



NEW TESTAMENT • LESSON 46

NEW BELIEVERS

The message of the gospel is effective to save and change the sinful hearts of men.



MONDAY

THE STORY: ACTS 2:36-39

Peter's audience was undone by the message of the gospel. They asked Peter, "What shall we do?" Peter answered that they should repent of their sins. He told them that the promised Holy Spirit was for them too. Peter continued with a wonderful extension of the promise. The promise was for them, their children, and all who are far off. We fall into the category of all who are far off. What a blessing to read and know that we, too, can be transformed as these early believers were.

TALK ABOUT IT:

Peter told the people there was something they must do. What was it? (The people must repent, or turn away from their sins.)

Peter told the people there is something that God must do. What is it? (The Lord must call them. The promise extends to all people of all ages whom the Lord calls. Apart from the transforming work of God, and call of God, none of us would repent and turn to God.)

PRAY:

Call out to the Lord and ask Him to call you and grant you repentance and cause you to be transformed by the power of His Holy Spirit.



TUESDAY

THE STORY: ACTS 2:40,41

The gospel reaps a harvest. Jesus said that the disciples would do even greater things than He did because He was going to the Father (see John 14:12). When we read these words, our minds may first think about more incredible miracles. What Jesus meant, however, is that after He ascended, the Holy Spirit would work through the disciples to gather in the harvest. Jesus preached to the multitude, but never saw three thousand converts! In fact, after all the miracles of Jesus, there were only about 120 believers who waited in the upper room for the promised Holy Spirit. Peter preached the gospel, and 3,000 believed and were added in just one day!

TALK ABOUT IT:

What does Acts say the people who were added did? (They accepted the message, believed, and were baptized.)

What were the people added to? (The people were added to the other believers. This is the first local church. Jesus told Peter, “I will build my church” [see Matthew 16:18]. These people represent the body of Christ, the first church.)

PRAY:

Thank God for the power of the gospel to transform our lives.



WEDNESDAY WHERE IS THE GOSPEL?

THE STORY: 1 PETER 1:13-16

The behavior of the very first converts in the Book of Acts is the fruit of the

gospel. These people were transformed from being mockers of Christ. In fact, some of them were probably in the crowd who yelled “Crucify Him!” And yet now, we see them selling their possessions to share with other Christians who had need. Peter, affected by this first dramatic gospel transformation, went on to exhort all new believers in his first letter to reject their sinful past and live holy, upright lives (see 1 Peter 1:14-15).

The gospel takes someone’s worldly self-focus and turns their gaze heavenward. The first converts went from Jesus-haters to being people who loved Jesus. They served others and worshipped God through Christ. Only the Spirit of God can change hearts this way. The gospel continued to transform lives as more new converts were added each day.

TALK ABOUT IT:

What does Peter mean when he says, “As obedient children, do not conform to the evil desire you had”? (Peter means that once we become Christians we should live for Christ and not for the sinful desires that once captured our affections.)

What are the sinful desires that most threaten to capture your attention? (Parents, you should lead in confessing your weaknesses to set the example for your children. Then make sure to help draw your children out.)

PRAY:

Ask God for help to say “no” to your sinful desires and “yes” to the gospel and living for God.



THURSDAY

THE STORY: ACTS 2:42-47

The gospel brings change. The three thousand converts were added to the initial one hundred twenty believers, and together they were the first local church.

Immediately we see the fruit of the Spirit at work in their lives. They willingly shared what they had, regularly praised God, were devoted to the preached word by the apostles, and continued to add more and more people to their number.

TALK ABOUT IT:

Peter called the people to repent. What evidence do you see that they turned away from sin? (Draw your children out and help them see how remarkably they were changed.)

Do we all need to sell everything we have to follow Jesus? (No. God does not call all of us to sell everything we have. He does, however, call us to be willing to sacrifice what we have for the good of others. Some may be called to sacrifice or share everything they have. Others may not. The issue is not our outward giving, but the posture of our hearts. Having said that, most of us could stand to give away much more than we do. Few people need to be corrected for giving away too much, as our sinful desires keep us from being that selfless.)

Who might you bless by giving away something you have or own? (Consider this question seriously and act on your ideas.)

PRAY:

Pray that God would transform the desires of every person in your family so that you are looking for opportunities to bless those who are in need.



**FRIDAY
ON THE ROAD TO EMMAUS**

THE STORY: ISAIAH 35:5-8

Jesus certainly did open the eyes of the blind and restored hearing to the deaf. But there is a greater meaning to this passage than physical healing. Jesus opened our eyes and ears to understand the message of the gospel. The early church understood how their eyes and ears were opened. They were even called “the Way”

(see Acts 9:2) because they followed the way Jesus spoke of when He said, “I am the way” (John 14:6). The way is the name given to the path of righteousness, which Isaiah says will be laid down for all those who repent. The early church understood this. Their eyes were opened and their ears unstopped to the truth of Christ.

TALK ABOUT IT:

What did Jesus mean when He said He is the way? (Jesus is the only way to salvation, the only way to the Father, and the only way to forgiveness.)

Do we call ourselves the Way today? (No. The followers of Christ were called Christians starting in Acts 11:26. That became a clearer way to describe those who follow Christ. See also 1 Peter 4:16 and Acts 26:28. “The Way” is never used to describe Christians outside of the Book of Acts.)

PRAY:

Thank God for opening up our eyes and ears to understand and believe the gospel.