

Acts #5 (5.24.20) #20039

Acts 2:37-47

Redeemed Community

I. What is God doing in the world...? Hint: It's more important that what we are doing...

A. Remember three new things Jesus said he would do.

1. Send His Holy Spirit into His people. Jn. 7: 37-39; 14:16-20; Jn. 16:5-15
2. Create a new community of redeemed people sourced in Spirit-faith in Him. Matt. 16:16-18.
3. Use His Spirit-people to bring a regenerating message of forgiveness to the world. Luke 24:44-49 (Rom.8:1-11; 1 Cor.3:1)

B. All three of these things are seen in Acts 2. A Crucial moment in redemptive history.

1. The presence of God indwelling (filling) the 120 disciples: 1-13

- a) 3 signs, all associated with God's prophetic work
 - (1) Auditory Sign: Wind = Spirit. ruach, pneuma
 - (a) God's personal presence.
 - (2) Visual Sign: Fire:
 - (a) Associated with God's purifying presence. Moses and the burning bush.
 - (3) Missional Sign: Language:
 - (a) Spirit-prompted utterance about God and His work in the World—pointing to Christ.

2. Followed by Peter's Message: *God is at Work Here:*

a) This is The Father's promise. 14-21. Joel 2:28-32

- (1) The coming of the Spirit, long promised by God.

b) Based on the Son's Resurrection. 22-32. Psalm 16:8-11; Ps.132:11

- (1) Specifically, his pre-planned death, burial, resurrection, and ascension.

c) Resulting in the Lordship of Jesus over everything. 33-36. Psalm 110:1

- (1) Jesus is Lord and Messiah. Exalted to the right hand of God
 - (a) Jesus Christ is Lord. The first real creed.
 - (2) As Messiah, he sits on David's throne. King in God's kingdom.

d) So, Wake Up and Respond to the Gospel. 37-41.

- (1) The Spirit, through the Word, pierces the hearts. Jn. 16:1-11

3. Resulting in the birth of the Church. 41

- a) Three thousand respond in one day and are baptized into the Body of Christ, receiving his Spirit and unified under his lordship.

II. This Morning: The Birth of a New Spirit Community. 37-47.

A. The Lord, through the gospel, creates the Church out of the redeemed material of regenerated sinners.

B. The Lord is the Life of the Church and the fruit of his life shows in the following:

III. Six Characteristics of Spirit-filled people (and churches): They have...

A. A Repentant Faith demonstrated by Baptism. 38. Matt. 28:18-20

1. Three elements of Christian Conversion.

- a) Personal, Repentant Faith: Turn around.
 - (1) Repent. Turn your mind around about Jesus and sin.
 - (2) What were these intensely religious and "biblical" people repenting of?
 - (a) Primarily rejecting Jesus as Messiah. 36
 - (b) Secondarily, sin in general. Rebellion.
 - (i) This was what John the Baptist clarified.
 - (c) *But also of placing confidence in religion itself, including their racial and national heritage.*
- b) Instant, permanent Regeneration: You will be born again. Jn.3:3; Titus 3:4-7
 - (1) The promise (of the Spirit, v. 33) is for all those the Lord calls.
- c) Immediate, faithful Water Baptism as evidence of trusting Christ.
 - (1) Be Baptized in the name of Jesus for the forgiveness of your sins.
 - (a) The baptism is "the sinner's prayer" of the New Testament.
 - (b) Not the physical act, but the faith it represents.
 - (c) The name of Jesus is Trinitarian. Matt.28:18-20

B. An Open-handed Faith that blesses those around. 44

1. Un-coerced generosity toward other believers. Gal.6:10 (Jn.13:34)
2. This is not simply socialism or communism.
 - a) It is uncoerced and it is not “other people’s money.”
3. Though it does include some administration (the deacons).

C. A Thoughtful Faith shaped by God’s Word. 42a

1. Devoted to the apostle’s teaching. paying attention to it.
 - a) Today this is done by Christ-centered exposition of the New Testament and the Old Testament.
2. Continually devoted = an ongoing study of the gospels, the teaching of the apostles, and the OT in light of the gospel.
3. *Apostolic Gospel Exposition is the key to healthy church life.*

D. A Shared Faith in Loving Unity. Fellowship. koinonia = sharing. 42, 46

1. It is the sharing of the common life we have in Christ through the Spirit.
 - a) Christians naturally desire it.
 - (1) I just want to talk to a Christian ... Rom. 1:11-12
 - b) And they are instructed to pursue it. Heb 10:25
 - c) Because love for one another is the universal fruit of the Spirit. (1 Cor.13; Gal.5; Jn.13:34)
2. It can happen anywhere, but only between Christians.
 - a) Whenever two or more Christians are seeking to help each other to know the Lord by sharing what each may have in wisdom, prayer, physical help -- anything.
 - b) They share with each other, giving and receiving from each other, encouragement, wisdom, advice, or just listening.
 - c) It’s happening when Christians are sharing what they have with each other: words, prayer, advice, compassion, money.
3. It is a byproduct of commitment to the Lord and his service.
 - a) It cannot be synthesized as a product itself, just for personal use.
 - b) It happens around the edges of other things, but is just as important.
 - c) It happens when you reach out to others.
 - (1) Which is why some people who complain that they don’t have enough “fellowship” might be seeking it just for themselves. If they get involved helping others, it is amazing how quickly they gain the desired companionship.

E. A Grounded Faith that is Christ-centered. Breaking of bread. 42

1. Meals were transformed often into **The Meal**. The Lord’s Table.
2. Grounded in historical and material reality—the Cross.
 - a) In the time/space event of the Cross and Resurrection of Christ.
3. The Lord’s Table/Communion is the regular reminder that Spirit Fellowship is Christ-centered and grounded in historical realities.
 - a) Always coming back to the work of grace and mercy at the Cross.
 - b) Beware of preaching that does not center on the substitutionary atonement.

F. A Praying Faith that Trusts the Lord. Prayer/Praise (Act 4:28-29)

1. Speaking to the Lord in public and private.
 - a) Praying out loud together when the occasions permits
 - b) Praying in your closet regularly
2. Speaking of the Lord, praising him together. (47)
 - a) This often takes the form of singing to and about Him.

IV. Some pastoral advice. 4 things:

- A. Preach Christ first and everything else second. Rom.1:16-17
 1. Why? Because people need rescued from God's judgment more than they need anything else. 40, 47b.
 - a) V.40 Let yourself be saved. Passive imperative.
 2. The Word of God is the Gospel and the Gospel is the Spirit-Dynamic message of the saving Lordship of Jesus Christ.
 3. If the Church moves off this foundation, it will produce "wood, hay, and straw" (1 Cor.3:10-15)
 4. All compassion and helping outreaches are vehicles for representing the Lord as the saving Lord. They have value, of course, but social work alone is not Gospel.
- B. Repent of religion as well as rebellion.
 1. There are two ways to avoid God.
 - a) One is to be really bad and run away from Him. (The Prodigal Little Brother)
 - b) The other is to be really good (according to you) and thus avoid the humility of repentance and the need for grace and saving faith. (the Big Brother)
 2. *The Jews had to repent and be baptized. This is stunning because.*
 - a) Baptism was not uncommon in Judaism, but it was for proselytes, not Jews. For Jews to need to be baptized in the name of Jesus Messiah meant they were letting go of any claim to salvation based on their religion, and trusting Jesus Messiah alone for membership in God's kingdom.
 - b) Misplaced faith in Judaism and Jewishness and works of the Law is what Jesus consistently challenged (Matt.23 for instance), and the apostles condemned (Rom.9:30-10:4)
- C. Embrace the Church without putting your faith in her.
 1. The Church is the imperfect Bride, made holy by grace alone.
 - a) He saves people he does not trust. Jn 2:23-25
 2. Keep your faith in the Lord and love others for His sake. Jn.21:15-17
 3. The gospel is not about the Church, but about the Lord, who adds us to the Church.
- D. Never, never, never forget that if you have come to Christ personally, His Spirit is in you and you are eternally forgiven. Rom.8
 1. Guilt and Shame, producing Rebellion, Rigidity, or Legalism, will result if we do not constantly come back to the central issue of complete forgiveness by Grace Alone, through Faith Alone, in Christ Alone.