

The Church – Part 6 The Book of Acts

In our study so far on the subject of God's church, we've looked at several things, but the last two or three sections that we've looked at, we've looked in the book of Matthew chapter 16 verse 18. It says: *And I say also unto thee, That thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it.*

Of course, Jesus is the rock, not Peter. Jesus is the foundation. He's the one, I believe, that laid the foundation for the church as He walked upon this earth, and He's not only the foundation of the church; He's the foundation of our salvation and that is who the church is made up of are those people who have found salvation through Jesus Christ.

And we looked at some things, and let me recall to your attention some of these things. We saw that God's church was a visible church. Acts 2:41 talks about that. And we know that they came together on the Day of Pentecost and God added to the church about three thousand souls on that day, on the Day of Pentecost. And this church, of course, was located in Jerusalem.

Then we looked at some actions that took place. It says, *And they continued stedfastly in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship, and in breaking of bread, and in prayers.* These people were steadfast; they were faithful; they had fellowship one with another; they had one common goal, and I believe that was to help other people come to a saving knowledge of Jesus Christ. They wanted to serve God, and the people also remembered. They remembered the death, burial, and resurrection of our Lord as they went from house to house, breaking of bread. I believe

they ate together, but I believe more important than that, they also observed the Lord's Supper during this time of togetherness and time of fellowship. They observed the Lord's Supper, according to Acts 2:42, 46.

Not only did they remain steadfast and have fellowship and they remembered the Lord, but they prayed. Acts 2:42 says that they continued in prayers.

And then, we also looked at some of the attitudes of the people who were there, and one of these attitudes was that they agreed. They continued daily, and this means that they were consistent. They agreed with one another, and as a church, there was no arguing, no backbiting, or disagreement as to who was in charge of His church. And, of course, God was in charge, and that's the way it is to be today in God's local church. He is to be in charge, and if we remember that, then we're not going to have as many problems as we see happening in local churches today.

But notice also the people were thankful in Acts 2:46. It said they did eat their meat with gladness. They were happy. They were thankful. And as they were eating, Jesus took bread, it tells us in Matthew 26:26, and He blessed the bread and blessed the cup as he gave it, and He gave thanks and He gave it to His disciples and they were happy.

They didn't understand everything that was going on at that time, but they were with their Lord at that time, and no doubt in my mind and my heart, they were happy to be with their Lord. They didn't really know that within a matter of just a few hours that Jesus Christ would be hanging on a cross, His blood coming

out of His body, and that He would die on that cross for the sins of the world.

If you've never trusted Jesus as your Savior, I want you to know that He died for you, but you must receive that. You must receive what He did for you. He's not going to force it on you. You must receive what He wants to give you, and that is eternal life. And it comes only through Jesus Christ through His shed blood.

But notice some people, their attitudes. They agreed and they were thankful and they also had praise to God. Verse 47 of Acts 2 says, *Praising God and having favour with all the people and the Lord added to the church daily such as should be saved.* And daily added to the church... He added to the Jerusalem church... the visible church. And we need to stop and think about that, because there is no such thing as an invisible church. Christ died for the church, for His people. If you've been born again, you need to belong to a local visible church. You need to gather yourself together and realize that God wants you to take part in a local congregation, just as these people did in the early church at Jerusalem.

We also looked at some results that took place in this early church. There was fear. Why? Because the Holy Spirit was present and there were signs and wonders done by the apostles. People knew that there was something supernatural taking place and they really wanted to know what was happening because there were thousands of people saved because of the reverential fear that came upon them through the power and the presence of the Holy Spirit.

And notice, there was also unity there. it says in Acts 2:44, *And all that believe were together.* They were joined together for the same cause. They were united and this means that, as they gathered together, they drew

strength from this. They helped each other grow in the grace and knowledge of Jesus Christ. They told each other and reminded each other how that the Savior had died. He bled and He died, but He rose again on that third day for them, and we need to uphold each other in this and give each other confidence that one day Jesus is coming back for us as He said He would in the book of I Thessalonians chapter 4.

Notice something else. They had all things common. They shared what they had and God is no respecter of persons. In other words, they shared. They helped each other. And more than that, they helped other people, as well. They sold possessions. The Bible doesn't say they sold all of their possessions, because we read and we study how that people who retained certain things such as a home or whatever, they used that for the glory of God by allowing others to come in and they actually took care of people who came from out of town. They helped people who didn't have as much as they did, and they gave them a roof over their head, and they gave them sustenance so they could live and so that they could have fellowship with those folks at that local church... in that local church in Jerusalem.

And notice the church helped when needed. They gave to all men. First, I believe they gave to those in the church who were in need, and then they went out and they helped other people around that area. The Bible says they went throughout all the world later and they gave out the Gospel to everybody, and they helped everybody find Jesus Christ as Savior. I believe that when we think about them giving people something, we often think of simply food or something like that, but I believe it goes deeper than that. The most important thing that we can give someone is the plan of salvation. Where will they spend eternity? Where will their

eternal home by? Will it be in Heaven? Or will it be in Hell? And these people knew that there was a decision that had to be made, and they wanted people to make the right decision, and that right decision would be to receive Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior.

Have you done that? Have you received Christ? Do you know Him as your Savior today? These people back in the early church at Jerusalem, they even speak out today through God's Word and they want you to know Jesus Christ as Savior, just as they did back in this early church in Jerusalem. You need to bow your head where you're at and say, "Lord, forgive me of my sin. Come into my heart. I receive You as my Savior."

And if you are saved, you need to do what the early church did. You need to be going out and helping others find Jesus Christ. You need to join yourself with a Bible-believing, Bible-preaching, Bible-teaching local church where you can grow in the grace and knowledge of Jesus Christ.

The early church helped others. The early church was respected. They had favor with all the people, according to Acts 2:47. That doesn't mean that everybody liked them. That means that the people looked and they saw something different. There was something there that they could not refute, that these people were different, and they had in many instances... these other people would look at the church people and say, "I want what they've got." They had favor with all the people. The church even had the respect of those who had received Christ as Savior during that time. Notice in Acts 2:47, *Praising God and having favour with all the people; and the Lord added to the church daily such as should be saved.* All of this worked together so that people could be saved.

Notice the Lord here. The Lord added to the church. As we read in Acts 2:47, as I've just read it, the Lord added to the church daily. This is the first mention of the word "church" in the book of Acts. And I want you to know that the Lord added to the church. We do not save souls. The Lord does. We do not add to the church. The Lord does. Programs, music, activities, clubs, fellowship, inviting to the local church building, feeding the poor, helping the needy and so forth and so forth does not add to God's church. However good those things mentioned are, only God can add to His church. Nothing should ever take the place of or have preeminence over the preaching of the Word of God. Notice in Romans 1:15-16, it says: *¹⁵So, as much as in me is, I am ready to preach the gospel to you that are at Rome also. ¹⁶For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek.*

First Corinthians 1:18 says, *For the preaching of the cross is to them that perish foolishness, but unto us which are saved it is the power of God.* And I Corinthians 1:21 says, *For after that in the wisdom of God the world by wisdom knew not God: it pleased God by the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe.*

Well, notice the results of this local church in Jerusalem. Lives were changed. In Acts 17:6, it says, *And when they found them not, they drew Jason and certain brethren unto the rulers of the city, crying, These that have turned the world upside down are come hither also.* The church at Jerusalem, a supernatural church, because they let God do a supernatural work through them.

Is God working in your life? Is God working through you today? You can have that power. We may not see three thousand people saved

in one day, but God rejoices over one soul that says, "Jesus, come into my heart. I receive You as my Savior." When we do that, we're not only honoring Jesus Christ; we're honoring God because He sent His Son to die for us and He's going to honor you by saying, "Welcome home, my son." One of these days when you leave this earth, if you've trusted Jesus Christ, He will say, "Welcome home, son or daughter, because you have received Jesus as Your Savior."

Won't you do that now? Bow your head and ask Him to come into your heart. And if you are saved, won't you bow your head and say, "God, forgive me for not serving you. Help me to serve you more from this point on in my life for Jesus' sake."

Let's pray.

Father, thank You for the privilege of prayer. Thank You for the privilege of being able to speak Your Word. Thank You for the privilege of being able to read Your Word and share it. Thank You for those listening. I pray for that person who needs to be saved. May that person say, "Jesus, come into my heart right now," and for the saved, may You strengthen, lead, and guide for Christ's sake. Amen.

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