



ORIGINS (Part 3) - “The Witness of Distinctness”

Acts 2:38-40 NIV

38 Peter replied, “Repent and be baptized, every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins. And you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.

39 The promise is for you and your children and for all who are far off—for all whom the Lord our God will call.”

40 With many other words he warned them; and he pleaded with them, “Save yourselves from this corrupt generation.”

Acts 2:42-47 NIV

42 They devoted themselves to the apostles’ teaching and to fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer. 43 Everyone was filled with awe at the many wonders and signs performed by the apostles. 44 All the believers were together and had everything in common. 45 They sold property and possessions to give to anyone who had need. 46 Every day they continued to meet together in the temple courts. They broke bread in their homes and ate together with glad and sincere hearts, 47 praising God and enjoying the favor of all the people. And the Lord added to their number daily those who were being saved.

Key Points

- Baptism is a declaration of identity. Being baptized in the Holy Spirit is an invitation for the Lord to lay claim over every part of your life.
- Out of our intimacy with God, we are drawn together around this new reality to live as His people guided by His Spirit.
- God is calling us out of this world to create a people for Himself.
- God is sending us back into the world to bear witness and act on His world as His Spirit fills us, and then through us, He fills everything in every way.
- Our witness is not just to our own personal experience, but rather we belong to a cloud of witnesses who testify to all that God is doing and has been doing.
- Forgiveness is the end of separation and the beginning of unity.
- Pursuing togetherness requires tremendous discernment, resolve, cooperation, and a willingness to wrestle out the implications of the resurrection together.
- Being saved from a generation does not require distance but distinctness.
- Grace, forgiveness, sacrifice, humility, and integrity are not the ways in which the world operates, but these profoundly affect the world when they are experienced.
- We struggle towards Jesus and His Lordship as we struggle towards community and our new unity.

READ

Open your time together by reading the Scripture passages on Page 1. Then, take a moment to consider what you just read:

- Reflecting on Acts 2:38-40, how do you understand the significance of repentance and baptism in the context of Christian faith? How is baptism a declaration of identity?
- Acts 2:40 talks about Peter's urgent appeal to "save yourselves from this corrupt generation." How do you interpret this message for our present time, and what actions do you think it calls us to take?
- Acts 2:42-47 highlights the distinctive unity among the early believers. How did their devotion to teaching, fellowship, breaking of bread, and prayer contribute to their unity? How can we cultivate similar devotion and unity in our church or community today?
- Acts 2:44-45 portrays the believers sharing everything they had and meeting the needs of others with glad and sincere hearts. How did this radical generosity differ from the ways of the world? How did outsiders respond to the distinctness they were witnessing?

REFLECT

- How do you think pursuing togetherness requires discernment, resolve, cooperation, and wrestling through implications of the resurrection together?
- In what ways have you experienced intimacy with God drawing you closer to others in your faith community? How does this intimacy shape your relationships and interactions?
- What does forgiveness mean to you in the context of unity and togetherness? How does forgiveness contribute to building and maintaining community?

RESPOND

- Discuss the tension between being called out of the world to be God's people and being sent back into the world to bear witness. How do you navigate this tension in your daily life?
- How do you personally struggle towards Jesus and His Lordship as you also struggle towards community and unity? How do these struggles intersect in your life?

PRAY

Close your time together with prayer requests. Ask how you can pray, support, and lift one another up. Pray over these requests collectively or by breaking into prayer partners.