



“Cut to the Heart & Filled with the Promise”

Acts 2:37-41

May 1, 2022

This morning I come to you with the joyful knowledge that grace is at the very core of biblical Christianity. Let me remind you that grace is not just God’s mercy upon the undeserving. God’s grace is His mercy and kindness upon the ill-deserving.

Grace is His love and it is His forgiveness released upon the heads of those who have sinned grievously and repeatedly. It is His Spirit poured out and given to His elect to transform them, to cleanse them, to renew them, and to conform them into the very image of His Son as they come to a living faith in the Messiah.

This morning as we open God’s Word together, we are going to see one of the greatest biblical portraits of the kind of grace that we are talking about—God’s grace and mercy upon the ill-deserving.

As we look upon the New Covenant people of God, we see the first evangelistic harvest of the Christian era. As we think about just who it was that God was saving at that time, our hearts rejoice that He has mercy upon sinners like them and sinners like us as our hearts are broken with the knowledge of our own iniquity and the grace that He gives to forgive them.

The grace that was at work here on this day continues forth through the centuries. It flows even across the sea and across the ages to Bellflower and a place called Bethel Grace. As we dig into the Word of God and see what happened then, we do so with the knowledge that these things happen still now.

We enter the scene of Jerusalem at the feast of Pentecost. There in the heart of the city are many of the very same people that demanded the crucifixion of Jesus of Nazareth, with repeated, asserted chants of, Crucify Him, crucify Him, crucify Him. Now here we are fifty days later at the feast of Pentecost. Simon Peter had seen the Risen Lord. Peter had been given the power of the Holy Spirit of Christ.

Behaving like the rock that Jesus was forming him to be, Peter instructed and exhorted and confronted this throng of people in no uncertain terms that they made a severe miscalculation in their estimation of Jesus and what they did with Him. Peter proclaimed to them that they were calling for His death, but God raised Him up to life and God has Christ at His right hand. There is the Lord at the right hand of the Father, seated with power.

Now as we continued forward, we see the piercing power of the Holy Spirit in the hearts of those that were being preached to, and we see the restoration that it led to, and we see this fountain of grace opened up. We look upon this with thankfulness and joy that this same fount is opened up today.

Let's look at what is here, beginning with the culminating, mic-drop conclusion of the sermon we studied two weeks ago on Easter Sunday. Then let's see the aftermath of that moment in Acts Chapter 2, beginning in Verse 36:

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

³⁷Now 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?" ³⁸And Peter said to them, "Repent and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins, and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. ³⁹For the promise is for you and for your children and for all who are far off, everyone whom the Lord our God calls to himself." ⁴⁰And with many other words he bore witness and continued to exhort them, saying, "Save yourselves from this crooked generation." ⁴¹So those who received his word were baptized, and there were added that day about three thousand souls.

Amen, and may God bless the reading of His Word!

What we have here in what we have just read is the initial fulfillment of the prophetic vision that was given to Zechariah. Through the prophet Zechariah, God spoke these words in Zechariah Chapter 12 and Verse 10:

¹⁰And I will pour out on the house of David and the inhabitants of Jerusalem a spirit of grace and pleas for mercy, so that, when they look on me, on him whom they have pierced, they shall mourn for him, as one mourns for an only child, and weep bitterly over him, as one weeps over a firstborn.

This is such a remarkable prophecy. We have God speaking through Zechariah and we have God saying, "They will look upon Me whom they have pierced." How is that possible? We understand this as we see God's plan of revelation; of His plan of redemption unfolding—how God Himself took on flesh and was incarnated in the person of Jesus of Nazareth.

It is as though the Messiah Himself is speaking through the prophet, saying, "They will look up me whom they have pierced." The triune nature of God seems to be revealed here as now the Father starts to speak through Zechariah, because the voice changes and halfway through and says:

¹⁰...they shall mourn for him, as one mourns for an only child, and weep bitterly over him, as one weeps over a firstborn

Here in Acts Chapter 2, we have the initial installment. You look through what else the Scripture reveals about what will happen with the Jewish people at the very end of this age, we expect there is going to be a mass conversion of Jewish people as they understand that Jesus was their Messiah all along.

There will a mass conversion as their hearts break with the knowledge that Jesus Christ is Savior and Lord, but we have this initial installment of it recorded for us here that took place on this earth in Acts Chapter 2. Notice that it happened as God poured out a spirit of grace and pleas for mercy.

It is also revealed in this passage that Jesus, exalted to the right hand of the Father, is the One who did the pouring out of the Spirit. It is Jesus pouring out this Spirit of grace, and the Spirit of grace that is spoken of is the very Holy Spirit of God. The Third Person of the Trintiy, pouring out saving grace, moving people that had sinned grievously into the knowledge of their sin and a new understanding of who Jesus is and the mercy that He alone can provide.

So we see this grace. I like how the DOXA students put it. One of their Ten Commandments is: grace, grace, grace. We praise God for His grace and we ask God to fill us with His grace. I think that is a pretty good commandment for people that are a part of a church called Bethel Grace which means house of God's grace.

Here we rejoice and we celebrate the fact that God saves sinners in Christ Jesus our Lord. Here we also see the initial upwelling of the New Covenant grace that was being poured out and is continuing to flow even to Southern California, even in the year of our Lord 2022.

I want for us to walk through these five verses and see five movements of the gracious working of Christ through His Spirit, knowing that this is an ongoing work that is taking place today. There were some things that were very unique about the day of Pentecost, but in these verses we see waves of grace that continue, so as we look at them let's pray that God would perform them in and through us, and that this church, like that church, would be characterized by this kind of working of God.

We will call these five movements:

The Gracious Work of Christ in the Holy Spirit.

The first movement of grace that took place in the aftermath of that awesome sermon by Simon Peter was:

1. A Cutting Pain (37)

God performed a cutting pain in the hearts that were gathered in that street. Yes, I mentioned at the beginning that grace is at the core of biblical Christianity, but understand this too: pain is also a core experience biblical Christianity.

There is a pain that heals. It is the conviction of sin that the Lord works in us through the preaching of the Word of God empowered by the Spirit of God. So we see this in Verse 37:

³⁷Now when they heard this

That is Peter's declaration of the resurrection, ascension, and exaltation of the person they crucified.

³⁷Now 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?"

The ESV speaks of the crowd being cut to the heart. The New American Standard translation gives it to us as "they were pierced to the heart." The Greek term means to strike, to stab violently, or to stun.

Therefore, this was something that was unexpected and that was very intensely emotional, even supernatural as the Spirit of grace was working this knowledge of sin in the hearts of the people that were gathered under the preaching of the Word that day.

Here we see this prophecy of Zechariah Chapter 12 and Verse 10 taking place and we also see the prophetic word of Jesus being manifested, who said in the Upper Room with His disciples in John Chapter 16 and Verse 8:

⁸And when he comes, he will convict the world concerning sin and righteousness and judgment

So understand that this cutting pain was a work of the grace of God. When it comes to the reality of sin in our lives, it is a very, very good thing when we experience this kind of pain, because it is indicating that something is wrong and we are coming to the knowledge that there is something wrong.

We need to pray that the Lord will stab the hearts of the people in our sphere of influenced lives that don't know Jesus with the knowledge of sin and its guilt. If we as followers of Jesus are lingering in unrepentant sin, we need to pray anew, "God, break my heart. Pierce me with the sword of the Spirit. Let not my heart be hardened and calloused in sin." It is better to have a broken heart than a calloused heart, so this kind of pain is a work of grace.

We understand that there is pain that heals. We understand that when we go under the dentist's drill. We understand that when we go under the surgeon's scalpel. And we must understand that under the preaching of the Word of God.

So if you happen to be under the hearing of this message and you are not a follower of Jesus, you are not a Christian, you are just learning about what Christianity is, and a

Christian preacher or a Christian friend or neighbor informs you that despite what all the voices in society tell you, no, you are not a good person. You are not!

Yes, you were created in the image of God and there is amazing value to that, but you are not a good person. Like the rest of us, you are a sinner and you have broken the Law of the Lord repeatedly. If somebody has the audacity to tell you this, understand that they are not telling you this out of place of superiority.

They are telling you this out of the understanding that we are all guilty sinners that need to confess our sin before the holiness of God. Our sin offends the holiness of God and we need to know that, because that is how the fount of repentance is opened in our hearts.

This is so important for us to hear because we are a part of generation that is increasingly intolerant of the confrontation of sin. We are living in a time of safe places, where nobody can impose upon anybody else in such a way that would render guilt upon their chosen course of life.

However, don't think that Bethel Grace or any Bible preaching church is going to be a safe place like that, where you never have your conscience afflicted. Pray that your conscience would be afflicted, because we need to know the gravity and the seriousness of our sin.

Each one of us needs for Scripture to reveal how we have offended the holiness of God with our attitudes, with our speech, with our sexual immorality, with our apathy toward the things of the Lord. Not only our sins of commission, but things that we ought to do that we don't do. We are sinners and this work of grace, it begins with cutting pain. It comes with the knowledge that we are sinners in the sight of God.

Hallelujah! Praise God that the gracious working of the Lord continues. Here on Pentecost it began with the cutting pain with the preaching of the Word. Then praise God for the continued work of the Spirit, for we see the next movement of this when we see:

2. A Healing Gift (38)

Verse 37:

³⁷Now 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?" ³⁸And Peter said to them, "Repent and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins, and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.

So we see this healing gift that is declared with the continued working of the grace of God.

In Verse 38, there are two marvelous gifts that are laid out before us. It is one great gift leading to what I think is an even greater gift, with the first gift being astonishingly awesome. What is the first gift spoken of here?

The first gift is the forgiveness of sin. Some of you may think that you have a problem with financial debt. Maybe you do. Maybe you don't, but every single human being has a fearsome problem with the legal debt that they have accrued in the courtroom of Almighty God. Each one of us is responsible for the sin that we have committed in the sight of the Lord.

Because it is an infinite God in an infinite court, each sin is an infinite offense with an infinite price tag, and here in this text we have the astonishingly good news of the free and clear forgiveness, clearing, cleansing, and removal of that debt. Talk about taking a load off! It is not that God just forgives sin, saying that maybe it wasn't so bad after all.

No, it is because the sin had its price paid when Christ was stretched out on the cross and there He hung as the target of the judgment due all our sin. Jesus paid it all. Jesus paid the price. Jesus alone is Savior because of what He alone could and did do.

But then we see that there is another healing gift that is spoken of here in this text. Praise God that having forgiven sinners, the Gospel does not just leave them in a neutral position. First we know through our study of justification that He gives us the righteousness of Christ imputed to us. But here there is another astonishing gift that is given to those cleansed of sin.

It is the unthinkable gift of the Holy Spirit. Peter was speaking of the indwelling presence of the One who was there hovering over the surface of the deep at the dawn of creation. So the same One who caused all of the varieties of life to exit on this earth comes to bring new life to you. The One who empowered the original creation now is empowering the new creation.

The One who brought order to the disorder that we find in Genesis Chapter 1 and Verses 1 and 2, is the same One who comes bringing order and grace and peace to those that are coming to faith in Jesus Christ as Savior and Lord. He brings the Paraclete, the Helper, the Counselor, the Healer and Friend into our lives to help us grow in the knowledge of how vast God's grace and love is for us.

With this, now we see that Peter gave two stipulations as he offered these two blessings. Peter said:

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

First Peter said to repent. This verb means to "change your mind or to change your thinking or your outlook." What we are talking about with this glorious grace of

repentance is that there is a change of mind and a change of thinking that leads to a change of life for those who are in Christ.

So here in this situation at Pentecost, Peter was telling the people gathered, “You once saw Jesus as a man worthy of death. Now you are to change your thinking and you are to view Him as the One who is the Lord of life.” He was telling them, “You had blasphemed the name of Jesus and now you are to praise the name of Jesus.”

The same Gospel truth goes out to all generations. Those who had been dismissive or unknowing or ignorant or not giving the time of day to the name of Jesus, are now to know that Jesus Christ is Lord and He is authority, and we go walking in the One who loves us and who has given Himself for us.

This repentance is a work of God that brings new direction in life. It is a word of great hope. It indicates to us that things can change and they will change as we are brought into the mercy of the Messiah. Knowing that God works this, we too are to be those who are obedient to the work that God is doing. Yes, we are going to change our thinking. We are going to listen too, and pray for God’s power to live out all that He commands us, knowing that this is the work of God’s Spirit within us.

So Peter said:

³⁸And Peter said to them, “Repent and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins

Now baptism is revealed to us in Scripture as a symbol and seal of the new life that Jesus gives. Baptism is the public immersion of the new believer in water, symbolizing the cleansing of sin and union with Christ in His death and in His resurrection. So those who come to faith in Christ are to declare that faith in Christ visually by going through the waters of baptism.

As we take in what was happening in Acts Chapter 2, understand what a bold moment that too was in an otherwise bold sermon all the way through. While the Jewish people practiced baptism, they generally thought of baptism as a rite for Gentile converts who needed to wash away all of their uncleanness that was related to their paganism.

But now for the Jewish people to undergo baptism in Jesus Name, it was a declaration that “I need God’s washing mercy every bit as much as all of the Gentile sinners of the earth. I’m a sinner too and I need this union with Jesus. I need this cleansing that He alone can provide.”

So likewise, moving into our day, baptism is a wonderful and dramatic visual testimony of our faith and belief in Christ. When a person is baptized they are portraying the fact that, “I am united to the Messiah. He joined me to Himself. In His death, I died. In His resurrection, I live. My life is now hidden with Christ in God. So baptism is a testimony that I belong to Jesus. I am in Jesus and I am born anew in Him.”

All throughout the pages of Scripture it is emphatic that faith is the entryway. God's grace through faith, that is how we come into the salvation that He gives. Then baptism is the closing associated sign and seal of that covenant that we are entering into by faith.

Even as we go through the pages of the book of Acts, we see that there were people that were born again clearly prior to their baptism. There is the great account in Acts Chapter 10 of Peter preaching to the Gentiles gathered in the house of Cornelius, where he said in Verse 43:

⁴³...everyone who believes in him receives forgiveness of sins through his name.

Even as Peter was preaching to all of those people who were hearing the Gospel for the first time, even as he was proclaiming that everyone who believes in Him receives forgiveness of sins, and suddenly there was a transformation that took place in the people that he was preaching to.

They were lit up and began speaking in tongues as well, indicating the presence of the Spirit in their lives. Upon viewing this, Peter said,

⁴⁷"Can anyone withhold water for baptizing these people, who have received the Holy Spirit just as we have?" ⁴⁸And he commanded them to be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ. Then they asked him to remain for some days.

They wanted more of this preaching about Jesus.

So we see that we are saved by grace through faith in Jesus Christ and baptism is the sign and seal of that covenant that Jesus has brought us into. It is kind of like in a wedding ceremony when the couple have exchanged their vows. Those vows are that which bind the marriage. Then as a symbol of those vows, rings are placed on each other's fingers.

Those rings are a sign of the marriage covenant, so baptism is a sign of the covenant that we enter into with Christ. So if you have not been baptized and you are a Christian—you have come to faith in the Lord Jesus Christ and you have not been baptized—you are walking around without your wedding ring. You need to put that ring on!

Good news! We are doing baptisms soon. Have we not been interrupted by a recent outbreak of Covid? There were three men who were being prepared to be baptized today. However, that will now happen sometime later in May. I was so thankful after the DOXA Bible Study a couple of weeks ago that several students wanted to know more about baptism. They want to be baptized.

If you have not been baptized and your heart believes in Jesus, it is time for you to get baptized. There are information sheets in the narthex describing what baptism is and how

we practice it here at Bethel Grace. Get one those sheets and we will look forward to a joyful time as a church family.

We see that this movement of grace started with a cutting pain. Now we continue to see a healing gift. Now there is:

3. A Spreading Promise (39)

There is a spreading promise that also comes with the working of God's grace. We read of this when move into Verse 39, still speaking of the Holy Spirit,

³⁹For the promise is for you and for your children and for all who are far off, everyone whom the Lord our God calls to himself.

Here the Spirit of Jesus is spoken of as a wonderful gift promised to the people of God. Did you notice in that verse the spreading nature of it? Peter had been speaking to them at the individual level, saying, "Each one of you, have faith and get baptized."

Then he told them, "You will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit, but understand that this gift is not just for you." There is a spreading nature of the gift as the message of Christ is carried by the people who belong to Him. It is for you and for your children and for all of those who are far off.

First when Peter said this promise is for you and your children, this is speaking to us of the fact that one of the primary ways that the Christian faith spreads from generation to generation is through family discipleship as parents instruct their children in the ways of the Lord.

This kind of family discipleship very well may be the main way that the Christian faith advances. It is a primary way, but it is not the only way of people coming to faith. How many of you came to faith because one of your parents introduced you to the Lord? Raise your hands. Now for those of you who came to faith in other ways, raise your hands. It's about even here. So maybe it is just like this in this verse. It is actually half and half.

But the Gospel is to go forth. It is to be given from parents to children. It is to be given as Aunts and Uncles, Grandmothers and Grandfathers, Mimis and Bops, and as brothers and sister in the church encourage children to confess their sins and look to Jesus in faith. This is a primary way that the gospel spreads. If you have been introduced to Jesus by a family member, understand that this is the work of God and He is pleased to do this in that way.

This does not mean that the children of believers are born regenerated with the indwelling of the Holy Spirit. When Peter said, "This promise is for you and for your children," that does not mean that as believers your children are born again. I wonder

how long it takes for parents to realize that? I wonder how long it took my parents to realize that about me, even as they came to faith later in their adulthood?

Children need faith and repentance and conversion by the grace of God. Therefore, children are not to be baptized in their infancy or their toddlerhood. They are to be baptized when they come to a knowledge of their sin and Jesus as their Savior, even as Peter said in Verse 41:

⁴¹So those who received his word were baptized

Receiving His Word implies is that they heard it and they understood it and they accepted it. This is why we practice the believer's baptism. Baptism is given to those who have heard and understood and received the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

As far as this goes, we see that family discipleship is one way the Christian faith advances, but it is not the only way. We see this as the promise spreads. Peter said:

³⁹For the promise is for you and for your children and for all who are far off, everyone whom the Lord our God calls to himself."

Now Peter was alluding to the mission of the church. There is a glimpse of the Gentile mission that was to come and was being launched. We heard this same language of *those who are far off, having been brought near* in the text that was read earlier in the service by Pastor Chris in Ephesians Chapter 2, where we have the Jews and the far off Gentiles now brought near and joined together in Christ.

So God wants this evangelism to occur in families and outside of families as the Gospel spreads, carried by the people of the Living God. Peter said that this is for everyone who is far too, talking about all of the different nations of the earth. All of the different economic classes. The prophet Joel said, "The Spirit is going to be poured out on all flesh," meaning black flesh, brown flesh, white flesh, male and female flesh, rich and poor, young and old.

The Spirit of God as the Gospel goes forth is going to be transforming the lives of all kinds of people. Check this out: it's empowered by the Holy Spirit and in the end, Simon Peter knew that it was the sovereign working of God calling His elect as people get saved. As he said in the message of the spreading promise:

³⁹For the promise is for you and for your children and for all who are far off, everyone whom the Lord our God calls to himself."

This is speaking of the Lord being at work summoning sinners of His choice from life to death. So Simon Peter, the Galilean fisherman turned master theologian by the work of the Holy Spirit, had a robust view of the sovereignty of God, knowing that as the Gospel goes forth, God is going to be working His power to bring His elect to faith. That is what

this verse is speaking of. We look at this and we say that our God is an awesome God and we praise His Name.

There are two more movements of grace. The next movement of His grace is:

4. A Continued Plea (40)

Peter provided a continued plea to the people. Do you see the continued passion in his heart as he spoke to these people? It says in Verse 40:

⁴⁰And with many other words he bore witness and continued to exhort them, saying, “Save yourselves from this crooked generation.”

This is interesting because these people were already convinced of the Gospel. They were convinced of their sin and the burden was being released as they were seeing Jesus as Savior and Lord. Belief was rising up in them already, and Peter continued to preach to them; continued to plead with them, and this is indicative of the ongoing need we all have for the Word of God living in the midst of a world that is broken and perverted and all twisted up in sin.

Each generation displays this perversity in different ways. That generation in Israel had its perverse ways and we know that the generation that we live today, it has all kinds of twisted up brokenness and perversity and iniquity. We are all touched by it. So we need the ongoing preaching of the Word of God to help us to see straight, to set us straight. And by God speaking to our hearts through the Living Word, He is going to keep us walking on that discipleship road and on that straight path with our Messiah, Jesus.

This is an ongoing work of Jesus. He is feeding His flock through the teaching of the Word of God. Bethel Grace, pray that as a church we will always be hungry and desirous for the plain preaching of the Bible; that God would put this hunger within us for it and that we as a church will remain orthodox-tethered to the teaching of Scripture.

Pray for the people who preach from this pulpit and for those who teach in all of the classes from nursery and preschool all the way up. Pray that the Lord will help us to divide it straight and say, “Here is what God says and here is what we need,” because we need these continued testimonies about Christ and these continued pleas and these exhortations to walk in His ways.

Finally, the final movement of grace that we are going to continue looking into two weeks from today at our annual meeting, is:

5. A Growing Church (41)

We see that here in Verse 41:

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

Acts Chapter 2 is a chapter that is filled with the wonder-working, miraculous power of God. There at the beginning, the Holy Spirit was poured out from heaven and He came with the sound of rushing wind. He manifested Himself visibly as tongues of fire came down to rest on each one of the people in the church in the Upper Room.

Then suddenly the fire rested upon them and they internalized it and they began to proclaim the glories of God in foreign tongues. They were suddenly speaking in all kinds of different languages, giving glory to God. That's one miracle that took place.

Then we clearly see the transformation before our eyes of Simon Peter, a new man. Fifty days earlier he could not even acknowledge knowing Jesus in front of a servant girl. Three times he denied Him. Now he was standing up in front of all of these people saying, "Jesus is Lord and you crucified Him." It was so bold! It was so awesome.

These were the same people that were chanting about Jesus, "Crucify Him. Crucify Him. Crucify Him." For all Peter knew, these same people could have said that same assertion upon him. "Is he talking about Jesus like this to us. Crucify him! Crucify him." And here you have Peter bold with power from the Holy Spirit. This is a work of God. Let us pray that that work of God will continue.

Then here in this text, we see the continued work of God. 3,000 people! This is a miracle. 3,000 people cut to the heart. Their hearts changed. They were born again, raised from spiritual death unto everlasting life in the Messiah. This transformation occurs. This too is a miracle of God. Which is the greatest miracle? I don't know. It's all awesome!

But let's pray for the miracle that we see here—people coming to faith in Jesus Christ to incur in and through Jesus. We will hear many, many stories about transformed lives. People coming and get baptized and testifying to the grace of Jesus Christ.

In closing, I want to point out two broad categories of the Spirit's work in Acts Chapter 2. First, there is the work of conviction. So if you are here and you are learning about Christianity and being introduced to what is at the heart of it, understand that the first work of God in your life is going to be to make you uncomfortable; to reveal to you the knowledge that He is holy and that you are not; that He is righteous and that you have sinned, and that you need to confess that sin and come under the cleansing flow of the blood of Jesus Christ.

The work of conviction is going to take place. You are going to fidget. You are going to wonder what is going on. I love hearing Kristy talk about her first experience in a church where the Gospel was being proclaimed. She was in her mid-twenties, and we were going out to services led by a man by the name of Greg Laurie in Costa Mesa.

I'm not sure exactly what she was expecting the experience to be like, but she was hearing the preaching of the Gospel and afterwards all she could say was that she was profoundly uncomfortable. She did not come expecting things about her life to be revealed. Kristy said it was like he was speaking to her, podding her, and she wanted to run out. She wondered how Greg Laurie knew about her life.

Kristy tried to resist that for a time. Then finally it was at a communion service at a small Bible study of young adults where the meaning of the blood and the body of Jesus Christ were revealed to her. The spirit of grace and pleas for mercy was filling her heart, and she shed tears and she came to faith in Christ and her life was made knew. But it came with the conviction of sin and that's how it comes.

So if you hear this language about sin and that God is righteous and that there is judgment that is coming and your heart trembles at that, that is a very, very, very good thing. If this is not being experienced, I advise that you say this prayer, "Change my heart, oh God. Change my heart, oh God. Change my heart, oh God." Pray that the Spirit will help you to see that you are in a dangerous position because God is holy and He is Judge. Praise God for the mercy that is given in Jesus Christ.

The first category is conviction. The second is empowerment. If you are walking with the Lord pray that the Spirit of God would give you boldness like He gave it to Peter. Pray that He would give you perception about who Christ is and all of the workings of God in and through Christ. Pray that you will be built up in the truths of God and that He will use you to build up others in the very same truths, just like we see Peter and these apostles doing here in the early church.

With this we will sing to the Lord a song about His wonderful healing mercy and grace as we prepare our hearts to come to the Lord's Table. Let's pray.