

~ACTS~

Lesson 11 - The Fellowship of the Church

We are continuing our study through the book of Acts, and last week we saw the effects of Peter's sermon as he preached the Gospel on the Day of Pentecost and 3,000 people were convicted of their sin, they repented, and they were saved. Now in our study today we are going to see the Fellowship that they have with one another now that they are born into the family of God. Let's read our text today, [Acts 2:42-47](#).

In these last 6 verses of chapter 2, Luke is describing the formation and function of the Church. Look at the last verse 47, he says "...[And the Lord added to the church daily those who were being saved](#)." Who are the ones being added to the Church? Those who are being saved. Those who have put their faith in Jesus Christ for Eternal Salvation. And it is the Lord who builds His Church. Jesus said in Matthew 16:18-[And I also say to you that you are Peter, and on this Rock I will build My church, and the gates of Hades shall not prevail against it](#).

The church is being built on the Rock who is Christ, not Peter, and it is the Lord's Church... Jesus says "My Church." The Church was established on the Day of Pentecost, this was the birth of the Church. And this phrase, "the Church," became the standard term for the gathering of Christians together. That's generally what this word means, ekklesia, [ἐκκλησία](#), means gathering or an assembly. But this word is a combination of two words, [ἐκ](#) and [καλεω](#) which literally means, "those who have been called out from," And I particularly love this definition. We are the ones who have been called [out from the power of darkness and translated into the Kingdom of the Son of His Love](#), Col 1:13. Remember how Peter describes us in 1 Peter 2:9- [But you are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, His own special people, that you may proclaim the praises of Him who called you out of darkness into His marvelous light](#); We are those who have been separated unto Him, called unto Him as His own special people.

We, the Church, the ekklesia, [ἐκκλησία](#), the ones who have been called out by God are described in Paul's writings as the Body of Christ, with Jesus as the head of the Body, [1 Cor 12:12-13, 27; Col 1:18](#). The ekklesia, [ἐκκλησία](#) is the unique assembly of God that has been gathered together in Christ by His blood. All those who have put their full trust in Jesus for Eternal Salvation are included in the Church, and we are being built and fitted together, growing into His Christ-likeness. Remember Jesus said He will build His Church. Paul explains this in [Eph 2:19-22; 5:1](#); 1 Cor 12:12-27; Eph 5:23; Rom 12:5; Col 1:24. We are being built together in Him for the purpose to glorify Him and continue the work that Jesus began to do and to teach. The church is this living organism that is constantly growing in Christ-likeness and in Fellowship with Him and each other, so that through our life we can continually bear witness of Jesus Christ to the world.

And this is exactly what we see displayed in the formation of the early church in these last 6 verses of chapter 2. Let's start with looking at verse 42...

<p>42 And they continued steadfastly in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship, in the breaking of bread, and in prayers.</p>	<p>ἦσαν δὲ προσκατεροῦντες τῇ διδαχῇ τῶν ἀποστόλων καὶ τῇ κοινωνίᾳ, καὶ τῇ κλάσει τοῦ ἄρτου καὶ ταῖς προσευχαῖς.</p>
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"[they continued steadfastly](#)"- [προσκατεροῦντες](#), to continue diligently toward. Luke used this same word in Acts 1:14 to describe the 120 in the upper room as they were continuing with one accord. And now more than 3,000 of them are still continuing steadfastly with each other being built up together in Christ.

Luke lists four things that they are continuing steadfast in... 1) apostolic teaching... 2) Koinonia Fellowship... 3) the breaking of bread... and 4) in prayer. Notice that these four things describe the edification and building together of the Church.

It is no coincidence that the first in the list is **teaching**, διδασχῆ- doctrine. I believe Biblical teaching is the foundation to an immovable church. When the congregation has a teaching pastor, a shepherd that shepherds the flock by teaching them and building them up in doctrine, this congregation will not be deceived. Because it is the Truth that will guard us from deception, and when our pastors are teaching us Biblical Truth, the enemy cannot sway us into error. This is how we become the salt of the earth and a light in the darkness to a fallen world. One of the major purposes for the gathering of the church is for the edification of the Body of Christ, **Ephesians 4:11-16**. The early church is continuing steadfastly first in Apostolic teaching because this roots them in Truth not to be tossed to and fro by deception, **Col 2:6-10**; 1 Tim 1:3-4; 4:6-11; 5:17; 6:3-5, 20-21; 2 Tim 2:14-16, 24-26; 3:16-17; 4:2-3; 2 Pet 1:2-4, 10-11; 2:1-2; Rom 6:17; Heb 13:9; 2 John 9-10; Rev 2:14; Titus 1:9.

The second thing they continued steadfastly in is **Koinonia Fellowship**. There is a oneness that is portrayed in being made one in His Body. This is the oneness that Jesus speaks of in **John 17:21**. And this oneness in Him is called Koinonia Fellowship. This is what we learned in the epistle of 1 John. That entire book was focused on our Fellowship with Him and then out from that Fellowship with Him, we then have Fellowship with one another, **1 John 1:3-4**. This Fellowship is the bond of perfection in Love with God and then with one another, Col 3:12-17. It is the Fellowship and love we have for one another that is the greatest witness to the world, John 13:34-35.

Thirdly, they continued steadfastly in the **breaking of bread**. The term breaking of bread is referring specifically to the Lord's Supper in partaking of the elements of communion, **1 Cor 10:16-17**. This word communion is the word koinonia. It is the fellowship we share in His Body and blood. There is no mandate on when or how often we partake in the Lord's Supper. Jesus told His disciples, "*as often as you do this, do this in remembrance of Me,*" 1 Corinthians 11:24-26. And I think the early church was doing this often... even every day, because in Acts 2:46 Luke says they were "*continuing daily, breaking bread from house to house.*" So the disciples seem to be sharing in communion on a daily basis, continually remembering the Lord's sacrifice for us.

Lastly, they continued steadfastly in **prayer**. Paul continually tells us to pray without ceasing, **1 Thess 5:16-18**; Col 1:3; 4:2; Eph 6:18; Phil 4:6. Peter said in 1 Peter 3:12- *For the eyes of the LORD are on the righteous, And His ears are open to their prayers...* Jesus said *where two or three are gathered together in My name, there I am in the midst of them*, Matt 18:19-20. In Acts 4:31 it says when they prayed, the place where they were assembled together was shaken... Prayer is powerful.

This early church is a young church, but it's strong church. They are being taught Biblical Truth, they are in loving Koinonia Fellowship with God and each other, they are keeping Jesus' sacrifice at the forefront of their minds, and they are continuing in prayer.

Now look at the results in verse 43 as the Spirit moves in this church...

<p>43 Then fear came upon every soul, and many wonders and signs were done through the apostles.</p>	<p>⁴³ Ἐγένετο δὲ πάσῃ ψυχῇ φόβος, πολλὰ τε τέρατα καὶ σημεῖα διὰ τῶν ἀποστόλων ἐγένετο.</p>
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When you yield yourself to God, miracles will happen. Luke says, "**fear came upon every soul**"- this was an awestruck fear of God and it was directly related to the "**many wonders and signs that were being done through the Apostles.**" That is exactly what a wonder does. It is a supernatural miracle that brings wonder and amazement. And the wonder leads to a sign authenticating and pointing to the fact that this is the hand of God at work. Luke says that "every soul" had this awestruck fear come upon them, believer and unbeliever. The unbelievers are seeing the miracles of God and coming to Jesus, Acts 3:11; 4:1-4. And the believers are trusting in God for everything and seeing miracles of healing and supernatural provision. Notice verses 44-45...

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.

⁴⁴ πάντες δὲ οἱ πιστεύοντες ἦσαν ἐπὶ τὸ αὐτό, καὶ εἶχον ἅπαντα κοινά, ⁴⁵ καὶ τὰ κτήματα καὶ τὰς ὑπάρξεις ἐπίπρασκον, καὶ διεμέριζον αὐτὰ πᾶσι, καθότι ἂν τις χρεῖαν εἶχε.

The Church is the gathering of “**all who believed**”- this word believed is πιστεύοντες. It is a present participle with continual action. “All those who were continually believing...” As Christians, that’s what we do... we believe, and we continue to believe in Jesus.

And these believers “**were together and had all things in common**”- These believers were drawn together, and they shared all things as common. The word “common” is κοινός, the root word for Koinonia Fellowship. They shared all things in Fellowship with one another. They did not consider their possessions as belonging to just them, but as something they would share as anyone had need.

Luke continues in verse 45... “**and sold their possessions and goods, and divided them among all**” This was not communism; it is voluntary commonality. Communism forces the community to divide things equally. But this is completely voluntary of their own free will. The Apostles are not making this mandatory. They are not setting a Christian mandate to sell everything and divide it among the believers. In fact, it is only here and in Acts 4 that we see this done. But it shows the abounding love they had for one another. It was out of their deep love and oneness with each other and God that they put away any selfish desires and they shared all things as common with each other.

And notice in verse 45 how they distributed the goods... **as anyone had need**. Luke gives us a little more insight on who is doing the distributing in **Acts 4:35**. It’s the Apostles distributing. Everything was given to the Apostles, and then the Apostles determined, by the Holy Spirit, who was in need. This is different than just selling everything and dividing it equally. It was distributed as anyone had need.

One question that comes to mind is why was there this sudden need for provisions? What was driving them to go to such extreme measures?

Many of these Jewish Christians living in Jerusalem lost everything they had when they made the decision to follow Jesus. They were put out of the synagogues, they lost their jobs, and even worse, had their possessions plundered. We read that last week in **Hebrews 10:32-34**. These Hebrew Christians suffered great loss and struggles, but yet they joyfully accepting the plundering of their goods, knowing they had a better and enduring possession in heaven. And that’s what we see in this text in Acts. Even in what seems to be terribly hard times physically, they are full of joy. Look at their attitudes in verses 46 and 47...

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,

⁴⁶ καθ’ ἡμέραν τε προσκαρτεροῦντες ὁμοθυμαδὸν ἐν τῷ ἱερῷ, κλῶντές τε κατ’ οἶκον ἄρτον, μετελάμβανον τροφῆς ἐν ἀγαλλιάσει καὶ ἀφελότητι καρδίας,

Notice Luke uses this phrase again, “**continuing with one accord**,” προσκαρτεροῦντες ὁμοθυμαδὸν, just as he did in Acts 1:14, and this time he adds “daily.” They continued daily enduring patiently with a similar strong passion of like-mindedness. And look where they are doing this... in the temple. Where the most intense persecution would be taking place. But they are bold and in one accord to preach the gospel. Luke also says they went from house to house breaking bread and they ate their food with gladness and simplicity of heart.

“**they ate their food with gladness**” God created us to enjoy meals together because this brings us in Fellowship together. Remember many times when Jesus appeared to the disciples after He was resurrected, He sat and had a meal with them, Lk 24:30, 40-43; John 21:5, 9, 12-13. And Jesus is

planning the biggest feast of all at the end of this age at the Marriage Supper of the Lamb, Matt 26:29; Rev 19:7-9. Even when we have our glorified bodies, were still going to be enjoying meals together.

This also has a spiritual implication because Jesus said in Luke 4:4- *Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word of God.*; Psalm 37:3 says to *feed on His faithfulness*. Jesus is *the Bread of Life*, and we are to *feed on Him*, John 6:57. Jesus told Peter to *feed My sheep*, John 21:17. Peter says we *grow by the pure milk of the Word*, 1 Pet 2:2. The best meals I have are the ones when I can physically eat with my Brethren and also talk about Jesus and feed on His Word.

“**and simplicity of heart**” The simplicity of heart is the word ἀφελότης. It is only used here in Acts and nowhere in the LXX. It literally means “not stony.” Which I personally think this fits the context perfectly. These believers didn’t have a hard, stony heart, but a heart of flesh, a heart of gladness and joy in fellowship with one another and in God.

Luke continues describing their adoration and exultation of the heart in verse 47...

<p>47 praising God and having favor with all the people. And the Lord added to the church daily those who were being saved.</p>	<p><i>47 αἰνοῦντες τὸν Θεόν, καὶ ἔχοντες χάριν πρὸς ὅλον τὸν λαόν. ὁ δὲ Κύριος προσετίθει τοὺς σωζομένους καθ’ ἡμέραν τῇ ἐκκλησίᾳ.</i></p>
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“**praising God and having favor with all the people**”- two present participles showing continual action, “continually praising God and continually having favor with all the people.” The people are the people of the city who are seeing the miracles of God. These are the same who were in awestruck of the wonders and signs, Acts 2:43. And we also see the people in awe of the lame man being healed in Acts 3:11. And then Peter preaches the Word, and 5,000 more believe, Acts 4:4. This favor is with the people and not the Pharisees or religious rulers because in chapter 4, Peter and John are arrested by the Pharisees, but notice in Acts 4:21. The people of the city are glorifying God as they see these miracles, and thousands of them are being saved.

“**And the Lord added to the church daily those who were being saved**”- it is only the Lord Jesus who adds to His Church. But He only adds those to His Church those who allow themselves to be saved. Remember Peter’s exhortation in Acts 2:40, “allow yourself to be saved from this perverse generation.” Notice the phrase, “those who are being saved.” “Being saved is a present passive participle. It is in the passive voice because we can’t save ourselves. We must allow ourselves to be saved. And it is in the present tense because salvation is a process. Justification happens in an instant, but the process of Sanctification is a continual and daily walk of life until Jesus comes back, and then finally we are made complete in Him in Glorification. And it is only those who receive the Word and have faith in Jesus who are being saved, Heb 10:14.

“**And the Lord added to the church daily**”- No fancy marketing schemes, no attraction models, just preach the Word. Lift up the Name of Jesus and He will draw all peoples to Himself, John 12:32. Paul said in 1 Corinthians 2:1-2-¹ *And I, brethren, when I came to you, did not come with excellence of speech or of wisdom declaring to you the testimony of God.* ² *For I determined not to know anything among you except Jesus Christ and Him crucified.*

That’s what we preach, we preach Christ and Him crucified and Him risen from the dead, and we let the Lord add to His Church ... all those who are allowing themselves to be saved.