

A Blood-bought Church

Acts 2:42-47

42 And they devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and the fellowship, to the breaking of bread and the prayers.

43 And awe came upon every soul, and many wonders and signs were being done through the apostles.

44 And all who believed were together and had all things in common.

45 And they were selling their possessions and belongings and distributing the proceeds to all, as any had need.

46 And day by day, attending the temple together and breaking bread in their homes, they received their food with glad and generous hearts,

47 praising God and having favor with all the people. And the Lord added to their number day by day those who were being saved.

Sermon Outline:

That confession of faith is the only requirement for membership in Christ's Church and Kingdom. But when one receives the good news from God's Word that he or she is a member of Christ's family, what must be the response? The early Church's example teaches us that the response must be one of **zealous living in new relationships**. Grace demands a new relationship with God which we call worship; a new relationship with fellow Christians which we call work; and a new relationship with unbelievers which we call witness.

I. **Worship (42,43):** The most obvious **new relationship for a Christian is with God**. What does the nurturing of that relationship look like? It involves worship through the Word and sacrament.

- A. Word
- B. Sacrament

II. **Work (44-46):** When you come into Christ's Church you find that you have **a new family**. What does the nurturing of a relationship with your new brothers and sisters look like? It requires fellowship and mercy.

- A. Fellowship
- B. Mercy (hospitality)
- C. Death and Sin (24)

III. **Witness (47):** Receiving a great gift requires great generosity. A Christian has received the news of how to live a fulfilled life both now and in eternity as the result of the forgiveness of sins. That requires **a new perspective** on one's relationship with outsiders.

A Christian is a debtor to unbelievers. He owes them the Gospel. What does it mean to be a witness?

A. Doxological: I want you to notice that the evangelistic effectiveness of the early Church flowed out of her worship.

Informal missionaries:

First, Green demonstrates that the early church's evangelism occurred naturally through informal missionaries. Yes, ministers and church leaders evangelized, but they alone could not have taken the Gospel as far and wide as it went by themselves.

Consistent: There were several factors that made the early Christians' witness especially effective.

B. Numerical: This is the first of six summaries of the growth of the Christian Church as Luke records it. I want you to notice that the early Church was not afraid of growing large and growing rapidly.

Conclusion:

The Church of Jesus Christ with which you have been entrusted was purchased by the blood of your Savior and preserved by the blood of your ancestors. They now pass it on to you as a stewardship. How are you attending her? Are you serving her with the best of your energies in your worship, work, and witness? Or are you exhausting her resources with your selfishness, undercutting her health with your criticism and gossip, or making her anemic by your laziness?

We are surrounded by a great cloud of blood-stained witnesses who have entrusted the church to us. With hearts bursting with joy, let us give our best for the Church Christ purchased with His own precious blood!

Discussion Questions

1. Where have you lately seen and experienced the work of the Holy Spirit in your life and/or your Christian community?
2. Describe the fellowship of believers in this new church in Jerusalem.
3. According to Acts 2:42-47, what are the priorities of this new community? Another way of putting this question is: What is the evidence of a deepening friendship with God in Acts 2:42-47? What is the evidence of deepening redemptive friendships with others? What one area do you want to shore up in the new year?
4. How do your life and the ministries of our church compare to those of this church in Acts 2:42-47?

5. What are the ways in which you see the power of the Holy Spirit demonstrated in this description of this church in Jerusalem? Take a moment and pray that we might live to see many people coming to faith in Christ like this church did.

6. How does our church need to change in order to see the power of the Spirit demonstrated among us in the same ways?

Going Deeper

1. “Devote” means to give steadfast attention to something... to give unremitting care to a thing. What are the things that vie for your devotion, time, money, and energy? By your own investment of time, energy and attention, to what are you truly devoted? Confess that to the Lord and ask for His grace to serve and worship Him with an undistracted and undivided heart.

2. There is a word that appears twice in our text. It appears in verses 40 and 47. It is the precious and powerful word: “save.” Salvation is not merely a one-time event, but a life-long battle against sin, temptation, and unbelief (Hebrews 10:39). In light of this, talk with the members of your group regarding why it is imperative to gather with other believers to worship, nurture, teach, and reach.