**The Book of Acts: Promises, The Holy Spirit & The Church, Acts 2:37-41**

* Mother’s Day is a card company’s dream holiday! What other days do you think have been pushed and publicized by marketers in order to encourage consumers to spend?
* What is the most exciting news you have either shared with someone or had someone share with you?

When other people share their great news with us, it has an impact on our day and sometimes our week. The internet is full of great engagements, gender reveals for baby, and promotion announcements. We celebrate great news with others.

When that great news has direct impact on our lives, we do so much more than celebrate. Our lives are reoriented around this new information. Our perspective and dreams for the future change in a moment.

* Who has participated in or put together an announcement or great news? What did that look like?
* In looking back over the years, what news/information shifted your life? Think college acceptance, moving, job, news house, etc.

In the passage we will look at in Acts, we watch people whose lives were interrupted with the good news of the gospel. In the midst of an ordinary day, they were presented with the truth of the gospel and it drastically interrupted the projection of their lives. Let’s read Acts 2:37-42 together.

**37** When the people heard this, they were cut to the heart and said to Peter and the other apostles, “Brothers, what shall we do?”

**38** Peter replied, “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. **39** The promise is for you and your children and for all who are far off—for all whom the Lord our God will call.”

**40** With many other words he warned them; and he pleaded with them, “Save yourselves from this corrupt generation.” **41** Those who accepted his message were baptized, and about three thousand were added to their number that day.

The impact of the gospel on those who heard Peter’s sermon is evident in verse 37. Pastor Jerimiah pointed out that the phrase “cut to the heart” emphasizes the deeply troubling that effected the hearers at the deepest level of their existence. Challenging them to question the world and their place in it.

We should be shaken to our core as well. The answers to the big question of life are framed around the gospel. The resurrection and ascension of Christ reorients our lives as we consider purpose, hope and personal foundation.

* How can having the gospel as ones most central and foundational truth make it easier to answer questions related to purpose and meaning?
* In what ways have you known God to reveal the sufficiency and priority of the gospel to you or other believers?

A second thing Pastor Jerimiah challenged us to consider is how is the way that the gospel was received and accepted. This passage points to both the individual and communal response of repentance and admission of guilt. When the gospel is truly heard, the response is always repentance, a desire to turn from sin to rely fully on God. The admission of guilt is a beautiful confession of an admittance of wrongdoing without excuse, rationalization or defensiveness.

Even today when the gospel is truly heard the responses are the same. It begins with repentance which propels the believer into a life with Christ as the new decision maker in our lives. Admission of guilt comes with the brokenness that clarifies that we are without excuse. There is no attempt at a defense or deflection of our actions because at the deepest level we acknowledge we are living/making decisions apart from God.

The communal nature of this passage is encouraging. In living in community with others seeking to keep in step with Christ, we are encouraged in our faith. We are challenged to live clearly focused on Christ as our Savior and Lord. There are times when our individualism cannot draw us closer to Christ. We need the Christian faith and strength of others to draw us and carry us closer to Christ.

* Share about a time in the last year when God has used you as a part of a greater Christian community to be a change agent in the world. Think service project, community awareness, ministering to a family/person, etc.
* Who and how has God placed someone in your life to be a coach/encourager for you in your Christian faith walk?

Finally, Pastor Jerimiah pointed us to notice the immediate fruits of the gospel. The people with whom we are in relationship will be able to see what comes from the good news of God’s love in our lives. This love we now center our lives around sets us free and changes how easily we can forgive others. God transforms us so much so that love makes us look at others differently. Moreover, our heart is for people to know the love of Christ more than we want them to have any other thing.

* When you consider forgiveness as being a part of the gospel alive in us, what encouragement would you give to someone who is struggling with forgiving themselves or someone who has hurt them?
* When has the confidence and hope of the gospel sustained you through difficulty? What did that look like?

**Application:**

Following Christ wholeheartedly as an individual and as a community of faith is a massive step. To do so, we much change what we love to such an extent that we chose to love Him more than anything else. When that takes place, we are in a situation where God is divinely interrupting our lives. Perhaps it is choosing Christ over comfort of schedule, of how we spend our money, of who we invest in. Ultimately it is allowing “messy” into our lives because we allow God to interrupt the hopes and dreams of what we have scheduled.

* What does it look like for you when God divinely interrupts your life?
* Into whose life is Jesus leading you and how can we encourage you in that relationship?
* Pick one person in our group to be intentional about partnering with them this week in their next spiritual steps. How can that be done well?