

Bible Study for Pentecost Sunday May 19, 2024

Our text for this Sunday is:

- Acts 2:41-47

Where are we and what is going on? Context recap:

- Jesus rose from the dead and spent 40 days with His disciples, preparing them to go and proclaim the Gospel to all nations (Acts 1:1-5)
- Jesus commissioned His disciples, promised to send His Holy Spirit, and ascended into heaven to be enthroned at the right hand of God (Acts 1:6-11).
- After Jesus' ascension, the disciples, 120 in all, gathered in prayer, awaiting the promise of the Holy Spirit (Acts 1:12-26)
- Shortly after Jesus' ascension, God sent the Holy Spirit upon the disciples as they were praying. When this happened, Peter stood in the streets of Jerusalem and proclaimed the Gospel, and on that day about 3,000 people believed in Christ and were baptized. This was the birth of the church (Acts 2:1-41).
- In our text today, Luke, the author of Acts, gives us a snapshot of the life of these earliest Christians (Acts 2:41-47).

Read Acts 2:41-47 The Message

Note: As you read this passage, try to list as many things as you can in the text that describe what this community of people were like and what they did together

41-42 That day about three thousand took him (Peter) at his word, were baptized and were signed up. They committed themselves to the teaching of the apostles, the life together, the common meal, and the prayers.

43-45 Everyone around was in awe—all those wonders and signs done through the apostles! And all the believers lived in a wonderful harmony, holding everything in common. They sold whatever they owned and pooled their resources so that each person's need was met.

46-47 They followed a daily discipline of worship in the Temple followed by meals at home, every meal a celebration, exuberant and joyful, as they praised God. People in general liked what they saw. Every day their number grew as God added those who were saved.

Among all the things Luke tells us about the early church, what stands out most about their life and priorities? Why? What do you like about this early church example? What feels challenging to understand?

It has been said that the three values of modern American culture are: individualism, consumerism, and materialism. From Luke's description, what would you say the values of the earliest Christians were?

Does this vision/version of the church feel do-able/attainable? Why or why not?

If you could play Sim Church (this is a computer game where you get to build something the way *you* want it to be), what type of church would you create? Sky is the limit in terms of finances/resources including building/no building...etc.

What might it mean for you (or our church) to take more seriously the example of fellowship found in Acts 2:41-47? What do you think it means to do *life together*? How might you/we do this?

It is clear from the text that the things these followers were *devoted* to were things that were done *together*, which means that these early believers were devoted to togetherness.

- What do you think devotion to togetherness looks like for our Shepherd community?
- What are common reasons you might miss a group gathering?
- In your opinion, what is a good reason for missing a group gathering, and what is a bad reason?
- How can we cultivate a devotion to togetherness without it feeling burdensome or legalistic?

Have you ever been hurt by a church? Without naming the church or people, how has your past hurt affected your current church experience or expectations? How might it have affected your willingness to togetherness? Do you think anyone got hurt in this foundational church example in our Acts text?

When was the last time you hosted a church friend over to your home for a meal? Can you come up with one name you want to invite this month to dinner? If you don't feel comfortable doing it at home, could you consider taking them out for a meal?

If everyone did this in our church community, what might this gesture/action do for our togetherness?