

The Character of the Early Church

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AM Service

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Text: [Acts 2:41-47](#)

Introduction

Today's message is something that the Lord has laid on my heart to preach as we celebrate our 3rd Church Anniversary. This message is long overdue. It is long overdue because this is part two of the message I preached here at Grace & Truth two years ago, entitled "*The Devotion of the Early Church*". This morning, consider with me "*The Character of the Early Church*". But before we look at the character of the early church, let us review the devotion of the early church. What was the early church steadfastly devoted to?

In [Matthew 16:18](#) our Lord says, "[I will build my church. And the gates of hell shall not prevail against it.](#)" Here we read a great statement from our Lord that He will build His church and the gates of hell, that is, Satan and his minions will not conquer it. Our Lord is stating a fact. This is sure. This is certain. This is guaranteed 100 percent.

Jesus Christ will build His church and Satan will not and cannot overcome it. But the only way that the church will ever have the guarantee that Satan will not overpower it, is when Christ builds it His way.

Look at the statement again, "[I will build my church. And the gates of hell shall not prevail against it.](#)" The key words are "My church". It is His church and it must be built according to His plan. And the plan is laid out for us in ...

[Acts 2:42 And they continued stedfastly in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship, and in breaking of bread, and in prayers.](#)

That is the key. It is a fourfold key. The key is that the early church was devoted to the apostles' doctrine, fellowship, in breaking of bread, and in prayers.

If the Lord tarries, five years from now, will Grace & Truth still be in existence? How about ten, twenty, fifty, hundred years from now? Will our children, grandchildren and great grandchildren have Grace & Truth to come to and worship and be instructed in the Word? Or if it is still in operation will it be around to glorify God and Jesus Christ? Nobody really knows, only God knows. But it will greatly depend on our commitment to the way and the plan Jesus Christ laid down for us in His word.

My prayer is that, should the Lord tarries, Grace & Truth will continue to exist and not just merely exist but exist for the glory of God. The only way to make that happen is for you and I to be

fully committed to the ways and plans of Jesus Christ. If Grace & Truth is to continue to exist and continue to be a lighthouse in Murrieta and its neighboring city we must be devoted to doctrine, fellowship, breaking of bread and prayers.

Furthermore, in order to exist and make a difference in this community, our church must have the characteristics the early church had:

1. Saved-only Church

Acts 2:41 Then they that gladly received his word were baptized: and the same day there were added unto them about three thousand souls. 42: And they continued stedfastly in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship, and in breaking of bread, and in prayers.

This is one of the amazing things about the early church. After Peter preached his sermon on Christ's death and resurrection, three thousand people got saved. Three thousand people **gladly received the word**; the same three thousand people **were baptized**; the same three thousand people **continued steadfastly**; the same three thousand people **were added to the church**. This early church is made up of truly saved people.

Brothers and sisters, this is where it begins. If Grace & Truth is to prevail against the devil, we must be careful that we receive into membership only saved people. Don't get me wrong. I am not saying that non-believers are not welcome here. Non-believers are very much welcome to come and sit under the preaching and learn the Word of God. But as far as becoming a member of Grace & Truth Bible Baptist Church, they are to be believing people and saved people.

Brothers and sisters, if we are to make a difference in our community we must be a **saved-only** church.

2. Scripture-hungry Church

Acts 2:41 Then they that gladly received his word were baptized: and the same day there were added unto them about three thousand souls. 42: And **they continued stedfastly in the apostles' doctrine** and fellowship, and in breaking of bread, and in prayers.

The three thousand souls who were saved and baptized and added to the church continued steadfastly in the apostles' doctrine. They did not simply make a profession of Christ, they showed true possession of Christ by steadfastly continuing in the doctrines of the Word.

This is the mark of a true Christian. This is the mark of one who has been born again. One who has been born again desires the sincere milk of the word.

John 8:30 As he spake these words, **many believed on him**. 31: Then said Jesus to those Jews which believed on him, **If ye continue in my word, then are ye my disciples indeed**;

Our Lord declares that those who truly believed will continue in His Word. To continue in the doctrines of His Word is a clear evidence of true faith.

Brothers and sisters, if we are to make a difference in our community we must be a **Scripture-hungry** church.

3. Spirit-filled Church

Another characteristic that the early church has, is that they were Spirit-filled church.

Acts 2:38 Then Peter said unto them, Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost.

The moment a person repents and believes the Gospel, the Holy Spirit comes and indwells and empowers him. And as he lets the word of Christ dwell in him, the more he is empowered and controlled by the Spirit of God. Satan cannot stop a spirit-filled church where sin and self is set aside in order that the Spirit of God may freely move and work.

Brothers and sisters, if we are to make a difference in our community we must be a **spirit-filled** church.

4. Single-hearted Church

Acts 2:44 **And all that believed were together**, and had **all things common**; 45: And sold their possessions and goods, and parted them to all men, as every man had need. 46: And they, continuing daily with **one accord** in the temple, and breaking bread from house to house, did eat their meat with gladness and **singleness of heart**, 47: Praising God, and having favour with all the people. And the Lord added to the church daily such as should be saved.

I love the phrase “And all that believed were together”.

Now notice in Verse 44b, “all things common.” Verse 46, “one accord.” Verse 46, “singleness of heart.” These all mean unity. The early church was single-hearted. They had singleness of heart.

Psalms 133:1 Behold, how good and how pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in unity!
2: It is like the precious ointment upon the head, that ran down upon the beard, even Aaron's beard: that went down to the skirts of his garments;
3: As the dew of Hermon, and as the dew that descended upon the mountains of Zion: for there the LORD commanded the blessing, even life for evermore.

The early church was characterized by amazing unity. At that church everybody that believed was together. They think the same thing, feel the same thing, and speak the same thing. There was beautiful unity. A united church will have a great and lasting impact in the community.

Brothers and sisters, if we are to make a difference in our community we must be a **single-hearted** church.

5. Soul-winning Church

Acts 2:47 Praising God, and having favour with all the people. And the Lord added to the church daily such as should be saved.

Acts 8:1 And Saul was consenting unto his death. And at that time there was a great persecution against the church which was at Jerusalem; and they were all scattered abroad throughout the regions of Judaea and Samaria, except the apostles. 2: And devout men carried Stephen to his

burial, and made great lamentation over him. 3: As for Saul, he made havock of the church, entering into every house, and haling men and women committed them to prison. 4: Therefore they that were scattered abroad went every where preaching the word.

Here we are introduced to a man named Saul before he became the Apostle Paul. He persecuted the early church and because of this persecution they were scattered abroad. As they were scattered they scattered the Word of God. They preach, they spread the Word of God.

The early church not only witnessed in the power of the Holy Spirit, but they did so in spite of intense persecution. A Spirit-led church is a church that witnesses for Christ regularly, passionately, and faithfully—regardless of the obstacles.

Evangelism in the Jerusalem church was not an occasional, sporadic event - it was a “daily” activity (Acts 2:47). Even when later the members of the congregation at Jerusalem were scattered because of persecution, they “went everywhere preaching the word” (Acts 8:4).

Brothers and sisters, if we are to make a difference in our community we must be a **soul-winning** church.

Closing Thoughts

The early church steadfastly devoted to the Word of God, to fellowship, to the breaking of bread, and prayer. And what is the result?

Acts 2:41 Then they that gladly received his word were baptized: and the same day there were added unto them about three thousand souls. 42: And they continued stedfastly in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship, and in breaking of bread, and in prayers. 43: **And fear** (awe) **came upon every soul:** and many wonders and signs were done by the apostles.

Everyone had a sense of awe. There was a sense that something supernatural was present. May we at Grace & Truth and those outside looking in, when they see the work being done here, would say ...

Psalm 118:23 This is the LORD's doing; it is marvellous in our eyes.

Let us pray that Grace & Truth will be a kind of church where people would sense the presence and the power God producing holy fear, love, unity, joy, to the praise and thanksgiving of our great God and Saviour Jesus Christ!

Our Lord said, "I will build My church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it."

It is His church and He will build it His way. That is our confidence. He will build His church and we are called to be part of what He is building.

I believe that Grace & Truth is not an accident. I believe with all my heart that it is God's perfect will and plan to establish Grace & Truth to be a lighthouse here in Murrieta and its neighboring communities. God has allowed us to plant this local church to make known the manifold grace,

wisdom and glory of Christ. The only way for that to happen is if we commit ourselves to devote ourselves Jesus Christ and to the blueprint He has laid out for us in His Word.

AMEN!