**Gleaner’s Sunday School Lesson at First Baptist Church**

**January 29, 2023**

**Unit:  How to Discern the Voice of God:** Our culture is full of those who claim to hear God speak, and we may question if their claims are true? Some things may sound good, but are not words from God.  Whether we sense God speaking to us through scripture, another person, circumstances, or that “still small voice" (I Kings 19:12), the Scriptures can guide us to determine whether or not it is God’s voice. In this 6-week study, we’re going to be asked six questions, and with these questions we can learn to separate what God is saying to us from the voices in the world calling for our attention.

**Lesson #2: Does it Bring Conviction?**

**Scripture:** Primary Source:  *Bible Studies for Life, the Senior Adult Personal Study Guide* *Winter 2022-23* beginning on **p. 108** or open Bible to **(Acts 2:32-41)**

**Prayer**: Father God, We praise Your Holy Name and are so thankful for Your presence with us, Your leadership and the peace that is ours in times of stress or worry.  As we study today, help us not only discover, but help us really understand how You convict us through the Holy Spirit of our failures or sin.   Thank you for the wonderful gift of forgiveness and grace.  Help us to always obey the truth of Scripture.  Bless our families, friends, and our pastors.  In Jesus’ holy name, I pray, Amen.

**Life Connection:** Our culture makes light of sin, either writing it off as “no big deal” or redefining it in such a way that culture no longer considers certain actions as sin.  God’s standards for right and wrong have not changed.  God will never call us into something sinful; on the contrary, the Holy Spirit convicts us of sin and of how we are to obey the truth of Scripture.

**Point: The voice of God seeks to convict us of the truth.**

**Setting:** Acts 1 reported the ascension of Jesus and the selection of a replacement for Judas.  Most of Acts 2 focuses primarily on events on the day of Pentecost, a Jewish holiday celebrating 50 days after Passover.  After a dramatic outpouring of God’s Spirit on the Jewish crowd in Jerusalem, Simon Peter preached to the audience.  He explained the unusual events as a fulfillment of a prophecy by Joel, and he stressed the resurrection of Jesus as God’s vindication of His Son.

**Background for Passage:** The Jewish audience who observed the outpouring of the Holy Spirit on the day of Pentecost were ‘astounded and perplexed,” and some thought the Christians were drunk (Act 2:12-13). The primary manifestation of the Spirit’s power was speaking in “tongues” (v. 4). Peter explained to the crowd what really happened that day. The Christians were not drunk!  Rather, the arrival of the Holy Spirit was the fulfillment of a prophecy by Joel (vv. 15-16)  God’s primary concern for us today is that we are in a right relationship with Him.  His focus is on seeing we acknowledge that we are a sinner, turn from our sin, and place our faith in Christ.

**Read Acts 2:32-36 (p. 110) The verses selected for this study are from the last part of Peter’s sermon on the Day of Pentecost.  Peter’s message was powerful.   Many were convicted by it and responded to Peter’s appeal with a confession of need, repentance of their sin, and profession of Christ as Savior.**

**Verse 32:** Peter focused on Jesus’s death and resurrection to the crowd of Jews who lived in Jerusalem as well as “fellow Israelites” from other nations. Many likely recalled the recent events of Passover.  Peter  announced **“God has raised this Jesus.”**  Probably several in the crowd heard about Jesus’s appearance.  Over 100 believers had assembled in Jerusalem earlier. Peter and the 11 disciples were among the many **witnesses** to the reality of the risen Christ.

**Verse 33:** Since Jesus ascended about 40 days after His resurrection, He was not in Jerusalem to appear to the crowd.Peter explained **Jesus has been exalted to the right hand of God and has received from the Father the promised Holy Spirit, he has poured out what you both see and hear.** When Jesus gave the great commission He said He would always be with his followers (Matt. 28:20). He is also at the right hand of God. Peter noted the relation of the Holy Spirit to the risen Savior. (Being seated at the right hand of an important person was a sign of prestige and power.)

**Verse 34, 35:**  To support his message, Peter quoted the Davidic Psalm.110:1. David prophesied the Messiah, and this Psalm appealed to the fulfillment of  Old Testament texts that Jesus was in fact the promised Messiah.  Jesus is the Lord and Savior of all who place their trust in Him.   **This is the declaration of the Lord to my Lord: Sit at my right hand until I make your enemies Your footstool.**   Although Jesus was a descendant of King David, Jesus was truly the Lord of David. David was a human king, and the risen Jesus is King of kings and Lord of lords (Rev 19:16).  Psalm 110  also offers encouragement since the church might suffer at the hands of its enemies. God the Father will defeat every foe and place them in submission to Christ.

**Verse 36:** Peter concluded his sermon with an appeal for his audienceto acknowledge Jesus. Earlier, Peter mentioned Jesus’s ministry, especially His miracles, but stressed that Jesus’ death was God’s plan to provide salvation for sinners.  **Therefore let all the house of Israel know with certainty that God has made this Jesus, whom you crucified, both Lord and Messiah.**  Peter spoke with certainty; he emphasized that it was they who crucified Jesus.  They may not have hammered the nails into His hands and feet, but they were complicit by their sin and rebellion against God and their rejection of the Messiah.  Although God’s people had been involved in the process that led to Jesus’ execution, through the resurrection God declared Jesus to be **both Lord and Messiah.**

**Question #2 (p. 112:)  How can we continue to be witnesses of Jesus’s crucifixion and resurrection today?**

**Read Acts 2:37-38 (p. 112) Here we will see the response of those who heard the gospel that day.**

**Verse 37:** Peter’s audience heard his sermon and responded in a positive way.  **They were pierced to the heart, and said to Peter and the rest of the apostles, “Brothers, what should we do?”**  Since what Peter said was true, they were under conviction and needed to respond to his message.  When an unbeliever is responsive to the gospel and asks questions, we too need to be ready to instruct them.

**Verse 38:** Peter replied, **Repent and be baptized, each 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 people understood they must act.  This is a major difference between Satan’s and God’s words.  Satan will try to make you feel guilty and not offer  solutions.  God will convict you of sin, but will then offer a remedy.  Satan's words lead to guilt and shame; God’s words lead to repentance and life.  Peter instructed the crowd to repent, to confess their wrongdoing and turn their lives in a different direction. **Baptism** is an outward sign of an inner transformation, but not needed to be saved.   It signifies that a person’s sinful nature has died and they have been born again to become a Child of God.  It is a public testimony identifying one with Christ as his Lord and Savior.  It symbolizes death to sin and being raised to a new life in Christ.  Christian baptism was distinctive and represented  a genuine commitment to Jesus as Lord and Messiah.

**Question #3 (p. 113): What does it mean to repent of our sin?**

**Read Acts 2: 39-41 (p. 114)We see the results of Peter’s call for a gospel  response.**

**Verse 39:** Peter reassured the audience that the **promise** of salvation and forgiveness **was for them and their children.** Some may have worried they lost the chance at salvation since some Jews rejected Jesus and cooperated with the Romans in finding Jesus guilty.  Peter now affirmed that salvation through faith in Jesus was still available to them and their descendants. The phrase **“all who are far off”** is a reference to salvation being offered to Gentiles as well.

**Verse 40, 41:**Peter used **many other words** to help these people understand what was involved in making a commitment to Jesus as Lord and Savior.  …**he testified and strongly urged them saying “Be saved from this corrupt generation!”**  **So those who accepted his message were baptized, and that day about three thousand people were added to them.**  Peter preached with urgency since he understood the eternal peril each of his listeners faced. This reflected the impact found in words from God delivered in the power of the Holy Spirit.

**Question #4 (p. 114): Why is repentance an important response to the hearing of God’s Word?**

**Question #5 (p. 116): What role do we play in the Holy Spirit bringing conviction to people?**

**Summary:** Our focus in this study is to discern the voice of God.  Last week we were reminded to ensure that what we are hearing is in line with God’s Word.  This lesson relates to  what voices are calling us to do or believe:   “*Is there conviction of sin or is it leading me to a place of hopelessness?  Am I being pointed to Christ and His mercy and grace?* We must recall that God always speaks words of truth and grace, desiring to bring us ever closer to Him.  We should be receptive to the voice of God who still speaks most often through the stirrings of the Holy Spirit, the insights of mature fellow believers, and His written Word, the Bible.

**Engage (p. 116):**

1. Are there any distractions in your life preventing you from hearing the conviction of the Holy Spirit? Explain

 2. Do you have any unrepented sins in your life?  Confess them now.

**Live it Out (p. 117):** How will you live out the truth in this passage?

* Receive Christ.
* Confess sin.
* Share Christ.

**Prayer:** *Father, We pray that those we know who are not believers will discern Your voice and say yes to You before it is too late.*

**Watchword:** *May the Lord watch between me and thee while we are absent one from another. (Gen 31:49)*