

Acts 2:42-47: The Five Marks of the Church

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[0 : 0 0] Hi, my name is George Sinclair. I'm the lead pastor of Church of the Messiah. It is wonderful that you would like to check out some of the sermons done by Church of the Messiah, either by myself or some of the others. Listen, just a couple of things. First of all, would you pray for us that we will open God's Word well to His glory and for the good of people like yourself? The second thing is, if you aren't connected to a church and if you are a Christian, we really, I would really like to encourage you to find a good local church where they believe the Bible, they preach the gospel, and if you have some trouble finding that, send us an email. We will do what we can to help connect you with a good local church wherever you are. And if you're non-Christian checking us out, we're really, really, really glad you're doing that. Don't hesitate to send us questions. It helps me actually to know as I'm preaching how to deal with the types of things that you're really struggling with. So God bless.

Okay, hopefully. So just tell me when we're live. Now? Good morning. Ooh, I don't know if it's welcome. Glad you're able to be here. Let's stand as our service begins. And as Christians, well, let's pray. Let's just bow our heads and pray. We give you thanks and praise that you have gathered us together. We ask, Father, that your Holy Spirit will fall with gentle but deep power upon all of us who are here, those who will be caring for the children outside of this room, those who are still making their way here, for those who are joining us online live and and for those who will be joining us downstream. Father, I ask that your Holy Spirit would fall with gentle power upon us. Help us to know, Father, that you are God, that you are the creator of all things, sustain all things, you're sovereign over all things, and that we are coming. Just as we're about to go into a time of singing God's praises, just a couple of sort of gentle, just stay standing.

First of all, we're really thankful. Deborah Reid, our worship leader, is on holidays. And this is my son and my daughter-in-law, who have left St. Paul's Presbyterian to come and lead us in singing. So we're really grateful that they're here with us. And we might have some sound difficulties today.

That's because our normal sound team is gone. But we will just soldier on. And anyway, it's good that you're all here. We'll remain standing. Let's sing God's praises. Great is thy faithfulness, O God, my Father. There is no shadow of turning with thee. Thou changest great is thy faithfulness. Great is thy faithfulness.

Great is thy faithfulness. Morning by morning new mercies I see. All I have need. It's not thy compassions, they fail not. As thou hast been, thou forever will be. Great is thy faithfulness. Great is thy faithfulness. Great is thy faithfulness.

[3 : 5 4] Lord unto me. Great is thy faithfulness. Lord unto me. All I have needed. Thy hands hath provided. Great is thy faithfulness. Lord unto me.

Timothy and thy grace. Emma hath.

Tonight, dim not while bleep sea, tonight. há ■■■iseth not hospitals. Tackído byorder sustainable wellness.

We meet Sarah at the glory of Jesus Christ Jesus Christ in Jesus Christ in death. mercy and love. Great is thy faithfulness.

Great is thy faithfulness. Morning by morning new mercies I see. All I have needed thy hands hath provided.

[5 : 07] Great is thy faithfulness Lord unto me. Pardon for sin and a peace that endureth thine own dear presence to cheer and to guide.

Strength for today and right hope for tomorrow. Blessings all mine and thousand beside.

Great is thy faithfulness. Great is thy faithfulness. Morning by morning new mercies I see.

All I have needed thy hands hath provided. Great is thy faithfulness Lord unto me.

Great is thy faithfulness. Great is thy faithfulness. Morning by morning new mercies I see.

[6 : 28] All I have needed thy hand hath provided. Great is thy faithfulness. Great is thy faithfulness.

Great is thy faithfulness. Great is thy faithfulness. Lord unto me. I love you Molly police. Lord I love you Lord oh your mercy never fails me all my days I've been held in your hands From the moment that I wake up Until I lay my hand I will sing of the goodness of God All my life you have been faithful All my life you have been so, so good

With every breath that I am able I will sing of the goodness of God On your voice You have led me through the fire In the darkest night You were close like no other I've known you as a father I've known you as a friend I have lived in the goodness of God All my life you have been faithful All my life you have been so, so good

With every breath that I am able I will sing of the goodness of God Your goodness is running after me It's running after me Your goodness is running after me It's running after me Your life laid down I surrender now I give you everything Your goodness is running after me It's running after me Your goodness is running after me Your goodness is running after me Your goodness is running after me

All my life you have been so, so good All my life you have been so, so good With every breath that I am able I will sing of the goodness of God I will sing of the goodness of God All my life you have been so, so good All my life you have been so, so good With every breath that I am able I will sing of the goodness of God I will sing of the goodness of God

[10 : 57] What gift of grace is Jesus my Redeemer There is no more for heaven now to give He is my joy, my righteousness and freedom My steadfast love, my deep and boundless peace To this I hold, my hope is only Jesus For my life is fully bound to His

Oh, how strange and divine I can say, all is mine Yet not I, but through Christ in me The night is dark, but I am not forsaken For by my side, the Savior He will stay I labor on in meekness and rejoicing For in my need His power is displayed To this I hold, my shepherd will defend me Through the deepest valley He will lead

Oh, the night has been one And I shall overcome it not I But through Christ in me No fate I dread I know I am forgiven The future shows The price it has been paid For Jesus' name, for Jesus I am For Jesus lived and suffered for my pardon For Jesus' name, for Jesus died And He was raised to overthrow the grave To this I hold, my sin has been defeated Jesus' name, for Jesus' name, for Jesus' name

Jesus now and ever is my plea All the chains are released I can sing I am free It's not I, but through Christ in me With every breath I long to follow Jesus For He has said That He will bring me home And day by day I know He will renew me Until I stand with joy before the throne To this I hold, my hope is only Jesus

All the glory evermore to Him When the race is complete Still my lips shall repeat Yet not I, but through Christ in me When the race is complete Still my lips shall repeat Yet not I, but through Christ in me Yet not I, but through Christ in me Just a pause, remaining standing The cross is going to the back of the church Those who would like to send their kids to Sunday school Can follow the cross And let's just bow our heads in prayer

[16 : 13] Father, thank you so much That you are not That you, Father, we give you thanks and praise That you are the creator of all things You sustain all things You are sovereign over all things You are the great transcendent, glorious God But you are not just a God who is far away Father, that you sent Jesus to be our Savior And that when we put our trust and faith in Jesus Father, that Jesus brings us to you He makes us right with you And you put the Holy Spirit within our lives So that, Father, you actually live within your people And Father, we are so grateful for this We ask that your Holy Spirit will move with gentle power In our midst as we worship And in the lives of these precious children And their teachers as they go off to Sunday school Or some other type of care And we ask this in the name of Jesus Your Son and our Savior, Amen

Please be seated The flow of our worship We are still in sort of the first part of our worship Is that Jesus gathers his people And then we will go into a time Where God speaks to his people Through his word Then we go into a time of Holy Communion Through the Lord's Supper And then the Holy Spirit sends us out And so we are still in that part of time If you just think about it for a second If Jesus was to appear We would want to be with him We would sing songs We would probably quote scripture back and forth to each other And that is the part of the service that we are still in And so we are going to say Psalm 98 responsively And it is from the New International Version The words should be up on the screen Sing to the Lord a new song We have done marvelous things His right hand and his holy arm Our salvation for thee The Lord has made his salvation known And revealed his righteousness to the nations He has remembered his love

And his faithfulness to Israel All the ends of the earth have seen The salvation of our God Shout for joy to the Lord all the earth The earth can do a song with music Make music to the Lord with the harp With the harp The sound of the king With trumpets and the blast of the ram's horn Shout for joy for the Lord Let the sea resound and everything in it For the world and all who live in Let the rivers clap their hands Let the mountains sing together for joy Let them sing before the Lord For he comes to judge the earth He will judge the world in righteousness And the people of the agony And together we pray this ancient and very profound prayer Almighty God Almighty God unto whom all hearts be open All desires known And from whom no secrets are hid Cleanse the thoughts of our hearts By the inspiration of your Holy Spirit That we may perfectly love you

And worthily magnify your holy name Through Christ our Lord Amen Our Lord Jesus Christ said The first and great commandment is this Hear O Israel The Lord our God is the only Lord You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart With all your soul With all your mind And with all your strength The second is this You shall love your neighbor as yourself There is no other commandment greater than these Amen Lord have mercy and write these laws in our hearts we pray One of the things we're going to be talking about in the sermon today Is a common life And one of the things that a church like ours A church of the English Reformation does to sort of mark that common life Is that not only will we announce things like small groups And try to get people involved in that And you know alpha courses and all of that

But we also in a sense which I'll talk about more We're connected to missionaries and the larger church And we're also connected in a sense have a bit of a common life with the church Which is before us Not that we pray to the saints But that we pray common prayers with them And so we're going to pray now these two prayers The first one is for the collect of the for the 18th Sunday after Trinity And when we pray this prayer It's a prayer that Christians have been praying for literally centuries And we'll pray all around the world today And then the second one of course is a prayer for Thanksgiving Day And these prayers are both a prayer that we can pray And a very concise gospel theology of the Christian life Let's pray this first prayer together And is it up?

[21 : 12] If we don't pray it together I will pray and you will all listen and say Amen Is it there? Is it the...

What's that? Start with the Lord we beseech you That's perfect Let's pray this together Lord we beseech you Grant your people grace to withstand the temptations of the world, the flesh and the devil And with pure hearts and minds to follow you the only God Through Jesus Christ our Lord Amen And let's pray together the collect for Thanksgiving Day O almighty and...

Is that there? Not yet But... By the way just... You know no pressure for money But if one of you has five or six million dollars You don't know what to do with If we could buy our own building I'll have a screen at the back of the church So I can see what you can see And that's just if you have that extra five or six million dollars to buy a property We'd...

We can talk You know what? I'm just gonna pray it And then you folks can just say Amen Let's do that O almighty and everlasting God Who crowns the years with your goodness And has given unto us the fruits of the earth in their season We yield to you our humble and hearty thanks For these your bounties Beseeching you to give us grace To use them rightly To your glory And the relief of those in need Through Jesus Christ our Lord Amen Well be seated as the Bible God's word written is read The Bible reading today comes from Acts chapter 2 starting at verse 42 And they devoted themselves to the apostles teaching and the fellowship To the breaking of bread and the prayers

And awe came upon every soul And many wonders and signs were being done through the apostles And all who believed were together and had all things in common And they were selling their possessions and belongings And distributing the proceeds to all as any had need And day by day attending the temple together And breaking bread in their homes They received their food with glad and generous hearts Praising God and having favour with all people And the Lord added to their number day by day Those who were being saved This is the word of the Lord Thanks be to God I invite you to stand for the reading of the Gospel text And just before I read this So this, what I'm about to read is part of an ancient eyewitness biography of Jesus Matthew in fact was one of the apostles who wrote this And it's taking place a day or two before Jesus dies on the cross

[24 : 22] So that's the context of this The Holy Gospel is found in the Good News according to Matthew Beginning at the 22nd chapter on the 34th verse Glory to you, Lord Jesus Christ But when the Pharisees heard that Jesus had silenced the Sadducees Just sort of pause if you're unfamiliar Those are sort of two, I guess we'd call them now denominations within Judaism So he's had a controversy with the leaders of one of those, the Sadducees And the leaders of another group have heard this I'll read it again But when the Pharisees heard that Jesus had silenced the Sadducees They gathered together And one of them, a lawyer, asked him a question to test him Teacher, which is the greatest commandment in the law?

And Jesus said to him You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart And with all your soul And with all your mind This is the great and first commandment And a second is like it You shall love your neighbor as yourself On these two commandments depend all the law and the prophets Now while the Pharisees were gathered together Jesus asked them a question Saying, what do you think about the Christ?

That's another word for the Messiah What do you think about the Messiah? Whose son is he? They said to him, the son of David And Jesus said to them, how is it then that David, in the Holy Spirit Calls him Lord, saying, the Lord said to my Lord Sit at my right hand until I put your enemies under your feet If then David calls him Lord How is he his son?

And no one was able to answer him a word But from that day, nor from that day Did anyone dare to ask him any more questions? This is the Gospel of Christ Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ I invite you to remain standing and join with me In confessing the Christian faith In the words of this very ancient creed I believe in God, the Father Almighty Maker of heaven and earth And in Jesus Christ, his only Son, our Lord Who was conceived by the Holy Spirit Born of the Virgin Mary Suffered under Pontius Pilate Was crucified, died and was buried He descended into hell On the third day he rose again from the dead He ascended into heaven And is sitting at the right hand of God, the Father Almighty He shall come again to judge the living and the dead I believe in the Holy Spirit The Holy Catholic Church

The communion of saints The forgiveness of sins The resurrection of the body And the life everlasting Amen Father, we ask that your Holy Spirit Would bring your word deep into our hearts And we, Father, give an invitation and permission For your word to speak deeply into our hearts And form us so that we will be free And bring you glory And do much good for your great praise And we ask this in the name of Jesus Your Son and our Savior Amen Please be seated Some of you who've heard me preach before Know that usually when I begin a sermon I begin with some type of a problem Or issue And then I go ahead and talk a little bit about How it is that the Bible addresses that problem Or that issue And I'm going to do something a little bit different today It's a little bit

[28 : 14] I was thinking about it in an odd way It's a bit similar to how I speak at funerals When I get to speak to a very, very mixed crowd And if you're at a funeral One of the things I will say is You know, I know people here have lots of different views You come from all sorts of different backgrounds As we gather here to remember, you know, the deceased And to pray for those who mourn and grieve And then I say it's just my great privilege To be able to share with you what my hope is As a Christian in the face of death And that's sort of what I do And this sermon is a little bit similar to it In the sense that there's a funeral Or anything like that And it's not to put anything down But it's just, you know, I wasn't raised In a church of the English Reformation I stumbled into it And I sort of stumbled into it And I sort of stumbled into it with lots of doubts Like I didn't really think Anglicans were Christians And I sort of stumbled into it But just one of the things I guess I just want to share

I've just been so blessed As the years have gone by As I've become aware of just the English Reformation And the documents And the life that emerged from that And like I just really love it Like I just think it's so wise And I'm not saying that If you're here as a guest And you're a Baptist or a Pentecostal Like I'm not saying that to put anybody down I just share that it's been like an ongoing delight To just to see how it is that the English Reformers Went about in a sense setting up and launching a church And one of the things which they did so relevant And that's why it's going to fit into this And I know this sounds like a bit of a criticism And I guess it is a tiny bit of a criticism And I ask your forgiveness But like technically speaking I can't receive communion at a Roman Catholic Church Like technically speaking Now in the city of Ottawa My guess is that if I was to go into just about any Anglican Roman Catholic Church for a mass

And I was to tell them that I was a priest And could I take communion And they'd almost definitely say yes But technically they're breaking the rules And it's not just like on that one side of the Christian spectrum Some of you are familiar with very closed brethren churches for instance And in closed brethren churches I wouldn't be able to receive communion there either In fact they would probably think that we aren't a church And that I'm not even a real Christian One of the things which is When I was in my previous church I was way up the Ottawa Valley In a place called Eganville and Killaloo And Clontarf and Tremor And after I had been in the church in Killaloo for a couple of years This elderly lady started to attend the services with her sister And I discovered over time that she actually went to one of those closed brethren churches When I was driving there I'd drive by this little gospel hall Tucked off Very picturesque Just off to the side surrounded by trees

And it turned out that I mean and she was breaking the rules by coming to hear me preach And to receive communion with me She'd come to my nine o'clock service And then the gospel hall met at eleven But in her case She was just I guess in held with such high regard in the church That they didn't kick her out And she started coming to the church Because I discovered after that she was a war widow Her husband had actually been an Anglican minister who died Serving as a chaplain in the Italian theatre of the Second World War And so she was a war widow And I discovered she actually I reminded her of her husband And so she would come to the church with her sister And I But here's the point When the English Reformation was going on One of the things they wanted to do was not to de-church or unchurch other churches Like that was very very clear to their heart

Even though they were trying to reform the Roman Catholic Church They didn't want to say that all Roman Catholics were bad Or that there was no Christians or no godliness there They really wanted to work very hard in terms of how they were launching the church This reformed, renewed, revived church In such a way that it wouldn't unchurch or de-church other churches and traditions And I think that they were very wise in that We have to be very careful as Christians to not put up walls that the Bible doesn't put up We need to understand the walls that are there There's some boundaries But when there's no boundaries We have to be very careful about making walls where the Bible has an open door And I mention all of that because what we're going to look at today We're preaching through the book of Acts And today they're for theology nerd types This text that we're looking at today is a very famous text Because it has the four marks of the church And John Stott argues

[33 : 24] And I'll just share very briefly I think there's actually five marks of the church there But there's four marks of the church And it's a very common understanding And so let's just have a look at it If you have your Bibles I'm using this ESV study Bible Just of this journal Bible There's a few Bibles there if you don't have your own And I think we have extras of these If you'd like your own journal Bible of just the book of Acts I think we have a couple extra here at the church And we can give them to you And we're looking at Acts chapter 2 And we're going to begin reading verse 36 Just to give you the context And if you're unfamiliar with this What this book is Is this is in a sense part 2 Part 1 The fellow who writes the book Was a pagan who became a Christian And he himself was not an eyewitness of what Jesus did But he interviewed eyewitnesses And wrote a very profound true eyewitness biography of Jesus And then after he wrote that He writes this eyewitness based biography

Of the early church The first 30 years approximately Of the Jesus movement And what it accomplishes And so we're very At the beginning of this ancient biography Luke himself was an eyewitness for some of the events And others he had to interview people And this eyewitness biography Or history of the church Is written when many of the eyewitnesses were still alive And could correct it And so what's just happened is For this part 2 The book of Acts First there's a bit of a Just a very brief summary of the fact that Jesus After had died on the cross That the grave was empty And the reason the grave was empty Was not because the body was stolen But because Jesus was alive Physically alive And he proved that in many ways In fact Acts begins with Peter Peter with Jesus sitting at table Eating with them I mean if you think If you think If by the way if you wake up in the middle of the night And you go down to the kitchen And you think you see a ghost

And you pass the ghost some toast And he eats it It's an intruder not a ghost Okay that's just sort of a general rule It's not a ghost It's a you should call 9-1-1 Because you have an intruder in your house And so Jesus This is like just a very subtle little way That Luke is emphasizing That Jesus had actually risen from the dead The grave is empty And then he talks about the ascension Jesus ending his physical appearances He ascends into heaven And then Luke describes how the whole group of Christians Were gathering together To pray together Waiting because Jesus said I'm going to send the promise of the Father I'm going to send you power from on high And then just a little bit before this The Holy Spirit Which we now call the day of Pentecost Comes and it makes a huge noise And it comes and people speak other languages And praise God And everything from the loud praising of God

To the loud noise of the wind of the Holy Spirit Draws this huge crowd To figure out what's happening And then just immediately before this What we looked at last week Is that the very first sermon by a Christian Is ever preached is preached And now And here's where we take up And what we're going to do is We're just going to catch the end of the sermon That's verse 36 Here's how it goes Let all the house of Israel This is Peter preaching Let all the house of Israel Therefore know for certain That God has made him That's Jesus Both Lord and Christ That is Messiah This Jesus Whom you crucified Now When they heard this That's the culmination of the sermon I want you all to know This Jesus whom you crucified Is risen from the dead We've seen it We're witnesses And this vindicates him He is the Lord He is the Messiah And you meant harm to him By crucifying him By abusing him But he's alive He's Lord

And he's Christ He's vindicated And then verse 37 The crowd When they hear this They were cut to the heart And said to Peter And the rest of the apostles Brothers What shall we do?

[37 : 44] And Peter said to them Repent And be baptized Every one of you In the name of Jesus Christ For the forgiveness of your sins And you will receive the gift Of the Holy Spirit And for the promises for you And for your children And for all who are far off Everyone whom the Lord our God Calls to himself And just sort of pause here So we have here a very very simple You know What's your response?

Response is to repent And in the New Testament In the Bible To repent Always includes believing Or trusting And trusting and believing Always includes repentance If they go together And so Repent means to turn So that your orient Your whole life is now oriented Around the man Jesus Who is also God's son The Lord And is our savior To turn and orient your life Around him And as a sign of that A public sign of that You are to be baptized To show that you have You know And I talked last week About the three different things That baptism types of symbolizes And you will receive The forgiveness that you receive If you turn to Jesus Repent You will receive the forgiveness Of your sins And you will receive The gift of the Holy Spirit Means the Holy Spirit Will actually come and live within you There's these three things That you receive You put your faith and trust in Christ As your savior and your Lord And And what he did for you on the cross And when you put your faith and trust in him

All your sins All of your things that you've done wrong All of the good things that you do That you shouldn't That you didn't do That leave you embarrassed and ashamed All of these things are forgiven by almighty God In the person and work of Christ And not only that He actually puts the Holy Spirit Within every person Who puts their faith and trust in Christ You become in a sense This deposit That God himself will dwell And abide within you And he will never leave you And this begins Even for ordinary human beings Like us on this side of the grave And it will continue even beyond the grave Into eternal life So you receive All of your sins are forgiven They're wiped away Your Holy Spirit lives within you And he receives you to himself He takes you to himself Yet you might not feel it Some people when they become Christians C.S. Lewis famously said If you've never heard of him He was a famous writer And thinker and scholar

And Christian From the sort of the middle part of the 1900s And he describes When he became a Christian He was the most dejected convert In all of England And that's because He was such a proud man And he didn't want to have to Give up his life so to speak But others have great joy And what happens is Whether you feel it or not That God himself Takes you to himself That's what happens When you put your faith And trust in Jesus This is the wonderful news There's no other way To have God The living God The creator God The triune God To receive you for himself Than to put your faith And trust in Christ Your sins are forgiven The Holy Spirit indwells you God receives you for himself Verse 40 And with many other words He bore witness And continued to exhort them Saying save yourself From this crooked generation And so those who received his word Were baptized And there were added that day

About 3,000 souls And I talked a little bit Last week about how This is one of the many, many, many proofs That historically Jesus The grave Nobody would have become a Christian If they could show you the body of Jesus And there is no better account For the start of the Christian movement Than the real defeat of death And resurrection by Jesus There is no better explanation than that It's true It's true It happened And it's profoundly good news Now what we're going to look at next Which is actually the bulk of the sermon The next 22 minutes or so Is we have the first of several summary statements In the book of Acts We get a summary statement And here's how it goes And they devoted themselves Verse 42 To the apostles teaching And the fellowship To the breaking of bread And the prayers Now I'm going to come back to all of this But these are the four marks of the church And I'm going to explain them in a bit

[42 : 22] They devoted themselves To the apostles teaching And in the original language That devoted themselves Applies to every one of the four things And if you notice You don't have to put your hand up But some of you are English nerds We know who each other are And for English nerds It's really interesting The definite article is before each of the four of them Isn't it like a really neat English nerd type of thing?

And so that's why there's the four marks, right? And so, you know, the first mark is They devoted themselves to the apostles teaching They devoted themselves to the fellowship Or the koinonia They devoted themselves to the breaking of bread And they devoted themselves to the prayers Now, before I go on and read this next little bit It's really important to understand what happens here Okay, what did not happen What did not happen Is that it didn't happen that the twelve apostles Gathered the hundred and twenty They said, okay, you three thousand people I'll go find a nice place to have some shawarma And some tabbouleh And after you've had some shawarma and tabbouleh And maybe some roast lamb or something like that Just come back And the hundred and twenty went off into a room And Peter got up and said We're going to look at our strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats And so we're all going to break up into small little groups And first we're going to all share with each other Like what some of the strengths are about this Jesus movement And write them down on some full-scat paper And then after you've done that

We're going to tape them all up on the wall around the room And now we want to do through Now we've done the strengths Let's do some of the weaknesses And then let's do some of the opportunities Let's do some of the threats Okay, and then after the facilitator has done all of that type of stuff He says, here we have a couple of little stars You each have four stars, five stars And we want to go to the strengths And I want you to put the star beside the strength ones that you think are our strengths And then we'll count them all up And then we'll see if we can group a few of them together And then we'll come up with some type of an action plan That didn't happen What happened is something both natural and supernatural just happened It wasn't thought through There was no institutional structure to plan it They, on the day of Pentecost On the day of Pentecost Nobody knew what was going to happen Like all of those 120 people in the upper room

When they woke up that morning They didn't wake up and say I think the Holy Spirit's going to fall And it's going to create four marks of the church No, they just woke up That's all they did And you know, there were more than 120 And, but some of the people They, you know, they went off Because, you know, people have to work And, and so some of them went off to do work And, and some of them didn't have to work that day And they gathered and they spent some time in prayer And then lo and behold the Holy Spirit falls And then lo behold Peter gets up and preaches this sermon And all of a sudden they go from about 500 people to three, over 3,000 people And that just all happened with no plan And then the next thing you know And then the next thing you know Is there's just something natural and supernatural And that these four marks The way to understand these four marks Is that in a sense four seeds Are planted in everybody's life That are going to grow Or another way to understand it Is that the Holy Spirit Between knowing who Jesus is And what he's done for us on the cross And the work of the Holy Spirit in our lives

Four quests begin And one of the things which is so brilliant about this Including the next little bits Is it doesn't say All of the, the, the little It doesn't come up with this detailed strategic plan It just gives you these four seeds And it happens time and time and time again It's, it's why they're considered to be the marks of the church Is that when people hear about Jesus And hear who he is And what he did for them on the cross They hear about his life And they trust their life to him And he really takes them to himself And the Holy Spirit really enters into them And, and the Holy Spirit places four seeds in your life Or launches you on four quests And they all fit together And they're going to be contextual There, it's, it's so neat Because, um, so, you know In, in, uh, six years ago I, I had the great privilege I was able to go to Angola for a while And, um, and, and one of the, the, the, the, the, one of the groups I got to be able to visit

[46 : 55] Was, uh, at some of the missionaries that we supported helped plant a church In this area of Angola That in many ways was using similar farming methods As they would have used 200 years ago Like this is, you know, beyond the beyond the beyond the beyond And they planted a church under a tree And they planted a church under a tree But that church has these four marks And you can read the story of Tim Keller Planning a church amongst the intellectual and the rich in Manhattan And their church has these four marks That there's something very dynamic and contextual about it And it's not as if there's this whole pile of rules That bangs you over the head That you have to follow every little thing It's, that's what I say It's like a, a, it's a seed that grows where it's planted And it's gonna, that seed is still recognizable And will grow in urban And, and, and, and, and, and, uh, down More urban, suburban Ottawa And it, it will grow in Eganville And it will grow in Angola

And in Nigeria And in Singapore And in Hong Kong And in secret In Tehran I, I just saw a report That they estimate that Over half the mosques In Iran have been closed And I just read a report That one of the senior clerics in Iran Blames the secret conversions of Christians To, from Islam to Christianity In Iran Is causing the mosques to be shut down And they're going to be shut down Brothers and sisters That blows my mind That just blows my mind That just blows my mind They risk losing everything To give their life to Christ Like, their life If not their life Their job, their occupation My, my wife's reading a I haven't read yet I started it But, uh, reading a, a, a I, I, it's supposed to be A very profound book

Everything sad Uh, everything sad Becomes, has become untrue Or something like that And it's the story Of, um, an Iranian man Whose mother was a dentist I think it was a dentist And she became a Christian And due to persecution She had to flee Iran And leave all of her, her wealthy life Uh, she had to leave her husband He didn't want anything to do with her And ended up coming to Oklahoma And it's the story about him This Iranian boy Trying to figure out How to live as an eight year old In, in Oklahoma Of all places And, uh, it's, uh, I've heard many people I'm, I'm looking forward to reading it After my wife has finished it It's a, a brilliant book But, but, you know, here's the point These are these four marks And, and they're gonna look different In different contexts But they're there When the gospel is preached Well, let, let's just finish reading this Because it sort of fleshes it out And, and then I'll go back And very briefly say We'll look at each of them What they are So we'll just read verse 42 again And they devoted themselves To the apostles' teaching

They devoted themselves To the fellowship They devoted themselves To the breaking of bread And they devoted themselves To the prayers And awe came upon every soul And many wonders and signs Were being done through the apostles And all who believed were together And had all things in common And they were selling their possessions And belongings And distributing the proceeds To all as any had need And day by day Attending the temple together And breaking bread in their homes They received their food With glad and generous hearts Praising God And having favour with all the people And, um, you know how in English You can have double entendres And, uh, one of the things That kids' movies discovered A few years ago Is that they could make kids' movies In such a way That the kids could follow it But often when they say certain things The adults would realize It's, there's like a second meaning to it Like they're making some film reference Or some political reference Or whatever

You can have, like the same words Have two sort of multiple meanings And, and that's what happens here in this And so, uh, the original people Hearing this biography Or this history in the original language They would have heard Praising God and having favour with all the people In other words People had good will towards the Christians But it also says They were praising good, the God And they had good will towards all the people In other words It's a context where they The Christians Had good will to Jerusalem And Jerusalem had good will towards them And the Lord added to their number Day by day Those who were being saved And that's what John Stott And I agree with him Says is the fifth mark That people The church grows That people come to a saving faith In, in Jesus That God does this work And this is a summary statement And the rest of the book of Acts Will show that This was a, a sweet time In their life But that problems would come Like at the very next chapter There's both a miracle reported But also an arrest reported And, and, and eventually

[52 : 00] There'll be martyrdoms Stephen will be martyred And James will be martyred And, and that's going to all develop But this is the summary statement And, and so let's go back To the marks And, and if you could put up The first one That would be very good And they voted themselves To the apostles teaching Now, obviously in that, those days That meant something very, very specific I, they didn't have to read The book of Matthew Cause they could have said Oh, there's Matthew Let's go listen to him talk They didn't have to read The book of John Cause it could say There's John Let's go hear him talk Um, most ancient Christians Believe that, uh, Peter Was the genius Behind the, the ancient biography That we now call Mark So people didn't have to read Mark They could just say Oh, there's Peter Let's go listen to him talk Right?

And that, that's how it would have Been back then And not just the, the, the, and But now it's, it's a very commonly understood That when we say They devoted themselves To the apostles teaching That what we have In the New Testament Is the apostolic teaching Jesus taught the apostles And that is what the apostles In a sense guaranteed Is included in what we now call The New Testament Just a little while ago I, I had a conversation With somebody in a, in a coffee shop And, um, they were asking me Some questions about the Bible And they were actually very surprised They thought that the Jewish people Had a Bible And that Christians had a Bible I said, one more moment We don't really have separate Bibles They said, and they looked at me funny And they said, well, what's going on?

I said, well, actually What you can understand is If you put on a piece of paper Jesus and like a line on either side And there's Jesus And then above the line Is what we would now call We call the New Testament And below the line Is what our Jewish friends called The Tanakh or the Torah And we call the Old Testament And, uh, in a sense All of the things in, in the Tanakh Are things that were written before Jesus And the things in the New Testament Are what was written after Jesus Ultimately, Jesus is the guarantor Of the truth of the New Testament And it's because of Jesus That we trust the truthfulness Of the Old Testament It all centers on Jesus And I said, so our Jewish friends They accept all underneath the line But we as Christians We as Christians We accept both what's underneath the line And above the line And above the line Our Jewish friends Think we've gone too far And we Christians think Our Jewish friends Haven't gone far enough And hopefully we can be friends

Although hopefully They'll also come down to Jesus I didn't say that to the person I was asking about it I was just trying to explain the Bible To explain the Bible But what we see here then Is they devoted themselves To the apostles' teaching Here, I think the way I put it That you should be able to see Up on your screen Is the first mark of the church Is a devotion to hearing And understanding God's word written And you know, when I said that These are things that are all natural And supernatural They're natural in this sense You know, one of the very common themes In movies When you see somebody Who's really grieving The death of a loved one It's a very, very common bit In the movies Is that they They don't cancel the phone number Of their beloved And they Time and time again They call their beloved's phone number So they can hear their voice Their voice And the message machine Because they want to hear the voice

Of their loved one And some of you Who've lost loved ones And then maybe You discover some letters From your loved one That you'd forgotten You're doing some house tiding You discover some letters Or something like that For younger people There are these things That used to exist Called letters Where you'd write on paper And put a stamp And mail them And if you've ever been To know people in that situation They're just so Overjoyed To hear their loved ones speak And so at the heart of this Is something very, very natural Because you see We understand That God loves us so much That he sent his son To die for us So that when we hear What we call the New Testament What we're hearing Is we're hearing God speak to us And we want to hear God speak to us We want him to speak to us It's both very natural And in a sense It's also supernatural And then look at the second mark And this is the one that gets In some ways People the most worried To the fellowship Or to the koinonia

[56 : 38] And I put it The second mark Is a devotion to having A common life With your brothers and sisters In Christ And And it's going to be A common life That's going to involve money Just, you know Give me a little bit of grace Here It's a common life That's going to involve Involve money And it's just a natural thing We human beings are social creatures If things are working properly Like we understand it's a tragedy When a child has both of his parents Or her parents die And it's even a bigger tragedy If there's not an aunt Or an uncle Or a grandparent That can care for that child And step in And in many times In places in the world That child could just have been condemned to death Unless there's something like an orphanage

But we understand that there's something just natural And holy About something like a family That we're meant to be social And what happens when you put your faith and trust in Christ Is you become part of the family of God And it's If you have no desire to all be with your brothers and sisters In some type of concrete, not an imaginary way Then there's something which is missing in your Christian life And if there's not some type of financial involvement with that There's something missing in your Christian life And so Christians have understood that there's this desire To have some type of a common life That's going to be very contextual It's going to look very different If, and I don't think she'll mind I know that every week Anne, who's in her 90s, watches this service She can no longer come to service Is it?

She watches Hi Anne Like you're watching this right now And we have to figure out ways to include people who get shut in And there's some people who are watching this And they could leave their house and come here And that's not being part of a common life Like I don't want to lay a guilt on you But we need each other And that common life is everything from having prayer partners It's being parts of small groups It's helping out on a Sunday morning It's coming to worship And it could involve very, very costly things Of financial help for people We've, in this congregation in the past Had to help members of the congregation Who've been in financial distress For them to be able to continue to live in their house And it's not just something for your local church And this is one of the things I so love about Anglicanism Is that we are connected to other churches in the city Both within our tribe Those are the churches of the English Reformation But those outside of our tribe We're connected to other churches Putting on an apologetics event Where in a couple of weeks

Hopefully we're going to have somebody come and speak Because we're part of a group of churches Not just from the English Reformation A group of churches And we team together To partner with a group of churches Amongst the very poor in Guatemala And we raise money To give to those churches For them to reach the poor in their community And that's koinonia That's fellowship One of the things we're going to pray about I don't know if Victor will But I'm going to pray about If Victor doesn't pray about in our intercessions Is that we support missionaries throughout the world And one of the missionary families that we support When his son They're missionaries in Israel And when their son turned 18 And he's basically lived his whole life in Israel He knows no other I mean technically I think they're New Zealanders or something But that's just like a foreign country to him He's grown up in Israel He's fluent in Jewish In Hebrew And when he turned 18 He had a choice to make Either he would do his military service

In the Israeli defense force Like other citizens Or he would have to leave And go back to New Zealand And so he chose to stay This is a missionary Aaron and Michelle We support them as missionaries And I got a picture yesterday Because their son got called up Because of the horrendous terrorist attack by Hamas And I got a picture of their son getting in the cab To go serve in the war But that involves us We're in Koinonia with him And we'll pray for him And just imagine how hard Aaron and Michelle must be praying And his brothers and sisters For their oldest son to go and fight this war And that's part of what it means to be in Koinonia And it involves our money It involves our prayer It involves our time And it might look different when you're in your 90s

[61 : 34] And it's going to look like when you're 18 And it might look very different when you're 50 and able-bodied And for a mom with five or six young kids It's all going to look like that desire to have a common life That's what's there And I need to hurry up over the last two If you could put up the next one The third mark is a devotion to holy communion With the triune God through the Lord's Supper Look what it says, verse 42 And they voted themselves to the apostles' teaching And the fellowship and the breaking of bread Now just to be clear If you went back in a time machine They would not do communion the way we do communion They almost definitely would have done What they would have almost definitely done Is they would have had all of us group up in varieties of tables And we would have all had a big potluck And in the midst of the pot And we would have arranged beforehand So Uzo's going to bring I don't know, he's going to bring the beef And Diane's going to bring the egg salad sandwiches Because she has a spiritual gift for that And she's famous for it

And I don't know And Owen would bring some type of spectacular gift And I don't know, maybe Susie and her husband Would bring some smoked brisket Or something like that That they'd do in the barbecue And then we'd all have a nice meal But as part of that meal We would also have the Lord's Supper And I love the way Anglicans understand the Lord's Supper Here's the theological understanding And most of the things which is so beautiful About the English Reformation Is it teaches Christian truths through prayer And here's what we say This is like in a sense At the root of the English Reformation About communion The body of our Lord Jesus Christ Which was given for you Preserve your body and soul Unto everlasting life Take and eat this in remembrance That Christ died for you And feed on him In your heart By faith

With thanksgiving It's not just remembering It's a time to feed on Christ In his person How do we do that? Well, you know what it means a little bit You know, if you see a grandmother Who gets together with her grandchildren And she just feeds on their presence You know, or you get to be with your family Or your loved one And you just sort of What do we say?

You're eating it all in You're drinking it all in It's not just that you remember the good times You just That's what communion is So what are the marks?

We're committed to hearing God speak through the Bible We're devoted to it We're devoted to having a common life together We're devoted around the Lord's Supper And the final thing is the prayers And they devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching And the fellowship To the breaking of bread and the prayers The fourth mark is a devotion to common prayer And so it goes beyond just having your private prayers It means that there's times when you have common prayer And that common prayer might be that if you join a small group And part of your small group time is you share prayer requests And you have common prayer And it also involves common prayer at a time like this Which is more formal Where Victor's going to come up in a few moments And he's going to lead us in some intercessions And we listen to him as he speaks to God on our behalf And then we all say, you know, we all agree with him in some type of way And say amen at the end And that's a decisive part of the church And all of these things are very, very natural And they're also supernatural They're natural because we want to hear loved ones and important ones speak to us

[65 : 21] And so we want to hear God speak to us They're natural because we want to have a common life with others Whether it's with friends or family or whatever And we want to have that And we want to have a common life with our brothers and sisters in Christ And it's a common, it's a natural thing Because we drink it in being with people that we love And people that we're, and so we want to, we want to, to keep the God's We want to, to keep the gospel in front of us And, and, and drink it in And, and feed on who he is And what he's done in his presence And our, and, and, and love for us And, and then, and then we want to speak to people We don't want to just be like, like they used to talk about kids I don't know in the 40s or the 50s They should be seen but not heard No!

Our Father in Heaven wants to hear us He wants us to tell him about our Our, he wants to tell, he wants us to tell him about the fact that we We're worried about finding a parking space this afternoon And about the job that we need And about our loved ones who need to know Jesus And about peace in the Middle East Like he wants us to pour out our hearts and pray to him And he doesn't just want us to do it by ourselves He wants us to do it as part of our common life That's so wonderful And the fifth mark is just the end of that little section If you put it up, the fifth mark is a life of humble prayer and witness That the Lord uses to bring people to himself I mean, we have lots of empty chairs here But let me tell you, if for some reason God did a wonderful work And every single chair here was filled I would say to the wardens, go out and get some empty chairs Because we always want to have room for one more person If you have a small group, you have empty chairs

And hope that it gets so big we have to have more groups Like we always want to have more God is continuing to call people, ordinary people, to himself Let's stand, please stand Let's pray Father, we give you thanks and praise that you reached out to us and called us That you called me Worthy as I am You called me to be your son By adoption and grace And many, maybe all of us who are here or who are watching online Father, that you've called us to yourself Father, we give you thanks and praise for your great love and kindness to us And we thank and praise you, Father That when we put our faith and trust in Jesus You take us to yourself We belong to you As your son, your daughter, your friend That you live within us You forgive us of our sins You give us this new life that will

Survive death and go into the new heaven and the new earth And that you put these seeds within us, Father These quests within us to continue to hear your voice And speak to us so that we have your wisdom and insight for living And that you put within us a desire to have a common life with our brothers and sisters And to remember Jesus and to feed on him in our hearts by faith with thanksgiving And to join together in prayer for ourselves and each other's needs and for the needs of the world And Father, we give you thanks and praise that these are the marks of the church And that you use us as worthy as we are in evangelism And we ask, Father, that you would grow these These streams These propulsions within us And that you would help us to live them wisely And we ask these things in the name of Jesus, your son and our savior Amen Amen