

Acts 2:42-47

The Priority of the Early Church

40 And with many other words he testified and exhorted them, saying, "Be saved from this perverse generation." 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 apostles⁴⁵ 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.

Pray

Tonight we are continuing our Church on Fire series looking at what made the early church so impactful

A) #1 Power of the early church –
#2 The Prayer life of the early church

B) Tonight we are looking at the Priorities of the early church- what were they devoted to!

C) V.42 They continued steadfastly – CSB They devoted themselves to.....

Their Devotion was to 6 things.

A) Doctrine – teaching the word
Fellowship
Breaking in bread – Communion
Prayer
Praise
Preaching

B) Tonight I want to consider how those six things played out in the life of the early church

C) But before we go there – I want to zero in on v.43 and sort of set the stage for what was happening

V.43 Then Fear came upon every soul – again the CSB is helpful – Everyone was filled with awe

A) So They were all awestruck -

43 Everyone was filled with awe, and many wonders and signs were being performed through the apostles. CSB

B) This is what I find to be very interesting: It says they were filled awe and THEN it says and many wonders and signs were done through the apostles.

C) I think we would expect that to read this way – and many wonders and signs were done through the apostles.

D) Then and everyone was filled with awe

But the fact that the Holy Spirit inspired Luke to put it the other way is intriguing to me.

A) What was filling them with Awe?

44 Now all who believed were together, and had all things in common

³² Now the multitude of those who believed were of one heart and one soul; neither did anyone say that any of the things he possessed was his own, but they had all things in common. ³³ And with great power the apostles gave witness to the resurrection of the Lord Jesus. And great grace was upon them all. ³⁴ Nor was there anyone among them who lacked; for all who were possessors of lands or houses sold them, and brought the proceeds of the things that were sold, ³⁵ and laid them at the apostles' feet; and they distributed to each as anyone had need. Acts 4:32-35

Ch. 2:44 and 4:32 – they had All things in common – that is such a powerful statement

A) Really? All things in common – think about this group the group at Pentecost

B) Gathered to hear Peter preach because they heard them speaking in tongues – they knew V.7 - "Look, are not all these who speak Galileans?" ⁸ And how is it that we hear, each in our own language in which we were born? ⁹ Parthians {Persian-Iran} and Medes Mt area outside of Iran and Elamites Tigris valley area also near Iran (So you have Mt pp – valley pp), those dwelling in Mesopotamia, Greek area influence – farmers Judea

and Cappadocia, Asia Minor – part of modern day Turkey-renowned for raising horses and producing wine – **more sophisticated crowd**
A)Farmers – Mt people – Posh more wealthy crowd

Pontus Roman province in northeast Asia Minor (so there is this heavy Roman influence –but also heavy Greek influence)

and Asia, Another Roman province western side of Turkey

¹⁰ Phrygia and Pamphylia, Also part of Turkey (all of Turkey)

Egypt and the parts of **Libya** adjoining Cyrene, visitors from **Rome**, both Jews and proselytes,

B)the last two are fascinating **¹¹ Cretans** The island of Crete was off of the coast of the Mediterranean – **Cretans had this reputation “Cretans are always liars, evil beasts, lazy gluttons**

C)and Arabs- From the region of Arabia – and this is what their reputation was: they were unemployed, idle, lazy unwilling to work – unproductive, useless and worthless.

The early church was made up of the following groups of people. Several countries

A)Greeks, Romans, Judeans, Galileans

B)Mt People, Valley people, Hard working farmers Rich land owners and wine makers

C)People who had the most prestigious pedigrees and reputations

D)Those who had the reputation for being the worst type human beings.

That is quite a gathering - All things in common –

A)This group of people couldn't have been more different

B)Economically different ? Some rich Some poor – Some were able to sell property to help others –

C)Politically ideologies – different - Most of them probably were not found of Rome

1)But their ideas on how to solve the problem was different

They looked different – All of Jewish decent that is why they are in Jerusalem –

A)But they have been born in different places – dress different – talk different

B)Spoke different languages – they were from different parts of the middle east

C)Some are hard workers – others – completely opposite reputation

1)Some were single – some married – both men and women

My point is there was a lot more that they didn't have in common.

A)But there was one thing that they had in common

B)that trumped everything that they didn't have in common – JESUS

C)They rallied around him! He brought them together!

D)There was plenty of things that they couldn't agree on- but the only thing that matter was Jesus

1)He had changed their life.

That is what filled their hearts with this sense of AWE- this UNITY

A)Where else does that happen?

B)Maybe briefly at a sporting event – Charger game high five – this dude hugged me

C)But that camaraderie is gone as soon as you get into the car trying to get out of the parking lot

1)No more high fiving or politeness then

D)But that was one of things that made the early church so impactful – UNITY – LOVE

1)Noticeable – the way that they cared for one another

E)How are all these people – so different – dwelling together in Unity – Harmony ?

The Catalyst for all of them is found in what they were devoted to.

42 And they continued steadfastly in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship, in the breaking of bread, and in prayers.

So they were devoting themselves Constantly to SIX Priorities: 4 here V.42 – 2 come later

#1 The Apostles Doctrine or teachings.

A) The early church didn't just dabble in the Word, folks. **They devoured it**

B)V.46 They continued daily in the temple and from house to house –

1)It was a **day to day** reality not a once a week routine.

C)These brand new babes in the Lord – couldn't get enough of the word.

Joshua 1:8 **“This Book of the Law shall not depart from your mouth, but you shall meditate in it day and night, that you may observe to do according to all that is written in it. For then you will make your way prosperous, and then you will have good success.”** Down loaded in my life.

Jon Courson: “A Bible that's falling apart usually belongs to a person who isn't.”

D)Not because – fell off of the roof of your car – dog ate it – child ripped it

1)It is falling apart because you are reading it so much
Taking notes –

So for that reason here at CCV we have always made the study of God's word – Priority.

A)**Worship is important** – activities have their place

B)But coming together around The Word of God is priority.

1)Focus in Children's ministry – Youth etc

C)So we are going to Continue to give ourselves corporately & you individually to the word.

D)Stress having a devotional life –

Bring your Bible to work – Desk – lunch – bring it school.

A)Take notes – meditate –

B)Promise:

Blessed is the man Who walks not in the counsel of the ungodly, Nor stands in the path of sinners, Nor sits

in the seat of the scornful; {not tied into ungodly influences

2 But **his delight** is in the law of the Lord, And in His law he **meditates** day and night. {bring it up over and over

The effect

3 He shall be like a tree **Planted** by the rivers of water,

That brings **forth its fruit** in its season,

Whose leaf also shall **not wither**;

And whatever he does **shall prosper**.

Planted, fruitful, vibrant, - People take notice – Secret?

4 The ungodly are not so, but are like the chaff which the wind drives away.

The Christian who is being impacted by the word of God and taking their nourishment – word

A)World view formed by the word –

B)That person is an anomaly – stand out – different

C)So they were devoted to the Word!

#2 They were Devoted to Fellowship.

A)Interesting Greek word – *Koinonia*

B)The word literally means to Share in common.

1)Partnership - Communion – communication.

C) Broad word – Gather at some ones house to watch the Charger game – or Super bowl

1)**Have Koinonia** – sharing in common our love for football.

D)But that is not going to do anything for me spiritually –

The Koinonia they experienced was in their sharing in common their **NEED** for the LORD!

A)So Church – listen – we love what is happening in the court yard – fun see sharing / hanging

B)But can I encourage you: if you are not already – don't be afraid to ask each other – how doing

1)How pray ?–

2)What did you get from the message today?

C)Tell me your story!

D) That is fellowship guys! – talking sports politics – fine –

1) Not spiritual fellowship

I don't need fellowship I have been saved 14 yrs I am as strong as a redwood tree.

A) There is something interesting about red wood trees – almost always in groves – Interlocking root System is their strength.

B) We need fellowship – Home groups –

1) Men's and women's studies

C) Get connected – **Radical times – busy pressure –**

D) That is what is attractive to people – drawn by the way believers rally around each other

1) San Diego Refugee – all the news

E) Christians jumping on planes to go and assist – that is the beauty of the body of Christ

#3 They were devoted to the breaking of bread.

A) Most commentators and Bible teachers agree that this is in reference to sharing of communion.

B) The Celebrating of the Lord's Supper.

1) A meal – that ended with communion
Something they did daily.

C) It seems they saw the importance of constantly bring their focus back to the Cross

1) constantly being reminded that the price was paid.

D) Constantly being reminded that the work was done.

1) So important to these Jewish believers who were prone to Law mentality – **perform to be accepted**

2) **FOCUS ON THE CROSS! Not do- but Done**

The cross is the great equalizer -

A) All the same at the cross

B) Humility at the Cross – None deserve it !

C) **Cross is a great reminder – Saved from- Hell**

1) **Saved for – Heaven**

D) Saved to be a part of a Family.

1) Created to live in Community –

E) The Cross puts that all in perspective.

#4 They were Devoted to prayer.

A) Prayer mark of dependency.

B) **Praying Church: - problem – pray**

1) Peter in jail – Pray – Persecution – pray
Not stop but boldness

C) **Believe in the power of Prayer! -**

D) **Zach Adams – 55 days on a Ventilator**

1) 30 days in a medically induced coma

E) **No way he was going to make it – BUT GOD!**

#5 Devoted to Worship

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**

There was an attitude of gratitude that filled their hearts.

A) They weren't complaining about the hard circumstances – they were praising God

B) **Communal Living – not a problem – sharing and caring**

C) **V. 47 The Lord added to the Church.**

Contagious

A) Something happens when the world sees a bunch of people living for a purpose

B) **United together – despite their great diversity.**

C) **IT is contagious when the world sees people who's whole perspective and world view is being shaped by something other than – Media or culture**

#6 They were committed to preaching the gospel

A) **Ch. 4 - ³³ And with great power the apostles gave witness to the resurrection of the Lord Jesus. And great grace was upon them all.**

B) **Great power in sharing about the REZ**

C) **Easter is not an event- We live Easter – the Rez is everything –**

D) Christ is not risen – Vain – stupid – pointless

But the reality that he is risen changes everything – makes all the difference in the world

A) Risen – alive

B) Great power / great grace !

Application for us- What is going to make the world stand in Awe

A) Unity of heart – soul mind and purpose

B) Devoted to the word

C) Devoted to Fellowship

D) Devoted to the Cross

E) Devoted to Prayer – dependent lives

F) Devoted to Worship – attitude of Gratitude amongst all the complaining

G) Devoted to preaching the gospel

Revival in the Church –

A) Get back to basics