

The Spirit-filled Church (Part Three)

Introduction

A. Our text is **Acts 2:42-47**

B. This section describes “**The Spirit-filled Church**”

C. So far, we have considered three characteristics of the Spirit-filled Church:

1. It is a **dedicated** church

2. It is a **learning** church

3. It is a **loving** church

D. This morning we will focus-in on **two more characteristics** of a Spirit-filled Church—

1. It is a **worshipping** church

2. It is a **growing** church

Worshipping Church

2:42-43 ⁴²And they continued steadfastly...in the breaking of bread, and in prayers. ⁴³Then fear came upon every soul, and many wonders and signs were done through the apostles.

2:46-47 ⁴⁶So 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, ⁴⁷praising God and having favor with all the people. And the Lord added to the church daily those who were being saved.

A. In fellowship, these first Christians gathered on a regular, on-going basis to **worship God** together “in the temple” and “from house to house”

B. They were “**God-worshippers**”—this is evident by the way they lived life

c. Three observations from Acts 2:42-47:

1. First, the **description** of their worship

a. ⁴²“They continued steadfastly in **the breaking of bread**”

i. The definite article “**the**” makes this “**breaking of bread**” to mean more than just a general sharing of a meal; it refers to a **specific meal**

ii. It refers to “**The Lord’s Supper**”—“**Communion**”

NLT: ⁴²They joined with the other believers and devoted themselves to...sharing in **the Lord's Supper** and in prayer.

⁴⁶They worshiped together at the Temple each day, met in homes for **the Lord's Supper**...

iii. **“The Lord's Supper”** is one of the **two sacraments** of the New Testament Church; the other being **“water baptism”**

iv. **Jesus** instructed His disciples to partake of it, and **Paul**, **directed by the Holy Spirit**, taught Christians to observe it on a regular basis—

1 Corinthians 11:23-26

²³I received from the Lord that which I also delivered to you: that the Lord Jesus on the same night in which He was betrayed took bread; ²⁴and when He had given thanks, He broke it and said, “Take, eat; this is My body which is broken for you; do this in remembrance of Me.” ²⁵In the same manner He also took the cup after supper, saying, “This cup is the new covenant in My blood. This do, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of Me.” ²⁶For as often as you eat this bread and drink this cup, you proclaim the Lord's death till He comes.

v. Focus-in: **The Lord's Supper**

aa. First, it is a **memorial service**

aa-I. The purpose of memorials is to remind people of something, namely people and events worth remembering

aa-II. The observance of the Lord's Supper is a memorial—it reminds us of Jesus and His sacrificial, propitiatory death of Jesus on the cross for our sakes

aa-III. The death of Christ is worth remembering—without it faith and life in Christ makes no sense

aa-IV. As we eat the bread, we **remember** the body of Christ—bruised and broken for us

- Face beaten
- Lashed back torn open
- Beard pulled out
- Crown of thorns pressing down on His brow
- Exhaustion and fatigue
- Back splintered by the wooden cross
- Hands and feet nailed to a cross
- Bones out of joint
- Nerves signals anguish and pain
- Respiratory system failure
- Satisfied God's wrath, paid the ransom for our redemption, and provided the means for our reconciliation with God

aa-V. As we drink the wine, we **remember** the blood of Christ—poured out for us

aa-A. His blood is the sign of the New Covenant relationship between God and his people—

aa-1. No longer is the basis of it the **law**

aa-2. It is now **grace**—due to the finished work of Christ on the cross

aa-B. His blood provides for us life, forgiveness, justification, and cleansing

aa-VI. **We are forgetful people**, and we need the Lord's Supper to awaken our memories of the most important event in history—and this should happen on a regular, on-going basis

bb. Second, it is a **worship service**

bb-I. In observing the Lord's Supper, we praise and thank God for what Christ did and accomplished on the cross

bb-II. The Lord's Supper should not end on a low, somber note

bb-III. Contemplation should lead us to **celebration**—“It is finished!” (see John 19:30)

bb-IV. “We are redeemed and reconciled; saved and justified! We are being sanctified, and will be glorified!” These facts carry with it the tone of **joy!**

bb-V. Jesus died on the cross, but He did not stay there—three days later he rose again from the dead!

We worship a risen Savior!

vi. The first Christians observed the Lord’s Supper on an on-going, regular basis—and **we should do the same**

b. ⁴²“They continued steadfastly in **prayers**”

i. Prayer is talking with God—it is an essential component for a thriving relationship with God

ii. In the Greek New Testament, the definite article “the” precedes “prayers”—“**the prayers**”

iii. This refers to a specific church service—the church prayer gathering; the prayer meeting

iv. The plural form of “prayers” may indicate the frequency of their prayer gatherings

v. “Prayers” is an essential ingredient of a Spirit-filled, Christ-centered Church

aa. Charles Spurgeon (1834-1892): “Prayer is the breath of faith. Prayer meetings are the lungs of the church.”

bb. In his book called “Fresh Wind, Fresh Fire”, Pastor Jim Cymbala wrote:

“You can tell how popular a church is by who comes on Sunday morning. You can tell how popular the pastor or evangelist is by who comes on Sunday night. But you can tell how popular Jesus is by who comes to the prayer meeting.”

vi. **JESUS** taught His disciples to pray—

Matthew 7:7-8

⁷“Ask, and it will be given to you; seek, and you will find; knock, and it will be opened to you. ⁸For everyone who asks receives, and he who seeks finds, and to him who knocks it will be opened.

Luke 18:1

¹He spoke a parable to them, that men always ought to pray and not lose heart...

vii. The **New Testament** commands Christians to pray—

1 Thessalonians 5:16-18

¹⁶Rejoice always, ¹⁷pray without ceasing, ¹⁸in everything give thanks; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you.

viii. The **first Christians** continually devoted themselves to prayers—

Acts 1:14

¹⁴These all continued with one accord in prayer and supplication...

Acts 2:42

⁴²“They continued steadfastly in...prayers”

ix. Their prayers included 4 forms of expression that can be remembered by the acronym **A.C.T.S.**—

i. **Adoration**—praise and worship

ii. **Confession**—admission of sin and petition for mercy

iii. **Thanksgiving**—expression of gratitude

iv. **Supplications**—intercession and petitions

x. Devoting themselves to prayer, these first Christians experienced four things:

aa. First, the sense of the nearness of Jesus

Matthew 18:20

²⁰Where two or three are gathered together in My name, I am there in the midst of them.

bb. Second, answered prayer

Matthew 18:19

¹⁹I say to you that if two of you agree on earth concerning anything that they ask, it will be done for them by My Father in heaven.

cc. Third, unity among Christians

Acts 1:14

¹⁴These all continued with one accord in prayer and supplication

dd. Fourth, power and boldness

Acts 4:31

³¹When they had prayed, the place where they were assembled together was shaken; and they were all filled with the Holy Spirit, and they spoke the word of God with boldness.

xi. The first Christians gathered to pray on an on-going, regular basis—and we should do the same

2. Second, the **attitude** in worship

a. Joy

2:46 ⁴⁶So continuing daily with one accord in the temple, and breaking bread from house to house, they ate their food with gladness (“exaltation”) and simplicity of heart, ⁴⁷praising God and having favor with all the people.

b. Reverence

2:43 ⁴³Then **fear** came upon every soul...

c. John Stott (1921-2011):

“The early church’s worship was both joyful and reverent... Since God had sent his son into the world, and had now sent them his Spirit, they had plenty of reason to be joyful.”

“Every worship service should be a joyful celebration of the mighty acts of God through Jesus Christ. It is right in public worship to be dignified; it is unforgivable to be dull. At the same time, their joy was never irreverent. If joy in God is an authentic work of the Spirit, so is the fear of God. *Everyone was filled with awe* (2:43), which seems to include the Christians as well as the non-Christians. God had visited their city. He was in their midst, and they knew it. They bowed down before him in humility and wonder. It is a mistake, therefore, to imagine that in public worship reverence and rejoicing are mutually exclusive. The combination of joy and awe, as of formality and informality, is a healthy balance in worship.”

3. Third, the **fruit** of their worship

a. ⁴³Then **fear** came upon every soul, and many wonders and signs were done through the apostles.

b. ⁴⁷And the Lord added to the church daily those who were being **saved**.

c. This reminds me of Psalm 40—

Psalm 40:3

³He has put a new song in my mouth—
Praise to our God;
Many will see it and fear,
And will trust in the Lord.

Growing Church

2:47 ⁴⁷And the Lord added to the church daily those who were being saved.

A. The early church grew not only in **maturity**, but also in **number**

B. Observation:

1. First, the “**Lord**” is the One Who brings numeric growth to a Church

a. In Acts 2:47 He is *adding* Believers to the church; in Acts 6:1 He is *multiplying* Believers in the church

b. In Acts 2, the church was *three thousand*; in Acts 4, the church is *five thousand*

c. The Lord continued to save lost souls throughout the book of Acts

2. Second, those that were being added to the church were those that were being “saved”

a. God desires for His church to be a “life-saving station”

b. According to an Evangelical Magazine in the U.S., 80% of today’s church growth is the result of “church-transplants,” not conversions—this was *not* the case with the early church

c. “A church is a hospital for sinners, not a museum for saints.” (L.L. Nash)

i. The early Believers were evangelistic Believers (see Acts 8:4), and the Lord added to the church daily those being saved

ii. The early church was in the business of *reaching out to the lost* because Jesus is in the business of *saving the lost*

3. Third, salvation was a “daily” experience in the early church

a. There is something unhealthy about a church where it is not common to see the salvation of lost souls

b. May God keep His church to be a “life-saving station”

c. Application:

10 practical steps to sharing the Gospel with others:

a. First, be prayerful

- i. Prayer opens the doors of opportunity
- ii. Prayer prepares and empowers us to preach the Gospel
- iii. Prayer prepares and opens the hearts of condemned sinners to hear and respond to the Gospel

b. Second, be Biblical

- i. Let the Word of God speak for itself—it will always accomplish whatever God sends it out to do (Isaiah 55:11)
- ii. It is the power of God to salvation (Romans 1:16-17)
- iii. Open your Bible and read the scriptures to people

c. Third, be loving and patient

- i. God wants people to see His love through us as we share His good news about Jesus
 - aa. The way people view us will impact their view of God
 - bb. Remember that “people don’t care how much you know until they first know how much you care”
- ii. Guard yourself against turning a conversation into an angry argument

Our goal is to win people, not arguments

d. Fourth, be simple

- i. Use simple terms speaking in a simple language
- ii. Explain the main points of your message

e. Fifth, be clear

- i. Speak clearly and loudly enough to be heard
- ii. Make sure the person you are conversing with is understanding what you are saying—ask him, “Do you understand what I’m saying?” “Do you have any questions?”
- iii. Summarize your points and message

f. Sixth, be illustrative

- i. Personal testimonies
- ii. Real life facts and moments
- iii. Hand motions (“The beating heart”)
- iv. Pictorial illustrations (“The Bridge”)

g. Seventh, be interactive

- i. Involve the person you are conversing with questions and opportunities to read out-loud verses of the Bible
- ii. If possible, take time to read through a short Gospel tract together

iii. In team outreach, invite the person to listen to the open-air preacher with you, then, after the message, ask him if he understood the Gospel message

h. Eighth, be *attentive*

i. Focus on the person

ii. Listen to their words

iii. Speak from the heart

h. Ninth, remain *focused*

i. Don't become distracted with non-related topics and debates

ii. Keep the conversation focused on Jesus and the sinner's need for him

i. Tenth, be *urgent*

Communicate to the person you are conversing with that **today** is the right time to respond to the Gospel—**now** is the time to start believing in Jesus as his Savior, and obeying Him as his Lord (see 2 Corinthians 6:2)