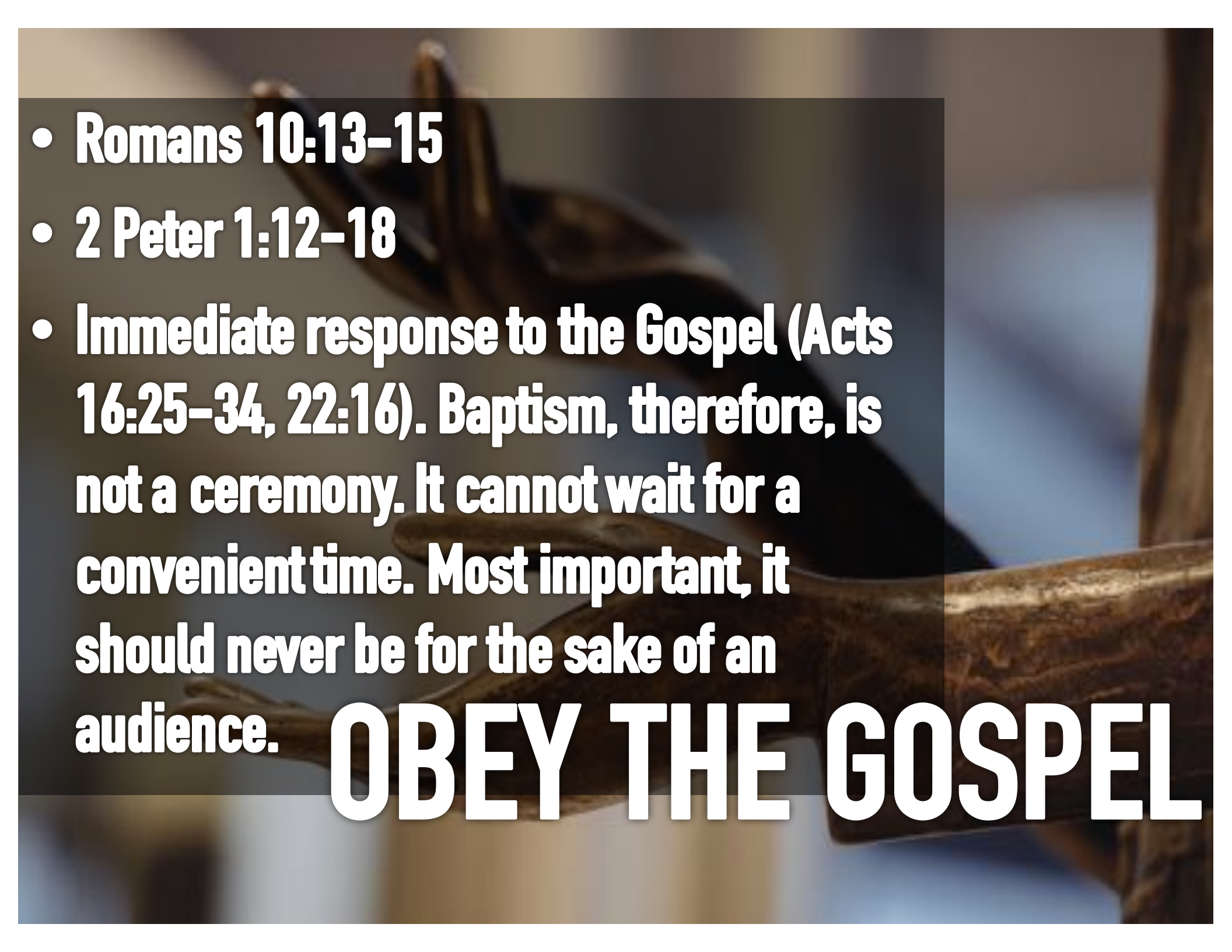




THE INVITATION

Matthew 11:28ff, Revelation 22:17

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- A close-up photograph of a hand holding a thick, weathered wooden staff or branch. The hand is positioned in the upper left, with fingers wrapped around the wood. The background is a soft-focus outdoor scene with a blue sky and a wooden post. The overall tone is natural and rustic.
- **Romans 10:13–15**
 - **2 Peter 1:12–18**
 - **Immediate response to the Gospel (Acts 16:25–34, 22:16). Baptism, therefore, is not a ceremony. It cannot wait for a convenient time. Most important, it should never be for the sake of an audience.**

OBEY THE GOSPEL

PUBLIC CONFESSION

- **James 5:16**
- **Confessing sin to others may only be the first step to recovery, since we must make our lives right with God. Nobody can intercede for us (1 Tim. 2:3–5).**
- **1 Timothy 5:24–25**
- **Public sins should be resolved publicly. There is too much at stake (1 Cor. 5, Matt. 18:15–17, 2 Cor. 2:5–8, Gal. 6:1).**

- **1 Thessalonians 5:14 – *‘And we urge you, brethren, admonish the unruly, encourage the faint-hearted, help the weak, be patient with all men.’***
- **Rather than trying to ‘go it alone’, we should never be afraid of reaching out to other Christians during times of trial. Remember Galatians 6:2 and Romans 12:15.**

ENCOURAGEMENT

PRACTICAL APPLICATIONS

- **It is not weakness to come forward.**
- **Be specific.**
- **Give others time to assist you.**
- **Have follow-through. A Sunday confession means little without a change of habit on Monday.**
- **Be more than your confession — You are not defined by your failures, so be careful not to play the victim.**