

Acts 2:42-47**"The Gospel-Formed Community"**

Imago Dei Church | 6/30/19 | 2 Services | Sunday AM

INTRODUCTION**Acts 2:42-47**

[42] And they devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and the fellowship, to the breaking of bread and the prayers. [43] And awe came upon every soul, and many wonders and signs were being done through the apostles. [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, [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.

I don't know about you and your house, but gardening is an enigma to the Shaddix household. It's more than an enigma...it's a form of self-torture, really. We don't like to be happy, so we found a way to steal all our worldly joy and sense of self-confidence.

6 years straight we'veplanted a small vegetable garden.
6 years straight we've....

- ...hoped and dreamed of living off the bounty of the land.
- ...talked about the tomato sandwiches we're going to get sick of because we've got tomatoes coming out our ears.

- ...looked up pickling recipes because we're going to have so many cucumbers we're not going to be able to eat them all.
- ...started *researching* what kind of fruit trees we want to plant in our back yard because we've gotten *so good* at gardening and...keeping things alive!
- ...the summer months have come and gone and our small garden has produced enough for us to tomatoes for us to slice up and everyone gets a tastes.
- (And we're always so self-congratulatory, you know—'This is the dream!' And the kids are like, 'When are we eating breakfast.' That was your breakfast!)
- ...the disappointment has set it.

But you know what. In six years, not a single time have we planted a tomato plant and a strawberry grown on it...cucumber...squash...blackberry.

Every single time, the fruit produced is EXACTLY the in line with the plant we put in the ground.

In our text this morning, we read about the life of the early church in the book of Acts. And **what I want us to see and understand about this passage is that the community that emerges is a direct result of the gospel that is planted.**

It is not the case that the Apostles, after Jesus ascended, got together and said, I guess we're going to start a church now. That's not what happens:

(READ Acts 2:1-14a)

And then he begins to explain from the book of Joel that this was God's plan all along—the messiah would come and then the Spirit of God would descend on his people. He used the event of the Holy Spirit coming to preach that God had not failed them, but had provided a way of salvation in Jesus Christ.

Acts 2:36

[36] Let all the house of Israel therefore know for certain that God has made him both Lord and Christ, this Jesus whom you crucified."

The Jesus that had only just been put to death in that city, had in fact died for the forgiveness of their sins, your sins, and mine, and had risen from the dead to defeat death and promise eternal life to all who trust in him.

That was the message that was planted. And the fruit? You see it there in v.37-38:

[37] Now when they heard this they were cut to the heart, and said to Peter and the rest of the apostles, "Brothers, what shall we do?" [38] And Peter said to them, "Repent and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins, and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.

And that's where our text picks up. The gospel has gone out, and as it is planted it naturally creates a new community of Christ-followers who are devoted to him and to one another.

Main Idea: The gospel *necessarily* creates and shapes a community called the church.

The church is a gospel-formed community.

A. THE PRIORITIES OF THE GOSPEL-FORMED COMMUNITY (2:42)

Acts 2:42

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

"**devoted themselves**" — we are immediately struck with a tension—as we've said, if zoom out we can see that the gospel naturally, organically, forms a new community. But here we also see that this new community is a commitment. It's an initiative. It's purposeful.

(APP) This is important because we must not be naïve and think that simply because you're a Christian you're going to get this right. In fact, we have every reason to believe that we're all going to drift away from this calling, not towards it.

And experientially you can probably feel that there are all sorts of things in your life that will naturally pull you

away from the gospel-formed community—**Sin, social anxiety, work, family, ministry, general business.**

The question in our day is not whether you will have time to be a part of the gospel-formed community, but whether you will devote yourself to it even when you don't have time? When something has to get squeezed, what will you be devoted to?

(ILL) Total Church image

1. **Apostles' Teaching**
2. **Fellowship**
3. **Breaking Bread**
4. **Prayer**

(APP) How will you devote yourself to these priorities? As this church devotes itself to them, will you be joining us?

B. THE POWER OF THE GOSPEL-FORMED COMMUNITY (2:43)

Acts 2:43

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

As the community commits itself to follow Christ together, the power of God is manifest so that...

(brief exposition with each)

1. The truth of the gospel is confirmed (43b).

Cf. Acts 2:22-24 — “[22] “Men of Israel, hear these words: Jesus of Nazareth, a man attested to you by God with mighty works and wonders and signs that God did through him in your midst, as you yourselves know— [23] this Jesus, delivered up according to the definite plan and foreknowledge of God, you crucified and killed by the hands of lawless men. [24] God raised him up, loosing the pangs of death, because it was not possible for him to be held by it. (ESV)”

2. The implications of the gospel are clear (43a).

C. THE PRACTICES OF THE GOSPEL-FORMED COMMUNITY (2:44-46)

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,

1. Committed Togetherness (44)

Bonhoeffer: “The physical presence of other Christians is a source of incomparable joy and strength to the believer. ... The believer feels no shame, as though he were still living too much in the flesh, when he yearns for the physical presence of other Christians. (19)

(APP) being present when we gather and purposeful when we don't

2. Mutual self-giving (44)

3. Sacrificial care (45)

4. Devoted worship (46)
5. Intimate hospitality (46)
6. Giving with joy (46)
7. Receiving with gladness (46)

D. THE PRODUCTS OF THE GOSPEL-FORMED COMMUNITY (2:47)

Acts 2:47

[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.

1. The Lord is praised
2. The world is served
3. The church is grown

CONCLUSION

Implications for our church family and friends:

1. **Commit to the gospel**
 - a. The commitment to the community is built on the foundation of the mutual commitment we have to the gospel
 - b. So strong is the connection between gospel and community that the health and vitality of our commitment to Christ can be

measured, in part, by our commitment to his people.

Milne: "The reality of our relationship with him may be assessed ... in terms of our relationship to other believers. A true relationship with Christ WILL MEAN a new relationship with his people. We cannot be related to Christ without being at the same time related to his body..."

(APP) fencing the Lord's Supper...but the response is not simply to commit to the church, but to commit to Christ in such a way that drives you to his church.

2. Submit to the gospel

- a. Allow Christ to shape us and use us how he wants
- b. All kinds of good things we could be doing, but we're going to submit ourselves to prioritize this kind of community.

3. Non-members, join the church

- a. This text shows why we prioritize church membership.
- b. If you are here simply to hear a good sermon (when Tony's preaching!) or simply to have a great worship experience, let me

graciously remind you...that is not what we are here for (podcasts and concerts).

- c. If you do not intend on joining us in our pursuit of Christ, fully committed to his gospel and fully committed to one another, there are SO MANY other places you could get a good sermon and hear good music.
- d. But if Christ has gripped you with the good news of his work, and if his Spirit is inside of you, then it is calling you to life out your life in Christ with his people, and we'd invite you to join this or another church where you can joyfully commit yourself.

4. Members, commit yourself anew to Christ's church

- a. Continue in the vast grace God has already shown us
- b. Examine areas where you can help us grow as Christ's church (Review the covenant!)
- c. Be cautious of idealism and anticipate messiness and difficulty!

Cf. Col. 3

Bonhoeffer: "...Christian brotherhood is threatened most often at the very start by the greatest danger of all, the danger of being poisoned at its root, the danger of confusing Christian brotherhood with some wishful idea of religious fellowship, of confounding the natural desire of the devout heart for community with the spiritual reality of Christian brotherhood. ... Every Christian wish dream that is injected into the Christian community is a hindrance to genuine community and must be banished if genuine community is to survive. ... Even when sin and misunderstanding burden the communal life, is not the sinning brother still a brother, with whom I, too, stand under the Word of Christ? Will not his sin be a constant occasion for me to give thanks that both of us may live in the forgiving love of God in Jesus Christ.

5. Pray for, anticipate, and labor for the Lord to add many new disciples to our number

When the gospel is planted, our Lord Jesus Christ grows a community for his own worship and work.

May we believe this gospel.

May we submit to him making us into this kind of community.

And may we pray and anticipate as he uses his community to bring many to know him.