

“Devoted”

Introduction

- Continuing series,
- Last week: Repent and Believe, be Baptized, receive the Holy Spirit
- This week: Now what?

Tension: Church, what is it and what was it meant to be? Some have been hurt by it, some are frustrated by it and some love it. What did God intend for it to be and how did He intend for it to function?

Acts 2:42-47

v.42

- **Devoted**
 - **Not bore you with the Greek, but ‘attend constantly’, ‘persist’, ‘persevere in’, ‘continue steadfast in’, wait upon’**
 - **Biblical devotion**
 - **In church we want the biblical awe w/o biblical devotion**
 - **Impossible to do this**
 - **Early Church/apostles were devoted**
 - **Hard to be devoted today?**
 - **We’ve made it hard in our culture**
 - **Can’t be devoted to everything**
 - **What were the early church/apostles devoted to**
 - **Made it simple**
 - **Limit it to a few, here a list of 4, but not going to concern ourselves with an exact number, just make it simple**
 - **Few is easy to remember**
 - **Be awesome at these few things**
- **Apostles Teaching**
 - **Not my words, my words are not important, God’s word is important!**
 - **1 Timothy 4:13**
 - **2 Timothy 3:16-17**
 - **Scripture is not just words but Life!**
 - **Jesus**
 - **John 6:63 (NRSV) “. . .the words that I have spoken to you are spirit and life.”**
 - **Power**
 - **Words themselves contain power**
 - **Stories of the Bible protecting etc.**
 - **Church, small groups, individuals**
 - **Read it even when you don’t understand it**
 - **Read as a story, but know it is not fiction!**
 - **Doesn’t return void**
 - **Isaiah 55:11 (NRSV)**
 - **Explanations given when needed= preachers/teachers (God gives us gifts to be used), but mainly listening for truth and result= Repent & Worship**
- **Breaking of Bread**

- NT= shared meal in which communion was celebrated
- Lord's supper
 - Intimate act of remembering flesh and blood
 - Jesus washed his disciples feet then asked them to stare at His body and blood to remind them of His LOVE
 - Communion important
 - Prophecy for our church
 - Power
 - Prophetic Act= Proclaiming over our life
 - Life in the blood=covenants, New covenant
 - Sozo= by his wounds we are healed
 - Died for our sickness/diseases as well as sins
 - God our healer= Rapha
 - Peace
 - That surpasses understanding in Christ Jesus
 - Remember
 - Over and over again in scripture, not fiction
 - Testimony
 - "Our relationship with God is transactional, it is relational" -Beni Johnson, The Power of Communion
 - Proclaiming Christ's death (act of remembrance)
 - His Love for Us
 - Testify to Jesus death, testimony important, tell the story, FCA

1 Corinthians 11:26 (NRSV)

- Fellowship
 - Church is not just a one hour service on Sunday mornings!
 - God designed Church and we have reduced it to an optional weekly meeting
 - Church should be known by supernatural Love
 - John 13:34-35 (NRSV)
 - "One another"
 - Over 100 times in NT= love. . . , care for. . . , pray for. . . , admonish. .
 - God clearly cares about this
 - Oneness Jesus prayed in John 17
- Prayers
 - "If prayer isn't vital for your church your church isn't vital" -Francis Chan Letters to the Church
 - "If you can accomplish your church's mission/work w/o passionate prayer than your mission is insufficient and your church is irrelevant" -FC LTC
 - Must be trying and completing the impossible/supernatural
 - Signs, wonders, boldness= Early Church
 - Acts 4:31 (NRSV)
 - Bible is unfamiliar with casual prayer -David Thomas
 - Groaning, Birth pains, etc.

Acts 2:43

- They devoted themselves to these few things, but other things were being done
 - Supernatural and natural
- Awe=Fear

- “Fear of the Lord”
- Not afraid fear, but awe fear
- Wonders and signs
 - Last week= Miracles, wonders and signs
 - Power
 - Great Commission= power from on high
 - Acts 1:8, Luke 24:49
 - These things will accompany believers
 - Mark 16:17-18 (NRSV)
 - Part of the Gospel!

Acts 2:44-45

- All things in common
 - Not Communism
- Need
 - Helping take care of one another!

Acts 2:46-47

- Spending much time together in the temple
 - Church
- Broke bread at home
 - Hung out with each other
- Praising God= favor of people
- Lord, not them added to their number
 - Devote yourselves to these things, share and spend time together= people get saved
 - Notice not great music and dynamic speaker!

Closing

- Devoted to these important few things
 - Word, fellowship, Lord’s supper, prayer
 - Why= Experience Him
 - Our goal here is and should be to reveal God to people, He is present in His Word, fellowship, communion, and prayer
 - His ‘formula’ much better than ours
 - Mike Breen, “Most of us have become quite good at the church thing. And yet, disciples are the only thing that Jesus cares about, and it’s the only number that Jesus is counting. Not our attendance our budget or buildings.”
 - What if we took God’s description of the Church seriously? What would happen if a group of people sought Jesus fervently, loved one another sacrificially, and then shared the gospel boldly?
 - I want to be part of that