4 Threads in the Local Church

Disclaimer: this is an automatically generated machine transcription - there may be small errors or mistranscriptions. Please refer to the original audio if you are in any doubt.

Date: 05 July 2015

Preacher: Bishop Dave Bena

[0:00] The Holy Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ according to Mark.! Glory to you, Lord Christ.

Jesus went away from there and came to his hometown, and his disciples followed him. And on the Sabbath he began to teach in the synagogue, and many who heard him were astonished, saying, Where did this man get these things? What is the wisdom given to him?
How are such mighty works done by his hands? Is not this the carpenter, the son of Mary, and brother of James, and Joseph, and Judas, and Simon? And are not his sisters here with us?
And they took offense at him. And Jesus said to them, A prophet is not without honor except in his hometown, and among his relatives, and in his household. And he could do no mighty work there, except that he laid his hands on a few sick people, and healed them. And he marveled, because of their unbelief. And he went about among the villages teaching.
The Gospel of the Lord. Praise to you, Lord Christ. Great is your faithfulness, O Lord our God. In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen. Please be seated.
[1:36] Amen. Okay, so it begins another transition for Holy Trinity. You are the church that takes a licking and keeps on ticking.

Amen. I have such admiration for you, for what you have gone through and continue to go through. God must have a great plan for you. Well, amid unpacking countless boxes in our new home, Mary Ellen and I not only are glad to worship God this morning, but to get out of the house.
Have you been there? Amen. Amen. Amen. As you may have read in the Constant Contact blurb that came out, this summer I'll be preaching a series of sermons on the basics of what the local church does.
What's the church for? During times of transition, we need to just step back a minute and find out who we are and what this is all about.
[2:52] And so we're going to preach on one verse all summer. Acts 2.42 Some of you have diamonds and some of you have diamonds on your ring.

And you know a diamond, you kind of look at it from a whole lot of aspects to see its beauty. We're going to look at that verse from a whole lot of aspects to see its beauty for us.
Now, my high school reunion is this month, but I feel like an imposter. I don't think I deserve to go because 40 pounds of me never went to that school.
So I might just stay here in Syracuse and use the 40 pounds in a powerful way. Now, the other thing is I like to preach sermons for about 12 minutes and I don't time them.
So maybe someone in here loves to time things. Do I have a hand? Forrest. Oh, there. Okay. All right. Are you ready? No.
[4:19] Start whenever you're ready because we're going to start this sermon right now. All right. Okay. All right. Thank you. So Acts 2.42 Today, we're going to give an overview of that verse.

We're going to talk about its historical context. Then we're going to talk about its importance for today. And then we'll apply it to Holy Trinity.
This is a continuation of our retreat last summer. Forrest and I are just continuing that retreat. And so let's just take up where we left off last summer and look at the historical significance of Acts 2.42. To get to that, we need to understand what was happening at the time. This verse came probably just days after the Pentecost sermon by Peter.
Remember, the tongues came and lopped on their heads, the believers, and they ran out in the street, preached the gospel. And at one point, people from that first congregation said, What do we do?
[5:26] It said, Luke says, they were cut to the heart. What shall we do, they said? And Paul said, Repent of your sins and believe on the Lord Jesus, be baptized, and you will receive the Holy Spirit.

Downloaded from https://yetanothersermon.host

That's what's been happening ever since. The problem they had, as you know, is 3,000 people decided to believe in Jesus at the end of that sermon.
Now, they had probably about 120 believers. They had to suddenly assimilate 3,000 members. Can you imagine if we had to do that? I'm a low-stress kind of guy, but that would be a high-stress situation.
So what they had to do, starting with Peter the leader, Peter the leader had to figure out, What do we do with these 3,000 believers, a lot of whom are not going to be here with us very long because they're heading out back to their homes.
They were there for the Pentecost feast. And so he came upon, through the guidance of the Holy Spirit, a four-legged church. They needed to know the Lord Jesus.
[6:43] And so he began to teach about Jesus as Messiah, as one who died and rose again, as one who ascended to heaven and sent down the Holy Spirit.

It was important that they learn that. And so it's called in that first leg, the teachings of the apostles. Where did they get their teaching?
From Jesus. So that first leg of the church was to share Jesus. These people, a lot of them didn't even know who Jesus was.
We have, for better or worse, some idea of who Jesus was. And hopefully we realize who he is today.
They had to learn that right from the beginning. The second leg that Peter, the leader, had to help integrate was what's called fellowship, koinonia.
[7:45] He had to teach them to be a community, a family. These people were from all over the world. A lot of them were going to stay in Jerusalem. They were going to make up that first church.

They had to know that fellowship means pulling together rather than pulling apart. They had to learn that, as we heard about the three musketeers, right?
One for all and all for one. That is the church. They had to learn that. That's the second leg. So we've got the teachings of the apostles. We've got the fellowship.
And the third thing they had to learn was what Luke described as Peter saying, they had to learn the breaking of the bread. We know that today as communion.
They had no earthly idea what communion was. Peter and the other leaders had to teach them about the last supper and how Jesus said, I am the bread.
[8:51] They had to learn how to receive Jesus into their hearts in a tangible way. They had to learn about worship. Now most of them were Jews, some devout, some nominal.

They had an idea of synagogue worship. And so when we'll talk about this in a couple of weeks, when the early Christian leaders put together a packet for worship, they took synagogue worship, they took the Lord's Supper, and they plomped it together.
Does that sound familiar? That's what we're doing today. They had to learn about worship. And then the last thing they had to learn, which was extremely important, was they had to learn the value of prayer.
We all know about prayer. They had an idea of prayer, but it was very formalized.
The closest they got to personal prayer was the Psalms, which is very good. But they didn't understand the things that we know about Thanksgiving, praise, confession, intercession, supplication, petition.
[10:07] They didn't know these things. They had to learn them. With those four legs, the early apostles built the church. And it was significant, because within a hundred years, that church was all over the map.

It had grown immeasurably. We don't know how to measure it. Thousands upon thousands of people all around the Mediterranean world, and even as far as India, maybe even to England, had heard the gospel.
And it was basically because of the church in its four-legged stance. So that's the first part, the historic significance.
Now, as they, remember, anybody ever watch Bonanza back in the old days? Yeah. Okay. And that's the way it happened. Moving west.
And we are west. And so it falls to us today. What's its importance for the church today? Well, we have a similarity with our early brothers and sisters back in that early church.

Downloaded from https://yetanothersermon.host

[11:23] You know what it is? We are moving into a pagan society. Have you noticed? Any god or gods is great today, and across the nation, they're all looked upon as equal.

The new movement is the atheist movement, which says, no gods are good. And we're going to do you in if you proclaim publicly your belief in a god.
Okay. That's a pagan society. All gods, no gods, whatever, is great. Lifestyles. You know, growing up in Schuylerville, New York, I don't remember all this stuff going on.
Today, whatever lifestyle grabs you is great. And in fact, whatever lifestyle you like, just, you can come to church. Most churches say, whatever your spouse looks like is fine with us.
And soon, it's going to be, whatever your spouses look like is fine with us. You know, there was a, there was a great cardinal in Chicago.
[12:40] He just died recently. He made a famous statement a couple of years ago. He said, I think that I will die in my bed, which he did. My successor will die in prison.

His successor will die a martyr. Now, that's pretty dire. And you know, when I eat my Cheerios in the morning, I don't think, what a terrible day this is going to be. But it's going to be a bumpy ride, brothers and sisters.
And the bottom line is, we have been counter-cultural. We're going to be more and more counter-cultural. Based on that, do you think it's important for the local church to be able to function in a biblical manner?
We need those four legs working equally for the church to function. We need to be ready for the people God is going to bring to us.
We need to be serious about the apostles' teaching, about the fellowship, about the breaking of the bread, and about the prayers. And so, each week, we'll highlight one of those legs to see why it's important for today's church.
[14:01] Most of us were raised in a situation where we just kind of went along, right? We went with the drift. And we didn't ever think much about it.

Most of us went to church on Sunday. We did our thing. We sang some hymns. We complained because we didn't know that new hymn. We listened to a sermon and we went home and continued with our life.
It's a different world today. It's time for the church to be serious. about church, about Jesus. Which brings us to that third point.
How much time we got? Two minutes. Perfect. Okay. What? Yeah. Two minutes. Okay. So, the last point, which is very important, is how does it apply to Holy Trinity?
Are we balanced? are you, and I'm not trying to accuse you or bring guilt on your head, but are you reading your scriptures every day? This church has a history of being serious about the word of God.
[15:14] it only can be serious if each of us takes it seriously. All right. How about fellowship for this church? Aren't we together? Now, in any family, I grew up in a family, I don't know about you, I grew up in a family, and in a family, people don't always get along, but they're always for each other.

That's where we need to be. And then the third, breaking of bread. Another wonderful thing about the history of this parish is its emphasis on praising God.
We need to be serious about that. And then the last, the prayers. I love the way you do prayers of the people. Your heart is in it.
You're talking to the Lord together. You see, God's doing a work here. We may be frustrated because we don't have a hundred people. There's going to be a hundred people.
But it's not about getting a hundred people tomorrow. It's about being a church that has the four legs firmly on the ground, on the floor. So that's where we are.
[16:25] Conclusion, verse 43. Anybody have a Bible? Read verse 43, would you? And fear came upon every soul, and many wonders and signs were done through the apostles.

And all who believed were together and had all things in common. Okay, that's good. That is what happens in the church that has a balanced leg, four legs, on the floor.
that's where we are. That's where we're going. We are preparing for the people to come. I'm going to have a moment of silent reflection.
We'll try each sermon to have just a silent minute for you and me, for us, to just address our Lord personally, to invite Jesus again to be Lord and Savior, to just let God love on us.

Downloaded from https://yetanothersermon.host

Okay, you ready? Amen. Silence.

Downloaded from https://yetanothersermon.host