

Acts, Sermon #5

Acts 2

Last week we looked at the first sermon of the church.

Peter preached a powerful sermon regarding Jesus Christ. What did Peter want his audience to do, vs. 21? In response, 3,000 Jews were saved and baptized.

What a start. So far in this book, it has been rapid fire, ascension, Holy Spirit, preaching. Pow, Pow, Pow! And now we come to our first summary statement – progress report. There are seven given in this book.

Acts 2:41

I've entitled today's message: "A Portrait of Early Church Life"

Let us stand for the reading of God's Holy Word.

Acts 2:41-47

Let us pray.

You may be seated.

A Portrait of Early Church Life

This passage is a description of early church life! We are seeing the church on the first day of its existence.

Vs. 41, “gladly received” means to welcome with enthusiasm. That is the spirit of salvation, of people being saved.

This small church of 120 people mushroomed to over 3,000. All of these people were baptized, 12 apostles, 3,000 believers, about 250 per apostle. That was quite a day.

What we have recorded in the following verses is what happened in the daily life of these believers.

Verse 42 sums up the main elements of the life and activity of the Jerusalem church.

They continually, steadfastly practiced two things.

I. They were steadfast in:

The apostles doctrine. The believers immersed themselves in their teaching. All Christians need to become aware of the truth. We need to be properly informed so we can appropriately live.

The apostles were not only to witness to the world but also teach the Christian family.

What was the apostles’ doctrine? The apostles had the recorded scriptures, the O.T., nothing written of the N.T., plus what Jesus had taught them. So a reiteration of Jesus’ teaching plus sharing His life stories.

The apostles were fulfilling the Great Commission, salvation, baptism and teaching.

Matt. 28:29, Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you:

So if we were in the early church service, we could not turn in our Bibles. They did not have them. They had scrolls and very few people had a scroll. We have the luxury of carrying the O.T. and N.T. with us. Immerse ourselves in the teaching of the Word of God, personally and corporately. Lazy minded Christians

II. Their second practice concerned their relationship to one another. They continued in vs. 42, fellowship. This has reference to their spiritual conversation.

This is the Greek word “koinonia” – to have in common, a common ground. We get our English word “coin” from that.

What is it that is common for 3,000 people from all over the world?

The common ground of 3,000 Jews was that they were saved and had received Jesus Christ as Lord and Messiah – gravitated toward one another.

Fellowship over spiritual things, focused on Christ. Fellowship is more than having coffee together and talking about the weather and who’s going to win the Super Bowl.

Many Christian people have no gravitation toward Christian people, Christian fellowship.

Fellowship is believers having the things of the Lord in common and that occupies their conversation. This is what spirit filled people do. The Bible goes on to tell us a couple of the ingredients of fellowship

Notice in vs. 42

Part of this spiritual fellowship was the breaking of bread, vs. 42c. This is a reference to the Lord’s Table (Communion). They were doing that every time they met, to remember their Savior, crucified, resurrected, ascended and coming again.

Their communion service was a part of their meal time.

Prayer was a part of fellowship, vs. 42. They continued in prayers. Praying with other believers.

When was the last time we fellowshiped with another Christian couple, talked about the Lord, opened the Bible and prayed together?

Listen Dads, get in your car or sit down for lunch and lead in a spiritual conversation.

Vs. 42

These are the necessary things. Is someone there instructing in the Word of God? Is there a real bond of unity, spiritual conversation? Are they bound together because of their common interests in the things of God? Do they observe the Lord's Table? Do they meet together for prayer? Are people being saved and baptized? Is this enough?

Now, let me ask you something. Would you be satisfied with this in a local church?

Today you have to be a full service church, children's ministries, youth ministries, recreation, baby sitting services, coffee stations, professional music....

This is the simplicity of early church life.

This was the continual practice of those people and it must continue to be so.

Notice the profound impact on the world, vs. 43, awe, vs. 47, this led to salvation. The early church caught the attention of the lost.

Today, the lost are indifferent to us so we try to offer lost people what lost people like, wrapped in a Christian package.

Vs. 43, these signs and wonders authenticated the apostles. One wonder is found in Acts 3:6, Acts 5:12.

God gave the apostles unique powers to get the attention of the multitudes, Acts 5:15-16, Peter's shadow healed people; 9:37-40, Peter raised the dead.

Acts 2:44-45, they had spiritual things in common. So too, their material goods.

They were sharing. This was not socialism or communism because it was voluntary, Acts 4:32, 34, 35. Their goods were not evenly distributed but were given to meet needs as they arose, Acts 2:45.

God did not tell them that Christians were to start a practice of selling every private material possession and live in a commune with all things in common. They were not given guidelines nor were they given any divine mandate to come together in a commune or community farm like a Jewish Kibbutz, or a Hutterite Colony. But many of the new converts had come from afar and now had no place to go. It was voluntary, it was sacrificial, and it was out of deep Christian concern.

Let us point out several things that I think will help us understand this passage.

1. In the first place, these two verses are an explanation of how the 3,000 could continue to meet for a long period of time.

How did they do that? They did that by everybody sharing what they had. That sustained them over the period of time that was necessary to get all these people grounded in the faith.

We have a unique situation here. It was the infancy of the church. We have over 3,000 believers from all over the world and they all desperately needed to be filled with doctrine and instruction before going home to spread the gospel.

How do you meet the material needs for this many people?

Basically what we have here is a spiritual boot camp that all of these people are going to be in for a period of time. What could they do regarding their material needs?

Please understand that this is not given in the N. T. as a common ordinary practice for God's people.

The reason I say that is because in the epistles the apostle Paul will make quite clear that it is God's will that one work by the sweat of their brow and that they earn their living. That they not only earn their living (their families too) and on top of this to work hard so that they will have to give to other people who are in need.

Eph. 4:28, Let him that stole steal no more: but rather let him labour, working with his hands the thing which is good, that he may have to give to him that needeth.

II Thess. 3, cries out against those who have stopped working. He says if any would not work, neither should he eat.

1. This giving of goods to one another was an inner generosity. Nobody commanded this, nobody made them do it, no coercion was involved. It was just the inner generosity of people led by the Spirit.

Acts 2:46-47, describes their daily life. The word "daily" is used twice in vs. 46 & 47

Six things:

1. Daily they would meet with one accord (passion) in the temple. Every day they went to church. Now, the church met in the temple. The Jerusalem Christians still worshipped daily at the temple and felt no inconsistency. At this time the Christians had the respect of the whole city of Jerusalem.

2. Not only in public gatherings but also house gatherings, vs. 46b. They were practicing the Lord's Table in connection with regular meals. We saw that in I Cor. 11. The Lord's Table was instituted at a meal with Jesus, remember!

3. Eating with gladness and singleness of heart, thankful and undistracted partaking of the needs of the physical body, no worry about tomorrow, thoroughly enjoying what is before them.

4. Praising God. These people were characterized by praise. They were filled with praise to God.

5. Favor with the world.

6. Daily people were getting saved

The “Lord added” to their family. The Lord added daily “those who were being saved.”

Vs. 47

God—Praise

World—Favor

To the lost—people being saved

This tells us what continually went on through the weeks and months after Peter’s sermon and what should be going on in our church.

Let us stand for closing invitation.

We cannot be a spiritual Christian and have a flippant, indifferent spirit toward the church of Jesus Christ. A relationship to God is seen in a person’s relationship to the church and His people.

Hungry for preaching and teaching, can’t wait to get together, hearts are for the prayer service, relationships with one another, joy, community interest?

They had a high level of commitment to one another

What a weariness church is. We often look for reasons to stay home.

Granted, the church was very young. They may have known very little, inexperienced, but they were full of life, like a child.

Is that true of us?

Simplicity

Have you responded to Christ?