**Lessons from the First Raised to Life Weekend**

**Small Group Notes**

**April 8 and 11, 2021**

**Introduction:**

**When were you baptized? What do you remember about it? (If not, what questions have you had about baptism before?)**

**Beside your own baptism, have you ever seen a baptism that you remember? What made it memorable?**

For today’s discussion we are going to reflect upon the some of the first baptisms that happened in Scripture. They occurred during a festival called Pentecost that was 50 days after Passover and Jesus’ resurrection (10 days after his ascension). Peter has been preaching to people in Jerusalem as they just witnessed hearing the gospel shared in their own language from the apostles in an amazing miracle.

**Discuss:**

1. At the first raised to life, many realized they had been wrong about Jesus!

* Read Acts 2:22-36

Explain: After Peter connected the coming of the Holy Spirit to prophecy, he moved to his main argument. Acts 2:22-36 is the heart of Peter’s sermon. It begins with an introductory summary of God’s action in the ministry, death, and resurrection of Christ (vv. 22-24). A scriptural proof from Psalm 16:8-11 then shows that Christ is indeed the expected Messiah, as His resurrection proves (vv. 25-31). A further scriptural proof from Psalm 110:1 depicts how the risen Christ is now both Messiah and Lord exalted to the right hand of the Father (vv. 32–36).

Ask:

**Why was it important for Peter to use the Old Testament to affirm Jesus as Lord and Messiah?**

**How has believing in the resurrection given you hope in times of difficulty? What are life situations that you may encounter where this message of Jesus being alive could make an impact?**

2. At the first raised to life, many realized they were responsible for the death of Jesus!

* Read Acts 2:37-40
* When you have been cut to the heart you finally realize your sin sent Jesus to the cross. (Acts 2:36-“whom you crucified”)
* When you’ve been cut to the heart, sin becomes less about breaking God’s rules and more about breaking his heart.

Explain: Verse 37 affirms that there were many people who “came under deep conviction.” These people did not ignore or dismiss the conviction they felt but allowed their conviction to move them to cry out to the apostles, “Brothers, what must we do?” In these verses we see the full response of an individual to the love of Jesus presented in the gospel. Therefore, the call to repent is also the call to believe. Baptism was thus a declaration of their belief, not a work to complete their salvation.

Ask:

**Why is it important to see that it is our sin that put Jesus on the cross? How does it change your perspective about sin when we understand that it breaks God’s heart?**

**What might we learn from their response when they heard the gospel? How does this conviction still happen to believers after salvation?**

3. At the first raise to life, baptisms were immediate, unplanned, and spontaneous!

* Read Acts 2:41
* Baptism is a public declaration of a brand-new association
* Your relationship with Jesus is personal but it was never meant to be private.

Explain: That day God added three thousand people to the small number of believers already serving as Christ’s witnesses. While this time there was no sound, no flame, and no foreign language, these people received the Holy Spirit because that’s what Peter promised in Jesus’ name. What did happen is that people were immersed in water and began to identify themselves as believers of Jesus Christ!

Ask:

**What are ways that we can try to focus our faith journey on being only personal instead of both personal and public? How does making our faith personal and public impact the way that we view our identity in Christ?**

4. At the first raised to life, many moved from excuses to obedience!

* Obedience to the Lord and His Word is essential to understanding our relationship in Christ.

Explain: In the sermon, Pastor Brady describes three groups of people: those that are lost that have never placed their faith in Christ; those that are saved and have never obeyed; and then those that are saved but their baptism is on the wrong side of their salvation. The key to remember is that all baptisms that we see in the Bible were preceded by conversion. Therefore, baptism is to always be after salvation, not to complete it or before it.

Ask:

**What are common excuses to not follow through with baptism? How can this impact other areas of someone’s spiritual life?**

**What truths have you learned from today’s discussion that we can share about baptism to those that may struggle or have questions regarding it?**