From "What?" to "WHAT?" Lindale May 6th 2018 AM Kris Emerson

The day of Pentecost, in Acts 2, started with a bang. Or I guess I should say, a roar; the roar of violent rushing wind filling a house, as tongues that looked like fire landed upon each of the twelve Apostles of Jesus Christ. These men began speaking in languages that did not know.

A crowd was already assembled throughout Jerusalem. It was the day of Pentecost, a yearly event wherein Jews gathered from all over their world to remember the Passover, a Jewish feast day. But then many of them gathered to the Apostles' location.

They were "bewildered" (v6), "amazed and astonished" (v7) and "continued in amazement and great perplexity" (v12). And since they were believers in God, they did not ask WHO did this. Because they believed what they were seeing they did not ask HOW are you doing this. Instead, they simply asked a question of one another reflecting their difficulty processing it all: "**WHAT DOES THIS MEAN?"**

From that point forward, we read of the sermon preached by Peter to answer that question – the question of relevance. It was a really good sermon. It was so good, that it answered their question AND spurred another one: "**WHAT SHALL WE DO?"** (v37). This one was not whispered to a friend nearby, this one was publically asked of the Apostles. This was not a question of curiosity anymore, but a question of *urgency, importance, life.*

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Peter told them what to do in **Acts 2:38-40**, and they were saved. They were baptized to have their sins forgiven and they committed themselves to a life of spiritual truth and faithfulness to Jesus.

I know people who need to do what Peter said here. I know people who need to be saved from this perverse generation and baptized for the remission of their sins. I know people who need to become completely devoted to the cause of Christ and all of what verses 42-47 teach.

But it does no good to tell them. Preaching on it won't get them to the water. Talking about it won't get them back to worship. And you wonder: what am I doing wrong? Now it is usually understood that we are doing nothing wrong, but they have to find a passion for the Lord in their hearts. But I think that may be a cop out. In our preaching and evangelism, our conversations and message, we may be doing something wrong. And a change today could change everything.

<u>We could be answering the wrong question</u>. *We could be answering the question they aren't asking. What good do all of the passages in the New Testament on repentance, baptism, worship, faithfulness and holy living do … for the person who isn't asking: "What shall I do?" Have you ever tried to give answers to someone who wasn't asking a question? How'd that go for you?*

Instead, maybe we need to be answering the FIRST question. "What does this mean?" I think we have people like this ALL around us, even in our assembly. People who recognize God's existence and believe in the Bible and know there are some incredible stories and events in there, and they believe them. But they haven't internalized or emotionally captured it's meaning. So they don't run into a church building and yell "What Does This Mean?" Instead, they whisper it to themselves during a heavy life event, or they casually mention it to a friend a dinner one night. <u>Relevance of God's Workings is fundamental to the second question, to obedience, to the new life!</u>

Okay, so the answer is simple: *JESUS IS LORD AND CHRIST! That is, this Jesus who died on the cross is the Ruler of all, and has the Right to Rule your life, because He is the One Sent by God, from heaven, to save your soul and take you home!!!*

<u>This may not be enough. It's not as simple as stating the answer to why God's covenant actions matter. Try telling this to someone and they'll say, "Okay." We can't just tell people what it means, we have to help them believe it – in their hearts, their eyes, their soul. This truth has to become real to them.</u>

So, the answer to "What does this mean?" is "Jesus is Lord and Christ." But here is how to believe it.

1. **Jesus's Blessings have Always been God's Plan for your Soul**
    a. **Acts 2:17-21** – Joel spoke of those days – Elizabeth, Zechariah, Annah, John the Baptist, they all prophesied of salvation in Jesus Christ. Pentecost announces those days.
    b. He keeps backing up: David (2:25), Moses (3:20,22), Abraham (3:25) – Announce this!
    c. In fact, **Genesis 3:15** – you can go all the way back and God has had a plan.
    d. What God offers you today has been in His mind since before mankind: **Eph. 1:3-4,10.**

2. **Jesus's Miracles have exclaimed His Right to Rule your Life**
    a. **Acts 2:22-23** – Jesus is more than a man – a fact He proved through miracles.
    b. You tried to put to death (out of your life), God's Son even after He proved His power.
    c. **Luke 8** (over nature – 22-25) (over demons – 28,32-33) (over the body – 43-44)
    d. (death and the soul – 52-55) – His miracles proved the reaches of His Majesty!
    e. **John 20:30-31** – He is God, and my life and hope is found only and always in Him!

3. **Jesus's Resurrection proclaims His Relevance beyond your Death**
    a. **Acts 2:24-32 –** Jesus defeated the ultimate adversary – the one we must all face.
    b. It was impossible for it to have power over Him – He is stronger than death.
    c. Witnesses abounded – from the Apostles to (**I Cor. 15:1-8** – 500 people!)
    d. **Acts 2:40** – His life beyond death could give them salvation beyond their life here.

4. **Jesus's Place in Heaven assures Eternal Victory over your Enemies**
    a. **Acts 2:30,33-36** – He was not just raised but EXALTED to God's right hand.
    b. He was given control over the Holy Spirit and sent Him to earth to deliver Truth.
    c. Pentecost is that Truth, along with all that would be taught – the King's message!
    d. This means He wins – victory is His! Over Sin, Death, Satan! (**I Cor. 15:20-22, 54-57**)

So, when Peter says: "He is both Lord and Christ" that was not just some tag line to get people to go – "Okay. Gotcha." It was a life changing reality shift. It was this massive revelation that Jesus is the One sent to save them and Lord of their lives – who was prophesied for ages, overpowered every element through miracles, escaped death and made escape possible, and rules in honor in heaven forever!

This became real to the audience. They knew what this meant: Jesus is Everything! (**Col. 1:18**).
And they said, "What shall we do?" The rest was easy. It is easy. Do what He says and live for Him.

You sit somebody down who is confused and curious as to what in the world God is up to in their lives; and you get a look at their eyes the moment they breathe in these truths about God – the moment it really hits their soul that Jesus and has always been and will always be their LORD AND CHRIST – the Ruler of All, from God, God and always with God… who died for them… and you won't have to tell them to be baptized for the reasons Christ taught. You will never again have to text them begging them to come back to church on a Sunday night. Christ becomes their air, their breath, their life. They will proclaim "What Shall I Do?" and they will DO IT!

Who came in the building knowing about God and the Bible and Jesus, but wondering "what does it mean?" And now you know Who He Is and What God's Work means – and you are thinking, what can I do to demonstrate to God I get it, and I want Christ to be first place in my life?? **Acts 2:38** – now.