

“On the Spot” // Acts 2:22–41

// Baptism 2019

Welcome to all campuses: Can I ask all of you at CPC to put your hands together right now to welcome our Summit family joining us all over the Triangle right now?

We are no church that meets at 12 locations: **Map of campuses:** From N Durham to Garner and everywhere in between...

Today is a special day, because today I am going to invite all kinds of people, at all of our campuses, to **put on this T-shirt** that I am wearing and be baptized, if you never have, just like you saw in that video.

I know some of you weren't expecting that when you came to church today--the thought had not even crossed your mind--but I want to show you that is the norm for people in the NT who got baptized.

If you have a Bible, I want you to open it to Acts 2 (if not, no worries--I'm going to put it up here on the screen).

(Some of you: *What about Romans?*--we will get right back to it, I promise but today **we're going to look** at the story of the **founding of the 1st church**.

The short version is this:

- It's been less than 2 months since Jesus died on the cross and resurrected from the dead.
- In that 2 months, Jesus has appeared multiple times to his disciples

- But **Jesus has gone now**, and he's given his disciples for planting his church and promised that he would send his Spirit to help them accomplish that.
- Well, in Acts 2 that Spirit comes in really dramatic fashion--it says that all of a sudden there was a sound of a fierce, rushing wind. (Scholars say the word used means something akin to a tornado, and little cloves of fire appear over the heads of Jesus' followers and they all start singing "rock you like a hurricane.")
- Then, they all start speaking fluently in languages they'd never even heard.
- This all happens in a public place, and a lot of people in the crowd recognized their language, so naturally they wonder **what is going on**.

So the Apostle Peter stands up in front of this crowd--and keep in mind that these are many of the same people who had cried for Jesus's crucifixion less than a couple of months ago--and he tells them they had been wrong about Jesus.

- You killed him, he said, thinking you were getting rid of a blasphemer and public nuisance, but **God overturned your verdict** by raising him from the dead.
 - Right? When you've got **2 guys in an argument** and one rises from the dead, he wins.
- Peter says, 'You thought you were getting rid of a nuisance, but in reality, he was dying for your sins'
- And, this resurrected Jesus, he's the one behind all this strange phenomena.

Acts 2:37 says, "When they heard this, they were cut to the heart (penetrated; convicted) and said to Peter and the rest of the apostles: "Brothers, what should we do?"

38 Peter replied, "Repent and be baptized, each of you, in the name of Jesus Christ for (because of) the forgiveness of your sins, and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. 39 For the promise is for you

and for your children, and for all who are far off, as many as the Lord our God will call.”

40 And with many other words he testified and strongly urged them, saying, “Be saved from this corrupt generation!”

41 So those who accepted his message were baptized, and that day about three thousand people were added to them.

- **3000 people decided in that moment** to be baptized as followers of Jesus.
 - That’s **3000 people WHO**, when they woke up that morning, had no expectations of being baptized that day--they hadn’t dressed for it, they hadn’t made any calls--
- **BUT Peter drew a line in the sand** and they knew which side of the line they wanted to be on.
- They were cut to the heart and their lives were changed, right there, like on the spot.
- And so they were baptized to show that.

We are going to see this exact same scenario play out over and over again the book of Acts.

- **In Acts 8 an Ethiopian government official** is riding along in his chariot reading from Isaiah, confused, when the Spirit of God directs a guy named Philip to join him in the chariot and explain to him that Isaiah’s prophecy is all about Jesus.
 - The eunuch becomes convinced Jesus really is the Messiah.
 - Watch this: Acts 8:36, “And as they were going along the road they came to some water, and the eunuch said, “See, here is water! What prevents me from being baptized?” And he commanded the chariot to stop, and they both went down into the water, Philip and the eunuch, and he baptized him.”
 - No prep. No classes.
 - **BTW, did you notice: Down into the water.** Philip didn’t stand beside the pool and scoop out water and drizzle it on his head. He put him under.

- **Acts 9, a man named Saul** gets confronted by Jesus on the road to Damascus.
 - This was a man who up until this moment was completely opposed to Christianity. He literally infiltrated Christian circles and took them to jail or murdered them.
 - But then one day, in a way he was not expecting, he met Jesus. He’d **heard about Jesus** but on that day he *met* him.
 - Jesus knocks him off his saddle and he sees the truth.
 - A disciple named Ananias invites him into his house, “...Then (Saul) got up and was baptized. And after taking some food, he regained his strength.” (Acts 9:18–19)
 - Again, no **long theology** class, no period of proving himself.
 - It **took precedence even over lunch**, which shows you important it was.
- **In Acts 16**, we are told the story of an influential business woman **named Lydia**--she was an up-and-coming female entrepreneur who attended one of Paul’s evangelistic small group Bible studies. “The Lord opened her heart to respond to what Paul was saying, and she and her household were baptized.” Acts 16:14–15. Immediate.
- **Acts 18, a man named Crispus**, a religious leader in the Jewish community in Corinth, a man who thought he had it all together and whom everybody else assumed had it all together, encounters Jesus through Paul’s preaching and realizes that day that his religious upbringing is not good enough and his life is undone, and he needs Jesus. “And Crispus, the leader of the synagogue, believed in the Lord, along with his whole household. And many of the Corinthians, when they heard, believed and were baptized.” (Acts 18:8)

Are you noticing a pattern?

- In Acts, I can’t find a single baptism that was not immediate, unplanned and spontaneous--something that the person baptized had any idea was going to happen when they woke up that day.

And I know this isn't how y'all grew up doing baptisms. You scheduled it. You planned it. You rented a private room at Cracker Barrel afterward to celebrate.

- **And that's fine.** I can see how there can be some value in waiting sometimes.
- But that's **not how it was** in the early church.

So, what I want to do is **go back to this first baptism in Acts 2** and look at what Peter said to them, and why they responded like they did. And then I'm going to **offer you a chance to be baptized** just like they did.

There are primarily **3 groups of people** I am talking to today:

- **There are some of you who need to make a first-time decision** to follow Jesus. You have have known about him all your life but you've never met him.
 - This includes some of you who've been in church your whole life and others for whom this is your first time in a church like this one
 - It includes those of you who may not feel like you fit in in a setting like this.
 - For those who feel far from God right now because of your past/ even your present.
 - It might include some of you who have been opposed to God or Christianity your entire life.
 - It's also for those of you who may have felt close to God at some point in your life, but that was a long time ago, and a lot has happened since then.
 - AMNESTY SUNDAY
 - If you have **any questions about where you stand** with Jesus, I want to help you settle those today.

That's **GROUP 1**: those who need to make a first time commitment to Jesus.

- **GROUP 2 are those of you who have made a decision in the past**, but never been baptized. **Approx #**
 - For some of you, maybe it's that you haven't known you were supposed to,
 - or maybe you feel like you just haven't had the opportunity yet,
 - or maybe you've just been putting it off.
 - But, bottom line, you haven't done it, this is the day you're going to stop making excuses and start obeying.
- **Finally, there are some of you that have been baptized in the past, so to speak--maybe when you were younger or even an infant**, but quite frankly you are not really sure if you were a follower of Jesus back then.
 - **Baptism, you see**, is supposed to mark the beginning of a life of discipleship.
 - It's **not a ritual** you go through or a **religious rite of passage**.
 - It's **supposed to mark the beginning of a life of surrender**,
 - **and for you**, you are just not sure what was happening back then when you got baptized.
 - Maybe all your friends were doing it and you didn't want to be left out
 - (**illus**: What kid didn't want to make the cannons go off?);
 - Maybe you just wanted to make your parents happy,
 - or maybe you didn't have much choice in the matter.
 - **Bottom line is this: that first baptism didn't mark the beginning of a life** of surrender to Jesus, and today you are going to be baptized as an act of surrender in following Jesus.

So, two questions from this first baptism:

- *What was it that cut them to the heart?*
- *What did they do in response?*

I. Why were they cut to the heart?

TWO things Peter said cut them:

A. They realized they had been wrong about Jesus

- At this time in history, there were a number of **different theories** floating around about Jesus.
- Some of those theories were fueled by what they wanted Jesus to be:
 - Some wanted him to be a **prophet**, calling people back to religion.
 - Others wanted him to be a **political Messiah**—delivering them from oppression and overturning the corrupt Roman empire.
- But **Jesus would not conform to their expectations**. He kept doing things that blew up their categories.
 - He **forgave people's sins**, something the Jews thought was blasphemous.
 - He let people **worship him**, saying that if they didn't the **rocks and trees** would cry out in praise of him.
 - He claimed he was **replacing the Temple** as the center of worship
 - He **demanded absolute Lordship** over his followers. To be more important to his followers than their fathers, mothers, husband or wife, even their own children.
- And **people started saying**, "It's like you think you're God!" And Jesus said, "You said it, not me!"
 - And what's more, he said, I'm on a **rescue mission** to save people from sin and **the only way** you'll ever get to heaven is through me.
- **And people were like**, "Jesus, we like you and all but you got to be quiet about all this God/Lord stuff."

But **he wouldn't**, and so they crucified him.

- **Peter said that by the resurrection, however, God overturned their verdict**:
 - "Therefore let all the house of Israel know with certainty that **God has made this Jesus, whom you crucified, both Lord and Messiah.**" (Acts 2:36)

- "**Lord**" which means "**God**"—not another religious prophet, but the Creator of the Universe.
- and "**Messiah**," means "the one who fulfilled all the promises about salvation."
 - Not **one way to be saved among many**, but the only gate through which we can enter heaven, the only name under heaven given to us, by which we can be saved.
- **Peter says**: *You had an opinion about Jesus, but God overruled your opinion by the resurrection--and now you have to change your opinion.*
- In the same way, **many of us today have something** we want Jesus to be.
 - Maybe it's **most convenient** to think of him as a great **religious teacher** -- a social justice model
 - **A great moral influence**--the foundation of Western morality
 - **One of many ways** to know God
 - For many he's a **get-out-of-hell free-card**:
 - Someone who saves you from your sins but doesn't have much impact on your life otherwise
 - pray the prayer, go to the class, walk through the ritual
 - For many in church he's more of a **good luck charm**; someone to **turn to in a jam**; someone who helps you find **success in life** and establish a **good family** as long as you obey most of his rules

*But Jesus would **not let himself be relegated** to any of those categories.*

I saw an interview with **Bono** a while back, and **in the interview, the subject of Jesus** came up—it was on a **public news station**—and the most fascinating conversation transpired. I guess Bono was just in a **truth-mood**, because here's what he said:

"The secular response to the Christ story always goes like this: 'He was a great prophet, obviously a very interesting guy, had a

lot to say along the lines of other great prophets, be they Elijah, Muhammad, Buddha, or Confucius.'

But actually Christ says, 'No. I'm not saying I'm a teacher, don't call me teacher. I'm not saying I'm a prophet. 'I'm saying... 'I am God in the flesh.'

And people say: 'No, no, please, just be a prophet. A prophet we can take. You're a bit eccentric, but we've had John the Baptist eating locusts and wild honey; so we can handle that. But (not God)! Not the Messiah! Because, you know, we're gonna have to crucify you if you say that.'

And he goes: "No, no, I... actually am the Messiah."

At this point, everyone starts staring at their shoes, and says: 'Oh, my God; he's gonna keep saying this.'

So what you're left with is either Christ was who he said he was – God incarnate, the Messiah – or a complete nutcase. I mean, we're talking nutcase on the level of Charles Manson...I'm not joking here. And, the idea that the entire course of civilization for over half of the globe could have its fate changed and turned upside-down by a nutcase, for me that's a little far fetched..."¹

BEST PART WAS NPR...

That's basically what Peter said: Jesus claimed to be the Lord and Messiah. You tried to redefine him but he wouldn't have that so you killed him. But then God overturned your verdict with his own, the resurrection, declaring to be both him Lord and Messiah.

And you've got to choose: Is he who he says he is, or is he who you say he is?

- Put away this redefinition game with Jesus.
- You wouldn't like that: Or I've compared it to someone writing a **bio of your life...**
- BE INTELLECTUALLY HONEST

So, let me ask you: Who do you say Jesus is?

- **There are only 2 sides of this line:** you've either submitted to him as Lord and Messiah, or you have rejected him!
- **Lord** = means surrender.
 - In every heart there is a throne and a cross (**symbols**)
 - No such thing as partial surrender, just as there is no such thing as partial faithfulness (marriage e.g.)
 - LORD OF ALL
- **Messiah** = only hope of salvation

You are **one side of the line or the other.**

- **Illus:** TSA. In or out.
- **Which side** of the line are you on? Who do you say Jesus is?

Better yet: Who does your life say that he is? Your belief system is better demonstrated by your life than by your mouth

- How can you call him Lord and not be fully submitted to him?
- Are you hoping in him and him alone for salvation?
 - If I asked you, "Why would God allow you into heaven?" What would you say? The most common answer, "I'm a good person"
 - **Are you telling people about him? How could you say you believe he is the only way** and not be telling people about him?
 - It seems to me like the only way you could do that is to **not really** believe it.

Surely there is salvation in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven... (Acts 4:12)

What is the **verdict of your life on Jesus?**

¹ Tim Keller, *The Reason For God* (RiverHead Books, 2008), pp. 239-240

They were **cut to the heart because** they realized they'd been wrong about Jesus. They were also cut to the heart because...

B. They realized they were responsible for the death of Jesus.

- **A couple of different times (vs. 23, 36)** Peter points at this crowd and says 'You killed him.'
 - Now this verse has, at-times, tragically, been used anti-Semitically, claiming the Jews killed Christ and that they should be held responsible for it.
 - But that is a very poor understanding of Peter's meaning here.
- **FIRST**, when Peter says, "You killed him," he was speaking **to the whole human race** not just that crowd.
 - **Furthermore, not everyone there** had been directly involved in Christ's crucifixion. He's really looking at all of us and saying, "You, you killed him."
 - In **vs. 39** Peter says, "**This is about you, your children and those who are far off—people in countries all around the world that haven't even been born yet.**"
- **SECOND**, when Peter says, "You killed him," he was including himself in that number.
 - You see, on the **night that Jesus** was crucified, Peter had denied Jesus 3x.
 - On that 3rd denial, **Luke says that Peter looked up, "Immediately, while he was still speaking, a rooster crowed. Then the Lord turned and looked at Peter."**²
 - Jesus **turned straight around** and looked at him: Jesus' **face** by that point, would have been purple, bruised, with blood and spit dripping down it.
 - And **Peter realized that in that moment** that Jesus was being **beaten for his betrayal**.
 - He was **cut to the heart** and went out and wept bitterly.
- You are cut to the heart when you realize that it was your sin that put Jesus on the cross. When **you see Jesus looking at you**.

- It was your **refusal to submit to God's authority**. Your rebellious attitude to **your parents**.
- Your **insistence on always** doing things your way.
- It was for **your sexual sin**.
- It was for your refusal to **trust God** and obey him.
- For your shame in **confessing him** before your friends out of fear over what they might say.
- For all the times you put **pursuing money** and the **praise of people** over pleasing him.
- It was for all those times you **bent the truth** to protect yourself
- It was for **your ungratefulness**, and **your pride** in thinking that your way was better than God's
- It was for your **selfishness**
- It was for your **love of gossip** and your **insensitivity to other people's needs**.
- *He was wounded for our transgressions...*
 - Adult industry
- **And suddenly you come to see that the first person you were sinning against in all this was him--it was a personal betrayal.**
 - **Before you have been cut**, you say things to yourself like, "I know I'm not perfect but I'm a **pretty good person**. I'm better than most people."
 - **After you've been cut** you see your sin as a betrayal of Jesus himself.
 - When you've been cut, **sin becomes less** about breaking God's rules and more about betraying God's heart.
 - You were the prodigal son who said, "I don't want you, God--I hate the rules of your house. There's more pleasure for me out in the far country..."
- **Have you been cut this way?**
 - **I remember when it happened to me**. I grew up with parents insisting I obey the rules. And I kept most of them on the outside. But inside I thought I knew better than God.
 - **God had been so good to me--yet** I had resented and rejected him in my heart, thinking I knew better.

² Luke 22:60-61

- And I **commandeered the gifts** he had given me for his glory and used them for myself.
- **And then, in an instant**, I saw that my **rebellion** put Christ on the cross.
- I saw him looking **AT ME**.
- **ME AND GOD**
- **YEARS I SPENT IN VANITY AND PRIDE, CARING NOT** my Lord was crucified, knowing not...³
- But then, **on that glorious day**: *“My conscience felt and owned the guilt, and plunged me in despair; I saw my sins his blood had spilt; and helped to nail him there.”*⁴
- **I was cut.**
- *Again: Has that ever happened to you?*
 - **Salvation occurs when you personally** are convicted of your sins and you run to him on your own.
 - **Your parents can't do it for you.**
 - Conviction of sin and forgiveness and salvation are things between you and God only.

Have you been cut?

That's what they heard. So...

II. What did they do?

41 So those who accepted his message were baptized, and that day about three thousand people were added to them.

They were baptized. Immediately. Why would baptism be the right response?

Baptism was **a symbol that Jesus had left** for the church--it's like a ceremony. Identifying with him in his death, raised to new life in his resurrection.

³ "At Calvary"

⁴ Old hymn by John Newton

Symbols and ceremonies, of course, have no value apart from commitment.

- **Illus.:** My wedding ring. If you put it on, you don't become married to Veronica...

So, **What does baptism symbolize?**

- **Surrender:** dying with Christ; dying to control
- **Embrace:** you embrace his death as your own.
 - The Bible calls salvation a gift.
 - A gift is free to you, but it has to be received, embraced. This pictures that.
- **Confession:** it's the going public of your faith. The putting on of the ring.

(MUSIC)

It's a symbol. There's nothing mystical or magical about the water: Wake/Durham/Orange/Alamance county water.

Only a symbol. But it is an important one.

So, when we baptize someone, we ask them **2 questions:**

- Are you willing to go wherever he tells you to go and do whatever he tells you to do (Lordship)
- Do you believe Jesus has done everything necessary to save you? (and are you embracing that gift as your own?) Messiah

If they answer yes, **this baptism symbolizes** that answer

Like I told you, we have **a number of people in here** that have not been baptized.

Remember 3 groups:

- **Group 1: Never become a follower of Jesus!** You have never really accepted Jesus for yourself

- **Group 2: You are a Christian**, you've accepted Jesus, but you've just not taken this step
- **Group 3: You got baptized** (so to speak) **a long time ago**, but it **didn't symbolize** a surrender to Jesus as Lord and a commitment to become his disciple

Now, a lot of you have **excuses** for why you haven't done this:

- *Some say, "Well, I don't think it's that important. I don't need to be baptized to love Jesus and follow him."*
 - I always want to say, "**Excuse me? Do you not realize this is a command of Jesus.**"
 - Who are we to decide which of his commands we're going to obey and which we are not? Is that really **the way you want to start out your walk** with God.
 - **(And let me tell you something else—**God takes **small steps of obedience** like this and uses them to open up blessing in our lives.
 - Notice that Peter said, "You will receive the gift of the HS." As believers, we now receive the HS when we accept Christ, but I do think being baptized releases a new power from the HS in your life)
- **Some have more practical excuses: "Well, I ain't got no clothes."**
 - This T-shirts; shorts; underwear; hair ties, even swim caps.
 - That's more than the early church had!
- **"My family / friends aren't here to see this."**
 - **Listen: We can take pictures.** Hand us your camera, we'll get it done for you. If you are from the dark ages and don't have a phone with a camera in it, we'll take one for you and send it to you if you want.
 - **This is too important a decision** to put it off any longer. You're likely not to get to it.
 - For all those stories in the Bible I told you, their relatives weren't all there.
- **"I rode with people."**
 - They'll wait.
 - **Raise your hand** if you're not willing to wait! (If you raise your hand, I will consider that your acknowledgment that you also need to be baptized)

- HAND: Uber drivers
- **"I'm not sure I'm ready--I still have questions."**
 - Great. Consider this an invitation to start a conversation. If you decide you're not ready, or we feel like it would be helpful to take some time to talk things through, we'll push pause and take a couple of weeks or however long it takes.
 - We'll even **let you keep the free T-shirt** if you want
- **"I want someone to come with me."**
 - That's fine. Ask your friend to go with you. Shoot. Bring the whole row with you.
 - SAY ALOUD
- **"I was baptized as a child."**
 - Let me **read aloud to you all the places** in the NT where they were baptized as a baby... And, I am finished.
 - There are **27 baptisms in the book of Acts**. In all 27 times they believed first.
 - For most of them, as I've pointed out, it was immediate
- **"I don't want to shame my parents."**
 - You're not! You're fulfilling their hopes!
- **"It's embarrassing to get wet in front of everyone."**
 - Do you understand what Jesus did to save you? And you're balking at this? How serious are you about this?
- **"I don't want to become a Baptist."**
 - This is a legitimate objection, but this is not about denomination.
 - You are not being baptized in the name of Baptist, you are being baptized in the name of Jesus.
 - **If it helps you**, my **wife** was brought up in a different denomination where they didn't baptize like this.
 - When **she made a decision to be baptized**, she said, "This is not about a denomination, this is about a public profession of my faith."

Again, in this scene that took place here in Acts 2, we have thousands of people who woke up not realizing they would be encountering God and getting baptized. But they heard the voice of God and they obeyed.

Today, many of you are **going to make the same decision**.

I was **talking with a lady in my SG** the other night who had yet to make this decision and I told her she was like Peter when he was in the boat and Jesus was walking on the water and **Jesus said, “Come!”** And Peter was afraid and had to decide if he trusted Jesus enough to obey.

He’s **saying that** to you. **Will you come?**

Bow heads: 3 groups

- **(First time decision)** For some of you, you need to decide to follow Jesus. This is the decision before baptism.
 - You say, “I’m ready to surrender, ready to accept.”
 - Raise your hand if that’s you.
 - Repeat after me (Pray)
- Group 2: Some of you **made that decision a while ago** but you’ve yet to take this step.
 - Raise your hand if you are in that category
- Finally, GROUP 3, you got baptized when you were much younger, but that baptism **didn’t mark the beginning of a life** of surrender to Jesus, and today you are going to be baptized as an act of surrender in following Jesus.
 - Raise your hand if you are in that category

Invitation

Counselors in place/Stand and step/We all cheer

Come if you’re in any of those groups. You don’t have to know which one you belong to. Maybe you still have questions. This, like I said, is the beginning of a conversation.

Last thing: Believers, I want to give you a chance to be sensitive to HS. Say to neighbor: *“If you want to go, I’ll go with you.”*