*DAILY DEVOTIONAL*

September 25 - 30

“Response”

**Monday, September 25 Acts 2:37-41**

*“What should we do?”*

The appeal of Peter’s prophetic preaching cut to the core of their conscience as he made clear who Christ is. They were not trifling with a Galilean carpenter, but God. Peter was ready with an answer when they cried out, “What should we do?” The word “repent,” *metanoeo,* is a two-part word – *meta*, “after,” and *noeo,* “to perceive.” To repent means to change one’s mind, to perceive after a mind-changing truth or understanding. Peter wanted them to change their minds about Jesus and to see their own need for him as Lord and Christ of their lives.

The final miracle of the Holy Spirit on the day of Pentecost was the birth of the church. We call it a miracle because the transformation of human nature requires nothing less than the Holy Spirit’s power. On its “birthday” the church was made up of about 3120 people who had come to a sure knowledge of salvation through Christ’s life, death, resurrection and exaltation, and had received his living presence through the Spirit.

*Change my heart, O God. Make it ever new. Amen.*

**Tuesday, September 26 Acts 10:39-48**

*“Everyone who believes in him will have their sins forgiven”*

Peter’s speech is typical of evangelistic messages in Acts. Each speech is unique and relevant to the audience, but certain features are common to all of them. The audience in Cornelius’ house consists of a unique type of Gentile in that they were God-fearers, who were familiar with the Jewish Scriptures. Thus, for example, Peter was able to refer to the Jewish prophets (verse 43). Paul did not do this in Lystra or in Athens; there he began by describing who God is.

After pointing out that the apostles were witnesses to what happened in the ministry of Christ, Peter presents the death and resurrection of Jesus. Peter implicates the opponents of Christ in his death, and stresses that God raised him up. Peter now makes the point that not only was the life and ministry of Jesus witnessed, but the risen Christ was also seen by witnesses. Next Peter speaks of the commission the apostles received to proclaim Christ, and he presents Jesus as judge of the living and the dead. Lastly, he declares that faith in Jesus will lead to the forgiveness of sin. Responding to Peter’s message with faith, all who heard it were filled with the Spirit.

*You have forgiven my sin, Lord, for I have placed my faith in you. Amen.*

**Wednesday, September 27 Mark 1:14-20**

*“Turn from your sins and believe this Good News”*

Jesus announces that the time of waiting for God’s intervention is over, which means that all that God had said and done in history is reaching its fulfillment. If Jesus is indeed the Christ, the Son of God, then the kingdom of God is at hand. But when God steps onto the stage of human history, it comes as a surprise to those whose vision is limited to finite human possibilities. It is easy to forget that God is the master of time who works according to a different clock from ours, and the author of history in whom all things work together according to his plan.

The kingdom of God has come – so near that we can touch it in Jesus. The future created by God is no longer flickering hope light years away; it has become available in the present. Jesus’ announcement that God is King places a demand on us: how will we respond? Will we shrug our shoulders and opt for worldly powers, or will we repent, submit to God’s reign, and trust that the incredible is taking place: God is with us, God is for us and, through faith in his Son, God has come to live in us by his Spirit.

*Your kingdom come, Lord, your will be done in me, as it is in heaven. Amen.*

*DAILY DEVOTIONAL*

September 25 - 30

“Response”

**Thursday, September 28 1 John 1:8 – 2:2**

*“If we confess our sins, he is faithful to forgive us”*

Not even the most right living of Christians is sinless and without flaw. John is not promoting sinlessness, which is humanly impossible, but awareness. The teaching of this passage is that the aware sinner is not a lost cause, beyond help, but that at just the right moment our companion on our journey through this life – Jesus – now becomes the means of our help which resolves our guilt. Thus, John says, we must confess our sin. Our responsibility is to agree with God that we have sinned. This openness and vulnerability on our part firmly plants us within God’s will.

John goes on to teach that the openness before God that enables our forgiveness also enables our fellowship. Fellowship is not founded upon deception and never has been. It cannot survive moral superiority or ethical one-upmanship, but recognizes that we have all sinned and fallen short of God’s will for us. Within Christian fellowship, forgiveness is freely given precisely because God has freely forgiven us in Christ. The ground and strength and promise of all our fellowship is based in what Christ has done for us.

*May we forgive one another, Lord, as you have forgiven us. Amen.*

**Friday, September 29 Colossians 1:9-14**

*“God has forgiven all our sin”*

Paul prays that God will fill the Corinthians with the knowledge of God’s will through spiritual wisdom and discernment of every sort. The knowledge that Paul has in view has nothing to do with some secret lore reserved only for the elite or some hidden key that unlocks the mysteries of the universe or of the inner person. For Paul, understanding God’s will involves recognizing how Christ is the fulfillment of God’s purposes, how God’s salvation is open to all people, and how God intends for Christians to live in whatever situation they find themselves.

Paul goes on to pray that the Colossians will joyfully give thanks to God the Father for all that he has done for them through God the Son: (1) They, being Gentiles, have been included in God’s promises to his people, the Jews. (2) God has rescued them from the powers of darkness. (3) God has brought them into the Kingdom of his Son. Paul caps off the mention of these benefits with the glorious truth that Christ has removed the barrier of sin. Forgiveness of sin is not simply liberation from the past; it sets us free to enjoy the present and future blessings of God.

*Because I am forgiven, Lord, I am free to enjoy your abundant life. Amen.*

**Saturday, September 30 2 Corinthians 7:8-12**

*“God can use sorrow in our lives to help us turn away from sin”*

The letter that Paul refers to in verse 8 was one he had sent in response to a very painful visit he had had with the Christians in Corinth. The letter, which we don’t have, must have stated in strong and direct language that Paul was very upset with them. Subsequent to this confrontational letter being sent to Corinth, Paul sent his fellow missionary Titus to Corinth to gauge their response to his letter. Now, in this letter we know as 2 Corinthians, Paul recounts how glad he was when he received word from Titus that his ministry had, in fact, born fruit among the Corinthians.

Though his letter of rebuke was a reflection of his own concern and love for the Corinthians, Paul initially regretted having sent its stark denunciation of their defiance, since he knew it would cause them sorrow. But, the sorrow it caused was short-lived. It soon led to repentance, which includes both the remorse that comes from recognizing that one has wronged God and its consequent resolve to reverse one’s behavior as seen in the first steps in that new direction.

*Confrontation is not easy, Lord, but sometimes necessary for repentance. Amen.*