

The Word and Pentecost

Pentecost

By Pastor Pieter Van Ruitenburg

sermonaudio.com

Bible Text: Acts 2:25-47
Preached on: Sunday, May 23, 2021

Bethel Netherlands Reformed Congregation

8920 Broadway Street
Chilliwack, BC V2P 5W1

Website: www.nrcchilliwack.org
Online Sermons: www.sermonaudio.com/bnrcchilliwack

This evening hour, two texts from Acts 2, the verses 37 and 41. Acts 2, the verses 37 and 41.

37 Now when they heard this, they were pricked in their heart, and said unto Peter and to the rest of the apostles, Men and brethren, what shall we do?

And also verse 41,

41 Then they that gladly received his word were baptized: and the same day there were added unto them about three thousand souls.

So far. "The Word on Pentecost." The word on Pentecost. In the first place, the preaching of the word. Do you see that? "Now when they heard this," that's the word, right? They heard the word. That's the first thought, secondly, the heart is pricked by the word, the word of God pricked their hearts, was convincing them as we see so clearly, "Now when they heard this, they were pricked in their heart." Thirdly, the calling to repent from the word. So they were pricked in their heart, they ask, "What shall we do," and in verse 38 we read, "Then Peter said unto them, Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost." And in the fourth place, gladly receiving the word as we see also in verse 41, "Then they that gladly received his word." So the word and Pentecost: the preaching of the word; secondly, their hearts pricked by the word; three, the calling to repent from the word; and fourth, gladly receiving of the word.

Remember congregation and friends, those cloven tongues like as a fire, all those little flames, all those tongues and speaking in different languages and the people astonished? It was busy in Jerusalem 9 o'clock in the morning. Busy. Why busy? Well, that's an agricultural time, right? People were farmers so were used to rise at dawn, 6 o'clock in the morning the day started, and they had their breakfast already and they had the things organized already and the streets were busy at this feast day of Pentecost, the Old Testament Pentecost, and they saw that and heard it and some said, "What does that mean? What is the meaning of this? No idea, you? What's happening? I'm confused. Is

this God talking? Is this something satanic or what is this? What does this mean? I have no idea, never heard of it." And others are mocking, "They had too much. They drank too much. Early in the morning they had something intoxicating already." And they're mocking them.

So that was the atmosphere and the Apostle Peter, does he have any courage to talk to mad and confused and angry and mocking people? Would you not feel kind of, "I don't want to preach to you. The whole atmosphere is so negative, maybe tomorrow I'll come back." No, because he is there not to please the people, and he does not want to be revered by the people, but he wants to preach the word of the living God. For God's sake, for his name, for his glory, whatever, even if everyone was against him, he must preach the word of the living God. But I have to admit if people are against you and holding a grudge and are disappointed, it's hard to preach and to speak but he does.

"Now when they heard this, they were pricked in their heart, and said unto Peter and to the apostles, Men and brethren, what shall we do?" And the Apostle Peter, he was standing still, right, as you read in the previous verses, verse 14, "But Peter," verse 13, "Others mocking said, These men are full of new wine." Verse 14, "But," they said full of wine, "But Peter standing up with the eleven." Standing up with the 11, so his fellow disciples are standing as well around him? Exactly. They feel kind of, "We need to support that man. We need to support Peter. We're not going to sit down or be in the crowd and we just stand next to him." And they show that they are the leaders of the church and that they support the preacher. Some say that's why our churches have consistories close to the pulpit, that's why they shake hands with the minister, so they indicate they are behind you, we pray for you, we are behind you, and that's biblical, is it not? So the 11 apostles, they stood with him. You say, "11? Should it not be 10 because he was there and the other 10 because Judas had left?" Yes, but Judas had been substituted by Matthias as we see in the last verse of the first chapter, "And they gave forth their lots; and the lot fell upon Matthias; and he was numbered with the eleven apostles."

So I see not Judas, of course, but I see 12 of those men standing there in front of the crowd being mocked and people being confused, and then the Apostle Peter is preaching. Do you believe it? The man who had denied the Lord Jesus? The man who had been cursing and being violent in his language and he's preaching the word? Yes. He is helped by the Lord, this is Pentecost and he is a herald. Not a hero but a herald and preaching the word of the living God. He feels that urgency to preach the word of God. Of course, a sermon like this is very particular. He's not preaching to Gentiles. It's not the same sermon as Acts 17 on Mars Hill on the Areopagus preaching to the philosophers. This is to Jewish people so no wonder he has a special slant, a special focal point and a special method. He preaches from the Old Testament especially and he feels that those listeners must search the scriptures if they are so like the people, like the Jewish people in Berea did, right? They're praised for that, that they said, "You know, I'm not going to believe you, pastor." They're praised for that. They're praised for the fact that they said, "I'm not going to believe you. I want to have proof of that in the Bible. I would like to see it myself."

So that's the Apostle Peter. He doesn't say, "You know, you just believe me. I say so in my authority." No, he says, "I will show you from the Bible," then he's preaching the word. There are 23 verses of his sermon, 23 verses. You know, those 23 are 12 quotes from the Old Testament. That's more than half, more than half of his sermon is Bible texts thrown in there. So, no, it was not a Bible study but preaching is expounding, preaching is explaining the word of God and to show people, "See, it's here. You cannot deny that. You are now forced to believe it. It's the Bible. The Bible says so." So I hope also tonight that you just don't believe me because it's me. I trust you don't but you say, "He pointed it out in the Bible. It's there." And that gives the word of God power, gives the message power that it's not a human word, a man's word but God's word.

So let me support this with two texts from Romans 10 and 2 Timothy 4. "The word is nigh thee, even in thy mouth, and in thy heart: that is, the word of faith, which we preach." The word of faith in order to bring to faith, that's the word we preach. And for "preach" it says "kerysso," for "preaching" it says "being a herald; to officiate as a herald; to proclaim after the manner of a herald with always the suggestion of formality, gravity and an authority which must be listened to and obeyed." And as I said, 2 Timothy 4, "Preach, Timothy. Preach the word; be instant in season, out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort with all longsuffering and doctrine." Preach the word. Preach the doctrine. Preach the message of God. Do it. Continue. Be faithful. Be instant in season and out of season, always continuing. So preaching is not just friendly talk, a pep talk, it's not something of psychology counseling although counseling can be also biblical counseling. It's not to entertain people and to make people feel happy, it's in the first place preaching the word of God. And yes, there might be an antidote and an example and something interesting, but it always must serve the purpose to make the word of God clear.

So the first mark, the first characteristic of this sermon of Peter was that it is scriptural, the second is that it is not formal official as an herald preached the word, it's also very personal. He is not describing something, what they experienced. It has a place too. They preached also how the Lord works in their hearts, in the hearts of whom the Lord draws out of the darkness, but it's not only they, they, they, it's also you. We must preach you, you need a new heart, you are resisting, you are the one guilty, you are in need of this. You. And he does that quite often, just read it over for yourself, this sermon, you. That's the application, right? Application is not a confusion about it, something that experiential preaching and application is only describing how the Lord works. That has a place, that's necessary but that's not the only thing. It is also it has to be pointy and directed to the individual listener in church. So not, "I hope," but the Lord calls you, that's the preaching, "Turn ye, turn ye. Let the wicked forsake his way."

He is also, in the fourth place, honest, so straightforward. He's not kind of softening it up or watering it down. He just tells you the way it is and in this sermon he says to the listeners, to them, "You know, see those people, see those faces? Whatever. What does this mean? Drunk." Not a good atmosphere and he just points to the people and he says, "You have taken him, your Savior, your own Savior, can you believe it? He came to save a people from their sins and you took him and by the hands of wicked men you crucified

him, and you have slain him, you killed him, you have assassinated him. You did. Yes, you did." And again, "You have crucified him." So he is preaching in a very honest way their unwillingness, their hostility, their resistance, that they did not cooperate in any form or shape.

How is that tonight? Should I preach you tonight as well, whom you have slain, whom you have crucified, whom you have delivered and taken? You have despised him. You esteemed him not. You did not want. Yes, I have to preach that. You know, it sits so deep in some hearts that people think, "I am willing to be converted. I pray for it every day, Lord, convert me, give me a new heart. I need it. I don't want to go to hell. Give me a new heart. Give me all I need. And I go to church faithfully and I pray and I do all the things I'm supposed to do, so I'm willing now and I hope the Lord is willing too." And then not realizing that the Lord is willing and we are not, and you say, "Yeah, that's right, minister." That's what you say, right, but do you believe it? But you did not want, that we have hewn out cisterns that do not hold water and that we leave the cisterns of the Lord and the water of the Lord. He's using sharp words, very sharp words. Crucified him. Neglecting him. Neglecting such great salvation. That's what we do. "Of how much sorer punishment," more serious punishment, "suppose ye," right, "shall he be thought worthy, who has trodden under foot the Son of God, and has counted the blood of the covenant, wherewith he was sanctified," was sanctified in the out sense, "an unholy thing, and has done despite unto the Spirit of grace?" The Spirit of grace. The Spirit of grace, and have done despite, have just refused him, kept the door closed, the Lord with his hand on the door to open it, we on the other side pushing that the Lord is not welcome. That's how it would be felt.

I remember talking about this with a member who has passed on already, and he said, "You know, I want to be converted," and he said, "I really want to but, you know, the Lord is not giving it to me and I just notice it that this is not the fear of the Lord." And I said, "No, it's not true. You don't want that. You are refusing." "What, me?" "Yes, you are." He said, I just remember that so vividly, he said, "Did we fall so deep?" That's how it would be felt.

Despite unto the Spirit of grace. Think of Zechariah 12, "And I will pour upon the house of David, and upon the inhabitants of Jerusalem, the spirit of grace and of supplications: and they shall look upon me whom they have pierced," shall look upon me whom they have pierced, "and they shall mourn for him, as one mourneth for his only son, and shall be in bitterness for him, as one that is in bitterness for his firstborn." So the Holy Spirit coming, Zechariah 12, the Spirit of grace convincing them that they have pierced him, that they have pierced him and then to begin to mourn for that. "Lord, I have pierced the Savior and having such a bitterness in my mouth, in my soul because of what I did, the bitterness as one that is in bitterness for his firstborn." Your first child, expect your first child and it's stillbirth, the first child, you have nothing. What a deep raw feeling and so when you see what you have done, so I'm not only describing it, I have now to practice what I preach, about to say, "That's you. I'm talking about you. By nature you have pierced him. You are despising Jesus." You don't want him. Be honest, you don't want him. No religious topics. No defending of yourself, please.

Honest and that preaching the word of the living God Peter preaches also very friendly. "Friendly? That's not friendly. You said you have slain him, you have pierced him, you have crucified him, that's not nice." Well, he's honest but you yet see how nice he is. He speaks about people who are the brethren. He speaks about the brethren. He speaks about the people of Israel, right? Like we see in verse 14, "But Peter, standing up with the eleven, lifted up his voice, and said unto them, Ye men of Judaea, and all ye that dwell at Jerusalem, be this known unto you, and hearken to my words." The tone is not hostile. He realizes, Peter realizes that he's talking to covenant people, to a people God has chosen in an outward sense and they are his friends, his brothers, his people, his congregation, and that's repeated time and again. "Men and brethren," verse 29, "let me freely speak unto you of the patriarch David." Men and brethren. Brethren. Connection, he makes a connection. He does not keep distance. He's not talking to them as if they are only enemies, he says, "No, I appreciate you. You're my brothers. You're family. You're family but what you did is awful."

So when we preach the word on the mission field or in a congregation, we need to be honest and straightforward and yet friendly, yet realizing we are talking to covenant people. Do you know what I see in this sermon, in the sixth place? That he preached the gospel. That's not the first purpose of this sermon, the first purpose is to explain the pouring out of the Holy Spirit so he's quoting from the Old Testament about the Spirit, that's his focal point but tucked in here and there you see the gospel. For example in verse 21, "whosoever," don't we like that word? Whosoever, anyone, whoever it is, "Whosoever shall call on the name of the Lord shall be saved." So also tonight we may preach that word of the gospel and just guarantee it. It's in the Bible. It's in verse 21. You know, whatever you say about my sermon, you can't be critical of the word of the Lord.

"And it shall come to pass, that whosoever shall call on the name of the Lord," the Lord Jesus, "shall be saved." So if you call on him not just casually praying but if you call on him in your needs where your sins and you take refuge unto him, if you need salvation that's the point here, need salvation and you turn to him and toward salvation, he will not turn you back. He will not say, "No." He will not say, "Another time." He will not disappoint you. I don't know any example in the Bible of that, that sinners come to Christ and that he turns them back. Well, that rich young ruler came and he wanted to inherit the kingdom of God and the Lord Jesus said, "Sell all you have." He just revealed to him that he did not want, there was no real desire, it was not really worth it for him, but if someone is interested in salvation for free, without money and price, he can receive it. The Lord is willing to give it.

And in the seventh place, the sermon that Peter is preaching is also Christ-centered, right? I see Christ in there. He talks about him being crucified and being slain and being buried and being raised from the dead. Very crucial. Of course, he could not miss that. So now when they heard this, you have now an idea of what they heard, "Now when they heard this," the Holy Spirit was working, right, and it did not go in one ear and out the other ear. It just did something to all of them and "they were pricked in their heart, and said unto Peter and to the rest of the apostles, Men and brethren, what shall we do?" Our

second thought, their hearts pricked by the word. I looked it up in the dictionary, I always do all the word in the text to see, you know, what is the background, what is the taste of this, a good explanation of the word. "Pricked" is also "pierced in their heart, or cut in their heart." It is to inflict pain in the mind sharply; to agitate it vehemently; especially used as the emotional sorrow. So they were cut in their heart as if the Lord opened them up and just cut it open and the truth had to come out. They were pierced in their hearts, pricked in their heart.

Now it says "heart," but everyone has a heart, right? It's not so that this, per se, speaks of conversion, also unconverted people can feel pricked in their heart although some say that's not from the devil and it's not from you, somebody from the Lord. Well, is there another option? Is it possible that people are pricked in their hearts and just cut open and they feel so convicted and feel the pain as a result of common grace? Why not? We firmly believe that, that people can have a certain amount of knowledge of their sins and feel awful and depressed and down and ugly about it and hopeless and whatever and are not saved. So were they all saved at this point? I'm not sure, not per se. Did not 3,000 people were not 3,000 pricked in their heart? It doesn't say that. Does it say that? It says 3,000 in verse 41. Yes, "they that gladly received his word were baptized: and the same day there were added unto them about three thousand souls." It doesn't say 3,000 felt pricked in their hearts. Maybe more. Maybe more. It's not sufficient to be pricked in your heart. Maybe that stays for the rest of your life, goes up and down, feel a little pricked in your heart, up and down, up and down the rest of your life and yet be unconverted.

So I'm happy to notice when people are touched and cry and feel convinced and feel awful but, you know, that is not, per se, the work of the Holy Spirit, not saving work. It might be just something of their personality, something common that goes up and down. So and yet it's better than nothing. It gives some hope. I like to see it. It's not enough but I like to see it when people just show that deep concern and feel, "Pastor, I feel so unconverted. What shall I do? I don't know where to turn." I'm happy to hear that but I won't lay up hands and say, "The Lord is working on your heart. It's not from yourself. I'd like to encourage you, you'll be okay." I'm not going to say that.

It gives hope but it's not everything and yet God's people when the Lord works savingly, they are stopped in their tracks and they have the lowest thoughts of self, don't they, when they are pricked in the heart, it's just low thoughts of self? You feel you have a heavy heart and you have been such a fool your whole life, you have heaped up your sins before God's countenance and you have been so unwilling yourself, the Lord is so friendly and you feel you are grieving, you feel the pain of grieving God, you feel that you have been so unreasonable, you feel you have been wrong all the time and you have an awareness of your danger, awareness that you have a soul for eternity. You feel kind of, "If I die without grace, I go to hell. I have to curse God," and hopefully you can't. You're broken, a broken heart, a contrite spirit. They have a cut in their heart, is it a broken heart or is it the life of self-condemnation?

Have you condemned yourself? If not, then you don't know what grace is. God's people, all of God's people, they come to self-condemnation and they have no good word for self

and the Lord takes everything out of their hands. They cannot be proud of anything. They cannot present anything to God the Lord will be pleased with. They are poor and needy and ungodly and lost but they have been arrested by the hand of the Lord. It's not salvation itself but it could be a first step in the right direction.

As I said because unconverted people can also be quite depressed and just in panic, unconverted people can panic absolutely, they can faint. There are examples in Holland that in a certain congregation when the minister preaches about hell, there always is a lady that is always fainting because they are very sensitive and some people are very sensitive when you preach about hell and peace in Christ and the guilt of sin. Do you know what's missing if it is not saving? What's missing is the love, what's missing is feeling sorry for the Lord. You feel you are victimized. You are victimized, you feel a victim, you feel sorry for yourself, "Poor me. Poor me." But that's not what the Lord teaches. The Lord says, "You have sinned against me." He is a holy and good-doing God.

You know, with common grace you have some temporary solutions and some band-aids but the real thing is not solved. You know, you have, for example, cried one evening, you cried, you just poured out your heart and said, "O God, I'm so unconverted. I just don't know how to continue. I'll go to hell." And just crying and after an hour crying you feel so much better, you feel kind of relieved. "I cried. I cried the whole hour. It was a good feeling." And you feel kind of a little better. That's common grace. That's not saving grace. King Agrippa said to Paul, "Almost thou persuadest me to be a Christian."

So people can come very close and show signs of conviction. In the Bible we find a few more of those expressions, "What shall I do? What shall I do?" They ask, "What shall I do," right? John the Baptist was preaching about the ax close to the tree and people asked him, say, "What shall we do, then?" Were they all saved? Or John 6, "Then said they unto him, What shall we do, that we might work the works of God?" Were they all saved? Yes, the Apostle Paul was saved. Acts 9, "And he trembling and astonished said, Lord, what wilt thou have me to do? And the Lord said unto him, Arise, and go into the city, and it shall be told thee what thou must do." That was saving. Or the jailer, right, the jailer also asked the same question. So pricked in the heart, cut in the heart, that is the word of God doing it, not the eloquence of the pastor, not emotions that you cry but the word itself, the content of the word itself is convincing you and cutting you.

It brings us to the third thought: the calling to repent from the word. Now that's interesting, you would think that those people with the pricked hearts had to be encouraged but in light of what I said before, 38, "Then Peter said unto them," then, after they said, "What shall we do?" Then after they were pricked in their hearts, right, they were pricked in their hearts and then, "Peter said unto them, Repent." So after they felt horrible, after they felt pricked in their hearts, after they said, "What shall we do," he said, "Repent." Were they not repenting yet, then? "Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost." So in order to receive forgiveness because he doesn't say "You are God's people, you are crying, you feel horrible of yourself, you're fine, the Lord is

working hard, just trust that." No, he says, "Repent ye and be baptized," so that includes believe.

Sometimes when "repent ye" is by itself in the Bible and we don't see believing there but then we know it's included. Sometimes it's mentioned to, "repent ye and believe," and here you see it's something similar, "Repent ye and be baptized." Being baptized means you take refuge unto Christ and himself. That's what baptism entails.

So what does he mean, "repent"? I looked it up again, the different words for repent in the Bible, this particular word, "to change one's mind for the better; heartily to amend with abhorrence of one's past sins." So it is to feel abhorrence, to abhor yourself, to feel sorry but also a change of one's mind, come to a different opinion, see things differently, open your eyes, turn, turn to the Lord, see your salvation in someone else and just say farewell to your previous doctrine because the doctrine of the Jewish people was not saving at all.

Mark 1:15, "The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand: repent ye, and believe the gospel." So who is he talking to, repent ye? Only to those pricked in the heart or to the whole crowd? Possibly to the whole crowd because it's an expression we read in the Bible that is used for anyone, anyone may heed this, "Repent ye and believe the gospel."

Also very clear in the Canons of Dordt on page 104, you probably are familiar with that, "Moreover the promise of the gospel is that whosoever," whosoever, no conditions, "believeth in Christ crucified shall not perish but have everlasting life. This promise to gather with the command to repent and believe ought to be declared and published to all nations and to all persons promiscuously and without distinction, to whom God out of His good pleasure sends the gospel." Did the Lord send the gospel to you, his good pleasure, in his good pleasure? Do you belong to all persons promiscuously? Yes, you do. To all people it ought to be declared so I need to declare and officially publish to all of you, what? This promise of salvation together with the command to repent and believe.

So repentance is a gift, right? The Lord gives to the elect in the hour of regeneration, he works that faith himself, right? And what the Lord works himself, he commands. He's commanding to repent and he works repentance. Now you can say, "Well, then, I just don't do anything." Take it serious that the Lord says repent ye and feel the impossibility of repenting. That's okay. Those who feel the necessity, the necessity of repentance, you must repent and the Lord declares it officially that you should, "Repent ye and be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness, for the remission of sins."

So if people are pricked in their heart, they feel just horrible and down and panicky but don't repent, don't turn to the Lord and don't believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, then they are still lost because that faith is so important. Without faith it's worthless. There needs to be faith in there, repent ye and believe the gospel for the remission of sins. Look it up, remission. The word means "to lift it up; to take it away; to loose; to set free." So the Lord gives freedom and the Lord lets his claim go and the Lord says, "I forgive you," the

remission, the taking away of sins. So the Lord Jesus came to seek and to save the lost ones that he could be the Lamb of God taking away the sins of the world.

Let me say something tonight. For them slain and for them hard, for anyone, the Lord says, "Repent ye." The wicked forsake his way and the unrighteous man is false and turn unto him to be saved. Would you like to have your sins forgiven? To have them all removed? Think of a teacher before the white board filled with all different things and he takes his brush and he just wipes it all off, nothing left. He erased, taken away. So the Lord is willing to take your sins away, take them all away, to make you clean like Naaman the Syrian, right? He washed himself in the Jordan River and the skin was the skin of a baby, just no leprosy at all anymore, clean. And so the Lord is willing to do that, just that believing, that true believing, taking refuge into the Savior Jesus Christ, that's doing it, whosoever will receive it will be saved.

And we also receive the gift of the Holy Ghost. The gift of the Holy Ghost. Not those special gifts of those times of speaking in different languages or so but the Holy Ghost to comfort you, the Holy Ghost to live in you, the Holy Ghost to lead you further, the Holy Ghost to comfort you time and again. That's the Holy Ghost. That's all it is. Remission of sins and the gift of the Holy Ghost, what else do we need?

What did he mean "baptized every one of you"? Of course, we need to believe and also be baptized. Was it even possible for 3,000 people in that time in Jerusalem? Yes. There were so many baths, ritual baths for the temple service, so many different ponds, people could walk in and walk out again. It was possible, 3,000-5,000 a day is possible. And of course, it was maybe done by immersion. That's possible, we don't know but the heart of the thing is not the baptism but the reason why they were baptized, the forgiveness of sins.

So how did they respond to this? They were pricked in their hearts and they heard the word of God, right? That's why they were pricked in their hearts. And then they heard, "Repent ye, whosoever, and you will receive the forgiveness of sins and the Holy Ghost." Did they walk away now or go home, what happened? Fourth thought, no, the crowd heard it. They were at first confused and mocking and now they came kind of a little bit at least to their senses. And suppose it would have stopped here, kind of, "Oh, I was wrong. Oh, I made a mistake. Oh, I feel I need something. What shall I do?" And they hear the gospel, "Repent ye." "Oh, I need to repent. I need to believe in the Lord Jesus Christ." What if it would have stopped there? It would not have been good. You know John Bunyan, you know John Bunyan, right? He is so concerned about that point that people are almost in, almost to the door and just are killed just in front of the door just before they get in. Almost in the gate. Standing before the gate, just leaning a little bit, "I have to go through the gate. I have to get through there." Looking back and there's some shooting and he just shoots them before the gate and just as he's shooting corpses through the gate. You can read it in "Pilgrim's Progress." He is indicating that some people are concerned, have left the sea of destruction, have been encouraged, have been hearing the curse of the law on Mount Sinai, have tried so many avenues and are at their wit's end, they come to the door finally and fail to get in.

I'm so concerned that it's true for too many among us tonight and listening. So concerned. Nice people. Concerned people with impressions, with encouragements, and they did not go through the door. They did not believe in the Lord Jesus Christ which is the mark, the mark of grace, faith in the Savior Jesus Christ. And we know there are little ones, I know there are little ones and those little ones have gone through the door, those little ones, they're through the door and they say, "What happened? What happened? Someone put me in and I still feel that backpack of sin on my back." So they don't feel so converted. Those are the little ones but those little ones also saw something of Jesus Christ and entrusted themselves unto him.

Verse 41, "Then they that gladly received his word were baptized," gladly received. Received. It doesn't say "received," it says actually "gladly received." You say, "But it already says gladly." Yes, it says it double. It actually says "gladly gladly received." It is double because the word "received" here is sometimes translated in the Bible as "gladly received." It's double. So let me translate it with "gladly welcomed." Not only received, welcomed with gladness in the heart, with such a joy, such a deep happiness, such a satisfaction within. You know, to believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, to trust in him, to seek salvation nowhere else anymore, to be in the midst of death yourself and just rely on him only and hear his voice and just trust in God and believing it.

You know, believing is not something of your brain only, believing is not just making a cold decision, believing is something more and loving. Not a duty. You know, I can take up this psalter book, anyone can do that who has some strength, but believing is not just something you do with your brain and it's not a duty thing, something you are supposed to, you're forced to do so, you press yourself. No, the true believing is something you can't help. True believing is something that kind of happens to you. It's the gift of the Holy Ghost and yet although it's a gift, the Lord says, "Repent ye and believe in me." You're welcome because it's not only a gladness from the sinner's side, they gladly receive also gladness from the Lord's side. The Lord has a delight in mercy. The Lord loves it to give gladness to the hearts of his people.

So there is gladness on the Lord's side and gladness on the sinner's side like a bridegroom and a bride. He rejoices in her, she's rejoicing in him, right? It's from both sides, it's mutual. So the Lord's gladness is so mutual; like a bridegroom rejoices over the bride, so thy God shall rejoice over thee. So that's incredible that there is a gladness on the Lord's side. I understand the gladness on the sinner's side, right? Why would the Lord be so happy with such a people? He loves them. He loves them from eternity. He has given them to his Son. He has paid the price for them and he delights in his mercy and loves that faith, by the way, he has given himself.

So it's willingly believing and willingly repenting, not reluctantly, not as a duty faith, not "I will do my best" type of thing. Appeal to the best to believe and to the best to repent, that's not genuine, is it, but with holy eagerness, with desire and love. You know, when someone is hungry, really hungry, he just wants to eat and to eat and to delight in it. It is so good when somebody first eats and you have this glass of water, that tastes so good as

it never tasted before. You're glad and you take it, and so this faith is a faith and gladness and the same day there was added unto them about 3,000 souls. The Lord added them.

So maybe less than had been pricked in the heart. Maybe the same. The Lord is still the same. He still wants us to preach the same word and if I have said something that's not in the Bible, let me know. I don't want to say anything on top of the Bible that is different than this. So search the scriptures and put your finger there and plead on it because faith is by hearing and hearing by the word of the living God. Amen.