

A Snapshot of a Healthy Church - Acts 2:42-47

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[0 : 0 0] I'm glad you have come to worship the Lord this morning and gather as His people. One of the most difficult things I would say and seminal things that a person can do next to coming to Christ and choosing your spouse, the next most perhaps most formative thing in your life is a church.

What church you go to? A church's influence in a person's life is incredible. And so we find if you're new with us today, we're walking through the book of Acts.

And in chapter one we read that the apostles have gathered, Jesus has risen from the grave, He appeared to many people and there's about 120 individuals in Jerusalem and He says, wait, wait for the promise of the Father who is the Holy Spirit until He comes, don't leave Jerusalem.

And so these folks are waiting. And in the process of waiting they choose the 12th apostle to replace Judas, but in addition to that Peter then the Holy Spirit comes and people hear in their own language the gospel of Jesus Christ.

And some accuse these Galileans of being drunk because how is it that they could do this thing? And so Peter then stands up and he addresses the crowd and there's probably anywhere between five to 10,000 individuals without a PA system, he declares God's truth and he says, listen, this Pentecost phenomena, this speaking in other languages that you just heard in your own, it is something that is foretold of Joel and Joel foretold of this event.

[2 : 0 0] And now that this has occurred there is coming God's judgment and so all of you who call on the name of the Lord shall be saved is Peter's message and at the end of the message Peter also meddles in their business a little bit because he tells them, you crucified Christ, the one that we have been waiting for, this Messiah, his blood is on your hands and the feeling the guilt of that and that message, Peter's the first message of the church, 3,000 individuals come to know Christ.

And so can you imagine your church ballooning from 120 to 3,120, that would be quite a thing and that is exactly what happened and so what then did this church do?

You now have the Holy Spirit, you now are empowered as God's witness to proclaim his name among the nations, what is it that they did?

And we find what they did in today's text, if you have your Bible in turn to Acts chapter 2 we are going to begin reading in verse 42 today and it says this, that Acts chapter 2 verse 42 through 47 and they devoted themselves to the apostles teaching and to the fellowship and to the breaking of bread and to the prayers and ah 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 to the temple together and breaking of bread in their homes they received their food with gladness and generous hearts praising God and having favor with all men and the Lord added to their number day by day those who were being saved.

What an amazing text, what an amazing thing that this early church did and it is this text that we want to look at today, I want to share just briefly, I'm going to spend the bulk of time in just one verse and that's verse 42.

[4 : 37] In verse 42 it says they devoted themselves to the apostles teaching, devoting themselves. This word devote means to persist and persevere in something, so to devote yourself to something it would be to persist and persevere in that activity whatever it is and because of the sentence structure of the sentence it is an ongoing devotion so it's not that the day they got saved they were devoted, it was that now that they are saved they devoted continually persisting and persevering in four different things and we're going to find them in the rest of this verse.

The apostles teaching, the fellowship, the breaking of bread and the prayers and what's interesting is the definite article, the is in front of each of these words and that's why we're going to spend a bit of time on them.

It says that they devoted themselves to the apostles teaching. If you consider with me for a moment what is the apostles teaching at this moment?

If you think about this Paul is not saved, he's going to be saved in Acts chapter 9 a few chapters later so in the future Paul is going to get saved and you say well Scott what difference does that make?

Why are you mentioning that? Because they didn't have the New Testament yet. Paul wrote Galatians, Ephesians, Philippians, Colossians, 1st and 2nd Corinthians, 1st and 2nd Timothy, Titus, Philemon, Romans, all of these letters were written by Paul and Paul isn't even saved yet so what is the apostle and Paul is an apostle.

[6 : 21] What is the apostles teaching? The gospel writers have not written their letters yet, we're about 50 days after Passover.

There hasn't been enough time yet to write the New Testament so then what is this apostles teaching? I think about it this way.

If you turn to Luke chapter 24 we have an indication of what it is. If you turn to your Bible I hope today we're going to be looking at a number of passages. Luke 24 is where I would like for you to turn today to consider what is the apostles teaching.

In Acts chapter 24, Luke chapter 24 verse 13 begins a section that is actually what I find very humorous. If you want to find comedy in God's word this is it.

What is happening, I'm just going to read verse 13, and that very day this is after Jesus has been crucified, he has rose from the grave, he appears to many. Well two of the many that he appeared to are on this road to Emmaus.

[7 : 33] That very day two of them were going to a village named Emmaus and about seven miles from Jerusalem and they were talking with each other about all the things that had happened.

While they were talking, discussing one another, Jesus himself draws near and went with them, but their eyes were kept from recognizing them. Here's the comedy. He said, this is Jesus said to them, what is this conversation that you're holding with each other as you walk?

Number one, he is the subject of their conversation because they're talking about the Christ crucifixion, this man who was this person who stirred up all of Jerusalem over the Passover and the Feast of Unleavened Bread that he had got people whipped up and so look what they say in response to this.

They stood still, can you imagine this? What is it that you guys are talking about? They just stop. They're walking and they stop. Notice what they turn and say to Jesus.

One of them named Cleopas, answered and said, are you the only visitor to Jerusalem who does not know the things that happened there in these days?

[8 : 48] Do you not know there was this guy that everyone thought was Messiah and Pilate even stood in front of us and said, who should I release?

The whole town got stirred up and we asked for this known murderer just to get Jesus taken care of.

Didn't you even hear about these things? And then they crucified him and the whole town went dark for three hours and then at the time the Passover lamb was slaughtered in the temple, this guy died outside the city.

And then they buried him and then some claim that even rose from the grave. Are you the only one who has not heard about this? We're talking to Jesus.

That's comedy. That's comedy. And he said to them, what things? Jesus claims ignorance. And they said to him, concerning Jesus Nazareth, a man who was a prophet, mighty indeed and word before God and all people, and how our chief priests and rulers delivered him up, condemning him to death, crucifying him, and we had hope that he was the one to redeem Israel.

[9 : 57] Yes, and besides this, it is now the third day since these things happened. Moreover the women from our company amazed us. They were at the tomb early in the morning and when they did not find his body, they came saying that they had seen a vision of angels who had said to them that he is alive.

Some of those who went to the tomb found it just as the women had said, but they did not see. And he said to them, oh foolish ones, slow of heart to believe all the prophets have spoken, was it not necessary that Christ should suffer these things and enter into his glory?

And beginning with Moses and the prophets, he interpreted to them all the scriptures concerning himself. What was the apostles teaching? It was what Jesus just did here.

He took all that the Moses and the prophets had written about in the Old Testament and showed them all the things that are foretold of the Messiah coming in Christ that he fulfilled in his life, death and resurrection.

He is the Messiah. So what were the apostles doing? They were taking the Old Testament with a messianic understanding that Christ fulfilled that.

[11 : 20] And that was the apostles teaching at that time. Today though, we have the apostles teaching in our New Testament. And so they had the Old Testament and this messianic understanding.

And one of the books that I just have enjoyed is by a lesser known guy. His name is Arnold Frugtenbaum. And I don't read a thousand page books very fast, but he wrote a thousand page book and I thought this is going to take me seven years to choke down.

But I actually was so fascinated. I finished it in a matter of months. I don't read like that typically. And so anyway, Arnold Frugtenbaum, he has this book Messianic Christology and he takes all the Old Testament passages that foretell of Christ with a messianic understanding of them.

And by the way, Arnold Frugtenbaum is a messianic Jew and he does exactly what the apostles teaching they were doing is taking the Old Testament, showing them how Christ fulfilled those things in the Old Testament.

But today we have the canon. It is complete. The Old and New Testament. We now have the apostles teaching. We too have the apostles teaching and it's called the New Testament, if you will.

[12 : 42] This gracious gift of God, God has chosen to reveal himself specifically through his word. We have the Bible. It is the breathed out by the living God through his spirit.

It communicates the mysteries of the faith. God's word is sufficient for faith and godly living. The word of God, it is the means by which God primarily speaks to you and to me.

The Bible is this living word and has the power to make someone spiritually dead and alive unto God. It is living and active, not dead, not sedentary.

The word of God discerns the thoughts and the intents of one's heart.

And this is what the early church devoted themselves to. They devoted themselves to the public hearing and the studying and the listening of the apostles teaching the very word of God.

[13 : 46] They devoted themselves. They persevered. They persisted in it continually. They could not get enough of God's word. I am grateful in our church for the children's teachers, the youth teachers and workers, adult teachers, elders, pastors who teach God's word carefully with us as we learn together.

Yes, the study of God's word devotionally should be done by all of us, but we also should devote ourselves. This is what the church did corporately.

They devoted themselves to the apostles teaching. Would your relationship to God's word be described as devoted?

Second thing that the church, if you want to turn back with me in the book of Acts, chapter 2, the second thing the early church devoted themselves to is fellowship.

And this is the word *coinonia*. They devoted themselves to the fellowship or they devoted themselves to one another.

[14 : 59] The word *coinonia* commonly is translated communion or fellowship. It is this type of mutuality. It's a shared activity.

The term often denotes or has an overtone of material support, of generosity, of tangible things, but there is more.

That's only a part of the sense of the word, and it communicates that there is a real sense of connection to, between and for each other. That if *coinonia*, that is, if the fellowship exists in a church, there is a connection to, between and for one another in the body of Christ.

So in Acts chapter 2, they not only had this new spiritual union with one another, and that spiritual union had a way of working itself out in practical ways of demonstrating love and support to one another.

So what I have done is I have just taken sections of the New Testament versus in the New Testament that have a one anotherness to them.

[16 : 11] And I just want us to sit, often we are familiar with these, but what would it look like to devote, to persist, to persevere in these activities?

So I'm just going to show several slides and read them together. I give you a new command, love one another, just as I have loved you.

You also are to love one another. We who are many are one body in Christ and individually members of one another.

Love one another deeply as brothers and sisters. Outdo one another in showing honor. Instruct one another. The members would have the same concern for one another.

Serve one another through love. Carry one another's burdens with patience, bearing with one another in love. Be kind and compassionate to one another.

[17 : 10] Do we devote ourselves to the fellowship, persist and persevere in these things? The New Testament goes on though.

Get to one another in the fear of the Lord. In humility, consider others as more important than yourselves. Do not lie to one another. Encourage one another.

Always pursue what is good for one another. Let us watch out for one another and provoke love and good deeds. Don't criticize one another, brothers and sisters.

Don't complain about one another. Confess your sins to one another and pray for one another so that you may be healed. Be hospitable to one another without complaining.

Do you devote yourself to the fellowship? Do you persevere? Do you persist in these things? And lastly, all of you close yourself with humility toward one another.

[18 : 08] Dear friends, let us love one another because love is from God and everyone who loves has been born of God and knows God. No one has ever seen God, but if we love one another, God remains in us.

Do we have this sharing of all things in common, this fellowship, and have a sense of responsibility for one another?

And do we devote ourselves to these things? That is in part what Koinonia, this word, the fellowship means.

Also thirdly, we have the—well, let me stop. I want to share a few examples of things that I have known of recent that have blessed me to illustrate what this may look like today.

Josh and Carly Comeston, would you please stand? Josh and Carly Comeston, they don't know I'm doing this. Josh and Carly Comeston, that's the beauty of being up here, you can surprise.

[19 : 13] You kind of feel compelled to stand. So Josh and Carly Comeston recently returned from Alaska after spending a little more than a month there, discerning whether God would have them help in a mission endeavor reaching villages that can be only accessible by plane for Christ.

And so they were up there serving in Alaska and before they returned, some folks from the body, I don't know how they broke into their home or how that happened, but regardless, some individuals from the body went over to their home and filled their pantry in the refrigerator before they got back.

And I love that. That's the fellowship. You guys can be seated. Also may I have Carol Owens and Sydney please stand. Sydney is in the back and Miss Carol, thank you.

So, please remain standing. So Sydney in the back is in her 20s. Carol is just shy of outside of her the 20s.

And these two ladies bless me so. They write to one another. They encourage one another.

[20 : 28] They have been shepherding one another toward Christ in a primarily written form, but they see each other. They encourage one another to pursue the Lord.

And I love that. Koinonia, the fellowship, but they devote themselves to this. And so what does it look like for us to devote ourselves? You may be seated.

Thank you, you too. Yeah, Carol's like, can I please sit down now? It's challenging to cultivate and maintain edifying relationships.

It really is. It requires showing up. It requires participating. It requires saying yes.

It requires being known. It requires sharing one's life with others of both the praises and the hardships. It requires being selfless, being eager and willing to listen and not to speak.

[21 : 27] Being eager and willing to meet a need that the propensity of one's heart is yes. You're invited someplace. We're having an event, trunk or treat, whatever it is.

You just have this leaning toward yes instead of way.

That devoted, persisting, persevering in the fellowship. That's what the early church did.

What if every member of the body sent one email, one text, one phone call, wrote one letter or prayed for and with someone and let someone know that you were praying for them each week?

What would be different? What would be different? What is one act that you can do each week or more that would edify and exhort someone toward loving the Lord more?

- [22 : 36] I would love. Would you consider that? Would we consider what it would look like to devote ourselves to the fellowship, persisting and persevering and having all things, if you will, in common?

Third thing is they broke bread together. This is one of only two references of like this in the New Testament. The second one is found in Luke 24 where it merely just refers to table fellowship.

It's unclear whether this is the Lord's supper specifically or just sharing a meal together generally. Regardless, if it is the Lord's sampler or sharing meals together, the early church is filled up with affections for the crucified Jesus Christ and risen Jesus Christ.

That whether you share a meal together or you observe the Lord's supper, whichever this is speaking to, you are doing it for the sake of exalting the Lord Jesus Christ.

If you invite someone into your home, please make Jesus from the church that you would have this affection for one another that you would break bread together and make Jesus part of the conversation that you talk about.

- [23 : 53] That would be very normative. When you invite a member of the body, talk about Jesus.

You don't have to be elaborate about this. I have shared with you previously in my college years, my means was pretty meager. I wanted to invite people over all the time after church and discuss the things we had just heard in the sermon and things.

I would invite folks over and all I could really afford is a loaf of bread. It was 99 cents. Sometimes I could get it as low as 75 cents.

Regardless, I would just purchase a loaf of bread. I would invite people over. I would supply butter on occasion jam, splurged, and that's all I did.

But it was sweet. It doesn't matter what we ate. It was a matter that we talked about the risen Savior Jesus, and it was sweet.

- [24 : 57] The early church was devoted to this, and they continually persisted in the breaking of bread together, cultivating affections for Christ when they gathered together over a meal.

Last, in the list, is they devoted themselves to the prayers, the prayers. This last week, as you turn to Mark chapter one, if you can have your Bible, please turn to Mark chapter one.

This last week on Thursday, along with some elders and the staff, we went to what is called a Spurgeon Fellowship, but it's basically a gathering of pastors in the local Spokane area and some of the surrounding areas.

We had Dr. Shaddix, who is a New Testament professor, a preaching pastor professor, speak to us. He, and when he used this verse, I thought, that is very fitting to what we're talking about today.

Look with me in verse 35. What is it to devote yourself to the prayers?

- [26 : 08] Mark chapter one, verse 35, speaking of Jesus and rising very early in the morning while it was still dark, he departed and he went out to a desolate place, and there he prayed.

That verse alone should be inspiring and both convicting that before the sun rose, Jesus rose early to go commune with the Father and he prayed.

That alone, we all would say, wow, wow. But in context, it's even more convicting and it's even more challenging because read with me in verse 21.

This is Jesus' day before and they went into Capernaum and immediately on the Sabbath, he entered the synagogue and was teaching and they were astonished at his teaching and he taught them as one who had authority and not as one of the scribes.

So there Jesus is, that Saturday Sabbath morning, he gets up and he goes to the synagogue and he teaches and as teaches as one who has authority that there's something altogether different than him and the other rabbis, that there's some weight to his message that is communicated.

[27 : 26] But read the next verse, his day is not over. And immediately there was in the synagogue a man with an unclean spirit and he cried out and so Jesus will go on to cast this unclean spirit out of this person and look with me after doing that what happened in verse 28.

And at once his fame spread everywhere throughout the surrounding region of Galilee. That people were, Jesus is in Capernaum and he's healing people and he's casting out demons.

You should come and hear, he teaches with one who has authority and if you have sick, hey, your relative has an evil spirit as a demon and I know the one who can provide relief and cast that demon out.

And his fame went out. Read with me in verse 29, his day is not over. And immediately he left the synagogue and he entered the house of Simon and Andrew and James and John.

Now Simon's mother-in-law, so Simon is Peter is married and his wife's mom, his mother-in-law was very ill, lay with a fever and immediately they told him about her.

[28 : 44] So Jesus enters this home but there's a problem. His mother, Peter's mother-in-law, one of his disciples, mother-in-law is sick.

And so verse 31 he came and he took her by the hand and lifted her up and the fever left her and she began to serve them. But his day is not done yet.

Read with me in verse 32. And that evening at sundown, at sundown they brought to him all who were sick. And oppressed by demons.

That fame that went out, people went out, they've had several hours, go get your friends, you're sick, come, I know the one who can heal. Here you have a demon, I know the one who can cast who has authority over demons, come.

And the line begins to assemble and the line begins at sundown. And through the night he heals, he casts out demons, he heals.

[29 : 44] He casts out demons. Verse 33, and the whole city was gathered together at the door. And he healed many who were sick and various diseases and casted many demons and he would not permit the demons to speak because they knew him.

And then you get to 35. And rising early, in the morning, while it was still dark, he departed and went out to a desolate place and there he prayed.

After a day like that before, I would say, I'm sleeping in. I'm done with people and I'm done ministering and I'm just done.

Physically, spiritually, I'm done. But Jesus, when we talk about what does it look like to be devoted to the prayers?

And that is, keep in mind, they're devoted to the prayers corporately. This is Jesus alone, but in the context in Acts, but nothing Jesus wanted to do would be to get in the way of Him communing with the Father.

[30 : 55] And that was so important to him that no matter what the previous day looked like, he was going to meet with Jesus alone. And if that meant early in the morning, so be it.

That perhaps captures the thought of what it would look like to persist and persevere in this thing called prayer, the prayers. But it's interesting.

One of the, let's take what the opposite would mean. The opposite of one being devoted to prayer would be prayerlessness. And if you want to think of prayerlessness as the highest form of an act of independence, there is, it would be prayerlessness.

You want to declare an act of declaration of independence, say, I'm not praying. It's not going to be a priority of mine. I can handle life on my own.

I don't need the Lord. I'm not going to pray. I'm not going to seek Him. And all of us, when I start speaking like that, should be, should have a visceral response.

[31 : 59] That is, that's arrogant. That's pride. And it's a lack of recognition just how much we need the Lord, even for our very next breath.

So being devoted to prayer is just the opposite. It's a statement, not of a declaration of independence, but a declaration of dependence, of Lord, I need you. I worship you.

I exalt you. And think about the early church. How many needs are being present? Every day by day, people are coming to faith in Christ.

There's 3000. There's only 120 of you at the beginning. How are you going to handle all the needs? Lord, I don't, I don't know how we're going to disciple all these individuals.

I don't know how we're going to meet all these needs. Only you can do this. And that same need that that first century church had, that first church had in Jerusalem, we have here at fourth.

[33 : 02] And I, and in the church gathered to, and devoted themselves to gathering together to do few things, but one among them was just to pray.

And they persevered and persisted in it. And it's sad when a prayer meeting is called, it's a handful of those in the body of Christ.

I have wanted to grow in my prayer life. And one book I've read is D.A. Carson's Praying with Paul. And so I have on my phone all the prayers that Paul prayed.

This morning, and so I take one of them every Sunday morning. This is in my discipline of my preparation on Sunday morning. I take one of them. Today was in, there's a prayer of Paul in Colossians chapter one.

And that was the prayer that I prayed for us today. But I want to invite you. There are several opportunities that we have here that all of them are on church center.

[34 : 08] But Sunday morning we pray at eight o'clock. The church gathers together at eight o'clock in praise. The church also gathers at eight thirty on Saturday night to pray.

We have a prayer and praise service about quarterly that we invite the church to come to. And truly we pray. And then I know of several other prayer meetings.

The women have one in the church. And if you're interested, please come talk to me or Melissa or someone on staff to get the day and the time of that.

So what we have in the rest of this chapter is this. As the church devoted themselves to the apostles teaching to the fellowship to the breaking of bread to the prayers, you have what the early church then what that did in the local the manifestation of that, if you will, there were other things that.

And so the rest of this is kind of out of the outflow of their devotion to these things. These other things were happening and it's descriptive, not necessarily prescriptive, but I just want to run through those things.

[35 : 28] So descriptors that are resulting from their devotion is how I see it is number one, radical generosity, especially within the church.

We read in verse 44 and 45 and all who believe were together and all and they had all things in common and they were selling their possessions and belongings and distributing the proceeds to all as any had need.

And this isn't like Christian communism that is being taught here. The Bible doesn't teach any form of that form of socialism or anything like that. For example, stealing is sinful.

If we had all things in common, oh, you want to take my rototiller? It's not stealing, we have it in common. It's not that. So stealing is sinful. So it's just one evidence that we're not talking about that.

But it is describing, but don't miss what it is describing. It's describing this extraordinary radical generosity among the household of faith.

[36 : 31] And again, the leaning toward this radical generosity should be a lean toward yes, early in our ministry several, 15 years ago or so.

I became aware of a young lady who had nine children and her husband left her. And I don't care how hard this woman worked.

She could never provide for her household. It was not a job that she could do and run that household that would ever provide for all of her needs.

And I'll never forget, there was an older couple, a young 60s, and they had a motor home that was underutilized.

And they sold that motor home and bought her a 12-passenger high-ceiling roof van, brand new.

[37 : 33] And they sold this thing that was underutilized and bought this woman a brand new 12-passenger van. And I think that radical generosity to those who have need, she had previously a 15-passenger van that had a hard time keeping going.

And I have experienced this. I've had my car repaired by others in the church.

But there is this radical generosity. So what I don't want to do is take this and say, it must look like this in the church. But so I want to take the principle of what is being described, not the specific example of what is being applied, and say this should be in every church, this radical generosity, especially of the household of faith.

What else do we see? A constant interaction with one another. A constant interaction with one another. Look with me in 46A and B, and day by day, attending to the temple together and breaking of bread in their homes.

What did they do? Day by day, every day. They were interacting with one another all the time. It wasn't just come on Sunday and then go home.

[39 : 00] It was day by day. We were going to gather together in the temple, and so they're probably up on Solomon's porch in that area of the temple compound, if you can imagine that in your mind's eye, because that's probably the only place they can hold 3,000 people.

But then they would gather together in homes and break bread together. And there was this constant interaction in the home.

Another descriptor, there was this spirit of awe and gladness and praise of God. Look with me in 43A, and awe came upon every soul.

There was this awe, and then 46 and 47. And they received their food with gladness and of generous hearts, praising God and praising God.

There is this spirit of awe. There is this gratitude and gladness about them, and they praise God.

[40 : 04] Keep in mind this political and spiritual climate that they were living in. Don't detach yourself from this. The Jews were living under the foreign occupation of Rome.

There was this oppressive taxation upon the people. Caiaphas, the one who schemed to have Jesus killed, is still the high priest.

The Sanhedrin is still functioning. The Jews think that this new Jesus following just needs to die out. Give it a little while, let it run its course, and these obnoxious people will just be done.

And despite the political and spiritual climate of antagonism and spiritual deadness around them, there is this awe. There is this gladness.

There is this praise of God that is just common among them. So as this pandemic legs on and political leaders make choices, national debt increases, more dash national debt is on its way, inflation is rising, school board meetings are getting heated.

[41 : 09] The culture is running out, supply chain issues, border concerns, vaccine mandates, rebellion is building in the many of the hearts. And a general fatigue over the whole thing is palpable.

And yet our circumstances are far better than they in the first century. And there is a spirit of awe about God at work.

And there is a gladness of heart and a gratitude for all things and a spirit of praise and worship of God that is unhindered compared to their surrounding circumstances.

I love this. The next descriptor is there is an attractive faith. There is an attractive faith having favor with all people we read in 47.

Not everyone loves the church and we will read in the next few chapters that be true. So what is attractive likely in John 13 we see that even those apart from Christ find it attractive that there is this love for one another that is in the church and they cared for one another.

[42 : 24] If there's an interesting thing in history, note in history, Emperor Julian who in the mid 300s A.D. angrily tried to stop the spread of Christianity in the Roman Empire.

He said the reason for its growth was due to the Christians' charity to the poor. This is a direct quote. He calls the Christians this empires galatians, these empires galatians, empires, these godless galatians, which what he is meaning is they're godless because they don't worship the pantheon of the gods of the Roman Empire.

But oh, believe me, they are very pious people. But anyway, he calls them the empires galatians, not only feed their own poor but ours as well.

And he continued to complain, they welcomed them with their agape feasts, there's this food that they share together when they gather, that attracted them and they attract children as well giving them cakes of bread to the needy.

There should be this attractiveness about the outworking of our faith that the world sees and that is palpable. And we should have favor, we ought to have favor with all people.

[43 : 46] Is your life in Christ worth emulating? Is there an attractiveness about your life to those who are without Christ who observe you?

Do you have an attractive faith? Last, and we'll conclude here, there is daily evangelism. Day by day, those who are being added to the faith, who are being saved.

Day by day. Do you know what that means? That there was daily evangelism taking place with this new, that the spirit of God has entwelled them, they are now spirit empowered witnesses, they are going to be witnesses in Jerusalem, Judea, Samaria and the ends of the world and they are sharing their faith.

They are excited about what this means for them and so they are sharing their faith and God is adding to their number day by day.

We have done something deliberate here at 4th and that is we try to maximize our Sunday morning gathering. Why is that? Notice we don't really have events on Sunday night, we don't have a midweek service on Wednesday, I'm not saying we will never add them, let me be clear on that, but we don't have events necessarily on Monday night, Tuesday night, Wednesday, Thursday, Friday night.

[45 : 06] Why is that? Is that because we are just too lazy to schedule anything? No. It's actually deliberate for this purpose. It's to give you margin in your schedule to say, would you invite someone over to your home?

Would you share, would you be a part of some PTO meeting at your school? Would you be a part of some committee at work? Would you be a part, would you coach a team?

Would you be involved in the community and we are allowing time in your schedule to do that? We are not trying to pack it out because we want you to be in the community sharing your faith and then we gather on Sunday morning, we want to maximize it so we have discipleship classes and we want to raise us up and train us up to do that even more and better and depend upon the Lord and be equipped to do so.

That's why we gather on Sunday morning. I'm not saying there aren't other things during the week that we don't do or we do, but please take advantage of that.

Please take advantage of that schedule. To conclude, what we just observed is the effect of the Spirit of God on believers in Christ.

[46 : 28] They devoted themselves to the apostles teaching, to the fellowship, to the prayers, to the fellowship. When they did this, these characteristics that we looked at occurred and I pray that we would have an attractive faith that would be actively evangelizing, inviting folks into our home, that our propensity would lean toward yes.

The inclination of our hearts would say yes. Lord, we love you and thank you. Thank you for this day. May our affections for you increase.

We are powerless to do any of this. We need your Spirit to empower us, to be your witnesses. Thank you for that gracious gift of your Holy Spirit.

We love you and may we be and grow into becoming a healthier church day by day. We love you, Lord. Amen.