

## Movement Gains Traction

### Week 4: Devotion

Reintroduce series...

- Jesus has given the **great commission**.
- He told them to **wait** in Jerusalem for the Holy Spirit and power.
- The **Holy Spirit falls** and they are heard praising God in other languages.
- Peter then tells them **what this means**...this is what the prophets spoke of when the spirit of God would **fall on all people**. This is about **Jesus who you killed**.
- They were "**cut to the heart**" and **3000 repented and were baptized** that day.

**Now this new movement is really gaining traction in Jerusalem.**

Here's what **happened next** as we close out chapter 2, which is one of the most significant chapters in the whole Bible.

**And they devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and the fellowship, to the breaking of bread and the prayers. <sup>43</sup> And awe came upon every soul, and many wonders and signs were being done through the apostles. <sup>44</sup> And all who believed were together and had**

all things in common. <sup>45</sup>And they were selling their possessions and belongings and distributing the proceeds to all, as any had need. <sup>46</sup> And day by day, attending the temple together and breaking bread in their homes, they received their food with glad and generous hearts, <sup>47</sup> praising God and having favor with all the people. And the Lord added to their number day by day those who were being saved. Acts 2:42-47

Here's what we have. **About 120 disciples** of Jesus in Jerusalem who, after obediently waiting to receive the power they need for this movement to gain traction and head worldwide. **The result of the power is that these 120 people are responsible for 3000 new disciples of Jesus and counting.** Great, but... **So, what do we do now?**

**I'm assuming that these new disciples are looking to the ones they heard speaking** in other languages for guidance. What do we do now?

- **We have repented like you said** for our sin and for the death of Jesus.
- We have **publicly committed our allegiance** to Jesus by following him in baptism.
- We have **been forgiven** of our sins.
- We have **even received the same Holy Spirit** that they saw in action.

**"So what do I do now? I mean right now.** Where do I go? **I'm looking to you guys** who walked with Jesus before his crucifixion and death and since have seen with

you own lives that he is alive. Tell us what to do next. **We have experienced this power and now we just need someone to walk with us to give direction and context to the whirlwind that has just hit us."**

**The closest to this feeling that I can think of is coming home with our first baby, Hannah. I've just experienced this amazing thing and there's this new life that I'm responsible for and I just wanted someone at the hospital to tell us what to do. Where are the adults? Where are the experts?**

**Similar to when I thought my job was to get people to say they believed in Jesus and have them pray a prayer to acknowledge that they understand some religious facts. I remember leading people to Christ on a Campus Crusade trip to Daytona Beach. After the prayer, there was this awkward moment when I said goodbye and tried to figure out what else I was supposed to do.**

**That's the question that these people were going to ask.**

**The verses that we just read don't tell all of how they did it but the twelve did answer the question. We see in what they did that these new babes in Christ were told what to do next.**

**Where it started with them is where it starts with us. It begins with a change in the object of my devotion.**

**"And they devoted themselves"**

Other words used to define are adhering to, devoted and **constant or steadfastly attentive**.

- Used 6 times in Acts 1:14, 2:42, 44, 6:4, 8:13, 10:7.

All these, with one accord, were devoting themselves to prayer, together with the women and Mary, the mother of Jesus, and his brothers. **Acts 1:14**.

**Here's what I know; everyone is devoted to something.** Maybe it's their spouse, kids, job, the next thing...**And in many cases it is the meeting of my own needs and wants.** It's self-fulfillment.

- I can do this with the best of them. I can make anything about me.

**What are these 3000 people and counting going to give their "constant or steadfast attention to? What will be the object of their devotion?**

Well, what does this snapshot of the first church tell about what they were devoting themselves to? Here's the first... **Teaching that points to Jesus.**

Verse 42 say that they were devoted to **"the apostles teaching"**.

- No description is given.

We know that this teaching is going to **come from what Jesus taught** them before he ascended to heaven. **The**

**great commission** and then all the stuff that was in Peter's sermon.

**All those things that Jesus had been teaching them, that they didn't really completely understand, now comes into focus. Post-resurrection and having the benefit of the power of the Holy Spirit, now the twelve are able to teach these new follows what Jesus had taught them.**

- **The gospel**, which is the Kingdom, Jesus as Christ promised messiah/deliverer, that he died and was raised from the dead. Their response was to follow, repent, and believe.
- The mission or the *Great Commission*, which was their marching orders.

Listen to how Paul describes being devoted to teaching that points to Jesus. **Hold on to the pattern of wholesome teaching you learned from me—a pattern shaped by the faith and love that you have in Christ Jesus.** <sup>14</sup> Through the power of the Holy Spirit who lives within us, **carefully guard** the precious truth that has been entrusted to you. 2 Timothy 1:13-14 (NLT)

**Wholesome** could also be called "**sound or healthy**" that came from another person who had met the risen Jesus.

**My commitment to you** is that I'm going to work really hard to bring to you what is **wholesome, sound, and points you to Christ.**

**Jennifer is just getting started with a new curriculum that I believe is really going to help make sure our kids are getting what is wholesome, sound, and points them to Jesus. Every Old Testament lesson makes a connection to how this is really about Jesus.**

**I want to give you what is worth being devoted to. As does Jennifer with the kids, Matt with the youth and Deb and her team with adults.**

**Desire for teaching is a proof of true conversion. Has the object of someone's devotion been changed if they don't want to be taught? ...but I don't like \_\_\_\_\_.**

**The second thing that they were devoted to was... Fellowship where Jesus is the glue (koinonia).**

1. "And all who believed were together and had all things in common."
2. Selling their possessions to meet needs of others.
3. Breaking bread together in their homes.

**"the unique sharing that Christians have with God and with other Christians." 120**

It's the idea of "communion". That's the idea in the Lords' supper.

- Fellowship with God through Jesus.

- Fellowship with other Christ followers, because Jesus' spirit enables that sharing and connections.
- In both cases, Jesus is the glue that enables fellowship.

This is where the importance of the Bible and what is being taught gets caught. Teaching is theory until it is shared with others and becomes practice. **When I am sharing my life with others** who are trying to align their lives with the teachings and life of Jesus, **I am better able to align my life to Jesus' life.**

Let us think of ways to motivate one another to acts of love and good works. Hebrews 10:24 (NLT) That happens when there is fellowship where Jesus is the glue.

Here Paul explains it clearly. **so it is with Christ's body. We are many parts of one body, and we all belong to each other.** Romans 12:5 (NLT) Jesus is what holds us together into one body.

"The Gospel of Jesus Christ knows no religion but social; no holiness, but social holiness." Wesley pg 125-6 **I cannot have a gospel that is not social and I cannot live a holy life that honors God where I am set apart for him without being in fellowship.**

**The biggest killer of fellowship and hospitality is pride.**

- I don't want you to see me as I am.
- I don't want to be responsible to you because I might fail.

You can see what is next... **Coming to Jesus' table.**  
This is referring to **communion** that they most likely did before their **fellowship meals**.

I read this almost every time we take communion.

Then he broke it in pieces and said, "This is my body, which is given for you. Do this in remembrance of me." <sup>25</sup> In the same way, he took the cup of wine after supper, saying, "This cup is the new covenant between God and his people—an agreement confirmed with my blood. Do this in remembrance of me as often as you drink it." <sup>26</sup> For every time you eat this bread and drink this cup, you are announcing the Lord's death until he comes again. 1 Corinthians 11:24b-26 (NLT)

**This was an affirmation of their new story.** It was to continue to **remind them of who they are and to whom they belong.**

Coming to Jesus' table does the same for us.

Finally, we are to be devoted to... **Prayer that nurtures openness to Jesus.**

Again not explained.

**Was it the Lord's Prayer** or going to the **temple** at prayer times or **personal**; we don't know.

**They were told to teach to obey all that I have commanded them.** This is the way Jesus taught them to pray when they asked him.

Jesus said, "This is how you should pray:



"Father, may your name be kept holy.  
May your Kingdom come soon.  
<sup>3</sup> Give us each day the food we need,  
<sup>4</sup> and forgive us our sins,  
as we forgive those who sin against us.  
And don't let us yield to temptation. Luke 11:2-4

**I think this verse describes best the kind of prayer they were to devote themselves to prayer that opens us up to Jesus' transforming presence.**

"And so I tell you, keep on asking, and you will receive what you ask for. Keep on seeking, and you will find. Keep on knocking, and the door will be opened to you. <sup>10</sup> For everyone who asks, receives. Everyone who seeks, finds. And to everyone who knocks, the door will be opened.  
Luke 11:9-10

Prayer that nurtures openness to Jesus...

**Actually, that's what all of these things that they were devoted to are intended to do.**

**Notice that they were not to devote themselves to the powerful expressions of the Holy Spirit in the hopes that more will come. These are very practical things that we are to be devoted to. The power is that they allow our devotion to God to grow. It allows our capacity to love others to grow. These create space for God to transform our lives.**

**The Holy Spirit will fill space when it is made available!**

Before we get to some ways to obey what we have heard, **there's one more thing.**

**Let's not romanticize these few verses** into something that we then try to make happen today and when it doesn't, we are discouraged. Here's why. Look what God is about to do with this idyllic church setting. **The idea is that if we can start to think that if we do it like this first church in Acts, then we will find favor with all people.**

<sup>46</sup> And day by day, attending the temple together and breaking bread in their homes, they received their food with glad and generous hearts, <sup>47</sup> praising God and having favor with all the people. And the Lord added to their number day by day those who were being saved.

Sounds like the ideal church, doing it right and, therefore, people are coming to Christ.

We will get to this chapter this winter.

Saul was one of the witnesses, and he agreed completely with the killing of Stephen. A great wave of persecution began that day, sweeping over the church in Jerusalem; and all the believers except the apostles were scattered through the regions of Judea and Samaria. Acts 8:1

Remember that this thing was **never to be a regional phenomenon.** It was to be a worldwide movement where disciples are making disciples. It gained traction here, but God had to get them moving outward at the perfect time.

**Steps of Obedience;**  
**Confess devotion that is misplaced.**

**What have I given my constant or steadfast attention to that doesn't deserve that attention. You know that it's not worth it, because that object cannot pay off the way you think it can. Whatever it is it will run its course. It has a shelf life. Is there something that didn't and wouldn't die for you and yet you give it your devotion as if it will?**

**Which expression of my devotion has faded?**

**Did you notice that devotion to all of these activities are really devotion to Jesus? That's why I put Jesus in all of them. They aren't ends unto themselves, they are ways of opening ourselves up to God, through Jesus. Are these ways of expressing devotion to Jesus which has faded?**

- Teaching that points to Jesus.
- Fellowship where Jesus is the glue.
- Coming to Jesus' table.
- Prayer that nurtures openness to Jesus.

**Now this is not an exhaustive list. These aren't the only way to express our devotion to Jesus.**

**Do it to enjoy him, not impress him.**

**Taste and see that he is good. Do these things in order to open yourself up to him and enjoy your relationship with him.**

**If you are doing these things to impress him, or earn something that is already free, or as steps to arrive somewhere, then you will be disappointed.**

**Could it be possible that allowing God's word to teach you becomes a moment when you jump out of the rat race and enjoy life that is full with him. What if fellowship, real sharing, was not something you did out of habit, but as a way of stepping out of the rushing current of life and rest and enjoy him through his people? What if your prayer time was not out of guilt or fear of falling out of his favor, but rather to enjoy his presence as a respite in your day.**

**Guilty as charged. I have done this for years. (Bring out my journals in the box) Now I'm trying to do these things to enjoy the one who created me so that He could enjoy me and give me life that is full. Oh, and as I'm enjoying him, he will transform my life by living his life through me!**