

Spiritual birth for Spiritual life.

Acts 2:42-47

30 Aug 2015

Is this all we see in God's redemption of a man or woman- just salvation, a **conversion experience**? I don't think so, there is more to God's salvation of a sinner...there is the after-affects on the sinner after salvation...it is what God does **through the sinner afterwards** where others can see God is glorified and the sinner rejoices in the hope and joy through the glory of God!

Spiritual re-birth is for Spiritual living,

God rebirths us **by the** Holy Spirit so that we would **live in** the Holy Spirit. And the affects of the Spirit are the same regardless of whether you are in first century Jerusalem or a 21st century prison.

There will always be;

1. The **teaching** of God's Word
2. **Fellowship** in the sharing of life.
3. The **lord's supper** and
4. sharing of **prayers**.

Now if your reading from an NIV translation you will not be able to see this. But if you have an ESV or KJV...

Have a look at our passage. There are 6 sentences for us here. Is there anything particular you see about each sentence structure, **if you see it yell it out!**

Each sentence begins with the word "And"

Acts 2:42-47

42 And they devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching

43 And awe came upon every soul

44 And all who believed were together

45 And they were selling their possessions.

46 And day by day, attending the temple together

47 And the Lord added to their number day by day those who were being saved.

Now let me put our passage in context with the verse 41...to give a feel for how Luke is trying to show us the affects of belief.

Acts 2:41

41 So those who received his word were baptized, and there were added that day about three thousand souls.

Acts 2:42-47

42 And they devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching

43 And awe came upon every soul

44 And all who believed were together

45 And they were selling their possessions.

46 And day by day, attending the temple together

47 And the Lord added to their number day by day

Can you see how it how sounds like Luke is describing the affects that happened after their belief, as to show us what we depicts the life of a believer.

Its almost like a shopping list of Christian action and behaviour and we need to be careful not to turn this into a legalistic one. Checking off each behavioural trait in our lives in order to become acceptable before God.

But we would do well to see and explore what each of these points mean. What does Luke aim to show us about the early believers lives that we should imitate.

Jonathan Edwards...said this;

It is not he that has heard a long description of the sweetness of honey that can be said to have the greatest understanding of it but he that has tasted.

Do you see what he is saying, it is not someone who has heard a long description of the sweetness of honey that knows best what honey is, but is the one that has actually placed a spoonful in their mouth, allowing it to melt in their palate, savouring the flavours of its texture, that is the one that knows best of the sweetness of honey.

- We might find ourselves stuck in the stickiness of church ignorance because we have never tasted and relished a life lived pursuing a biblical community.
- We have never tasted the sweet embrace of a holy community of God and now we have become cynical and weary of investing our emotions outside our immediate families.

But Providence we need to overcome this, we must look to what God displays as the paradigm of His redeemed community and seek to **imitate it**.

TEXT

So lets go to our text and see what God has install for our hearts this morning.

I want to break this passage into two sections this morning.

1. I want to speak about the response of unbelievers to the believers
2. And then I would like to speak about the actions and behaviours of the believers that lead to this response

There are two responses I would like to focus on here to the early church.

RESPONSE #1

All people saw the works and unity of the believers and they were in **awe of the** believers and some looked **upon them with favour**. – this is the first response we see of non-Christians to this group of believers.

Acts 2:43

43 And **awe came upon every soul**, and many wonders and signs were being done through the apostles.

46 And day by day, attending the temple **together** and breaking bread in their homes, they received their food with glad and generous hearts,

47 praising God and **having favor with all the people.**

The early church was not hidden. The actions and behaviours of the believers were seen so that awe **came upon every soul...v43** and that their actions gained **favor with all the people...v47**

John 15:19

19 If you were of the world, the world would love you as its own; but because you are not of the world, but I chose you out of the world, **therefore the world hates you.**

Matthew 5:16

16 let your light shine before others, so that they may see your good works and **give glory to your Father who is in heaven.**

RESPONSE #2

The believers actions were so pleasing to the Lord and to unbelievers, that the Lord added to their number.

Acts 2:46-47

46 And day by day, attending the temple together and breaking bread in their homes, they received their food with glad and generous hearts,

47 praising God and having favor with all the people. **And the Lord added to their number day by day** those who were being saved.

Such a beautiful response to the early church that God was adding to their number. It was God conducting His revival in 1st century Jerusalem.

And it is has been like that ever since...

1 Corinthians 3:6-7

6 I planted, Apollos watered, **but God gave the growth.**

7 So neither he who plants nor he who waters is anything, but only God who gives the growth.

It is God who gives the growth! We can become so focused on the celebrity preachers, church programs, fancy youth events and think that this will grow the church of Christ.

But if God is not in it, there will be no fruitful growth.

Psalm 127:1

1 Unless the Lord builds the house, those who build it labor in vain. Unless the Lord watches over the city, the watchman stays awake in vain.

We so often think about what it is that we need to do so that we awe-inspire people and that they look upon the Lord with favour... That our Lord will then give the church growth...

Well what did these believers do, to warranted this response. The answer is found in verse 42.

Second section: what the believers did that gained these responses?

Actions and Behaviours #1

Acts 2:42

42 And they devoted themselves to the **apostles' teaching** and the **fellowship**, to the **breaking of bread** and the **prayers**.

Their devotion to these four things moulded their behaviour so that they then became united and had all things in common, which lead to the unity, care and awe-inspiring favour to the believers.

Acts 2:44-46

44 And all who believed were **together** and had **all things in common**.

45 And they were **selling their possessions** and belongings and distributing the proceeds to all, as any had need.

46 And day by day, attending the temple **together** and breaking bread in their homes, they received their food with **glad and generous hearts**,

This behaviour was the outcome of four practices;

1. The **teachings** of the Apostles

2. The **fellowship** of believers
3. **Breaking** of bread – which is the Lord's Supper
4. The sharing of **prayers**.

So in other words – the believers focused their lives on God and each other...and let God take care of His church.

TEACHING

These are the things of prime importance to the believer's spiritual life and of course to the church as the collective of believers. But always of prime importance to our walk and in our Spiritual lives is the teaching and preaching of God's Word.

That is why the great commission places such emphasis on the teaching

Matthew 28:19-20

19 Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit,

20 teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age."

The teaching of God's Word is paramount to our discipleship, to our growth in the knowledge of God.

FELLOWSHIP

And with this come fellowship. Many of you will be familiar with the term *Koinonia*. Meaning close association and participation, in this context close association in each others lives that it becomes the sharing of life together.

We see this unpacked in verses 44-45

Acts 2:44-45

44 And all who believed were together and had all things in common.

45 And they were selling their possessions and belongings and distributing the proceeds to all, as any had need.

This doesn't mean we should all go out and sell our houses if someone is in need. I don't doubt some did sell their houses and give to the needy as we see in Acts 5, but I do not think Luke is instructing us to sell all of our possessions; **How else would the believers be breaking bread in their homes v46?**

I think the intention of what Luke aims to show us is that the believers were so united and so part of each others life that they did all they could to care for their needs of their brothers and sisters.

It is like the verse we saw last week;

1 Corinthians 12:26

26 If one member suffers, all suffer together; if one member is honored, all rejoice together.

It was so, because they had found such a tight bond with each other that was brought together by the will of God.

LORD'S SUPPER AND PRAYER

They devoted themselves to the breaking of bread, which is the Lord's supper and prayer. And they were doing this in each other's houses.

There was no limits to their devotion in their new found spiritual lives. There was no Sunday morning cry for gathering 9:30-10:45 and then split for a week. They were doing what we call church every other day, and they were doing it in each others houses and at the temple.

Their devotion to this new-found life was unrestrained by time, geography or building.

CONCLUSION

So as I wrap this up.

We need to ask ourselves. **Do I act this way,
Do I do the things God sees as praise worthy.**

1. Do I devote myself to his teaching?
2. Do I commit to share my life with other believers
3. DO I break bread and share my prayers with others?

The devotion the believers had for the teaching of God's Word, for the fellowship and care of another, breaking of bread and the sharing of prayers, I believe that the Lord looked upon them with joy and blessed them by adding to their number!

So this is why we at Providence will do the same today.

We have heard the teaching of God's word, so after the service we will open our home so we come together in fellowship, to strengthen bonds with one another; we will even break bread together and we will pray with glad and generous hearts.

And we will do it all for majesty of our King Jesus , with the love of holy Spirit, to the glory of the Father.

Amen.