

# Acts Ch2v22-47 - Committed To Church

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[ 0 : 00 ] We're going to be looking at Acts chapter 2 for part of our talk this morning, and then we're going to be looking at the rest of Acts.

So I'm not going to be reading anything straight off this morning, we're going to be looking at different parts of the Acts. So you can look it up at least anyway for starters.

I'm going to pray and ask for God's help. Let's pray. Father, thank you for the gathering of this church, for the people that you have brought together, people that you love and treasure.

And thank you that you have given us your word so that we aren't left guessing and wandering in the dark, but you've shown us your truth, your light, so that we might know how we should live as your people together.

So encourage us today and build us up in Jesus' name. Amen. Thank you. Thank you.

[ 1 : 37 ] So in this series, as we head towards the more summer months, we're asking the big question, what is a Christian?

And I wonder if you were asked that question, would you be able to answer it? What does it mean to be a Christian? Well, today we're going to see that a Christian is someone who is committed to church.

Now, all of us can have lots of different ideas about what church is. So what do we mean when we talk about church? Well, church is not the building you enter.

It's a basketball court. It's not the service you attend. It is that, but it's much more. And it's not a club that you adjoin.

Church, and I've summarized it here for helpful for us this morning, is a local community of Christ followers who are committed to one another.

[ 2 : 40 ] Again, it's more than that, but it's not less than that. A local community of Christ followers who are committed to one another.

And to help us understand this commitment, the Bible uses two striking word pictures. It says the church is like a family.

So in Galatians, it reads, you can see this on the screen. Let us do good to all people. That is, people who are believers or unbelievers.

But especially to those who belong to the family of believers. And the church is also like a body.

In Christ, we, though many, and there's many here this morning, well, we form one body. And each member, a foot, an arm, a leg, an eye, a tongue, each member belongs to all the others.

[ 3 : 45 ] So we belong to a family, and we belong to a body. In other words, the Bible's view is that if you are a Christian, you belong to a local church.

You can't have one without the others. You can't say, oh, I'm a Christian, but I don't really bother with church. Or I like the church, but not so hot on being a Christian.

One writer put it like this. Again, you can read it on the screen. The Christian community, that is, the church, is not an ideal we have to realize, but rather a reality created by God in Christ in which we participate.

So being a Christian and being committed to church are two sides of the one coin. They belong together.

So we're going to look at the book of Acts together and going to see how this is true. We're going to look at two main things. How we are saved into the church, and then what it looks like to be committed to the church.

[ 5 : 01 ] So saved into the church, and then committed to the church. These are the two big ideas we're going to think about together this morning. So have your Bibles open in Acts chapter 2.

First, we are saved into the church. You see, the church doesn't save us. No, we're saved into the church by the gospel.

The gospel in which we stand. The gospel that we were singing about just earlier. Two things will help us to see how we are saved into the church. First, we need to hear the gospel.

And in Acts chapter 2, Peter, who is an apostle, that is someone who's been entrusted with the words of Jesus and commissioned by Jesus, is preaching to many different people from all kinds of different backgrounds and cultures.

And he's preaching about Jesus. And we can summarize his whole talk in four simple headings. I don't think he had a PowerPoint then, but nevertheless, we're going to help us by giving it some headings.

[ 6 : 22 ] So the first thing he wants us to know is that Jesus is God. So look at verse 22. Fellow Israelites, here's the crowd he's addressing.

Listen to this. Jesus of Nazareth was a man accredited by God to you by miracles, wonders, and signs, which God did among you through him, as you yourselves know.

Some of them had seen and witnessed Jesus and the miracles that he had done, the wonders he had done, how he walked on water, how he calmed the storm and fed crowds with just a little bit of food and raised the dead.

All of these miracles and wonders were signs, a big signpost pointing and proving that this man, Jesus, is God.

Jesus is God who comes to us as a man, a human being into the world. Not just a person, but he is the God-man.

[ 7 : 39 ] And what about this God-man? Well, very simply, he tells us that Jesus died for you. Verse 23. This man, Jesus, was handed over to you by God's deliberate plan and foreknowledge, and you, with the help of wicked men, put him to death by nailing him to the cross.

Jesus' death was no ordinary death. Yes, it was very severe in his crucifixion, but something deeper and greater was happening as Jesus died.

As he died on the cross, he was taking the punishment for our sins, all the things we do wrong. He was suffering the penalty that we deserve.

He was suffering hell itself so that we might not have to. This is the gospel. Jesus is God. Jesus died for you, and Jesus was raised for you.

Look at verse 24. But God raised Jesus from the dead, freeing him from the agony of death, because it was impossible for death to keep its hold on him.

[ 9 : 04 ] Jesus did not stay dead. He was buried, placed in a tomb, but three days later, he walked out of that tomb.

He crushed death to death. He defeated the grave so that we, all who trust in him, might not have to suffer death forever, but have life with him.

So Jesus died for you. He was raised for you. And he continues to talk about the resurrection, but we're going to jump to verse 32, where he begins to conclude his talk and tells us that Jesus is God's saving king.

This is what he wants us to know. Verse 32. God has raised this Jesus to life, and we are all witnesses of it. So people like Peter saw Jesus, ate with him, touched him, heard him, and now, verse 33, he is exalted to the right hand of God.

That is a position of all power and all authority. Verse 36. Therefore, let all Israel, everybody who is listening, be assured of this.

[ 10 : 28 ] God has made this Jesus, whom you crucified, both Lord and Messiah.

It's telling us that Jesus, who died and was raised from the dead, now rules and now reigns over all people and over all things.

He is God's king who comes to rescue us from our hell-bound life. And he demands that all people would treat him as king and would worship him as Lord of all.

This is the gospel. This is the gospel on which we stand. Jesus is God who died for your sins, who defeated death for you, and now rules as God's saving king.

This is the wonderful gospel that saves us. In fact, it's a message that demands a response from each one of us today.

[ 11 : 38 ] So, having heard the gospel, there is a response to the gospel. Verse 37. When the people heard this, when they heard this wonderful message, they were cut to the heart.

Remember how we saw last week, like a surgeon's scalpel, the word of God cuts right to the heart. And they said to Peter and the other apostles, brothers, what should we do?

What's, what's our response? How are we to respond to this message? Well, we can respond negatively and continue to push Jesus away, or we can respond positively.

And that positive response comes in two parts. Follow on the screen with me. The first is this. The first response that there is a personal confession of the Lord Jesus.

So what does that mean? Well, look at verse 38. What's the response? Well, Peter said, repent and be baptized every one of you.

[ 12 : 59 ] Now, repentance isn't just something that's done on its own. It always comes with faith. So just very quickly, just flick over to Acts chapter 20, verse 21.

So it isn't that sometimes some people had to repent and other people had to have faith. No, repentance and faith belong together. So in Acts chapter 20 and verse 21, here, the apostle Paul is summarizing his message.

And he says it in verse 21, I've declared to both Jews and Greeks that they must turn to God in repentance and have faith in our Lord Jesus.

So do you see it there? Repentance and faith. Go back to Acts chapter 2. So when we see repentance here, the implication is that faith is also implied.

That's the response, the personal confession, that we turn from living from ourself and turn to live for Jesus.

[ 14 : 16 ] That is a life of repentance. No longer am I going to live as if I am king, but I am going to live with Jesus as my king. And we respond in faith.

That is, we put our full and complete confidence and trust in Jesus Christ alone for our salvation. There's nothing in myself. It's all what Jesus has done.

And as we do that, as we repent and turn in faith to Jesus, look what happens, end of verse 38. There is the forgiveness of your sins.

All your sins forgiven. forgiven. But not only that, you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. You see, to live a life that responds to Jesus and follows him in the right way, well, we cannot do that without the Holy Spirit.

And the moment we believe and turn to Jesus, we are filled with the Holy Spirit. Now, Peter's message wasn't just for the people way back then.

[ 15 : 33 ] This is for us today. He even tells us. Look at verse 39. The promise, the promise of forgiveness and the gift of the Holy Spirit is for you, that's the people who are listening, and for your children, so the people who are listening, and for all who are far off, not just distant lands, but for all whom the Lord will, our God will call.

So he's thinking of all the people in the future, wherever they come from, as they turn to Jesus, they can have forgiveness of all their sins.

So that's the personal confession, the personal response that is required. But there's also more, isn't there, in the response?

There's a public identification with the local church. We see this in verse 40. With many other words, Peter warned them, and he pleaded with the crowd, saying, save yourselves from this corrupt generation.

And those who accepted his message were baptized, and about 3,000 were added to their number that day. Now can you see what's being said there?

[ 17 : 00 ] Verse 40, there's a leaving, isn't there? He says, save yourself from this corrupt generation. So leave this corrupt generation.

And now, verse 41, belong to God's new community. Leave one and belong to another.

Can you see that? Verse 41, it says about 3,000, of all the number of people who were there, about 3,000 were added to their number.

Well, you've got to ask, well, who's their number? Who's he talking about? Well, it's the church, the community of believers. And this adding is important.

They weren't saved to live in isolation, so turn to Jesus and off you go and do whatever you like. No, they were saved into a community of other believers.

[ 18 : 03 ] They were added. This was the practice all the way through Acts. Have a look over the page at chapter 5, verse 13. Acts chapter 5, verse 13.

So they continued to preach this wonderful gospel. And as they heard it, it did demand a life of commitment.

So it tells us in verse 13, no one else dared join them. even though they were highly regarded by the people. It was a cost, you see, to follow Jesus.

But, verse 14, nevertheless, more and more men and women believed in the Lord and were added to their number.

You see, they were saved and they belonged to the church. you see, personal confession of the Lord Jesus goes hand in hand with public identification with the local church.

[ 19 : 18 ] The gospel forms the church and by the gospel we're saved into the church. We cannot have one without the other.

And the way we demonstrate our personal confession and our public identification, is through baptism. We haven't forgotten it.

Have a look back in chapter 2, verse 38. Do you see what it says there? Peter replied, repent and be baptized.

And then in verse 41, those who accepted his message were baptized. You see, baptism is the outward sign of your confession of the Lord Jesus, that you trust him, that you love him.

And baptism is also an outward sign of your identification of a local church. It's saying you're committed to these people who are before you.

[ 20 : 26 ] Now you might be thinking through all of this and go, yes, that's really simple, I've heard all that before. Well, before we move on, I want to ask two very important questions.

Nobody else is going to ask you this question this coming week, so I'm going to ask it for you. Here's the first question. Are you a Christian?

Are you a Christian? What's your answer to that? No matter if you're young and still in school or whether you retired, whatever your status in life, are you a Christian?

If not, hear the good news of the message that Jesus died for you, was raised for you. He is your king.

Turn from living your own way and put your trust in Jesus for the forgiveness of all of your sins. you can do that right now as I talk.

[ 21 : 35 ] You might want to talk with me afterwards or an older person later on or somebody who is a Christian. Tell them that yes, I have trusted in Jesus.

So that's the first question. Are you a Christian? The second question is, have you been baptized? baptized? Well, if you're a Christian and you haven't been baptized, why not?

Make clear your confession of Christ. It's like putting your hands up or putting a shirt on to identify yourself with a team and say, yes, I'm for Jesus.

I'm for this local church. So are you a Christian? Have you been baptized?

And let me say this to younger people who sit and listen also. Maybe you talk to your parents when you go home today about these issues of being a Christian and being baptized.

[ 22 : 49 ] So that's the first step. we are saved into the church. Well, what does it look like as a family to be in the church?

What does it look like to be committed and belonging to the church? Well, identifying with a local church is not, as some people think, restrictive and repressive.

It's for our good. God saves us into the church to grow us, to mature us, to protect us and equip us.

So we're going to look very quickly at five ways we see what commitment to the church is like. There's many others, but I've taken five this morning and they all come from the book of Acts.

So let's look at them quickly. You can follow along with me. Here's the first one. first we are committed to worshipping together. If you were listening this morning as Ralph opened up, he said we gather together to worship God.

[ 23 : 56 ] That's why we're here. Worship is the term used to describe all that we do as we gather together. So look at verse 42. Acts chapter 2 verse 42.

They, that's the church, devoted themselves, they prioritised, they made it a habit to devote themselves to the apostles teaching, to the fellowship, to the breaking of bread, and to prayer.

Now the apostles were uniquely chosen by Jesus to be the teachers of the church. And, well, we don't have the apostles today, we can't invite the apostle Peter to come and speak, but we do have his words written down, recorded for us in the New Testament.

So today, as we gather right now, we're learning the same truths that the apostles were teaching and declaring all those years ago.

You see, the church, as we're gathered here today, are committed together to hear the word of God and for God to do his work within us.

[ 25 : 14 ] But not only do we gather to be taught and to learn much of Jesus, we gather to remember Jesus. Isn't that what it says at the end of verse 42?

They devoted themselves to the breaking of bread. I think this is a reference to the Lord's Supper or what we call communion. communion. The Lord's Supper is a family meal where we affirm our ongoing faith in Jesus as we eat of the bread and drink of the juice.

We're saying, yes, I trust in Jesus. But more than that, we do it together as we affirm our commitment as brothers and sisters who worship together.

together. So we are committed to worshipping together. We're also committed to community care.

We have a responsibility to one another. Look at verse 44. We're still in chapter 2. Don't worry, we're not going to go through every verse of the whole book of Acts.

[ 26 : 22 ] We're going to jump ahead in a minute. Verse 44, all the believers, all the church, were together and had everything in common.

They sold property and possessions to give to anyone who had need. Every day they continued to meet together in the temple courts.

Now what an amazing example of community care. There were obviously people who God had blessed and, well, they had more than one house or they had things they didn't need and they were able to sell them to provide for those who didn't have.

So the principle is clear, we're to care in very practical ways, to provide for those who are in need. That might be financial help, it might be a lift to the shops, it might be arranging to meet somebody for tea and coffee and have a chat to find out how they're doing.

This care was not random, they knew who was in the church and who they were to care for. So they were committed to community care.

[ 27 : 40 ] Third, committed to every member ministry. For this we need to go to chapter 6. Follow with me, chapter 6.

And when we think about every member ministry, we're saying that every person in the life of the church, young and old, male or female, whatever your background or your culture, everybody has gifts and skills to serve others.

So let's look at an example, chapter 6, verse 1. In those days, when the number of disciples was increasing, the Hellenistic Jews, so that's Jews from a Greek background or culture, among them complained against the Hebraic Jews, those from a Hebrew background, because their widows were being overlooked in the daily distribution of food.

So there was a real and practical concern in the church. Some of the widows who were older had no food, they had no means of working, they had no income, which was a serious matter then because there was no meals on wheels, there was no social welfare, they were dependent on the church community.

So what were they going to do about this issue? Well, look at verse 2. So the twelve gathered all the disciples together and said, it would not be right for us to neglect the ministry of the word of God.

[ 29 : 20 ] So we have a role and it's to be teaching and discipling and caring for people as we bring God's word to them. We need to, we shouldn't neglect the ministry of the word of God in order to wait on tables.

In other words, to be involved in this distribution of the food. Brothers and sisters, choose seven men from among you who are known to be full of the spirit and wisdom.

We will turn this responsibility over to them and we will give our attention to prayer and the ministry of the word. This proposal pleased the whole group and then they choose the seven people who were to be involved in this work.

So you see, in the church there were different people with different roles and responsibilities. communities. And so it is for us today.

Every person has a ministry. It might be teaching. It might be helping in the rock or polo. It might be welcoming or serving tea and coffee on a Sunday morning.

[ 30 : 35 ] It can be all kinds of things. I'm going to read what I sent earlier this morning. It was intentional to send this morning. if you got this little note on your phone from me this morning.

Pray before church. This is ways in which we can enact every member ministry. Pray for those who you will meet.

Pray for God to use you as you come to gather with other people. Second, look during church. Look out for newcomers. Go, oh look, there's somebody over there.

I don't even know their name. Maybe I'll go and speak to them afterwards. Speak after church. Introduce yourself and introduce others to new people and invite them.

Say, come and have a cup of tea and coffee. Let me get to know you. You see, we can all serve in lots of different ways.

[ 31 : 39 ] Every member ministry. ministry. Now, before we move on, notice how the decisions were made in the church. Do you see that in verse three?

Brothers and sisters, choose seven men from among you. And then down to verse five. This proposal pleased the whole group.

You see, this just wasn't a random group of people where they said, oh, go and, you know, get a few people and go do this and go do that. No, it was an identified group of believers who made decisions about the life of the church.

It was like a members meeting, isn't it? Where they had an issue and they were able to solve it by making a decision together. So we are committed to every member ministry.

The fourth one. Let's jump to Acts chapter 13. A commitment to church planting.

[ 32 : 53 ] So as we go through Acts, yes, the church there in Jerusalem, as they spread and preached the word to other places, so new churches were formed.

And one of those new churches was called the church in Antioch, which is not too far away from where modern-day Aleppo is, north Syria, in that area.

Well, let's read about this church, chapter 13, verse 1. Now, in the church in Antioch, there were prophets and teachers. There was Barnabas, Simeon, called Niger, Lucius of Cyrene, Manion, who had been brought up with Herod the Tetrarch, and Saul, that's the same Paul that we know of, while they were worshipping the Lord and fasting, the Holy Spirit said, Set apart for me Barnabas and Saul for the work to which I have called them.

So after the church had fasted and prayed, they placed their hands on them and sent them off. Now, if you were to read through chapter 13 and 14, you'll see all the different places they went to, different areas, preaching the gospel, establishing churches, and then go to the end of chapter 14, verse 26.

So chapter 13, verse 1 says they were sent off. Now chapter 14, verse 26.

[ 34 : 33 ] From Italia, this was obviously one of the places they had visited, they sailed back to Antioch, where they had been committed to the grace of God for the work they had now completed.

On arriving there, they gathered the church together and reported all that God had done through them and how he had opened the door of faith to the Gentiles.

You see, there was a desire on behalf of the church to reach out with the gospel, and that's what we seek to do. But notice that in this situation here, it was the church that sent the people off and it was the church that they reported back to.

You see, there were no mavericks doing their own thing and going, oh, I'm going to go off and do my own thing here and plant a church over here. No, it was a church partnership, a church responsibility, sending, praying, supporting, reporting back, encouraging.

planting. So the church is committed to church planting. The last one, and we're going to go to Acts chapter 20 for this, is that there is a commitment to pastoral oversight or pastoral care.

[ 36 : 00 ] prayer. So in Acts chapter 20, we're introduced to another church and the church that's being looked at here is the church in Ephesus where we have the letter to the Ephesians.

And in verse 17, Acts chapter 20, verse 17, Paul is on a journey and he comes close to Ephesus. He's not able to go there, but he's sent to Ephesus for the elders of the church.

So he arranges for the elders from the church in Ephesus, come down to Miletus because I want to talk to you. I have a message for you. Well, what's the message for the elders in the church in Ephesus?

Well, look at verse 28. Keep watch over yourselves yourselves and all the flock of which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers.

Be shepherds of the church of God, which he bought with his own blood. I know that after I leave, savage wolves will come in among you and will not spare the flock.

[ 37 : 17 ] Even from your own number, men will arise and distort the truth in order to draw away disciples after them. So be on your guard.

You see, the elders, the pastors have a responsibility before God to care for the flock, the church, to teach them, to guard them from error.

Now, I speak this morning as an elder of this church. church. In fact, there are four of us who are elders, Alex, Ralph, and Jonathan, and myself.

Now, who appointed us as elders? Did the four of us get together and go, guys, I've got a great plan. Let's make ourselves elders.

elders. No, we don't appoint elders. We don't appoint ourselves as elders. It's the church that appoints the elders and holds us accountable.

[ 38 : 28 ] And if I go off the rails, it's the church that has to take responsibility and correct me or tell me to step aside. So who appoints the elders?

The church. Well, who do the elders care for? The church. Does that mean we care for every Christian?

What about the person who comes in, well, just for a couple times over six months? Are we to care for them? No, we don't care for every Christian.

We care for, verse 28, those who are in the flock, those who are in the church, those who identify with the church.

Just as sheep need fed and watered and protected and looked after, so the shepherds, the elders, are to feed the church with God's word and look after them.

[ 39 : 33 ] And if the elders are going to know who we look after, we need to know who's in the flock, who are the sheep. It's really important.

So the church is committed to pastoral oversight. Now did you notice, just look on the screen there, each commitment, the five commitments there, there is a clear knowledge and understanding of who the church is.

In every commitment, in every situation, there is an identifiable group of people who worship together, who care for each other, who serve one another, who plant churches together, and commit themselves to the care of the elders.



members. It seems very clear and obvious that there were members of a local church. Well, I know the smart ones amongst you will go, but Johnny, there's no membership.

You didn't read the word member in anything in Acts. Well, no, you're quite right, I didn't. But the practice is undeniable.

[ 40 : 52 ] And at Carragalline Baptist Church, we believe that membership of a local church is best and right. We can't, we don't force people to sign up to anything, but we encourage people and say, the best way if you are a Christian is to identify with a local church.

And if that's here, that's great. So as we close, let me ask you this question. Are you a Christian?

If you are, are you committed to a local church? And the best way to do that is to become a member, to identify yourself with your brothers and sisters in Christ.

So what is a Christian? Christian? A Christian is someone who has been saved into the church by the gospel and who is committed to their brothers and sisters.

What a joy and what a privilege to be in God's church. church. Let's pray. Let's pray.

[ 42 : 14 ] Let's pray. Let's pray. Let's pray. Let's pray. Father, we thank you for the gospel, the good news about Jesus Christ that saves us into your eternal family where we belong to one another.

People that you have graciously given to us to encourage us and support us to grow us and mature us.

Thank you for brothers and sisters in Christ who are there to help us as we walk our path with Jesus.

Father, would you please help us to live out what you have called and created us to be. Thank you so much for the care of this church family.

Thank you for all the many ways in which we receive help for words of encouragement for people praying.

[ 43 : 35 ] Thank you, Lord. Please continue to help us and grow us. In Jesus' name. Amen. Well, we're going to sing together.

O church, arise as we've been thinking this morning. We hear the call of Christ our captain for now that we can say that they are strong.

So let us sing this song as a theme song to encourage one another as we live for Christ. Let's stand.