

Sunday Evening May 6, 2018
"The Early Church" Acts 2:42-47

I. *Their start: Peter's preaching Christ crucified brought Holy Spirit empowered conviction and repentance –*

"Therefore let all the house of Israel know assuredly that God has made this Jesus, whom you crucified, both Lord and Christ." ³⁷ Now when they heard *this*, they were cut to the heart, and said to Peter and the rest of the apostles, "Men *and* brethren, what shall we do?" (Acts 2:36-37 NKJ)

1. *This time, even this moment, was prophesied –*

"And I will pour on the house of David and on the inhabitants of Jerusalem the Spirit of grace and supplication; then they will look on Me whom they pierced. Yes, they will mourn for Him as one mourns for *his* only son, and grieve for Him as one grieves for a firstborn. (Zechariah 12:10 NKJ)

"But this is what was spoken by the prophet Joel: ¹⁷ And it shall come to pass in the last days, says God, That I will pour out of My Spirit on all flesh; Your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, Your young men shall see visions, Your old men shall dream dreams. (Acts 2:16-17 NKJ)

2. *This time was prayed for –*

These all continued with one accord in prayer and supplication, ... (Acts 1:14 NKJ)

3. *Peter who at one point despised the cross - From that time Jesus began to show to His disciples that He must go to Jerusalem, and suffer many things from the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be killed, and be raised the third day.* ²² Then Peter took Him aside and began to rebuke Him, saying, "Far be it from You, Lord; this shall not happen to You!" ²³ But He turned and said to Peter, "Get behind Me, Satan! You are an offense to Me, for you are not mindful of the things of God, but the things of men." ²⁴ Then Jesus said to His disciples, "If anyone desires to come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow Me. (Matt. 16:21-24 NKJ) – *is now preaching it – Acts 2:36*

4. *They were cut to the heart, why? Multiple choice:*

- A. *Because Peter as a preacher had a great sense of humor*
- B. *Because all the Apostles were extremely entertaining*
- C. *Because Peter spoke to their sin and the Holy Spirit convicted them*
- D. *Because Peter's speaking voice was amazing*

5. *Peter's preaching emphasized:*

- A. *The Word – Acts 2:16-20*
- B. *Salvation Acts 2:21*
- C. *Jesus: His works, death, resurrection and ascension to the right hand of God - Acts 2:22-33a*
- D. *The pouring out of God's Spirit – Acts 2:33b*
- E. *Proof of these things with a Biblical reference to the words of David – Acts 2:34-36*
- F. *Answering questions about salvation, emphasizing repentance, baptism, God's promises to them and their children Acts 2:38-39*
- G. *And at last a word call to be saved –*

And with many other words he testified and exhorted them, saying, "Be saved from this perverse generation." (Acts 2:40 NKJ)

6. *The response –*

Then those who gladly received his word were baptized; and that day about three thousand souls were added to *them*. (Acts 2:41 NKJ)

II. *The continuation of their start –*

1. *They were devoted to doctrine –*

And they continued steadfastly in the apostles' doctrine ... (Acts 2:42 NKJ)

Continued steadfastly - προσκαρτερέω proskartereo {pros-kar-ter-eh'-o}

Meaning: 1) to adhere to one, be his adherent, to be devoted or constant to one 2) to be steadfastly attentive unto, to give unremitting care to a thing 3) to continue all the time in a place 4) to persevere and not to faint 5) to show one's self courageous for 6) to be in constant readiness for one, wait on constantly

But his delight *is* in the law of the LORD, And in His law he meditates day and night. (Psalm 1:2 NKJ)

They were not people who consider the Bible or apostle's teaching boring or uninteresting or needing help - He who despises the word will be destroyed, but he who fears the commandment will be rewarded. (Proverbs 13:13 NKJ)

2. *They were devoted to fellowship -*

And they continued steadfastly in the apostles' ... and fellowship... (Acts 2:42 NKJ) *κοινωνία koinonia {koy-nohn-ee'-ah}*

Meaning: 1) fellowship, association, community, communion, joint participation, intercourse

A. *This is not doing fun things together as opposed to hearing doctrine in a sermon or Bible study, rather it should include encouragement in the faith, we are one in Christ –*

B. *We are unified, intimate because of Christ -*

so we, *being* many, are one body in Christ, and individually members of one another. (Romans 12:5 NKJ)

C. *Fellowship in Christ, should foster growth in Christ –*

And let us consider one another in order to stir up love and good works, ²⁵ not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as *is* the manner of some, but exhorting *one another*, and so much the more as you see the Day approaching. (Hebrew 10:24-25 NKJ)

3. *They were devoted to the Lord's Supper*

And they continued steadfastly in ... the breaking of bread... (Acts 2:42 NKJ)

A. *The Lord's Supper, remembering the cross*

B. *Eating together*

4. *They were devoted to prayer(s) –*

And they continued steadfastly in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship, in the breaking of bread, and in prayers. (Acts 2:42 NKJ)

"You will as soon find a living man without breath as a living saint without prayer." Matthew Henry

A. *The men and women of the early church were POWERFUL in PRAYER –*

And when they had prayed, the place where they were assembled together was shaken; and they were all filled with the Holy Spirit, and they spoke the word of God with boldness. (Acts 4:31 NKJ)

B. *Powerful even beyond their faith –*

Peter was therefore kept in prison, but constant prayer was offered to God for him by the church. (Acts 12:5 NKJ)

And as Peter knocked at the door of the gate, a girl named Rhoda came to answer. ¹⁴ When she recognized Peter's voice, because of *her* gladness she did not open the gate, but ran in and announced that Peter

stood before the gate. ¹⁵ But they said to her, "You are beside yourself!" Yet she kept insisting that it was so. So they said, "It is his angel." (Acts 12:13-15 NKJ)

5. *They were characterized by the FEAR of the LORD and miracles were done by the Apostles –*

Then fear came upon every soul, and many wonders and signs were done through the apostles. (Acts 2:43 NKJ)

6. *They shared everything but were not communists or socialists –*

Now all who believed were together, and had all things in common, ⁴⁵ and sold their possessions and goods, and divided them among all, as anyone had need. (Acts 2:44-45 NKJ)

What is the difference?

A. *Everyone shared everything and had all things in common, the Apostles did not get rich!*

B. *In Communism / Socialism God is left out –*

"Religion is the opiate of the masses" Karl Marx

C. *Yet, even if they claim to leave out God, they always leave out man's natural depravity and moral sinfulness!*

The problem of man to the communist is not sin and fear of God's judgment but rather that some have money, food, luxury while others do not! So, when the communist is on top, not recognizing his own depravity, he never shares but hoards and kills off all that might oppose him, not at all what the Apostles or early church did!

7. *Note how often they met –*

So continuing daily with one accord in the temple, and breaking bread from house to house, they ate their food with gladness and simplicity of heart, (Acts 2:46 NKJ)

8. *See how God blessed –*

praising God and having favor with all the people. And the Lord added to the church daily those who were being saved. (Acts 2:47 NKJ)

Note what they did not have –

Radio, television, the internet, a lot of money, entertainment

Note what they did have – God!

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