

Committing To One Another

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[0 : 0 0] really up to it. I was dealing with still on the end of recovery from a sinus infection, but by the grace of God, it's cleared up. My voice is feeling particularly strong today, and I'm very energetic today, so who knows how long we'll go. God does. What? 12 o'clock.

You'll at least see it once, right? So I encourage you, please, to open up to... Stay long enough. Right? Exactly. Stay long enough. Be twice. So go ahead and open up to Acts chapter 2.

And last year, last week, what an exciting time to just to evaluate and come back to the Good Friday service and to, yes, focus on the death of Jesus on the cross, and we looked at particularly Peter's failures. And Peter, who was a... He thought he was committed 100% to Jesus, and he thought Jesus was wrong when he gave the indication that he was going to deny him. He said, no way. And then he did. But yet, even though there was agony and bitterness in his failure, there was a triumphal redemption when he hears about Jesus's body being gone, about him being raised. He ran to the tomb. He couldn't wait to go inside. You know, John, the apostle John was a... He was a good guy. He was respectful that, hey, we're at a tomb. Don't just go running in. It could not be...

It could, you know, maybe not be a good thing. Peter's like, forget that. I need to see that this is true. Because it was the only hope that he had. And then... And so he gets this hope, and he gets this encouragement. And he sees Jesus several times over a course of 40 days. And Jesus tells him, Pete, you need to feed my sheep. You need to tend my sheep. You know, you... And he told him that when he turns back, after he'd fallen away, when he returns to strengthen the brethren. And that's what Peter did. And we see that in the book of Acts from chapter... From verse 1 on, that Peter is like the guy, right? He's like the lead apostle, so to speak. He's the spokesman. And he is... He's there, you know, leading the transition from Judas Iscariot, as the one who fell away, betrayed Jesus, and went and hanged himself. So he led that transition to where eventually they cast lots, and the lot fell to

Matthias, and he became the 12th. And then Peter's there in the upper... They're in the upper room. They're praying together. And when the Holy Spirit comes down, and it's like, you know, the sound of a mighty rushing wind. And he settles with tongues of fire on the apostles, on the disciples there. And they come out, and they're speaking in tongues and languages that people could understand as their mother tongue, where they lived. And Peter then takes the reins and preaches the first sermon in church history. And we've spent the last three or four weeks looking at that sermon, because there's really as simple of a sermon as it seems, there really is a lot of depth to it that we can draw out.

[3 : 3 3] And that's what we've been doing. And last week, we saw that the people who were listening, there's a large group of them that heard the sermon, and they were convicted by the Holy Spirit.

And they realized, hey, we've crucified the Messiah, the one we've been waiting hundreds of years for to deliver us. What do we do now? And Peter gave the message, repent and be baptized. Put your faith and trust in Jesus and be baptized, and confess your commitment to Him, and walk in that way.

And now we come to verses, I'm going to pick up in verse 41, which we did cover last week. We're going to read verses 41 through 47, and get to the end of chapter 2. Can you believe it? I said we were going to get through Acts probably in about a year or so, and it seems at this rate it might be five years. But I promise we'll speed up and slow down when we need to, as those spirit guides.

So starting in verse 41, So those who received His word were baptized, and there were added that day about 3,000 souls.

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.

[5 : 07] And all who believed were still 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 favor with all the people.

And the Lord added to their number, day by day, those who were being saved. So we see in verse 41 that in response to Peter's sermon, there were 3,000 souls added that day.

That's quite a number of people. So what exactly were they added to? Well, they were certainly added to the original 120 who were meeting in the upper room in Acts 1.

They were up there, they were meeting together, they were praying together. And then that's, you know, we saw that the Holy Spirit came down and utilized those individuals to minister and share about the mighty works of God.

[6 : 27] So in a sense, they were added to the church membership role. And it's not a sermon about church membership, but it certainly plays a part.

There's debate. You may or may not know that there's debate of whether or not people should join a local church. To you, it may be a settled and done deal. Yeah, you do that. You join a church.

You go and you sit and you take part and you encourage each other and you get voted in, whatever it is. For some, it's like, no, we don't do that.

And they don't see any precedence for that in Scripture. I think there's some precedence here. The fact that we have this number, about 3,000 souls. The fact that Luke knew there was about 120 people gathering in the upper room.

I think it shows that there was a record kept. That he may have even, you know, Luke probably did a lot of research in preparation for the gospel and acts to be written.

[7 : 35] And he may have opened a scroll and said, yep, there's about 120 people there. And, oh, it says here there's about 3,000 people. Maybe there's like seven other scrolls with all their names. I have really no idea, honestly, just speculating.

But ultimately, these 3,000 were added to the universal body of Christ. These are folks who believed and trusted in Jesus Christ for salvation and committed themselves to his teaching, his word, and to living it out.

So the people, upon coming to faith in Jesus, made it a priority to meet together with one another. I cannot stress that enough.

These people were meeting together. They were intentionally taking their lives and kind of meshing and mending with other believers. And there were two areas where it's said that they devoted themselves.

And that word for devotion, it means to persist in or to hold closely to or to adhere to something. So there are two areas that were non-negotiable for these believers as they presented the greatest opportunity for their growth and their commitment to Jesus.

[8 : 56] And these new converts, they didn't really add Christianity to their already busy lives. As we were talking about a little bit in Sunday school, you know, the compartmentalized, you know, like I'm a Sunday Christian here now on Sunday, and then I go and live my life and I'm something else or whatever.

They didn't just add Christianity as just something else to be done, but they devoted themselves to their Christian experience. They devoted themselves to what they had confessed in the waters of baptism.

It became their life. Their life lived out, reflected their belief. Their life lived out, reflected their life.

Their life lived out, reflected their life.

Like on YouTube. I said don't look it up, though. So just take my word for it. I've looked it up. Just ridiculous themes, things that are done. Pastors who, like, zipline from the rafters to the stage in a Mission Impossible type of theme.

[10 : 55] Anyway, just take my word for it. It's really bad. It really is. Anyway, sorry. So anyway, the fact is they weren't looking for that type of stuff.

They wanted to sit under the apostles' teaching. See, the Holy Spirit indwelt the apostles and he empowered them to preach the gospel and to proclaim the mighty works of God.

And he was giving to them also new revelation to be shared. Remember, go back to Acts 2.17, where Peter was quoting Joel 2. And he says, through Scripture, through the book of Acts.

Paul deals with it in Corinthians. You see these different gifts, the different spiritual gifts that God gives out that people utilized to present his truth to the church.

And so the apostles were the conduit that Jesus used to continue the earthly ministry of preaching and spreading the gospel and giving new revelation to God's people.

[12 : 30] In Acts 6, when there arose complaints related to the serving of food, the apostles addressed the issue by having the congregation select people to meet the need. In that process, we say these are the first deacons that are selected in the church, Acts 6.

In the process of developing that new role of deacon in the church body, the apostles tip their hand as to the important ministries of the church. In Acts 6, verse 4, they say, You know, you guys select for yourselves seven capable, able, godly individuals to serve and do this ministry.

But we will devote ourselves to prayer and to the ministry of the word. The two most important ministries of the church are prayer and the preaching of the word of God.

That's not to say that other ministries are not important or good, but the primary ministries that any church body must be built around and must be focused on is the preaching of the word, the preaching of the gospel, and prayer.

And those things should never take a backseat to other ministries. The preaching of the word and prayer must always be central.

[13 : 49] That's why so much of our worship time together is committed to time of prayer and the preaching of the word. Because it's primary, it's key, it's what we need.

But there's always existed throughout church history the temptation to compromise the truth of the word of God by watering down the preaching or significantly reducing its presence for the sake of the comfort of the people in the pew.

For instance, the rise in the power of the Catholic Church during the Middle Ages came about not because they faithfully preached the word, but because they withheld the truth from the people and claimed to be the only ones capable of teaching it to them.

And of course, what they taught as truth was not the word of God, and it eventually led to the Reformation. But that took about 1,200 years to come about.

The modern American church culture has seen its share of rock star pastors who woo in awe spectators with their stories and their charisma and their zip lining and whatever else they do.

[15 : 07] But they also tend to leave the word of God out of the equation. Or they might pick up their Our Daily Bread and turn to the page, maybe that nobody looked at or read or whatever, the page for that day and pick their one verse of Scripture that they're going to say.

And then the rest of the time is spent on stories, and the rest of the time is spent on connecting and relationship building and being more of a motivational speaker rather than a preacher of the truth.

Scripture is not popular with the majority of people. Did you know that? Yeah.

The truth of the word of God is not popular with the majority of people. So if you want to see numerical growth in a church, you better not preach the word. All right?

So this is your time. Okay, this is your opportunity. I'll give you until 2 o'clock this afternoon to make up your mind officially. If you want to see numerical growth, if that's your key thing, I will leave my Bible here when I'm done.

[16 : 19] I'll put it right here, okay? I'll leave it here. And I'll come back later for a year, and I'll check. If it's gone, that means you don't want the preaching of the word anymore. And you want to see the numbers grow.

But you'll also see a U-Haul truck at my house tomorrow morning, if that's the case. Vance Abner once said, the very fact that truth is not popular is all the more reason for preaching it.

It is not our responsibility to make it acceptable. It is our duty to make it available. I'm going to come out and say it.

Dennis, I'm putting you on the spot. I'm roasting you right here. And I'm looking forward to what you bring and what we're going to be talking about in Sunday school. But the thing that concerns me a lot in a lot of these studies and a lot of these articles, a lot of these books and such that are put out there, is the focus is so much about how do we become more like and look like the culture.

And I'm not saying that's what this is going to lead to. For those of you who haven't been at Sunday school, come next week and you'll know what I'm talking about. But no, we're having a good discussion because what he's sharing and presenting is from this study, research that has been done, shows how society views the church.

[17 : 45] And I think it's important to know how society views the church because we should take from that study and those things that we learn, are we stepping in the pile of manure?

Are we making things smelly and worse? Is it because of what we've done? Is it unbiblical practices? Those types of things. That's why I'm really excited about, you know, to hear more and discuss more and such like that.

But what I have found a lot in a lot of things, a lot of articles and things that I've sent to, books that have been suggested, it's more about how does the church look like the culture?

How do we make the church look more like the culture and be accepting to the culture? Well, let me tell you that. Once you start getting into that type of conversation, you have now left the word of God behind you because we're told that we're to be in the world but not of the world.

We're told to not be conformed to this world but be transformed through the renewing of our minds. We're to be different because we're not of this world and that's why people are going to hate us because we're not of this world.

[18 : 56] Now the Christian life is so much more than just me spitting those few lines in the last five minutes because there's a lot of text and there's a lot to digest and there's a lot to bring to the table. But ultimately, as these believers, they were committing themselves to the preaching of the word of God.

They're committing themselves to the apostles' teaching. And it's the truth of Scripture that matters in the life of the church and it's the truth of Scripture that matters in the life of an individual.

It's not about taking your Bible and going out into society and just smacking, hitting people on the head or the forehead or smacking around saying, oh, you're not living like you should be.

You're a sinner because you did this and this and this. It's smack, smack, smack and all that. God didn't deal with us that way. He sent his son who lived among but not in sinful society.

He loved and cared for and had compassion for people. And his life was very different from what the lives of the rest of religious leadership at that time was showing the people.

[20 : 11] But Jesus loves people and loved people while he walked on this earth and lived differently from them. And that's why they hated him.

He lived offensively because he lived according to the truth of Scripture but he was not offensive in the way he lived if that makes sense. If it doesn't then we need to sit down and have a longer conversation for me to break it down for you.

Jesus told those who believed in him the importance of the word in John chapter 8 verses 30 through 32. He says, as he was saying these things many believed in him.

So Jesus said to the Jews who had believed in him if you abide in my word you are truly my disciples and you will know the truth and the truth will set you free.

Jesus said it's very important to know the word of God. It's very important to be committed to the word of God because you must if you are a believer and a follower of Jesus you are to abide in his word.

[21 : 20] Then you could go to John 15 and the vine and the branches and abiding in Jesus and how we grow and bear fruit that way. In John 17 Jesus' prayer for his disciples included the importance of the word of God.

I'm going to read John 17 verses 14 through 17 19 excuse me. So John 17 verses 14 through 19 Jesus praying to the Father he says I've given them your word and the world has hated them because they are not of the world just as I am not of the world.

I do not ask that you take them out of the world but that you keep them from the evil one. They are not of the world just as I am not of the world. Verse 17 John 17 17 Sanctify them in the truth your word is truth.

As you sent me into the world so I have sent them into the world and for their sake I consecrate myself that they also may be sanctified in truth.

The word of God Jesus gave God's word to his disciples. We have been given God's word so that we may know the truth so that we can be sanctified in the truth.

[22 : 48] His word is truth. The apostle Paul spoke of the purpose of the word in 2 Timothy chapter 3 verses 16 and 17. He says all scripture is breathed out by God and profitable for teaching for reproof for correction and for training in righteousness that the man of God may be complete equipped for every good work.

We have the word of God given to us for the purpose of teaching to be for reproof. So you see a brother or sister in Christ this is where the church membership comes in see a brother and sister in Christ that are living sanctified lives while they're here for two hours on Sunday but when they leave or not you can go up to them and say yo you you're a follower you say you're a Christian right?

this behavior that you're carrying out that what you're doing is contrary to the word of God you know you can bring the word of God to them and allow it to reprove the wrong behavior of an individual.

Now notice I said earlier we don't take our Bibles and go out in the world and start smacking people on the head saying you're doing it wrong you're doing it wrong because the world as in non-believers those who do not follow Jesus those who do not claim to know Jesus as Savior I can't hold them to the same standard.

They don't claim to know it or believe it I can show them the truth but for me to say well you're not doing what Jesus said you should do who's Jesus right?

[24 : 29] But somebody who within the body says I know Jesus I love Jesus I follow Jesus blah blah blah and we see them out there that's a whole other ball game I'm not saying you take your Bible and smack them upside the head we don't physically beat people that's not okay not good but we bring to them we confront them we say brother you're erring and we seek to encourage and build up and yes let the word of God reprove them let the word of God correct them or correct you oh man forget that right I'm perfect I don't need correction I got it all right I am what Christians should seek to be said no one that I know of but they live that way sometimes and those conversations go that way we need to let the word of God to reprove us and correct us and to train us in righteousness for a purpose for a reason and there's more on that coming too to be equipped for every good work for every opportunity we have to show the love of Christ

Jesus was very clear that those who claim to know him and follow him are going to be obedient to his word in Matthew 7 verse 21 he says not everyone who says to me Lord Lord will enter the kingdom of heaven but the one who does the will of my father who is in heaven how do you know the will of the father read the word Luke 6 46 why do you call me Lord Lord and do not do what I tell you why are we going to call Jesus Lord remember we saw in Acts 2 that God he has been made both Lord and Christ and if we're going to call him Lord Lord that means he's our master that means that's who we're submitting ourselves to if we're calling him Lord Lord we ought to be doing what he tells us to do and his accusation there Luke 6 46 is why are you calling me

Lord Lord and not doing what I'm telling you to do how could you do that if you really believe I'm your Lord then you're going to listen to my word these early Christians knew exactly what they needed they needed the preaching and teaching of the word they devoted themselves to the apostles teaching Martin Lloyd Jones made the statement he said I would say without hesitation that the most urgent need in the Christian church is true preaching and as it is the greatest and most urgent need in the church it is obviously the greatest need of the world also we must be preaching and teaching the word of God and don't look at me and say no pastor that's your job I mean yeah technically it's my job right I mean pay me to do it but it's everyone's job or it's

God's expectations for everyone if you remember back in Hebrews chapter 6 and 7 the writer of Hebrews says that by this time you all ought to be teachers it is God's expectation for us to be teachers of the word and we're going to see how that plays out here in a minute now we need to take seriously the example given to us here in Acts 2 and seek to come together so we can sit under the apostles teaching but that's not the end of it as a believer because the next area that we see these folks committed to is the area of fellowship oh that's easy fellowship it's a word that we hear at First Baptist Shapley we personally are well acquainted with this word fellowship we know this word now we're getting it at least one of them we've nailed right at least one I'm not saying you didn't nail the other one but fellowship slam dunk right in fact after Sunday school before our worship time together we have a time of fellowship in the

Holdsworth room or during the summer months we have fellowship time after our 930 a.m. worship service and that'll be coming up in another month and a half where we're going to be making that switch to 930 a.m.

[29 : 15] worship but then after our worship what do we do we fellowship we have it now clearly the word fellowship means sitting around eating snacks and drinking coffee or juice or milk or tea or if you're not a coffee drinker tea Josh thinking of you yep clearly that's what it means right well the Greek word translated for fellowship is point on nia that's what's up here in the center point on nia we define it commonly as fellowship participation but as you can see from the graphic there are several ways in which the word is translated now it only occurs 19 times in the New Testament but as you can tell by the various words that are utilized participation sharing share partnership part contribution fellowship of course how we understand it and hear it most often these 19 times all really convey one very clear meaning oneness oneness it's about sharing participating and taking part together in something koinonia means that everyone is contributing to something so what exactly is it that they are contributing to well in this passage we're told it is to the breaking of bread and the prayers see these phrases

I gotta go back to Acts 2 still stuck in John these phrases here in Acts 2 42 so they devoted themselves to the apostles teaching and the fellowship to the breaking of bread and the prayers those phrases breaking of bread and the prayers appear in the opposition they're in a positive to the statement of the word fellowship so got it man I'm getting ahead of myself so this indicates that these words the breaking of bread and the prayers are further defining what is meant by fellowship in the passage so they do fellowship by the breaking of bread now there's not a clear agreement as to what this phrase exactly means the interpretation changes from commentator to commentator though a majority of it link it to the Lord's table to communion in the opinion of this preacher that is the this phrase

I don't think has anything to do with the Lord's table it's possible it might so I'm going to back off and say I don't think da da da no but I'm going to give you my reasoning okay we see it appear again in verse 46 and day by day attending the temple together and breaking bread in their homes they received their food with gladness and generous hearts so it seems to be the breaking of bread is more about a meal and not so much about a time of communion and the bread and wine also you got to take into consideration the fact that Jesus instituted communion at the Passover meal and they were not at Passover on Pentecost right this is 50 days later so they may not have thought to partake of any other time of year now we have as our tradition once a month there are some churches the church that we attended in West

Virginia did it every week there are also some churches who do it maybe quarterly or once a year at the time of Passover there is no wrong formula when it comes to partaking of the Lord's table and communion together it just says in 1 Corinthians 10 or 11 that when you take this bread eat this bread and drink this cup you proclaim the Lord's death until he comes so it can be once a year it can be four times a year it can be monthly it can be weekly it can be twice a week it can be every day it really doesn't matter how frequently you partake of communion but my argument is the Lord instituted it on the Passover meal and that's likely what they would have associated it with until they became Baptists and did it once a month so this breaking of bread may indeed fall right in line with the

Baptist tradition of partaking of food as it took place in their homes so we're getting fellowship right guys we talk about fellowship we talk about potlucks we talk about food and it just makes everything all right we're doing something right whatever the case is whether it's the Lord's table food or both I've heard that these early believers were doing this together day by day and that's the key together then you have the prayers now see that this appears in the plural suggests that it's referring to specific prayers rather than prayer in general and since they were meeting daily at the temple it probably refers to the set times of prayer that took place there we see next week we get to Acts 3 now Peter and John were going up to the temple at the hour of prayer the ninth hour so there appears to be at least one hour of prayer at the temple probably more and so it's saying that they were devoting themselves to the prayers the time of prayer and supplication before God the daily meeting and homes were also accompanied we see in verse 47 by praising

[35 : 39] God and it's likely involved a time of petitioning God about their own needs and the needs of others and that would be that would make sense that that would be the time where the needs of the people were made known and God put it on the hearts of individuals to give what they could verses 44 and 45 right all who believed were together they had all things in common and they were selling their possessions and belongings and distributing the proceeds to all as any had need but when do you know somebody has need when you fellowship when you're together you know it could be during Wednesday Bible study it could be during prayer time here prayer time during Sunday school it could be as you meet somebody in a coffee shop in the middle of the week and you get together for a time maybe you're both headed into work and hey you know what let's take a few minutes here let's talk let's see how things are going let's pray oh hey what's going on oh man well we just had it happen we just pulled our car out of the garage and found there was an oil spill or something you know and we don't have money to take care of that and oh really

I'm sorry to hear that and then next thing you know there's 100 bucks given to you anonymously after you've had a conversation with somebody sometimes it works that way but not always but that's how we know each other's needs and that's how we can help each other you know some people don't have money to give maybe they have time to give skill to give advice to give I'm not saying you forcing your advice on people a lot of times people don't want to hear your advice don't give unsolicited advice unless you're me no no don't ever let me do that to you either but we all have things we can give and share and these guys they were selling stuff and we're going to get to this in Acts 4 where it becomes an issue and a problem internally so as we can see fellowship was more than just a time of sitting and eating snacks together it was a time of mutual encouragement and building one another up another thing too that's interesting here in verse 47 they're praising God they are having favor with all the people they were meeting in the temple they were around non-believers and they had favor in the eyes of the people now that won't always be the case in fact we're going to see shortly in a few short chapters here the next three chapters or so in Acts we're going to see that whole thing turn on its head this is a time of peace right now they can follow Jesus and know

Jesus and all that but they're going to get to be too big and that peace that they have is no longer going to be around and it's going to be not just what we see and read in scripture but I'm also going to bring in some historical stuff as well that relates to the church and it was not a time of peace for at least 300 years yeah but these guys that are fellowshiping they're doing stuff together they're doing life together and while social times together are fun you know we have social times right we have game nights we have teas we have you know iron sharpens iron conferences if you're a man want to go may 6 please talk to me or I might have to come talk to you whatever it is social times we have we enjoy and they're fun and they can provide these types of opportunity of sharing needs and prayer and praise and all that but often they just result in people getting together to have fun

I don't know how often and now I'm not a part of every conversation right I can't be and maybe there are conversations where this stuff is brought up when we're gathering together for different social reasons but at least most of the conversations I'm a part of don't don't involve the you know the prayers and the breaking of bread and the you know togetherness and being concerned for one another not that there's not concern but it just doesn't come up usually it's like man I can't believe you just played the red reverse card and I was about to go out with my last card here right you know an uno or something you know different you know good fun time different purpose and reason J.I.

Packer says the fact that we share social activities with other Christians does not of itself imply that we have fellowship with them just because you're socially doing stuff with other Christians doesn't mean you're fellowshiping with them fellowshiping has a purpose it's to build each other up it's to express oneness together so what so what this time of study and acts looking at the birth of the church at Pentecost and the first activities of the believers can seem so far off I mean how can something that took place almost 2,000 years ago have any relevance to my life today so much is different so much has changed like if you bring those people that early church those 3,120 and you bring them to today they would like drop dead it would be over like they can't even understand oh why this doesn't even make sense well you gotta look at it this way okay you gotta look at what is actually there this is the first unadulterated meetings of the followers of Christ these are the ones that God is gonna use to set the tone for what the church is supposed to be and by the time

[41 : 56] Paul is martyred around AD 65 during the reign of the emperor Nero the instructions for the church will have been mostly written and distributed the only exception will be John who doesn't die until later on revelation and gospel John depending on who you talk to dated around 90-95 AD but the fact is that most of the instructions for the church are gonna be there by 65 AD AD 65 each individual here okay so back back backtrack for a second so these are the ones that God's gonna use to set the tone and the example for the church following okay we don't we don't set our model and an example based on our research and our feelings and whatever now and say oh well the church back then had it wrong we don't do that you can't do that you can't impose a model or system backwards it doesn't work that way rather what God does is he sets the model at the beginning and expects it to carry on and when you wherever you wherever you are in history so as

Martin Luther did in the 1500s realized no no indulgences is not a biblical thing no we gotta have a conversation in fact I have 95 off the top of my head I have 95 things that I have a problem with and he nails it to the church door which was the that was the bulletin board of the day basically he's calling people to debate and discuss this he wasn't like it's not like he went up to a random church it was the one he was associated with right but he realized he's like no we got something off we need to go back to where we're supposed to be and we don't come we don't come to it today and be like yeah that just doesn't work we gotta scrap what that stuff is it wouldn't work today we gotta bring it here God set a model for us to follow and he's given us examples to follow and so each individual here at

FBS needs to evaluate the importance of the apostles teaching and fellowship in their lives are you hungering for the truth of scripture are you seeking it out on a regular basis are you seeking out the truth of scripture are you reading it for yourself are you listening to podcasts of individuals teaching and preaching it I highly encourage you read it for yourself more than anything but listening to a good biblical preacher is good as well are you participating in fellowship with other believers are you encouraging others through times of prayer and praise together more times than I can remember I've heard the excuse that people do not feel like they're being fed in church they hear the truth being expounded they know what the Bible says but it doesn't speak to them as a Christian it's just no it's not really hitting me yeah I mean that's when I start throwing things no I'm just kidding as I've given some serious thought to that

I'm not being fed all right I'm arriving more and more at the conclusion that the issue is not so much that the people are not being fed rather I think people are being fed too much without using what they are taking in we eat food every day because our body demands it we partake we take in nutrition every day because our body demands it we need it to live but that food does not just sit in your stomach it gets digested and the nutrition gets used up to keep your body functioning properly it could be to play baseball or to go and play in a band or whatever like we're using what we take in our body uses it all the time we don't have to tell it to it just does it God designed our body amazingly to do things like that I believe that the body of

Christ cannot function properly if we are not digesting the truth and serving others with it I'm not speaking of serving unbelievers in the community around us yes that must happen and yes that burns energy but that is secondary to what I'm getting at we must be serving one another through fellowship with each other we need to participate in the breaking of bread and in the prayers together the new testament is full of one another commands and expectations and these commands and expectations have their opportunity to be fulfilled when we are regularly meeting when we are regularly gathering together as saints now I'm not talking necessarily about you know having another meeting here another service though to be honest

[47 : 48] I don't think one's enough but that's just me maybe it's not just me come join me let's start a revolt no please don't no revolts here but that's the thing people go to one service a week I'm not being fed maybe you're not being fed during the week either and you're starving but that's another issue but it's about gathering together it's about meeting up it's about hey if you know if you know you and someone else's path cross in the morning as you're going to work or maybe like the movie that we enjoy watching in our household you've got mail the two main characters their paths cross all the time they just don't know it until later on they fall in love and oh so great I'm not saying you're going to fall in love with the person that's crossing but my point is this maybe you go to the same coffee shop or maybe you're at the same area at the same time together where you can say hey you know what we both can meet up at

Dunkin Donuts there in Sanford and let's add an extra five or ten minutes and let's get our coffee sit down and let's pray together let's read scripture together let's encourage one another that is fellowship it's not it doesn't just happen in this building it doesn't just happen in that room it doesn't just happen around food though it does make it convenient you know fellowship it's coming together and it's pouring into each other it's being part of life together so are you meeting regularly with the body of Christ are you are you going from house to house encouraging one another and building each other up in the faith one reason why many churches die and become irrelevant to their community is not because they look too different from the culture that they exist in it's because they do not grow together and build each other up when you're sitting under the apostles teaching and you're being fed the word of God and it's being expounded for you it's being broken down for you and you take it and you start digesting it and you start meditating on it and you start praying over it and you start looking into it for yourself and you're getting that nutrition in how are you spending that how are you exerting yourself we need to digest the word but we need to take that digested word and all the nutrition that comes with it and expend that through our service to one another to expend that to our service to other people whatever however it is

God leads you to work and serve do it do every good work to his glory but don't just sit there week in and week out man I'm not getting anything I'm not being fed take what you're being fed take the nourishment you're getting and use it use it and you're never get this you're never too old to do it and you're never too young to do it the only time you're too anything to do it is when you're too dead to do it and at that point it's not going to matter because you're going to be in the presence of Jesus you're not too young you're not too old you're not too disabled you're not too handicapped you're not too sick you're not too incapable by and large it's because you're not very committed that hurts everybody so how many people do you know that you come to worship with just looking around like I'm not even talking about like I can right I can sit up here and name every individual in the pews right you can probably sit there and name all the backs of the heads in the pews right you know who's who well I'm asking how many do you know like truly know like you know maybe what they're struggling with you know what their hardship is you know what their weakness is in their life because you talk to them and you walk with them and you pray with them and you get in the word together and you're encouraging each other and you're fellowshiping and doing life together how many do you know how many do you connect with outside of our appointed times together that is what this is about that that is that that is what it is to commit to one another that is what these believers were doing they were getting fed through the apostles and they're fellowshiping together they're living life together they're encouraging each other why because we have to live in this world because this world does form an opinion about us and the question is is the opinion that they that they are forming about us is it biblically consistent let me tell you something and I'm going to close on this this is not even in my notes

I've gone off the script I know it's late people are wondering if their roast is going to burn it might if it does just go get a salad or something it'll be good the issue is this and I hope you feel the same way but I'm not telling you you need to but I hope you do I don't care if the world hates me and society doesn't want to hear another word from my mouth as long as the reason why they hate me is because I love Jesus and glorify God and love people for his glory if the reason they hate me is anything but a biblically good and okay reason then we need to sit down and have a conversation right and that's what we're doing in Sunday school we're having a conversation because there are reasons why this world hates us and there are labels they put on us and there are ways that they view us that are because many

