

**Acts 2:41-47 - Evangelism
True North
Core Values Series 2018**

41 Then those who gladly received his word were baptized; and that day about three thousand souls were added to them. 42 And they continued steadfastly in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship, in the breaking of bread, and in prayers. 43 Then fear came upon every soul, and many wonders and signs were done through the apostles. 44 Now all who believed were together, and had all things in common, 45 and sold their possessions and goods, and divided them among all, as anyone had need. 46 So continuing daily with one accord in the temple, and breaking bread from house to house, they ate their food with gladness and simplicity of heart, 47 praising God and having favor with all the people. And the Lord added to the church daily those who were being saved.

Have you ever had a bad experience sharing your faith with someone?

A) I have had several – probably the worst – down at the Oceanside pier

**B) A friend of mine and myself were down there one night witnessing –
1) looking for opportunities to share Jesus**

**C) We saw this young woman probably in her mid 20's – standing on the pier over looking the ocean.
1) She was Crying – I thought – she looks like someone who needs to hear about the love of Jesus.**

D) So we approached her – started talking to her –

1) A few minutes later her Marine Boyfriend or Husband – came walking up – noticeably angry {pick up

He thought I was trying to pick up on his girl.

A) What you doing talking to my woman?

B) He threatened to throw me off the Pier!

1) Not a great experience – It took a while before I attempted to go witnessing at the Pier.

C) Most Christians agree – Sharing our faith is important

1) But statistics show that very few actually do it? – Why?

Reasons why Christians don't share their faith

A) #1 Bad experiences – Like me turn down too many times – true for some

B) #2 Fear – Fear of rejection – fear of losing a friend – fear of not knowing what to say – Maybe....

C) #3 Political correctness – Not politically correct to say that Jesus is the only way.

D) Suppose there are some believers who are more concerned about being PC

1) than they are concerned about the lost – NOT YOU!

#4 Don't know how- Sure this is true of some – how do we get started – not a problem for most of you.

#5 No burden for the lost – Too self absorbed – too focused on their own problems –

A) Again not the case for most of you – hear your prayers –

B) prayer sheets full of names obvious concern for the lost.

#6 Too busy

A) I am sure that this is one that many struggle with – it is not that we don't know how – or afraid

B) The problem for many is our days just get swallowed up by life and responsibilities/ pressures

1) The result is we miss the opportunities that are right in front of us on a regular basis

C) Today – I am hoping that we can learn something from the early church – that will inspire us to be more affective and regular in Sharing JESUS

If you are new or visiting with us today – we are at the end of a 7 week series – True North – Core Values of the early Church

A) Six priorities and practices that kept focused – that kept them pointed in the right direction

B) Six priorities and practices that helped them make a RADICAL IMPACT IN THEIR WORLD.

1)Core Value #6 They were an evangelistically minded Church!

C)Please note the end of V.47 again **And the Lord added to the church daily those who were being saved.**

D)The early Church was a Contagious church! – There was something attractive about these people.

1)The Lord was adding daily to their number – Why? What was so different about them?

Our text gives us some insight into what was so attractive about them!

46 So continuing daily with one accord in the temple, and breaking bread from house to house, they ate their food with gladness and simplicity of heart, 47 praising God and having favor with all the people.

1st Their lives were marked by gladness!

A)There was a joy that they possessed in Jesus. Joyful people are attractive

B)Some might argue – but my natural tendency is not Joyful!

1)My face – not smiling I look mad.

C)Here is what I have found - Joy is connected to what we focus on.

In John 15 Jesus shared this illustration with his disciples

A)I am the Vine you are the branches – just as the branch receives it's life and nourishment from the Vine – So too you with me

B)So you need to Abide in me – abide in my word – like the branch abides in the Vine – the result is fruit

1)So too if you abide in me and in my word – You will bear fruit and your life will glorify God

C)Jesus finished up that analogy with this statement - ¹¹“These things I have spoken to you, that My joy may remain in you, and that your joy may be full. – John 15:11

D)Well the Disciples took that to heart – seen that in these first 5 Core Values – V.42 They continued steadfastly

1)Continually devoting themselves to

1. Apostles Doctrine: Teaching that revolved around Jesus

2. Fellowship: - Sharing in common the new life they had in Jesus

3. Breaking bread: Communion - Remembering the death and Resurrection of Jesus

4. Prayer: Their lives were marked by this dependency on Jesus

5. Worship: V.47 Daily - praising God – rejoicing in the who Jesus was – what He did for them

Joy is connected to our relationship with Jesus.

A)Understanding who we are in Christ – Our identity in Jesus – Enemies to sons and daughters

B)Our future with Jesus – Hell to heaven

1)Our purpose in Jesus – Lived for self – now live to glorify God – partners in his mission

C)No wonder their lives were marked by gladness/ JOY!

1)Their whole sense of being had been radically changed by Jesus

D)As we consider our Identity in Christ – our Future with Christ and our Purpose for Christ –

1)Our hearts filled with Joy as well!

What made them so attractive?

1st Lives marked by Gladness.

2nd A Simplicity of Heart.

A)Simplicity is the opposite of complicated-

B)Complicated people are not very attractive – they can be exhausting

1)they are always fretting over things – always worried – stressed

C)Or always making a big deal of things that are not supposed to be a big deal.

C)But when you are around someone who has a simplistic approach to life –They are ENGAGING!

1)There is a calm in simplicity

D)Simplicity of heart – speaks of an honesty – and a Humility

1)Speaks of being without guile or duplicity. Not Hypocritical

E)Simplicity of heart is GENUINE – A heart that is non threatening and very relational

That simplicity of heart led to the attractiveness of the early Church.

A)People were curious about them – what made them tick – they seemed different

B)The early church understood that their purpose was to be salt and light.

13 “You are the salt of the earth; but if the salt loses its flavor, how shall it be seasoned? It is then good for nothing but to be thrown out and trampled underfoot by men. 14 “You are the light of the world. A city that is set on a hill cannot be hidden. 15 Nor do they light a lamp and put it under a basket, but on a lampstand, and it gives light to all who are in the house. 16 Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works and glorify your Father in heaven. Matthew 5:13-15

C)Light needs to be seen – don’t hide – don’t isolate 1)don’t form a Christian commune separated from the world!

Salt – used healing, preserving – purifying –

A)For salt to be affective it has to be applied – can’t stay in the salt shaker

B)For us to be salt – we have to be willing to interact with unsaved people.

C)We have to be intentional about Building relationships with unsaved people.

1)We have to be willing to do that!

D)We have to genuinely care for people who don’t know JESUS!

What made them so attractive?

1st Lives marked by Gladness.

2nd A Simplicity of Heart.

3rd Result: #3 Having favor with all men!

A)Now that is a broad statement – because we know they were hated by many – **Jesus told them that would be the case**

B)They were greatly persecuted by the religious crowd and later the Roman empire

C)But on a broad scale – because of their Joy and simplicity of heart –

1)the early church as a whole was well liked

D)I think the same should be said of the church today – Positive impact in a community

One way - Christians need to be known for what we are for and not for what they are against.

A)Unfortunately – often the opposite is the case We are known more for what we are against

B)Many Christians are always complaining about life – complaining about culture

1)Complaining about the Politics

C)Sometimes I get encouragement to be more political

1)Jesus didn’t do that

He lived during a time when Roman oppression was at an all time high.

A)Life was hard – most people distained the Govt.

B)Not only was Roman oppression high but so was Roman decadence.

1)Theirs was a highly hedonistic culture.

C)Sexual immorality was rampant – Homosexuality was accepted and practiced

The interesting thing is that Jesus didn’t make any of that his Focus – His focus was on People

A)His focus was on hearts – His focus was not on REFORM but redemption

B)He knew that society changes when individuals in society get their hearts right with God!

C)So he encouraged his followers to preach not REFORM but redemption –

1)the gospel message – change hearts

D)When a person’s heart gets changed – so does their morals

1)So does their outlook on life

E)His message was simple: Repent turn from sin and turn to the living God – Salvation of your souls

It is that example as a Pastor that I try to follow!

A)Not going to use this platform to espouse my opinion on Politics

B)I am going to encourage you to vote and vote according to scripture not your wallet.

1)Republicans, Democrats and independents in our church.

C)You are not going to hear my opinion on immigration – I have an opinion.

1)but I am not going to share that here, not the place. And my opinion might be wrong,

D)but the reality is THIS because of immigration- there are new people in our communities that Jesus loves – He died for

E)He has placed them in our sphere of influence to reach. So that is what I focus on.

I am pro life, because the Bible is pro life.

A)So I am against abortion. I support people who are pro life!

B) but my heart breaks for the young men and women who have had abortions,

1)and will do anything in my power to communicate to them –

C)that there is forgiveness/ freedom from the guilt.

People all throughout this city/ county are dealing with the ramifications and consequences of their sin

A)My heart is filled with compassion for them because I know what can fill the void – JESUS

B)How do we have favor? How do we become known for what we are for instead of what we are against

C)View all people the same.

1)We don't see color, Sex, gender, but as a person who has been uniquely created in the image of God.

D)That Jesus loves, died for, Jesus has a plan for.

1)People all around us are hurting and carrying baggage- Jesus is the answer.

Jesus told his followers – they will know you are Christians by your love!

A)The early church though not perfect stood in stark contrast to the Religious stuffiness and Hypocrisy that was prevalent

B)They were loving – they were free – and it was an attraction

C)We experienced a similar thing when we started going into Russia and Eastern Europe 28 yrs ago

1)Shortly after the fall of Communism –

D)now it wasn't that there was no Christian presence in those places their were.

E)But in many ways – it was more Religious than Real

1)PACIR – ice cold – Subo – we can't go there

We brought the simplicity of Jesus – we brought relationship and not religion – Experienced – Having favor

A)Easier back then – American Novelty – Kaluga – 2500

B)The American Novelty has worn off – but God is still working – Still on the move

C)1989 No CC churches in Russia – today over 30

D)Over 100 CC now in Europe – including 25 in Germany – 20+ Hungary – 11 in Italy

It is an exciting time to be a Christian! – Not an easy time but an exciting time.

A)Not easy because our world is full of a lot of contradiction and confusion right now.

B)Spend a few minutes on your social media feed, and you'll see just how lost and broken we are right now.

1)Many people suggest that we are living in a Post modern – post Christian society

C)True Our culture is changing every day, leading to an endless list of new challenges and questions for the Church,

But here's the thing: God isn't phased by it.

A)He's not sitting back wondering how this "post-Christian" thing is going to play out.

B)He's still the same, and His plan hasn't changed.

1)I don't know if you've checked your Bibles lately, but Matthew 16:16-19 tells us that nothing—not even the gates of hell—shall prevail against the mission and people of God.

C)Though our world is changing, our purpose hasn't.

1)He has put us in this time & place with a purpose,

D)Our world is as ripe as ever with opportunity to proclaim the good news of the Gospel.

Close today give you 4 simple ways to have a greater impact with lost people.

- 1. Pray for people you know who don't know Jesus**
- 2. Build relationships with them – ask if they have any spiritual believes.**
- 3. Look for opportunities to show love and kindness**
- 4. Look for opportunities to share the gospel.**