**Responding to The Gospel**

***36****Let all the house of Israel therefore know for certain that God has made him both Lord and Christ, this Jesus whom you crucified.”*

***37****Now when they heard this they were cut to the heart, and said to Peter and the rest of the apostles, “Brothers, what shall we do?”****38****And Peter said to them, “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****For the promise is for you and for your children and for all who are far off, everyone whom the Lord our God calls to himself.”****40****And with many other words he bore witness and continued to exhort them, saying, “Save yourselves from this crooked generation.”****41****So those who received his word were baptized, and there were added that day about three thousand souls. (Acts 2:36-41, ESV)*

 Whenever we hear the Gospel presented, we have to have an answer to the invitation. Greetings in the Lord to you all on this beautiful day, as we continue to examine the life and teachings of the early Church Universal. Today’s reading is taken from the ending of the second chapter of the Book of Acts, which is the ending of the first evangelistic work by the Apostles. Today, it is important for us to see not only the words of the people hearing Peter’s message, but also their hearts. What kind of answer should we have when the Gospel invitation is given to us? This is today’s topic, and I pray that our spiritual thoughts and life-approaches are adjusted accordingly. Let move to our main analysis…

 When the Gospel is preached, the message must be clear, and the same with the response to it. Here we have the Apostle Peter expressing very clearly with his first sermon the identity of Jesus and the sin of the people. It is in this moment that the audience chose the correct response to the evangelistic sermon. They asked a question, because they were moved by the Gospel message, and they had already been cut to the heart according to verse 37. In the Greek, the literal image is one of piercing. Why did they feel this way? Probably because they realized that they were part of the same people who had crucified the One who was in fact Lord and Messiah or Anointed One, named Jesus. In other words, they had believed Peter and had allowed his message to touch even their emotions. At that moment, they asked the most important question of the passage: “What shall we do, brothers?”

 The answer to their question is the Gospel call to all people groups on the earth. It is: “

“Repent and be baptized in the name of Jesus, and you will receive the Holy Spirit. This is not only for you, but also for your children and for all who are far from God right now.” In addition, by doing this, Peter was saying, “Save yourselves from this crooked generation.” And the audience, following the directions, was baptized, and that day the church became stronger by 3,000 people.

 The most important part of any program is the initial answer or RSVP to the invitation. For example, imagine if a dinner was being planned and we did not know how many people were going to show up – we would send an email so we could get an answer from people about who was coming. Often, when we get an invitation, we need to think, “What are we going to do?” “Should we go?” or “Is there an obstacle to going?”

 Here is the most important question that we should answer for ourselves: If we are the ones giving the invitation, is our message clear? If, however, we receive the Gospel invitation, have we allowed the message to break our proud hearts and cause us to repent and be baptized or dedicated to God? Often the message comes, but lives do not change. Therefore, in order for people to be changed, the Gospel message needs to be allowed to touch the heart. If Jesus’ deeds (especially related to His salvation) do not become personal for each of us, then our answer to the Gospel call remains formal and ritualistic. To follow the Lord and remain faithful to Him, we need to become Jesus-lovers (those who have fallen in love with Christ).

 Therefore, may God make us into those we give the invitation clearly, or into those who are deeply moved by the Gospel message, thus seeing our entire life-trajectory change and become Christ-centered.

 When we hear the Gospel message, we need to have an answer to it.

The Lord bless you all. Amen.