

## **Acts 2:37-47 NIV**

### **“Do you feel truly forgiven?”**

“When the people heard this, they were cut to the heart and said to Peter and the other apostles, ‘Brothers, what shall we do?’ 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.

“The promise is for you and your children and for all who are far off—for all whom the Lord our God will call.’ With many other words he warned them; and he pleaded with them, ‘Save yourselves from this corrupt generation.’ Those who accepted his message were baptized, and about three thousand were added to their number that day.

“They devoted themselves to the apostles’ teaching and to fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer. Everyone was filled with awe at the many wonders and signs performed by the apostles.

“All the believers were together and had everything in common. They sold property and possessions to give to anyone who had need. 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, praising God and enjoying the favor of all the people. And the Lord

added to their number daily those who were being saved.”

**To make sense of our text, recall what Peter said in verse 36, the sentence just prior:**

“Let all Israel be assured of this: God has made this Jesus, whom you crucified, both Lord and Messiah.”

### **What did Peter mean?**

**Imagine being in a crowd of people when authorities drag in a bloodied man they accuse of a serious crime.**

They want this man immediately executed.

**People in the crowd strongly demand justice and you join the chant wanting his death.**

Officials put him to death that afternoon.

**After some strange phenomena seven weeks later, a crowd gathers again.**

**Someone presents factual evidence that the man you had helped convict and kill was innocent.**

**Greed and selfishness had motivated the leaders who twisted truth to get the man executed.**

**This horrible fact is what Peter hammered home in Acts 2:36 on the Day of Pentecost:**

**“Be assured of this: The Universe Creator has made this man you killed, both King of the World and the One all people should worship and honor.”**

**How would you feel once you realized you had joined corrupt folks in killing an innocent man?**

Note this fact about the word *assured* in v. 36 (NIV), *assuredly* (KJV) “**Be assured.**”

**Did you drive today on an asphalt highway?  
Did you worry about the road collapsing?**

The English word *asphalt* describing a hard, dark surface (usually of petroleum base) comes from the term used in our text translated *assured, certain, assuredly*.<sup>1</sup>



It was an indisputable, hard fact that Jesus, whom those Jerusalem people had crucified was the one who created all things and is ruler of all rulers—Biden, Putin, Xi, and all the rest.

We can't imagine that we'd have voted with the majority that Passover weekend when the crowd demanded Jesus' crucifixion.

**Still, we have a hard time making a full commitment to Jesus, don't we?**

**How would our time, mind, and heart commitment to Jesus look on a spreadsheet?**

**What percent would be fully devoted to Jesus?  
This story tells about dithering and wavering.**

Two elk hunters got lost, years ago on the north slope of the Salmon River Canyon wilderness near the Idaho-Montana border. The men were hunting on a stream that runs about twenty-five miles. . . The stream's elevation starts at about nine

thousand feet and descends to about thirty-five hundred feet. There were no roads in the area where the hunters got lost. But a forest service road ran along the divide at the head of the drainage. A good trail ran along the main Salmon River.

“From the point where the hunters became lost they could have gone downhill and found the trail along the river. But for five days they were lost. . . . Men from the Forest Service and some from the Fish and Game Department joined in the search. The weather was cold; there were snowstorms.

“Each day . . . searchers found abandoned campfires and tracks in the snow, but for five days they were not able to come upon the lost men. In their frantic efforts to save themselves the lost men eluded the search parties; they made it very difficult for those who knew the way to find them. After the search was officially abandoned, one dedicated Ranger continued the effort and finally came upon the lost men; except for his dedication the hunters would have perished.

“Asked why they had continued to wander when a definite effort going” either uphill or downhill “would have taken them to the trail along the river, they said they had discussed the situation, realized this was a possibility, and had made a practice of going uphill half a day and downhill half a day.”<sup>2</sup>

You possibly know people, who try one thing after another— going “uphill” a while and then

<sup>1</sup> ἀσφαλῶς

<sup>2</sup> From *Wild Rivers and Mountain Trails* by Don Ian Smith

“downhill”—but never fully commit to Jesus.



A story I love, but Norma hates tells of a fellow who was born with a golden screw in his navel.

No doctor could explain it. No professor ever heard of such a thing. No one knew its purpose or how to remove it. The guy couldn't get his mind off that screw. He couldn't go swimming and was ashamed to be seen in a locker room. All his life he searched for a way to remove it.

Finally someone told him that if he went to a remote place near Darjeeling, India, a wise man, there could remove it. He flew to India. In a remote clearing in the Himalayan foothills, he found a little man with a golden screwdriver. It just fit the head on that golden screw. The little man took that screwdriver, fit it into the head of the golden screw, carefully turned it back three full turns and it came out. The guy was thrilled. He jumped up and down exclaiming,

“Oh goodie!” **And his rear end fell off.**



**How many have thought that finding the golden moment--the person of their dreams—becoming rich—would give them meaning and make them live happily ever after?**

## **But the bottom dropped out.**

**Our generation enjoys more wealth, more gadgets, more entertainment, and more leisure than any in history.**

**But this generation is also weary, confused, desperate for answers, but not finding them.**

**I understand that a significant killer of people aged 18-45 is drug overdosing.**

**Peter urged: “Save yourselves from this corrupt generation.”**

***Corrupt* is literally a *crooked (scolios)* generation.**

God designed a straight path that leads to purpose, meaning, and life.

Human beings often twist, distort, and amend God's way; many refuse to worship or acknowledge God.

**How many have called the population to pray?**

**Preachers and church leader bear much of the responsibility for what's happening.**

Some seem afraid to tell what's in God's word.

**Others appear ashamed of Jesus' way.**

**They preach about faith, how “God loves you” and how to find happiness.**

**Do they ever talk about sin and wrong-doing?**

**Political correctness and empowering certain groups dominate society and many religions.**

Preachers tend to neglect Bible texts that emphasize personal repentance, adult baptism for remission of sins, and living by godly standards.

They regard these passages as offensive or divisive.

In many cases, preachers fear losing popularity and big contributors.

Some have turned counseling over to “professionals.”

A few decades ago, David Belgum was a professor in the School of Religion and Coordinator of Clinical Pastoral Education in the College of Medicine at the University of Iowa in Iowa City—I think you know the state.

In the 1970s, I read Belgum’s book, *GUILT: Where Religion and Psychology Meet*.

This statement stood out on the back cover:

“Treating the mentally ill is the responsibility of the behavioral sciences.”

It seemed to say what many now assume: only psychiatrists and licensed psychologists can treat mentally ill people. But then it says:

“The author, *however*, contends that where sin and guilt are the source of the trouble, religion and psychology meet. Here much of the concern for the mentally ill belongs to the church.”

Belgum evidently hoped to help ministers find their place in counseling troubled people.

In truth, hate, sin, guilt, worry, and fear cause probably 95% of our mental difficulty.

But few talk about sin and professionals rarely connect guilt with wrong-doing.

In the 70s, religious leaders were already slipping down an icy slope.

Now many ministers are in deeper holes than Punxsutawney Phil.



How many mental health experts advise folks: “stop doing wrong, quit hate, and act as Jesus did”?<sup>3</sup> Jesus exposed hate in religious people and insisted that we: “forgive those who trespass against us.

In Acts 2, Peter cut through the psychological jargon and excuses saying what Jesus taught:

“Repent-change, stop making excuses and blaming others, turn to God, praise Him and live like Jesus.”

Jesus’ first word when he began preaching -“Repent!”

The world makes excuses and blames others.

It often denies God.

According to the world’s experts, no one sins anymore.

Lawbreakers suffer “mental diseases,” they claim.

Many therapists label “a sin” a fancy-named syndrome and then find a drug that supposedly alters the person’s behavior.

<sup>3</sup> *GUILT* Pp. 53, 54

"But human pride is skilful (sic) to invent most serious names To hide its ignorance."<sup>4</sup>

If folks have a named condition or disease, they're not responsible for what they do.

**Let me give you an example:**

You know the word kleptomania- Dictionaries define it as "a persistent neurotic impulse to steal, especially without economic motive."

**Do you know what the Bible says to Christians who are inclined to steal?**

**"He who steals must no longer steal, but rather he must labor, performing with his own hands what is good, so that he will have something to share with those who have need," Ephesians 4:28.**

**No counseling or prescription required.**

Stop, get to work, and help others, or don't try to wear the name Christian.

**Recall our opening, when we were part of the crowd calling for an innocent man's execution.**

**Suppose you also learn that he had paid every debt or misdeed you had and would ever incur?**

**The people on Pentecost were fully convicted; they didn't hide their sin: "Brothers, what shall we do?" they asked." 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."**

**On that day, about 3,000 people found new meaning; the kind we all long to have.**

**These folks were happy, fulfilled, saw awesome things happen, and suffered no loneliness.**

**They were surrounded by positive, unselfish, thoughtful, people with purpose.**

**It doesn't get much better than that, does it?**

- **We love and forgive others as God loved us in Christ.**
  - **Instead of worrying and fretting, we trust our future to God.**
- **We spend time adoring God every day and thanking Him for Jesus.**

**This makes us efficient, effective and leads us to peace.**

**God's word and His Spirit give us purpose and meaning into eternity.**

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<sup>4</sup> Percy Bysshe Shelley, Queen Mab 7 1792-1822