

## INTRODUCTION

Today we are assembled to worship the Lord, including having baptism.

How are such things supposed to go? Sure, religious people and religious groups do all kinds of things when they get together, many of them while naming Jesus Christ.

But how do things go in the gospel congregation of Jesus Christ, when they are done according to His will?

Let's look to the scriptures for that today, to the primitive apostolic days of Christianity.

Let's see what pattern was laid down at first, so that we here may follow the pattern our Lord Jesus has laid down by His apostles in the primitive congregation.

## TEXT

Acts 2:36-42 "Therefore let all the house of Israel know assuredly that God has made this Jesus, whom you crucified, both Lord and Christ." 37 Now when they heard this, they were cut to the heart, and said to Peter and the rest of the apostles, "Men and brethren, what shall we do?" 38 Then Peter said to them, "Repent, and let every one of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins; and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. 39 For the promise is to you and to your children, and to all who are afar off, as many as the Lord our God will call." 40 And with many other words he testified and exhorted them, saying, "Be saved from this perverse generation." 41 Then those who gladly received his word were baptized; and that day about three thousand souls were added to them. 42 And they continued steadfastly in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship, in the breaking of bread, and in prayers.

## BODY

In the congregation of Jesus Christ, when things are done according to His will, how do they go?

### I. Jesus Christ Is Preached

#### A. As the one crucified

1. the Jews of that time were the most obviously culpable
2. but every sinner should acknowledge his part in it

#### B. As the risen Lord

1. earlier in the sermon, Peter had said much about Jesus being risen from the dead
2. see in this verse the inaccuracy of telling sinners they should "make Jesus Lord" when God already has done so!

#### C. As what can be known assuredly, for a surety, for certain, with certainty

1. many people there were giving eye-witness testimony that Jesus was risen from the dead and ascended to heaven
2. many people there were displaying a miraculous sign that could only be from God

In the congregation of Jesus Christ, when things are done according to His will, how do they go?

-Christ is preached

## II. Repentance and Baptism Are Commanded (38a)

- A. Not in every case, but in this case, the sinners who had heard of Jesus Christ crucified actually cried out asking the preachers what they should do in response
  - 1. APPLICATION: if you hear the preacher preaching, or hear the Bible read, or read the Bible yourself, and you don't understand, or don't know what to do, ask!
    - a) children, ask your parents; wives, ask your husbands
    - b) any of you, ask the pastor or someone else in the congregation
- B. APPLICATION: Hear this if you struggle with what faith is, with what it is to believe, with whether or not you believe. The apostles in this case did not command the people to believe, but commanded them to repent and be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ.
- C. Faith or belief and repentance are not exactly the same thing, but they are so closely connected that either one can be said, and the other is necessarily implied
  - 1. examples in the apostolic preaching
    - a) faith commanded, and repentance not mentioned - Acts 16:30-31 And he brought them out and said, "Sirs, what must I do to be saved?" 31 So they said, "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and you will be saved, you and your household."
    - b) repentance commanded, and faith not mentioned - Acts 17:30 Truly, these times of ignorance God overlooked, but now commands all men everywhere to repent,
  - 2. to repent in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of sins necessarily implies faith in Jesus Christ; to believe in Jesus Christ to save you necessarily implies repentance
    - a) 1 Thessalonians 1:8-9 For from you the word of the Lord has sounded forth, not only in Macedonia and Achaia, but also in every place. Your faith toward God has gone out, so that we do not need to say anything. 9 For they themselves declare concerning us what manner of entry we had to you, and how you turned to God from idols to serve the living and true God,
- D. In what we just read from 1 Thessalonians, you have a good short description of what it is to repent in the name of Jesus Christ
  - 1. you were serving something else, as if it were a god
  - 2. because of Jesus Christ, you turn from whatever else you were serving to serve the living and true God

#### E. A note regarding children and repentance

1. it is a common experience to understand ourselves as sinners more and more fully as we get older
2. typically a child's understanding of himself as a sinner is immature, and his ability to express it in words is limited
3. our 1689 confession, in the chapter on repentance, recognizes that a sinner who has grown to adulthood before being converted is more conscious of repentance than is a sinner who is converted in childhood
4. when I was a boy seven years old, I considered myself to be repentant when I wept over how Jesus suffered for my sins, and asked to be baptized; I have thought about that many times since, and I think that really was the case; as far as I can tell in examining myself, I was unrepentant before that, and have been repentant ever since
5. when I hear from a child that he believes in Jesus Christ crucified and wants to be baptized, one of the things I do is ask the parents whether they perceive that he is repentant

#### F. Baptism

1. commanded only of those who are repenting
2. relation to forgiveness different from that of repentance
3. this symbolic rather than effectual

In the congregation of Jesus Christ, when things are done according to His will, how do they go?

-Christ is preached

-Repentance and baptism are commanded

### III. Salvation Is Promised (38b)

#### A. Remission or forgiveness of sins

1. Psalm 32:5 I acknowledged my sin to You, And my iniquity I have not hidden. I said, "I will confess my transgressions to the LORD," And You forgave the iniquity of my sin. Selah
2. Isaiah 55:6-7 Seek the LORD while He may be found, Call upon Him while He is near. 7 Let the wicked forsake his way, And the unrighteous man his thoughts; Let him return to the LORD, And He will have mercy on him; And to our God, For He will abundantly pardon.

#### B. The gift of the Holy Spirit

1. the Holy Spirit had come upon the disciples of Jesus Christ with a very evident manifestation
2. the same presence of the Holy Spirit is promised as part of salvation to everyone who believes; but not the same manifestation

In the congregation of Jesus Christ, when things are done according to His will, how do they go?

-Christ is preached

-Repentance and baptism are commanded

-Salvation is promised

#### IV. The Word of Salvation Is Gladly Received (41a)

- A. That because Jesus Christ has been crucified and is now the risen Lord, if I repent in His name, I will be forgiven all my sins and will have the Holy Spirit of God inside me
- B. This seems obvious, doesn't it---that the word of salvation would be gladly received
  - 1. you are sick with a deadly disease, but there is a surgery or a medicine that will cure you
  - 2. there has been a bad car wreck, but everyone is okay
- C. See this in other words verse 44: "all who believed"

In the congregation of Jesus Christ, when things are done according to His will, how do they go?

- Christ is preached
- Repentance and baptism are commanded
- Salvation is promised
- The word of salvation is gladly received

#### V. Those Who Gladly Receive the Word Are Baptized (41b)

- A. Not any who did not gladly receive the word
- B. Were baptized
- C. Were added to the congregation

#### CONCLUSION

In the congregation of Jesus Christ, when things are done according to His will, how do they go?

- Christ is preached
- Repentance and baptism are commanded
- Salvation is promised
- The word of salvation is gladly received
- Those who gladly receive the word are baptized, and so added to the congregation

Let us, then, joyfully and faithfully follow this pattern, in loving obedience to our Lord Jesus Christ.

Stephen - Call to Worship and Opening Prayer - Psalm 146:1

Alex - Scripture Reading - Psalm 146:2-9

Dillon - Congregational Prayer

Benediction - Psalm 146:10

Journey - Prelude - please pick

Rita - Trinity 675 "A Wonderful Saviour" - Andrew lead

Rita - Trinity 53 "Hallelujah, Praise Jehovah" - Andrew lead

Audrey - Trinity 731 "And Can It Be?" - Andrew lead