **I didn't come prepared...** I *knew you'd say that...* so we've got everything you'd need to do that: shorts, t-shirts, towels... but **we'll get to that at the end.**
- It will be a glorious end to the day! (**ALLIE**)

### Acts 2:22–41

We're going to pick up in Peter's sermon in Acts 2:22. Let me tell you what happened leading up to this...

- The apostles and the first band of disciples had been hiding out together in an upper room, when a mighty, **tornado-like wind** had swept through the place... **cloves of fire...** and they **went outside** into the crowded marketplace and temple where there was this huge crowd and began proclaiming the glory of God in languages unknown to them.
- Well, there were people there from all over the world who said, *"Wait a minute... I understand what you're saying... you are speaking my native language fluently?"* The speakers were people who had never been outside Israel.
  - This is something like the **crew of Duck Dynasty** breaking out into flawless Mandarin and French
- **Peter stands up** and explains that this **multi-language miracle** was the **fulfillment of God's promise** to send the Holy Spirit, and that was a **sign that God wanted** the gospel preached in all languages, to all nations.

And then he says this: [22] "Men of Israel, hear these words: Jesus of Nazareth, a man attested to you by God with mighty works and wonders and signs that God did through him in your midst, as you yourselves know—[23] this Jesus, delivered up according to the definite plan and foreknowledge of God, you crucified and killed by the hands of wicked men.

This Jesus God raised up, and of that we all are witnesses...

[36] Let all the house of Israel therefore know for certain that God has made him both Lord and Christ, this Jesus whom you crucified."

Vs. 40 says, "and with many other words he bore witness and continued to exhort them, saying 'Save yourselves from this crooked generation...'"

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

"Cut to the heart." It felt like a knife had entered their chest.

- Jesus had promised in John 16:8 that when the Spirit came he would "convict the world of sin." "Convict" is the Greek word "*ele(ng)cho*," and it means "cross-examine"—to press you with evidence until your inconsistencies are exposed and you consent to the truth. Think of a **lawyer. That's what the Spirit does.**

**So, two questions:** *What was it that cut them to the heart? What did they do in response?* (Because this was the energy of the Christian movement.)

### I. Why were they cut to the heart?

Tim Keller says that **TWO things** about what Peter said cut them:

1. **They realized they had been wrong about Christ**
  - In Jesus' day, there were a lot of **different theories** about him. People had all kinds of things they **wanted him to be.**
    - Some wanted him to be a **prophet**, calling people back to religion.
    - Others wanted him to be a **political Messiah**—delivering them from oppression and overturning the corrupt Roman empire.
    - Others just kind of wrote Jesus off as a **fake**—a charlatan and a magician with a strange charismatic power over people.
  - But Jesus would not conform to everyone's expectations. He claimed to **be God**. He **demand absolute Lordship** over his followers. He **forgave people's sins**, something the Jews thought was blasphemous. He let people **worship him**, saying

that if they didn't the **rocks and trees** would cry out in praise of him. He claimed to be on a **rescue mission** to save people and that he was **the only way**.

- And people were like, **Jesus, we like you** and all but you got to be quiet about all this God/Lord stuff; and **he wouldn't**, and so they crucified him.
- Peter said that in in the resurrection, however, God overturned their opinions and declared Jesus to be who he was:
  - **"Lord" which means "God"**—not another religious prophet, but the Creator of the Universe.
  - and **"Christ,"** which means "the only Savior"—not **one way among many**, but the only name under heaven by which we can be saved.
- Many of us today have something we want Jesus to be.
  - A great **religious teacher**.
  - The **backbone** of Western morality.
  - **One of many ways** to know God.
- *But Jesus would not let himself be relegated to that.*
  - I saw an interview with **Bono** recently (Now, some of you weren't that engaged when I am explaining Peter's words, but you're like, "*Bono; wait—what?*"), and in the interview, the subject of Jesus came up—it was on a public news station—and the most fascinating conversation transpired. **Bono said:**

*"The secular response to the Christ story always goes like this: 'He was a great prophet, obviously a very interesting guy, had a lot to say along the lines of other great prophets, be they Elijah, Muhammad, Buddha, or Confucius.'*

*But actually Christ says, 'No. I'm not saying I'm a teacher, don't call me teacher. I'm not saying I'm a prophet. I'm saying... 'I am God in the flesh.'*

*And people say: 'No, no, please, just be a prophet. A prophet we can take. You're a bit eccentric; but we've had John the Baptist eating locusts and wild honey; we can*

*handle that. But (not God)! Not the Messiah! Because, you know, we're gonna have to crucify you if you say that.*

*And he goes: "No, no, I... actually am the Messiah." At this point, everyone starts staring at their shoes, and says: 'Oh my God; he's gonna keep saying this.'*

*So what you're left with is either Christ was who he said he was – God incarnate, the Messiah – or a complete nutcase. I mean, we're talking nutcase on the level of Charles Manson...I'm not joking here. The idea that the entire course of civilization for over half of the globe could have its fate changed and turned upside-down by a nutcase, for me that's a little far fetched..."<sup>2</sup>*

- They killed him... but God *resurrected* him.
  - And if God resurrected Jesus, then what you and I think about him is less important than who he is.
  - *Have **opened yourself up** to who Jesus presents himself to be? Are you open-minded about him?*
  - **Biography** where you are an astronaut, bad at relationships
- That's the question. **Did God resurrect Jesus?**
  - The **people listening to Peter** didn't see how they could deny it.
    - Keep in mind—this took place **less than 2 months** after the crucifixion, in the very city where Jesus had been killed. Here are **3,000 people who could have said**, "Hey, no, no, no, I can lead you to his tomb. I can show you where his body is." But no one did.
  - And they didn't see how it could have been a **hallucination:**
    - Paul refers to **500 people** who saw him at the same time, most of whom were still alive at the time of his writing (check with them)... 500

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<sup>2</sup> Tim Keller, *The Reason For God* (RiverHead Books, 2008), pp. 239-240

- people don't hallucinate that way at once. (see Elvis up here)
- They couldn't just dismiss them as **liars**.
  - What profit did they **gain from this lie**? This confession didn't usher them into a life of money or power.
    - **Every one of the Apostles** would end up dying a martyr's death, but proclaiming to the end: he's alive! We saw him!
- This **made them conclude**: we had wanted Jesus to be one thing; but his resurrection declares him to be something else.
- So, again, what about you? *Have **opened yourself up** to who Jesus presents himself to be?* Are you open-minded about him?

*So they were cut to the heart because they realized they'd been wrong about Jesus. They were also cut to the heart by...*

## 2. They realized they were responsible for the death of Jesus

- A couple of different times (vs. 23, 36) Peter points at this crowd and says 'You killed him.'
  - Over the years, this verse has been used anti-Semiticly, claiming the Jews killed Christ and they should be held responsible for it.
  - But that is a very poor understanding of Peter's meaning.
- **FIRST (1)**, when Peter says, "You killed him," he was speaking **globally**—to all of us.
  - **Not everyone there** had been directly involved in Christ's crucifixion, but he's looking at all of them, and he's looking at all of them and saying, "You, you killed him."
  - In **vs. 39** Peter says, "*This is about you, your children and those who are far off—**people in countries** all around the world that haven't even been born yet.*"

- This wasn't about a particular group of Jews in Jerusalem; it was about all people. It's **about you and me**.
- **SECOND (2)**, when Peter says, "You killed him," Peter was speaking **personally**. Peter knew he himself had a part in it.
  - On the **night that Jesus** was crucified, Peter had denied him 3x. Luke records a very important little detail in his Gospel, that after the 3<sup>rd</sup> denial, "*At that moment the rooster crowed and the Lord turned and looked straight at Peter.*" (Luke 22:62). Jesus turned straight around and looked at him.
  - The **face of Jesus**, by that point, would have been purple, bruised, with blood and spit dripping down it.
  - Peter realized that in that moment that Jesus was being **beaten for his betrayal**, and Luke says he was **cut to the heart**, and that he went out and wept.
- Those who were listening to Peter came to the **exact same conclusion** Peter did. We did this.
  - The Bible says, you see, that **Jesus died for our sin**. *He was wounded for our transgressions...*
- You are cut to the heart when you realize it was your sin that did this. **You see Jesus looking at you**. You did this against God. It was for your **rebellion**. Your **cheating**. Your refusal to do things **God's way**. Your **selfishness** and **pride** and **hatred** and **bigotry**.
  - **Before you are cut**, you think of sin as **breaking God's rules**. After you've been cut through this realization, you think of them as *breaking God's heart*.
  - You see that he came in love, as a Father coming to gather his rebellious children home. But you said, "**No, I don't trust you. I'd rather be in charge of my own life.**" And we resisted him, and when he wouldn't be resisted, we killed him.
- **Has this realization happened to you? Have you been cut?**
  - I remember when it happened to me... grew up in church; high school... I saw that my **rebellion** put Christ on the cross. My **caring more** about so many things—the opinion of my friends; being **ashamed of being**

- **identified** with him; my giving myself over to the **lusts of my flesh**... I saw him looking **AT ME**.
- I said with John Newton, the writer of *Amazing Grace*: *“My conscience felt and owned the guilt, and plunged me in despair; I saw my sins his blood had spilt; and helped to nail him there.”*
- I was cut.
- **Throne and cross**
- *Has that ever happened to you?*
  - HAVE YOU EVER HAD a **first-hand, personal experience** with God.
  - You can't come to God on the **faith of your parents**.
    - **Have you ever been cut** to the heart realizing it was your sin that put Jesus on the cross and you need to be forgiven?

So...

## II. What did they do?

*THREE things:*

### 1. They sought forgiveness from the cross

- Peter said, **vs. 38**, “Come be baptized as a symbol that you're claiming Christ's death as your forgiveness.”
- Now, that's a little **ironic**, isn't it? You say, “The cross of Jesus is where we murdered him. How could that be the place of our forgiveness?”
  - Yes, the great irony of the cross is that God used our most heinous crime against him as the means of our salvation.
  - **Romans 6:23 says**... On the cross Jesus paid that penalty.
  - **Isa 53:5**, He was wounded for our transgressions...
- There are **two things you have to see** in the cross. ONE. “That it is **your sin that did that** to him.” TWO. “That he **did it to rescue** you.”
  - The cross is an invitation of grace; it's an offer for you to come home.

- It's **not enough to feel the condemnation** of the cross; you have to perceive and **receive the goodness** of God coming to you through it.
  - Peter was not the only apostle to betray Jesus that night, and realize that his betrayal was what killed Jesus. Judas did too. Judas saw his sin had crucified Christ, but what he didn't see is that God gave himself in love, saying, “Come back to me!” so we went and hung himself.
  - **Jesus resurrected from the dead** saying to you “You killed me. But I was dying for you! Come back!”
- **Have you heard that voice?** It's the voice of your Father saying, “Come home.”
  - **Illus. Man who posted a classified ad:** “John, all is forgiven, come back to me. Dad. And a phone number. Hundreds of calls.
    - Something in us that longs to be reconciled. You were created for God!
  - **Pascal**

### 2. They changed their minds about God

- The word Peter uses is “REPENTANCE.” He said **vs. 38**, “Repent and be baptized.”
- Repentance in Greek means “a **change of mind**.” It's **more than just a resolve** to do better—it's a whole new attitude toward God.
  - You see that your entire **attitude toward God has been wrong**: You have resisted him as an **adversary**; you now see him as a loving **father**.
- And that changes your attitude toward sin.
  - When you know someone loves you, it changes your heart toward them...
    - *“You know, J.D., Veronica loves you so much, she's so loyal and faithful to you – you could cheat on her and be just fine. She'd probably forgive you.” No. Her faithful Love makes me want to be more faithful.*

- *Romans: the **goodness of God** leads us to repentance. You see in the cross how good he is; how far he has reached for you.*
- *Preachers of old used to say there are **two sides to the gospel sword**. One side is fear: realizing that we stand under the condemnation of God. The other side is love: realizing the great love that God our father has for us. The love side cuts more sharply.*
- *You **have a heavenly Father** who has always **loved** you; always **watched** you; **never given up** on you; always been trying to **bring you back**.*
- *Change your heart toward him!*
  - There is a town in Wales, England, called **Bedgelert**, “The grave of Gelert” ... You feel pity, or a little enraged, by what happened to a dog. This was the Son of God, slain by us for our sins. We didn’t know he came as the Savior...

### 3. They surrendered

- In vs. 37, they said, “**What shall we do?**” Not: “OK, give us 2 or 3 things we can do to make up for this... to pay God off.” But, “What shall we do? We’ll do anything.”
  - Coming to Christ means **recognizing that he is the Lord**—and you have been living in rebellion against him.
  - **C. S. Lewis**, “We don’t come to God as bad people trying to become good people, we come as rebels to lay down our arms.”
- It’s not about becoming a better person, or being a little more religious, it’s about recognizing the Lordship of Christ—that **he’s in charge** and surrendering to him—and receiving his offer to be your Savior.
  - That’s **something you’ve either done** if you haven’t. Think of it **like a LINE**.
    - **TSA**. Line, not a zone.
    - You have either **recognized him as Lord** and surrendered, or you haven’t. You’ve either **received his offer** of salvation, or you haven’t.

- I don’t mean you **become a perfect person**—I still struggle daily with areas of **inconsistency and sin**. But I know that he is the Lord and **I’m done arguing** about who is in charge.
- We have a culture where a lot of people have grown up in or around church but have never crossed that line.
  - Maybe you see Jesus as your **Savior**, but **not necessarily your Lord**.
    - Areas of known inconsistency
    - Not actively a disciple; not an active part of a church
  - Maybe you **COMPARE YOURSELF** to others all the time and think, “I’m good enough... As long as God grades on curve.”
    - That’s not the issue. The issue is whether you have ever surrendered to Christ personally and received him as your Savior.
  - “I grew up in church. **Of course I’m a Christian**. What else would I be—I’m not a Muslim, or Jew, or atheist. What else would I be?”
    - You have to choose Christ personally, for yourself.
    - “God has no grandchildren.” You have to choose for yourself, personally.

Have you made that decision to trust Christ as Lord and Savior?  
Have you stepped across that line?

### SAVE YOURSELF from this CROOKED generation!

- *Where will you be w/o Jesus? If you die w/o him? What does it profit...?*

The sign that you have made this decision is baptism. A PUBLIC DECLARATION you are following Jesus.

- We see in [41] *So those who received his word were baptized, and there were added that day about 3000 souls.*
- For 3000 people, **that day** marked a turning point in their lives, the day they crossed the line. (Just a SYMBOL)



*This day could be that day for many of you. Today, we are giving you a chance to cross that line and be baptized.*

- You can **come up here in just a minute** and say, “Yes, I’m **choosing Christ**. I’m receiving his offer of salvation.”
- Or, maybe you **trusted Christ as Lord and Savior a while ago**, years ago, even, but you have never shown it through adult public baptism. That was Jesus’ first command! So I want to come today and be baptized. Quit putting it off!

#### Excuses:

- **“I don’t think it’s that important.”**
  - I always want to say, “Excuse me? It’s a command of Jesus.” Who are we to decide which of his commands we’re going to obey and which we are not? That’s **not the way to start out your walk** with God.
  - And let me tell you something else—God takes **small steps** of obedience like this and uses them to open up blessing in our lives.
    - A couple of weeks ago... we learned about Naaman that God told to go dip in the Jordan River. Nothing magical about the water, but God used it to begin to pour blessing in your life.
    - Same for you. This act of obedience could mark a new beginning of obedience and blessing in your life.
    - I’m talking to **couples here who are living together** but not married. You know it’s wrong. Repentance and the willingness to begin to do things in your life God’s way.
- **“I have no clothes.”**
  - T-shirts; shorts; underwear; hair ties and swim caps.
- **“My family / friends aren’t here to see this.”**
  - We have professional, dedicated photographers at each tank. We’re going to take your picture, and it’ll be on our website by this afternoon for you to download, instagram, facebook or tweet.
- **“I rode with people.”**

- They’ll wait.
- Raise your hand if you’re not willing!
- **“I want someone to come with me.”**
  - That’s fine. Ask your friend to go with you. Bring your whole row with you. We’ll tell you in a few minutes about how your friends and family can get closer.
- **“I was baptized as a child.”**
  - Their decision or yours?
  - 27x we see a baptism in the book of Acts; all 27 times they believed first.
- **“I don’t want to shame my parents.”**
  - You’re not! You’re fulfilling their hopes!
- **“Don’t want to become a Baptist.”**
  - This is not about denomination.
  - My wife was brought up in a different denomination. She made a decision to be baptized, *“This is about a public profession of my faith.”*

#### Instructions:

*Here’s what’s going to happen:*

- I’m going to give you a chance to pray to receive Christ, if you never have. Then I’m going to give you a chance to respond...
  - TO MY **RIGHT AND MY LEFT** ARE TWO WHITE TENTS. THESE ARE YOUR DESTINATION. **IF YOU CAN GET TO THESE TENTS**, WE’LL ASSIST YOU THE REST OF THE WAY. IF YOU’RE UP IN THE UPPER SECTIONS, WALK DOWN THE STEPS TOWARDS THE FIELD. COME ONTO THE FIELD, AND JUST LINE UP AT THE TENTS.
- PRAYER of SALVATION: “Jesus, I’m receiving you today as my Savior. You are the Lord, and I surrender right now to you.”
  - God, thank you for hearing all those who just prayed to you, and give them the courage to do what they need to do next.
- INVITATION:
  - Now, in just a minute, we’re all going to **stand together**
  - **If you prayed** to receive Christ, I want you to come.

- If you **have received Christ at some time past** but need to be baptized, as we stand, I want you to come.
- **Stand and in one swift motion**, make your way down here **to the tents**.

Ok, so EVERYBODY STAND. *If you that need to be baptized, go.*

**2<sup>nd</sup> call:**

- “Tell the person next to you, I’ll go with you if you want to go”  
(or squeeze their hand)