

# Acts 2:41-47, 3:1-11 | God's Growing Church |

12/26/15

- God's growing Church | Acts 2:41-47
  - **Read Acts 2:41-47**
  - The results of God working through Peter's first sermon.
    - Scripture tells us that 3000 people who were listening to Peter preach the Gospel had obtained true saving faith and believed in Jesus Christ for their salvation.
    - God instituted the sermon to bring His word and it was proven to be very effective. Not because of the abilities of man, but because of the Holy Spirit.
    - Worshiping God and preaching the Gospel message is the purpose of the church.
      - These 3000 people are a result of the church that Jesus Christ has established and reigns as the head.
      - The church as it began that day has man who is filled with the Holy Spirit proclaiming the truth of Christ for their salvation.
      - This leads to belief and praise and worship of our loving heavenly Father.
  - Christianity spread because of the Holy Spirit and the obedience of the Christians
    - As we see all of the actions described in these few passages of Scripture we see that they were critical for the spreading of Christianity.
    - The Christians are the hands and feet of the body of Christ and we are instrumental so spreading the Gospel and making disciples so that all can have an opportunity to hear it.
    - All that we are going to look at was critical for the early church and are important for us today as Christians.
  - The new believers devoted themselves to the the apostles' teachings.
    - These early Christians understood that there was more to being a Christian than just simply being saved, they desired to learn and know more about God.
    - A critical step for all Christians after coming to faith and receiving salvation is to continue in God's Word to learn more about Him and how we are supposed to live our lives.
      - Being a Christian isn't some check box that we do one time we receive our tickets to heaven and we then live a life that is **unchanged**.
      - Being a Christian is a life long journey striving to live out God's purpose for our lives.
        - 2 Timothy 1:9
          - "He has saved us and called us with a holy calling, not according to our works, but according to His own purpose and grace, which was given to us in Christ Jesus before time began".
        - For us to fulfill God's purpose for our lives requires us to have a relationship with God which is something that is a continuous and growing process.
          - Just like your spouse a relationship needs to be nurtured and it needs to grow.
          - So must we treat our relationship with Christ.
        - Then we are in a position to listen to God so that we can hear what our holy calling is.
      - Jesus wants us to be disciples
        - A disciple is a follower of Jesus Christ who see's Him as the Lord of their life.
        - Matthew 28:19-20

- “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, **teaching them to observe everything I have commanded you**. And remember, I am with you always, to the end of the age.”
- Jesus desires that we learn EVERYTHING that He has commanded
  - This is why we MUST study the Scriptures and spend time with God in prayer.
  - God has many things to teach us and He desires that we know them all.
- To be a disciple is to be a follower of Jesus Christ and to not rely upon Him solely as a crutch where we only turn to Him when we need Him.
  - This shows if God is truly the Lord of your life.
- Christians must not neglect our responsibility to teach others to be disciples.
  - The disciples were commanded to teach the Christians to observe all of the teachings of Jesus.
  - We must not forget nor neglect our responsibility as Christians to make disciples of others as well.
    - We MUST ALSO teach others these same truths.
  - All too often we are good with planting the seeds and show others the Gospel, however we are not as good with the follow up.
  - It is our divinely called duty to make disciples, we must be sure that those new Christians are given guidance and help so that they can strengthen their relationship with God and become spiritually mature.
  - God desires that we learn His Scriptures not only for our benefit, but also for the benefit of others.
- For the church to grow it was necessary for the Christians to grow spiritually
  - One of the reasons why the early church spread like it did was because its members desired to be spiritually mature.
  - **The body of Christ cannot grow if it is full of cold or lukewarm Christians who have no desire to grow spiritually or share the Gospel message.**
  - We must strive to not be the Christians in whom Hebrews 5:12 was directed at.
    - Hebrews 5:12
      - “Although by this time you ought to be teachers, you need someone to teach you the basic principles of God’s revelation again. You need milk, not solid food. “
- **How important is making disciples and being spiritually mature?**
- **Why do we seem to have a harder time following up and making disciples? What are some of the specific causes or “excuses”?**
- The new believers devoted themselves to fellowship and breaking of bread
  - Breaking of bread can signify both the Lord’s Supper and also simply a meal that was shared by the believers.
  - In this case this daily breaking of bread was the Christians gathering together for fellowship which included meals and likely partaking of the Lord’s Supper at the end.
  - One thing we as Baptists like to do is to come together for fellowship to be with one another and to eat 😊
  - We can take comfort knowing that this is in fact **very biblical** and was part of the early Christian Church.
  - **Why do you think this was so important to them? What are the benefits of fellowship with fellow believers?**

- The new believers devoted themselves to prayer
  - Prayer is vital to the Christian. It is how we communicate with God.
  - These Christians understood this truth and therefore were always in prayer to God, they desired to have a relationship with Him.
  - This same devotion to prayer must be mimicked by Christians today if we want to have a close relationship with God.
- The new believers held all things in common
  - These early Christians were such a close group that they sold their possessions and property and distributed as needed.
  - To note this passage is not a biblical representation or commandment of communism or redistribution of wealth, that is not what this is.
    - These were **voluntary acts** of selling and giving of their possessions it wasn't a government or ruling body forcing them to do this.
  - But what this example shows us and it is that which is required of Christians is that we are to be generous and we are to look out for and care for others.
  - These Christians were a unified body of believers who cared for one another and desired no one would be in need.
  - **How important was unity during this time period?**
- The new believers worshiped God daily
  - Every day (not just on Sunday's) these Christians were devoted to meeting in the temple complex.
  - These were dedicated Christians who were on fire for God and desired to have a deep and close relationship with Him.
  - They were hungry for the Scriptures and to learn more about God.
- The new believers were joyful, humble and had favor with all the people.
  - These Christians were not a stuck up group that was detested by the world, they were joyful, humble and found favor with the public.
  - These Christians were embracing the teachings of the Scriptures and were putting it to action in their lives.
- The results of these obedient Christians
  - These Christians who were living out their lives filled with the Spirit and being obedient to God were spreading the truth of Christ and the Lord was saving them daily.
- **How important was it for these early Christians to live out their faith so that the Gospel message could be made known to the world?**
- **Do all Christians have this same fire for God? Or do we at times take it for granted?**
- The healing of the lame man | Acts 3:1-10
  - ***Read Acts 3:1-10***
  - The signs and wonders of the apostles as stated previously are shown to us here in chapter 3 with the healing of the lame man.
  - The apostles through the Holy Spirit were able to perform miracles and other signs that were quite similar to that of Jesus Christ.
  - The lame man
    - This man was lame from birth so it wasn't that he had been injured and was on the mend but in fact he had never walked in his entire life.
    - He had friends that placed him every day at the temple gate called Beautiful in which to beg.
      - This was a prime choice given that the giving of alms by the Jews was a requirement so they knew that it was very likely to encounter those who would give at this location.

- As this man set there he saw Peter and John who apparently actually made eye contact and asked them for help which he of course was expecting money.
- Peter and John
  - Peter and John were traveling to the temple for their daily prayers or time of worship at 3 in the afternoon.
  - Now Peter and John were not seeking this man, they were simply going on about their business going through their routine.
  - But they came across this lame man who had called out to them.
  - Their response was not scripted nor was it solely of their own intention but it was God through the Holy Spirit that gave them their true purpose.
  - **This is a perfect example of why we as Christians must always be watchful and ready, because God may choose to use us for His good works when we least expect it.**
- The lame man is healed by the name of Jesus Christ
  - Peter empowered by the Holy Spirit tells the man something that he was not expecting to hear.
  - He figured they were going to give him a few coins but to his surprise Peter first says I don't have any money.
    - You can imagine the momentary sadness when he heard that.
  - But Peter then says something that would change this lame mans life forever.
  - Peter tells the lame man that "in the name of Jesus Christ the Nazarene" to get up and walk.
  - The healing performed by the name of Jesus Christ
    - It important to note that this healing was not done by the power of the apostles alone, but it was because they invoked the name of Jesus Christ in whom has the power to heal.
    - This was of course the only way they could heal the man as they had not the ability on their own.
    - This also made it clear that it was not them that did the healing but Jesus.
- The astonishment of those who witnessed the miracle
  - The lame man would have been well known by most of the people who were there as they also likely made regular visits to the temple.
  - And since this man had been lame and a beggar for all his life he would have been a common site at the temple.
  - So now when they saw this same man that they knew was truly lame walking and praising God that this was truly something that was a miracle.
- Reason for the miracle
  - Proof as to the name being taught by the apostles
    - These apostles were proclaiming the name of Jesus Christ for salvation, these signs were done by the Holy Spirit through them as to give validity and show the power in the name that they were proclaiming.
    - That they were truly the apostles of Jesus Christ and bringing the same message that Jesus did.
    - Jesus performed many miracles, signs and wonders to prove who He was and the Holy Spirit also did this through the apostles.
  - To bring praise and glory to God
    - Everything we that do should bring praise and glory to God. The actions of the Spirit through the apostles was no different.

- The lame man being ever excited and grateful no longer being name began to praise and worship God.
- Not that this man wasn't giving glory to Peter and John, but to God because he knew that the power in the name of Jesus Christ was from God.