



## Cases of Conversion: The 5,000

In Acts 4:4 the text says, "...many of those who heard the word believed; and the number of the men came to be about five thousand." Wow, what an exciting time in the early days of the New Testament church! What brought about such a large number of converts in a conflicted society?

It began with a simple act of compassion. In Acts 3 we read of Peter and John healing a "man lame from his mother's womb" (3:2). While these miracles lasted for only a limited time, the love Peter and John showed was to endure (1 Corinthians 13). Indeed, by our Christ-like compassion we can open the door to teach others about Christ.

Yet, compassion was not merely enough. While a good example is to be commended, it can be wasted if we fail to teach. So, Peter begins teaching the people about God's great love. He starts with God's great promise to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob and finishes with the promise's fulfillment in Jesus Christ (Acts 3:12-16). This is the heart of the gospel message—God's love for mankind.

Yet, God's love for mankind is not enough if we fail to see its purpose. This crowd had sinned against God by crucifying Jesus Christ (Acts 3:17-18). They were in need of God's forgiveness. This could only be done if they would hear the preaching of the gospel of Jesus Christ, our Savior (Acts 2:20).

Hearing was not enough either. They needed to do something with the gospel they heard! Acts 3:19 says, "Repent therefore and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out, so that times of refreshing may come from the presence of the Lord." This conversion process was quite similar to the repentance and baptism commanded in Acts 2:38.

What a wonderful message! Even so, Peter and John are arrested in Acts 4:3. Despite their arrest, 5,000 souls are added to the number. Friends, God loved you too. Jesus died for you, just as He did for the 5,000. Will you turn from your sins and obey Him?

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