

# A Growing Church

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Date: 08 October 2023

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[0:00] Good morning. I want to thank James for this opportunity to preach. We will be continuing in the passage that we've been in the last two weeks in Acts chapter 2. So you can go ahead and find your spot.

Before we get started, if you don't know me, I am Ty Campbell. My wife is over here, Jessica. We are the family that takes up the entire road. My whole family is not here, but we have eight kids. So literally, we take up the entire road. You will know we're gone.

So before we get started, I want to recap what James has talked about in the past couple of weeks as it builds into what we're going to talk about today. Two weeks ago, James focused on the devotion to the apostles' teaching. The early church, they would meet regularly, and they were characterized by their devotion to the apostles' teaching.

We looked at the fact that that was their very identity, that when people thought about the apostles' teaching, they thought of them. And likewise, when they thought of this early church, they thought about the apostles' teaching, which was nothing more than the work that Christ taught the apostles as he walked this earth.

We see in the Great Commission that he said that they are to teach people to do all that he has taught them to do. And so this church met regularly, and they loved the teachings of the Word, so much so that we can devote to them.

[1:53] Furthermore, last week we looked at the fellowship, something I heard a lot of discussion around this week, which is great to hear. People wanting to be involved in each other's lives.

We met Wednesday night with the men, and we talked about what it looked like to fellowship together on a regular basis. Not just meeting together on Sunday morning, but doing life together. That's what these people did. This church, they loved each other. They loved the Word, they loved each other, and they spent that time together, growing each other, sharpening each other.

That is what the early church looked like. Also last week we looked at the fact that they were a church devoted to prayer. They prayed regularly for each other and for the lost.

And so today we're going to look at the fact that this church was also a growing church. We're going to focus in on the last part of this section of verses 42 through 47.

[2:56] If you will stand with me, we'll go ahead and read this passage. The Word of the Lord says, And they devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and the fellowship, 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 of plath and generous hearts, praising God and having favor with all the people. The Lord added to their number, day by day, those who were being saved.

That's great. Dear God, I thank you for your Word. God, I just pray that we would look to this early church and that we would live our lives and shape this church around what your Word has declared to be a church.

God, help us to be devoted to these teachings. Help us to be devoted to fellowship with one another. And God, we pray that we would grow this church. God, just bless this time together.

[4:10] In Jesus' name. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Alright, so this morning we are going to, again, focus in on that last part and the Lord added to their number day by day, those who were being saved.

Now, this is a topic that, at least for me, maybe it's just me, we get a little uncomfortable on. This evangelism, sharing the gospel. I was reading some polls this week.

Some polls are showing that less than 5% of professing Christians share the gospel with one person per year. Less than 5%. Now we're not talking about sharing the gospel with at least 100 people or maybe one person a day or one person a week. This is one person per year, less than 5%. A staggering. It's not saying that less than 5% share it regularly. That it's a part of our everyday conversation. No, one person per year. People share more about their email than companies. All over Facebook. All over every phone conversation you have. And they will have gospel. We love and employ the excuse that paints a facade. That we care so deeply about our relationship with this person. That we don't want to say anything that might come between us.

I've even heard it said that it's not loving to point out someone else's sin. So I hear that complaint or that argument enough that I decided to sit down and think about it. How should we approach the idea when someone says it is not loving to fill in the blank?

So as I thought through this when Jesus was asked what is the greatest commandment. He replies that you shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, with all your mind. And the second is like that you shall love your neighbor as yourself. So if we're going to ask ourselves. Is it loving to our neighbor to do whatever?

[6:24] We must ask ourselves. Does it honor the Lord? A recent specific example I was faced with a question of. Is it loving to attend. Or to not attend a homosexual wedding?

So I had to think about that. So as I thought through this question. Is it honoring to the Lord to do that? We see in Hebrews. That Moses took great care to do all that God instructed while building the tabernacle. Why?

Because everything that God instructed was intentional. And it painted a picture of what Jesus was going to do when he came. The sacrifice, the priesthood. Every aspect of what God commanded Moses. Was intentional. And he had to take great care. And preserve that picture. That was painted. And I think what modern example do we have?

What modern example do we have? Of Moses. In the situation of marriage. Marriage is the picture that God has given us. To represent Christ and his bride and church. And so we must preserve that picture. It is vitally important. That as Christians. That as Christians. We take great care. In keeping that picture of Christ. And his church. Pure. And so now I hope it is. Unloving to not attend. That wedding. In fact I think the wedding is a mockery of our Lord. Amen. And so too often. We for the sake of our own comfort. Skip the question. Does it honor the Lord. And say. Am I loving my neighbor? And we proceed to answer that question. As our culture is not to love. So when we are faced with this love. Is to share the gospel. With other people. We can't look at what potentially might happen. Without a relationship. With each other. We must honor. The Lord above all. And only through that. Can we love our neighbor. Charles Spurgeon says. Either every Christian. Is a missionary. Or an imposter. Now I understand. Some take offense. To the missionary word. But in context. He's saying. Every Christian. Shares their faith. For their own imposter. Does it not mean. That sharing our faith. Saves us. Is not a motive of that. But rather. Is a fruit. Of being saved. Moving my right arm. Does not mean. I am alive. If I can't move it. Does it mean. I am not alive.

[9:19] However. If I cannot move. My right arm. I must take. Serious look. At the health. Of myself. Likewise. Sharing your faith. Does not save you. But if you are. Refusing to share. Your faith. We must. Take a serious look. Into the life. Of your spiritual self. And say. What is going on. So as I was. Preparing this. This week. I had to spend. Some time. In a tire shop. And I'm. reading. Through material. Trying to get ready. And I was stuck. In this tire shop. For a few hours. And on the ride home. And later that week. I was. thinking. I was in despair. About these stats. About this. Less than 5%. Sharing your faith. How can this church. Be in this position. It's easy to. look around. And say. Come on. Get your act together. And then I realized. I was in a tire shop. Studying for evangelism.

I had people around me. That could not go anywhere. And they literally. Walked away. And I didn't. share my faith. It's important. That we look at ourselves. It's easy to. look at other people. And their faults. But this is something. That hit home. this week. I had opportunity. After opportunity. While. studying. For evangelism. And we must. Be vigilant. And share. In our faith. Romans 1:16 and 17. It

says For I Am not ashamed Of the gospel For it is the power Of God For salvation To everyone Who believes To the Jew first And also to the Greek For in it The righteousness Of God Is revealed From faith For faith As it is written The righteous Shall live by faith Most professing Christians Proudly stand behind This verse For themselves That they are not ashamed

To say that I have been saved By God However that's not What Paul is necessarily Referring to there Are you ashamed Of the gospel To share it with others Do your actions Demonstrate That we are not ashamed Of the gospel That is our question So this morning I want to look At what does The book of Acts In this passage Teach us About evangelism So again The part we're focusing In on Says The Lord added To their number Day by day Those who were being Saved Now building on From the past Two weeks They were devoted To the apostles Teaching They were focused On their vertical Relationship Of them To God They spent their time As they got Praising the Lord As we see earlier In verse 47 They were praising God They had that Relationship

Correct Also they had Made it with people Their horizontal Relationship With one another They focused on it They were doing That right And as a result We see that the Lord Is adding to their number So the question is Who was adding We can look at the passage And answer this question Very simplistically What the Lord was Move on right But I want to look A little deeper At this Is the answer That we find In this text Is it exclusive Right For instance I can say As of today I can say I preach A cornerstone Does that mean I'm the only one Well no Obviously not Right That text Is not exclusive So is this saying That the Lord Adds And other people add Well we can look At the rest of scripture And see That answer So there's two questions I want us to consider

Who has the authority To add To the church When I was in college I spent the summer Out there And I would go fishing In the evenings I would go fishing At various farm haunts Around Tonkawa And a friend of mine Mitchell He decided You know Hey I'm going to take you fishing I've got a pond That I have access to And so we went out there And I had a great time And caught big fish It was one of the times In my life And he told me He said Yeah You can go out there Whenever you want So I I was excited Right And so I thought I had access To this pond And so I'd go out there Two to three times A week And I was having A great time Catching great fish And then one day I got there And there was another Truck there I thought Okay It's a big pond We can share But there was a guy Inside the truck

[14:23] Who got out And he was not Very happy with me He said Who are you? I said You know Ty Campbell He's like I don't know you I said I know But my friend Mitchell He said that That you were okay With me coming out To fish this pond He said I don't know Mitchell I was not very happy With Mitchell But the reality is Mitchell did not Have the authority To grant me access To that pond He did not own That pond He had no Stake in that pond When we look at Matthew 16 18 Jesus is talking To Peter He says And I tell you You are Peter And on this rock I will build My church It's not our church We don't have The authority

To add people Only The Lord Has that authority It's his church He owns it He does as he pleases With it He adds what he wants To add We Do not carry That authority I have another question Who has the ability To add to the church To save someone From their sin Another sinner Cannot Do that And therefore Jesus is the only Human that has Walked this earth That has lived A sinless life That even has The ability To save us We see in Acts 4 Peter is talking He says This Jesus Is the stone That was rejected By you The builders Which has become The cornerstone And there is salvation In no one else For there is no Other name Under heaven Given among men

By which we must Be saved There is No other name That we can be saved By John 10 That intends As I Am the door Anyone who Ventures by me He will be saved And will go in And out And find pasture The thief Comes only to steal And kill And destroy I claim That they may have Life And have it Abundantly There is only one Access There is only one Person who has The authority And the ability To save you That person Is Jesus Therefore As we look And answer The question That we see From this text Who is adding To the church The answer Is the Lord And it is The Lord Exclusively As sung Well in John 14 6 Jesus said To him I am the way And the truth And the life And no one Comes to the Father Except me I'm just saying

About in Christ alone What a beautiful song That paints this picture As well That only through Christ And his sacrifice And his blood Can we come To the Lord So what is this Not saying Right I heard Many Many arguments That say Well If the Lord Absent in church Then evangelism Is unnecessary

Well first We are commanded By Christ To share the gospel Is this line Of thinking Carried out In any other Walk of our life Do I Walk around And say Well You know My sins Are forgiven So it's okay If I steal Will that Fly show No Right But we don't Carry that logic In fact Paul even Addresses this He said He talks in Romans He says Shall I go on Sinning So that grace May abound By no means Second As if that's Not enough That the Lord Who saved you Has commanded you To do it As if that were Not enough What a beautiful Picture that God Chooses to use His people To share the gospel We are Nothing but a Tool in the Hand of God I remember Talking to a Photographer Who would get Very upset That people Would say Well you only Take good pictures Because you have An expensive camera Or what lens Do you have I want to take Pictures like that Right And they were Offended Why Because it's not The camera That's taking The picture It's the Photographers The artist But when we Share the gospel We are not Saving other People But God By his Great goodness Is using us To bring the Gospel to other People and he Saves them Through his Word

[19:27] Romans 10 14-17 How then Will they Call on him And who They have Not believed And how Are they To believe In him To whom They have Never heard And how Are they To hear Without someone Preaching And how Are they To preach Unless they Are sent As it is Written How beautiful Are the feet Of those Who preach The good news For they Have not All obeyed The gospel For Isaiah Says Lord Who has Believed What he Has heard From us So faith Comes from Hearing And hearing In the word Of Christ We must Share The gospel For this Is the Lord Who has Church The second Thing I want Us to Look at Is how Often Are people Added Right It says Here And the Lord Added to the Number Day by Day That day By day Indicates An iterative Thing

It is An ongoing Thing We can Look through The book Of Acts And we See an Example Where Three Thousand Souls Were added Through One Sermon We also See examples Where the Ethiopian Eunuch Was added A person We see Examples of Where Ian Household Was added He doesn't Necessarily Always add The masses Or always Add the Individual But as He pleases I know Often times I read The account Of Pentecost When three Thousand Souls Were added And I Think Wow That is Just Unthinkable Is it Is it Unthinkable That the God Who spoke The entire Earth Into existence Can save Three thousand People through His word Is that Really that Unthinkable The God That holds Everything Together Is it Really Unthinkable To think That he Could not Save All the Portals Built Through His word By no Means

He Could And it Is Likewise Equally Worthy Of rejoicing When he Saves A single Soul From a Single One on One Conversation When the Gospel Is Proclaimed Praise God For Every Single Soul That is Saved The next Thing I Want to Look at And spend Some time On is Who Was being Added Says And the Lord Added To Remember Day By Day Those Who Were Being Saved There are Two Aspects To This That I Want to Look at Those That were Added To The Church Are Those Who Were Saved You May Have Heard James Talking Quite A Bit About Regenerate Church Membership That's Something He's Not Going To

Stop Talking About It Is So Important That Those Who Join The Local Church Are Those Who Have Been Saved By The Lord Tom Askell Wrote A little Pamphlet Called Regenerate Church Membership And A summary On Amazon Says The idea Of Regenerate Church Membership Comes From The Biblical Teaching That Local Churches Are To Be Comprised Of Those Who Can Legitimately Lay Plain To Designations Restricted To Recipients Of The New Birth All Efforts To See Churches Grow And Increase In Membership Should Be Governed By This Principle So That The Integrity Of God's Saving Power Can Be Maintained Before A Watching World In Other Words If Their Churches Are To Follow The Pattern Of Those Described In The New Testament Baptists Must Insist That Only Genuine Christians Are Qualified To Be Members Like

We Talked About A Little Bit About This Topic And What A What A Shame It Is That The Qualification To Join A Church These Days Is To Go Up Front To Have The Pastor Say This Person Accepted Christ And Welcome In We Need To Guard Membership That Doesn't Mean That We Maybe Go Through All These Hoops And Hurdles But There Should Be When A Church Welcomes In A Member There Should Be A Confidence In The Leadership And Even In The Congregation That This Person Is Showing The Fruits Of Being Regenerated That We Are Not Fulfilling Our Numbers Chasing These Lofty Goals And Trying To Appease Affiliations And

Appease All These Discussions Between Pastor Friends We Must Guard The Membership So That Those Who

[24:29] Join This Church Are Those Like The Ones Described In Acts Those Who Have Been Saved There Is Another Aspect Of This That We Need To Look At Notice That It Does Not Save And The Lord Added To The Number Day By Day Some Of Those Who Were Being Saved There There There Are Too Many People That Say That They Know The Lord But Refuse To Join A Church That Is Not What Scripture Teaches Those Who Today Right? But we're trying.

Let's be a church that's devoted to the apostles' teaching and to the fellowship with each other. Let's be a church that is filled with people who have been born again by the Lord.

And as we fail, let's push each other and drive each other to repentance. Let's be the iron that sharpens iron. Let's grow together as we grow toward the Lord.

So, a lot of this discussion has been evangelism. How can we share the gospel? There's another part. There's times in our life where we think we know something.

And we use a word and we don't really know what it means. And we are so confident that we don't even think to ask if we know what it means. Because we know it.

[26:24] I had a great illustration of this. I was taking some of my children over to meet my aunt. She watched them this weekend while we were at a volleyball tournament. And we were heading west on Highway 60, just west of Paw Huska.

And we started coming up to a wind farm. You guys may be aware of that. And Abby's in the back seat. And she says, Daddy, what are those things called? I said, they're winter.

But then I get to ask questions, right? I said, Abby, do you know what those are for? She says, no. So, there's other kids in the car. I said, does anybody know what they are?

What they're used for? And Malachi answered. And his answer exuded such confidence that he was completely baffled that Abby could not tell me what these were for.

He was even so confused as to why I would even think to ask such a dumb question. And he said, as he kind of leans back in his seat, this little snug grin, you know Malachi, you can probably picture that.

[27:31] And he says, so the cows don't get too hot. And of course, my immediate response is, Brent, you bring hairy cows from Minnesota in the summer and you don't give them a fan.

But the reality is, there are people all over America that use the word the gospel.

And they are just as confused as Malachi on a wind turbine when they use the word gospel. Amen.

But we have churches all over that have Taco Bell nights and say there are gospels in the church.

We have people that say that they share the gospel by paying for a Starbucks coffee. Amen. It is no laughable matter when people don't understand what the gospel is that they think they do.

Amen. So what is the gospel? The gospel is that we are completely sinful and that we have no chance to save ourselves.

[28:53] But God, for his goodness, sent his son to this earth to be born of a virgin, to live a sinless life, die on the cross.

And pay the sacrifice that his sheep deserve. And that the Holy Spirit, at the proper time, will draw those people to the Father for salvation.

And that by no merit of their own, they are saved from their sins and will spend eternity with the Father, praising the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

And fellowship with one another. Church is a microcosm, but a small picture.

A faulty picture, but a small picture of what heaven will be like. Where people from all walks of life join together for the purpose of being devoted to the apostles' teachings. To fellowship with one another and pray.

[29:54] Church is a microcosm, but a small picture of what heaven will be like.

Once I get it my all, who's it going to be? Who's going to step up? Crickets. So I asked him again. I said, who's going to step up?

And I think it was Bella. One of them, in a form of regression, said, all of us. And I said, so I asked him again.

He said, who is it going to be? And they all were like, all of us. I said, no. I said, it needs to be you, and you, and I will. You know what did I say?

And he says, here am I sending you. It needs to be all of you. And it's all of you individually. Far too often, we as a church say, we are.

[31:09] Who's going to share the gospel? We are. And what we mean by that is James. He'll share the gospel. And as you go, so do we. No. It's every single one of us.

Who's going to share the gospel? I am. That needs to be the response. So, that is where I'm going to finish this.

Who is going to share the gospel? Let's pray. God, thank you for the promise. Thank you for your word. And just pray, God, that we're going to have the boldness and the courage to share the gospel.

I pray that we would love you so much that we cannot help but share the gospel. And God, help us to help keep us from being so selfish and so self-absorbed that we refuse to share the gospel.

And to keep some semblance of comfort. That God, challenge us. Give us opportunities to share who you are. And God, I pray that if there are people in this room who do not know you.

[32:21] God, I pray that you can use your word to draw them to yourself for favor of them. That they would repent from their sins and that they would chase after you. And that they would then go out and share what you have done in their lives with others.

God, those of us who have been saved for some time, give us that same fire and that same passion that we should have. To share who you are to the lost and dying world.

Give us an urgency with which to share the gospel. We love you. We praise you for what you have done. We ask these things in your name. Amen.