

# The Apostles Teaching

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[ 0 : 00 ] Good morning. Return with me please to the Acts of the Apostles, chapter 2, reading from verse 37. Now, when they heard this, they were pierced in the heart and said to Peter and the rest of the apostles, brothers, what shall we do?

And Peter said to them, Repent and be baptized, every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins, and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.

For the promise is to you and to your children and to all that are far off, everyone whom the Lord our God shall call to him. And he testified with many other words and exhausted them, saying, Save yourselves from this crooked generation.

So those who received his word were baptized, and there were added that day about 3,000 souls. Amen. And they devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and fellowship, to the breaking of bread and the prayers.

Amen. Amen. The Lord had his blessing to that reading. May be to his praise and glory. During the time that Daniel's in the Sunday school, I'm going to start this series of three, three, which is about having an apostolic foundation based on they devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and fellowship, to the breaking of bread and the prayers.

[ 1 : 58 ] So this week concentrates on the apostles' teaching. Next week, God willing, deals with fellowship and the breaking of bread.

And the final week deals with the prayer life of the early church. So here we are in the Acts of the Apostles, which is the second volume of two volumes that Luke has written.

One of these was the gospel, and this is the Acts of the Apostles. At the very beginning of the Acts of the Apostles, he tells us that in the former treatise, i.e.

the gospel of Luke, I dealt with all that Jesus began to do and to teach. And the theme is carried on in the Acts of the Apostles, only that theme is now carried out by you and me.

Now, in this particular chapter, chapter 2, there's been a very positive reaction to the word of God preached by Peter, in that some 3,000 souls added to the church.

[ 3 : 23 ] And following this, they not only received his word, but were also baptized. So what we come to now in verse 42 is a very positive reaction to the ministry of the word, to the advice of Peter.

They devoted themselves. Now, let's think of what this means. The Greek verb here means to carry on with an action or to be devoted to an action.

It's used some 11 times in the New Testament, and 8 of those are in the Acts of the Apostles. So in actual fact, it's quite a favorite word with Luke.

The first time it appears in the Acts of the Apostles in chapter 1, verse 14. And all these, with one accord, devoted themselves to prayer.

Together with the woman and Mary, the mother of Jesus, and with his brothers. So following the ascension of Jesus to heaven, this company returned to the upper room.

[ 4 : 43 ] And with great unity, they devoted themselves to prayer. The result of which was one of the greatest movements of the Holy Spirit that had ever been experienced at that time.

Now, what does it mean to be devoted to prayer as far as these individuals were concerned? It means that whatever differences they might have had, they put them to one side.

And they became united in this endeavor. So that they would receive all that God had to give them.

Now, going again to Acts 1, verses 4 and 5, this is where we read what Jesus says. There's a promise.

And the instruction is that they are to wait for that promise. And you know, there's something very fundamentally great about that statement.

[ 6 : 14 ] Because in the Bible, there are thousands of promises. And perhaps in your reading of Scripture, you feel that God has made that promise to you.

Well, according to this, you're not only required to say amen to the promises of God, but you're required to believe and to wait.

And that's what they did. They waited for the coming of the Holy Spirit. Why did they do this? Again, in verse 8 of chapter 1, Jesus says to them this, You shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you, and you shall be my witnesses in Jerusalem and in all Judea and Samaria to the end of the earth.

So the reason that they are required to wait is that they have to have the power to enable them to carry out this task.

So what's happened here? They've got a vision of gospel preaching. They've got a vision of taking this fantastic message, which they had experienced, to the ends of the known world.

[ 7 : 47 ] Because of this, they devoted themselves to prayer. The individuals who did this are noted in verse 13 of chapter 1.

When they had entered, they went up to the upper room where they were staying. Peter and John and James and Andrew, Philip and Thomas, Bartholomew and Matthew, James the son of Alphaeus, Simon the zealot, and Judas the son of James.

Now all of these came from different backgrounds. Take, for example, the second last name, Simon the zealot.

What does that mean? It means he was a nationalist. He was in the party that wanted rid of Rome out of Judea completely.

So he had issues. Because perhaps many of the others didn't have that kind of aim. But they put that difference to one side. And became united in prayer.

[ 9 : 01 ] Not only the apostles, but also the women who had followed Jesus with his mother and his brothers. So when we come to Acts 2.42, it's not just that select group that are there, but indeed a greater group has now become attracted because they have just recently had the faith to believe.

Now in Acts 2, verses 9 to 11, you will find a great list of nations from Crete, from Mesopotamia, from Rome, travelers, proselytes, Alexandria, the whole of the world.

It is they who have come together. They've heard what Peter has said relative to the gospel. And they've received it.

And it's they who have now devoted themselves to all that Peter had said and explained to them. Now, at the very beginning of my reading, in verse 37, it becomes clear that they had become convicted by the Holy Spirit.

And they had seen that they had sinned against God by taking part in the crucifixion. Verse 37. When they heard this.

[ 10 : 37 ] What's the this? All that Peter had said about the coming of Jesus and what he did and the resurrection. They were pierced in the heart.

Now, if you want an illustration of what that meant, the same verb is used in John 19, 34, after the death of Jesus, where soldiers are told to go and break the legs of the two that were still alive. And also, when they came to Jesus, they found he was dead already. And so a soldier took a spear and pierced the side of Jesus when water and blood came out.

So what is being indicated in verse 37 is the fact that they were convicted by the Holy Spirit.

Now, they didn't, this is not some kind of reaction that flowed from any kind of emotional state. Jesus himself said, Jesus himself said, in John 16, 8, when the Spirit comes, he will convict, reprove the world because of sin.

[ 12 : 03 ] That is a fact. God's word is alive. It convicts of sin. What shall we do, they said.

And he says, repent and be baptized, every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ, for the forgiveness of your sins, and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.

And as a result of that, they became devoted to the apostles' teaching. And this devotion wasn't an emotional result.

This was also something that had been brought about by the ministry of the Spirit. Devoted. So let's move on from that and let's think of the content.

They devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and fellowship, to the breaking of bread, and the prayers. If you were to sum up in one sentence what they believed, it would be this.

[13:18] Jesus Christ is Lord to the glory of God the Father. That was their revolutionary belief. And revolutionary it was.

because what had happened was Peter had said this, let all the house of Israel therefore know assuredly that God has made him both Lord and Christ, this Jesus whom you crucified. Jesus Christ is Lord to the glory of God the Father. and if he's Lord, he can do anything. So how are we to understand this apostles' teaching? The teaching involves the mission of Jesus, his death on the cross, his resurrection from the dead, his ascension exaltation to God's right hand, and the fact that one day he will come again to the Mount of Olives as Messiah and King. And we go to Peter's sermon and we look at verse 22. Here he speaks about the mission of Jesus. Men of Israel hear these words.

[14:45] Jesus of Nazareth, a man attested to you by God with mighty works and wonders and signs which God did through him in your midst.

Here is the human Jesus. Here is what he did. He taught. He did many mighty works. For example, in John 11, at the tomb of Lazarus, he raised him from the dead.

That is a mighty work. So much so was it a mighty work. If you read the Gospel of John, you find that the Pharisees were determined to put Lazarus to death as well because because of him, many Jews had gone away.

believed in Jesus. Let me move on to verse 23, the death of Jesus. This Jesus delivered up according to the definite plan and foreknowledge of God, you crucified and killed by the hands of lawless men.

So the coming of Jesus is directly in the plan of God. But the problem is, says Peter, you frustrated the plan of God because you took part in the crucifixion.

[16:17] You crucified and killed him by the hands of lawless men. Normally, from a human point of view, that would have been the end of the story.

But far from being the end, it's the beginning. His resurrection from the dead. Verse 24, But God raised him up, having loosed the pangs of death because it was not possible for him to be held by it. Now, when you read the sermon through, you find that from this point on, Peter is concentrating on the resurrection from the dead, the message of Easter. And to show that it's in the plan of God, he quotes from Psalm 16, verses 9 to 11.

And the point of the quotation is simply this. It could only be fulfilled by the person of Jesus. Since the author of the psalm, namely David, the king, has both died and has been buried. So therefore, the truth of it cannot apply to him.

[17:32] He's still in the grave. but it does apply to the Lord Jesus. Verse 31. He foresaw and spoke of the resurrection of Christ that he was not abandoned to Hades, nor did his flesh, his body, see decay.

The term Hades is just a Greek term that refers to the location of where all the dead are. and Peter is saying Jesus is not there.

He's also saying his body never saw decay. And Peter goes on and says, I may say to you confidently of the patriarch David that he has both died and was buried and his tomb is with us to this very day.

David the king has rotted away. But Jesus the king is still with us. He's risen from the dead. His ascension and exaltation verse 33. Being therefore exalted at the right hand of God and having received from the Father the promise of the Holy Spirit, he has poured out this which you now see and hear.

[19:04] So the proof of what I'm telling you says Peter is the fact of the coming of the Spirit. But they also have another proof and it's a personal one.

Verse 32 this Jesus God has raised up and of that we are all witnesses.

How were the witnesses? There was nobody present other than the angels when Jesus rose from the dead. But what he's saying we are witnesses to, we are witnesses to the truth of the gospel because each one of us have received it for herself.

And it has changed our lives. And if you will but receive it it will change you as well. This in simplicity is the teaching of the apostles.

it is this that they have devoted themselves to because it is a miraculous teaching. The whole of the Bible is based on the fact that God can do whatever he wants to do.

[ 20 : 35 ] He can break the laws of nature. He brought forth Jesus from the dead. God and so we find that those who received his word were baptized and they were added that day about 3,000 souls.

Now we now move on to consider the application of all this. They devoted themselves to the apostles teaching and fellowship to the breaking of bread and prayers. And the application is to be seen in the way that the early believers received and applied the word of God to their own lives.

And so you see this in verse 43. Fear came upon every soul and many wonders and signs were done through the apostles.

Now the Greek noun here that's being used described as a translated fear is phobos. While it is the case that the term can mean fear in the sense of terror, it could, and likely in this instance, it means reverence.

[ 21 : 56 ] So the concept of the outside world having reverence towards these new believers, you can see it in verse 47.

They were praising God and having favor with all the people. So in other words, the way that this company had responded and the way that their lives now glowed with the message of Jesus produced this atmosphere of reverence, even amongst those that didn't believe.

Now if we go to the next chapter, which deals with the healing of a lame man, you can see the same thing. And all the people saw him, that's the lame man, walking and praising God, and recognized him as one of those who sat for arms at the beautiful gate of the temple.

And they were filled with wonder and amazement at what had happened to him. So again, it's this atmosphere of reverence, amazement, appreciation, somehow, with people who were not necessarily members of the infant church.

Reverence. The second thing that can be said about the application of this teaching is they all developed a social conscience towards other members who were not as well off as they were.

[ 23 : 41 ] So verses 44-45, and all who believed were together and had all things in common. And they sold their possessions and good and distributed them to all as any had need.

An act of kindness, an appreciation of other people's positions. It's really the application of the commandment, you shall love your neighbor as yourself.

Because if you don't want to be in need, neither do you want your neighbor to be in need. And this came to be involved not only with ordinary members, but also with those who were involved in the leadership of the church.

In this case, I'm thinking of Barnabas, who at a later stage was involved in missionary work with Paul himself. And at verses 36 and 37 of chapter 4, we read this.

Thus Joseph, who was surnamed Barnabas, which means son of encouragement, a Levite, a native of Cyprus, sold a field which belonged to him and brought the money and laid it at the apostles' feet.

[ 25 : 05 ] Barnabas was a convert. He was a Jew. He was part of the Levitical family who assisted with the worship of God in the temple.

But although he had this important post, he was among the first of those who acted in an unselfish way towards his fellow believers.

Later in the Acts of the Apostles, he gets this testimony for he was a good man, full of the Holy Spirit and of faith.

We've seen that his name means son of encouragement and he certainly lived up to that name. The final response is seen in verse 46.

Day by day, attending the temple together and breaking bread in their homes, they partook of food with glad and generous hearts.

[ 26 : 12 ] So the way that they continued in faith was absolutely consistent with what they believed. There was no difference. They believed that Jesus Christ was Lord.

And so there they were, attending the temple, praising God, having favor with all the people.

Following the ascension of Jesus, the text tells us that the disciples returned to Jerusalem with great joy and were continually in the temple praising God.

So here we have it. This work of the Spirit came about because they had listened to the message of the gospel.

And that message is, as you and I know, that Jesus Christ died in your place and mine.

He is risen and his presence is with us. It produces this atmosphere of reverence and adoration, salvation, even amongst those who don't believe.

[ 27 : 33 ] And the final thing the chapter says in verse 47 is, the Lord added to their number day by day those who are being saved.

So here this is what has happened with this devotion. It has come about by the ministry of the Spirit and it has produced great results.

And God willing, next week we'll look at fellowship and the breaking of bread as the first of these results. In the meantime, thank you for listening.

May God bless you richly. We'll stand and sing our final hymn, Gracious and Eternal God. We are dependent on your word for our spiritual growth.

By grace we receive it, believe it, and ask you to fulfill it in our lives. For Christ's sake. Amen.

[ 28 : 53 ] Father think they're good■■ who will breathe.

Amen.