

## Cut to the Heart

*"When the people heard this, they were cut to the heart and said to Peter and the other apostles, 'Brothers, what shall we do?'"*  
Acts 2:37

**Icebreaker:** *What has God done in your life to get your attention?*

### Acts 2:1-4

*What three things marked the coming of the Holy Spirit on the apostles?*

- Violent wind
- Tongues of fire
- Speaking in tongues

As we talked about last week, the start of the church is a God-initiated event and comes through His power and not our own.

### Acts 2:5-13

*Why were so many Jews from all over the world gathered in Jerusalem at this time?*

- They were there to celebrate the Day of Pentecost, which was a time to celebrate the harvest 50 days after the Passover.

God meets us on our level. He speaks our language and uses words we can understand. It was clear that these untrained fishermen couldn't have known these languages on their own. This was a miracle. It got their attention and prompted the crowd to ask, "What does this mean?"

### Acts 2:14-24

Peter preaches to them Jesus Christ. Peter says they already know about miraculous things Jesus did before his crucifixion. *How would they have known about these things?*

- They may have been in Jerusalem at the time.
- It had only been 7 weeks since Jesus' death and the town was probably still talking about it.

*Why was it important that Peter could mention that there were witnesses that what Peter was saying was true?*

- They couldn't deny what Peter was saying.
- Peter wasn't making these things up.

Notice how Peter says God handed Jesus over to "you" and "you" put him to death...*Had all of these people participated in Jesus' crucifixion?*

- There may have been a couple who shouted "Crucify him" but not all of them.
- Ultimately it was our sin that put Jesus on the cross and we are all responsible for that.

*In what way do we all share in the guilt of Jesus' crucifixion?* **Romans 3:23 & 6:23**

Peter continues to appeal to scripture because he knows that is what they understand. *Why is it important to start with where people are and show them God from what they already understand?*

- We can't expect people to be someone they are not. We need to get to know people well enough to know how they need to hear the message of Jesus.
- Opening the Old Testament to convince people today may not work as well for some people but that is what Peter's audience needed to hear to be convinced.

### Acts 2:36-37

Peter's words are shocking. They have killed God's chosen. They have crucified the Messiah! Little wonder why they are cut to the heart. They had been convinced that Jesus was a blasphemer and a criminal and they had him killed. Now they understand that he is the Son of God. *What thoughts would you have if you just realized you killed the Son of God?*

- That would be upsetting and terrifying

Before people can ask "What shall we do?" they have to be cut to the heart. They have to be convinced that they are guilty and in need of reconciliation with God. People need to know that no matter how good they seem, their life is totally upside down without Jesus.

*Why has it become easy to be calloused to the message of Jesus Christ?*

- We hear it so often it seems normal.

*Is it normal for perfect God to come to earth and die for sinful people?* Of course not.

*How can you help soften the hearts of those you come into contact with on a daily basis?*

- By really living for Jesus, even when it is tough
- By loving those people like Jesus would
- By being there for them when their life is hard.
- Many other ways

### Acts 2:38-41

What was the answer to their question? They needed to be made right with God. *What two things does Peter say they need to do to be right with God?*

- The first is repentance— *what does it mean to repent?* - it is a total life change. We turn from walking the wrong way to walking with God.
- Second is baptism. In Romans 6 Paul tells us that through baptism we are connected with Christ in his death and we die to our sins as we are lowered into the water. As we are raised back out we are connected with Christ in his resurrection. We receive the promised Holy Spirit and have the hope of a future resurrection because just like Jesus, death can no longer have a hold on us.

Today many say if you accept the message of Jesus you pray a prayer that is not found anywhere in the Bible. That is not what the early church did. Next week we will learn that there is more to being a Christian than just being baptized. There is an entire Christian community that we become a part of.

*What things in your life harden your heart toward the message of Jesus?*

*Are there things you are still holding on to that interfere with your relationship with God?*

If the people who killed Jesus can be pardoned, so can we. There is no one bad enough that God won't take them back. [If there are non-Christians you can let them know that the group is there to support them. You may want to ask if anyone tonight was cut to the heart and wants to be made right with God through repentance if they are a Christian or repentance and baptism if they are not yet a Christian.]