**Dream Again, Lessons from the Book of Acts**

**When God Knocks at Your Heart: Acts 2:36-41**

January 31, 2016

Introduction:

* As people heard Peter explain the incredible phenomena at Pentecost, they were struck with the realization that the one whose execution they had cheered for was in fact the Son of God, the Saviour of the world and would one day return as Judge.
* Acts 2:37 “when they heard this they were cut to the heart”
* Tim Keller: “Before you’re cut to the heart, you understand your sins have broken God’s rules. After you’re cut to the heart, you realize your sins have broken God’s heart.”

1. When God knocks, ask for help. (Acts 2:36-37)

A. Have the courage to invite others in.

* It would have been so much easier to have just gone home and thought about it privately.

B. Give people permission to speak.

* God gives us people to help see our blind spots.

C. God’s invitations require an R.S.V.P.

* They realized that there was something to be done in response to how God had spoken to them.
* Luke 3:9-10 Even now the axe is laid to the root of the trees. Every tree therefore that does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire.” And the crowds asked him, “What then shall we do?”

Q. When have you felt “cut to the heart” the way Peter’s hearers did? When have you seen your sins not only as having broken God’s rules but also breaking His heart?

Q. Is your faith mostly private or do you regularly invite people in? How? What are some areas where you would be helped socially, professionally or spiritually by inviting people’s feed-back in your life? Is there an area where you need that feed-back now?

2. When God knocks, get past the surface. (Acts 2:38a)

A. God’s R.S.V.P. calls for repentance.

* The first sermons of John the Baptist, Jesus, the disciples and Peter all called for repentance.
* Matthew 3:2 Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand.
* Mark 1:15 The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand; repent and believe in the gospel.
* Mark 6:12 So they went out and proclaimed that people should repent.
* Martin Luther: “When our Lord and Master Jesus Christ said, “Repent” (Mt 4:17), he willed the entire life of believers to be one of repentance.”

B. Repentance isn’t just regret.

* 2 Corinthians 7:10 For godly grief produces a repentance that leads to salvation without regret, whereas worldly grief produces death.
* You can feel badly about your sin and get worse.

C. Repentance isn’t just reform.

* Acts 26:20 … they should repent and turn to God, performing deeds in keeping with their repentance.
* Repentance is a fundamental change in our thinking that leads us back to Jesus and to change how we live.

Q. What do you think Luther meant when he said “the entire life of believers is to be one of repentance?” Do you agree? When was the last time you responded concretely to God’s conviction in your life?

Q. In 2 Corinthians 7:10 Paul says worldly grief produces death. Just feeling badly about our sin can actually make us worse. Have you ever experienced this?

Q. Describe what would happen to a person who felt God’s conviction but ignored one of the elements of Acts 26:20: (1) repentance, (2) turning to God, (3) life change.

3. When God knocks, draw a line. (Acts 2:38b-41)

A. Baptism makes a personal decision concrete.

* It’s wet, public and unambiguous.
* It’s probably deliberate that you can’t baptize yourself.

B. Baptism pictures the cleansing of a spiritual bath.

* Acts 22:16 And now why do you wait? Rise and be baptized and wash away your sins, calling on his name.
* Titus 3:5 he saved us, not because of works done by us in righteousness, but according to his own mercy, by the washing of regeneration and renewal of the Holy Spirit

C. Baptism pictures our death to our old life and the start of a new life together with God.

* Romans 6:3-4 Do you not know that all of us who have been baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death? 4 We were buried therefore with him by baptism into death, in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, we too might walk in newness of life.

Q. Did you learn anything new about the significance about baptism from the passages above? Are there any other areas of your life where you need to similarly draw a line?

**Notes:**