

**PP Acts: To the End of the Earth**

**Part 5-Acts 2:42-47, A Spirit-filled Church**

**10/24-25/2020**

I would like you to think about what has been your best experience in a church in your life  
Think for a moment about that church...what made it such a wonderful experience for you?  
Maybe it was a church where it seemed everyone was involved, everyone loved each other, or  
the preaching impacted you every week, where people were getting saved  
Maybe a church where the Holy Spirit produced charismatic signs, or repentance, or altar calls  
Today, in **Acts 2:42-47**, we are going to see what makes a powerful church and I will tell you  
something now that we need to know

There is no truly powerful church unless it is a Spirit-filled church

Notice the beginning of verse 42: ***“And they devoted themselves to...”***

**‘They’**, together **‘devoted themselves’**, meaning regularly, continually persisted in, 4 priorities:

**PP Here is what a Spirit-filled church will have as priorities:**

**PP 1-‘the apostles’ teaching’**

We saw last week in **2:41**, that **‘about three thousand’** people were saved from Peter’s sermon  
The weeks following that sermon, this brand new thing called the church had to develop ways to  
organize themselves and function together in what will be an increasingly hostile world  
Many of those believers likely headed back to where they were from, all over the world  
But those who stayed in Jerusalem immediately banded together, and began to learn, but learn  
what?

They didn’t have the letters written by James, and Peter, and John and soon Paul  
But those letters were being taught before they were written, and there is a really fancy word for  
them that I will tell you after this little historical story

In 1873, an archbishop was searching through the library of the Jerusalem Monastery located in  
Constantinople, Turkey, and he discovered a manuscript that dates back to around 60 AD

This manuscript was called the Didache, and it summarizes the early church’s teachings on  
baptism, Lord’s Supper, and preaching and reading and worship and a whole lot more

The early church didn’t have the New Testament, or all the books available to us today

Today, if you don’t like our preaching here, you’ve got 1,000’s of options: Podcasts, YouTube...

But here in Acts 2, they were entirely dependent on the Apostles teachings and they gave all of  
their allegiance to that teaching, as the Apostles explained the Old Testament and the  
teachings of Jesus

**PP** *They gathered in single-minded devotion with the goal of learning how to live like Jesus*

**PP 2-‘the fellowship’**

**PP** John Wesley once said, *‘There is nothing more unchristian than a solitary Christian.’*

But what, really, is **‘fellowship’**?

It’s a fantastic word that means *holding something in common*, and a sharing partnership

The highest example is marriage, but the word can also describe a business partner

With the word **‘the’** before fellowship, it means the church, the community of believers who had  
something in common

What the believers had in common were the great spiritual realities of their new life in Christ

They devoted themselves to *fellowship* as they regularly, continually gathered together, for what? Simply, and beautifully what would become the great **‘one anothers’** of the New Testament *Confessing to one another, bearing one another’s burdens, sharing with one another, encouraging one another, loving one another, and many more*

Tertullian, known as the father of Latin theology, born in 160 AD, reported that when Rome became suspicious of the early church, they sent spies into their midst Those spies went back reporting that the Christians were peculiar, that they had no idols, but worshiped One by the name of Jesus Who was not there, and then said, *“How those Christians love each other, and how they are ready to die for each other”*

### **PP 3-‘to the breaking of bread’**

There are a couple of meanings of this phrase, one of which is simply sharing a meal together, which is what is meant in **2:46**

But here in **2:42**, Luke wrote **‘the breaking of bread’** which makes **‘the’** a definite article and describes the formal service of communion or The Lord’s Supper

They would gather, remembering the body and blood of the Savior and why is that you may ask? It is by regularly observing this that you remember how great His love is, how great our need is, and how great it is when we are all together in one body called the church

### **PP 4-‘and the prayers’**

We see that another priority of these early believers was to be a praying church

Look at **3:1** and you will find Peter and John going up to the Temple at the ninth hour of prayer, 3 pm in the afternoon

Devout Jews had 3 special daily times for prayer: morning (6am), noon and evening (3pm), and though these could be offered anywhere, nowhere was more precious than at the Temple

These early believers went to the prayer services, the formal times of prayer, to offer their praise and petitions to God

Our Elders and Pastors have a Wednesday evening prayer service on facebook, and our Women’s ministry just had a prayer event and will have more in the future

We desire to people from Cornerstone step up and begin prayer groups all over our church and our campus pastors will help you do that if you reach out and contact them

This Spirit-filled church sat expectantly under the preaching of the Apostles, shared life together, were strengthened by celebrating the Lord’s Supper, and prayed together

So now **PP** Look at why you would want to be part of this incredible church:

### **PP This Spirit-filled church was a worshiping church as ‘awe came upon every soul’**

Revival and spiritual vitality are never part of a Christian or a church without the fear of God The fear of God is the passionate conviction to live life placing God above everyone and everything for the sake of His glory and my blessings

This was being produced by the **‘many wonders and signs were being done through the apostles’**

The Holy Spirit’s display of power will lead us toward a fear and awe of God, and open the eyes and ears of those who witness His signs, wonders and miracles

In **PP Hebrews 2:4**, we read that the person of Jesus and His message were confirmed ***“by signs and wonders and various miracles and by gifts of the Holy Spirit distributed according to His will”***

It was the same with Moses, whom God confirmed to both Israel and Pharaoh through signs and wonders

The final verse in Mark’s gospel tells us that the disciples **PP** ***“went out and preached everywhere, while the Lord worked with them and confirmed the message by accompanying signs.” Mark 16:20***

Wonders and signs are meant to confirm the message and the messenger, not replace them

**PP** *This Spirit-filled church was a generous church, as they ‘had all things in common’*

This election season has provoked a lot of anger, and I recently had an unbelieving friend explain to me that Jesus, if He was alive today, would be a socialist

He is actually not correct, and what we see here is not a picture of either communism as the Christian retained the right of private ownership as we’ll see later in Acts

Communism is compulsory and has nothing to do with generosity

Nor was it socialism which while acknowledging the right of private property, it compels individuals to give a percentage above a certain figure to others

Biblical generosity is giving gladly for the sake of others, not giving under compulsion

***“They were selling their possession and belongings and distributing the proceeds to all, as any had need.” 2:45***

Friends, **PP** *One of the most powerful witnesses of a Spirit-filled church is a generous church*

Not just a church whose people give generously, but whose people live generously with each other, a church that lives life together, ***day by day***, not just once a week on Sundays

***“day by day, attending the temple together and breaking bread in their homes, they received their food with glad and generous hearts” Acts 2:46***

This time, the breaking of bread means they enjoyed meals together in each others’ homes

**PP** *This Spirit-filled church was a witnessing church “praising God and having favor with all the people. And the Lord added to their number day by day those who were being saved.”*

One person said, *‘They spent time blessing God, and God spent time blessing them’* Paul Apple

Can you imagine our church growing, not so much by people leaving another church, but because we are seeing the Spirit of God save people through our ministries?

Friends, these are the marks of a Spirit-filled church

A church centered on God’s Word, rich in love for each other, centered on the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ, and one that finds us together praying to our great God

We would be filled with the fear and awe of God, generosity, and a powerfully effective witness

**PP** Is the Spirit increasing these attitudes in you?:

A desire to be part of a growth group to live out the *‘one anothers’* of the Bible?

A desire to be living life with those at Cornerstone ***‘day by day’***, not just once a week?

A desire to pray together with each other at both formal times of prayer and informal?

A willingness to share your possessions with others who are in need in this church?

A desire to use your home as a place to enjoy meals with others from our church?

An attentive, yielded heart to the preaching and teaching of the Word of God here?

A sense of awe and fear that places God above everything and everyone in importance

Amen?

Pray