

Built

Week 4: Built for One Another

Acts 2:42-47

I get to take my Sabbath Day on Monday and I have some routines that I find really life giving. After I take the girls to school, I go back home and enjoy another cup of coffee (or two). I spend a little more time in the Word. Try to get outside, maybe get an extended workout in. Things that renew and revitalize my soul.

But part of my Sabbath routine is listening to a couple of Podcasts that drop on Mondays. One of them is the History This Week Podcast, because that's the stage of life I'm in right now. Another one is the Bible Project Podcast.

Last Monday, I was listening to their latest episode, and they started going in depth on the passage I had just preached on the day before. And at first, I was like, "Oh, cool! I just preached that!" But like two seconds later, I thought, "Oh no!" Because these guys are *really* smart!

And this irrational fear washed over me like, *what are they about to say that I totally missed? And, what if I really botched something and need to send an apology email to everyone?* You know, totally normal, not crazy things like that!

But it actually just affirmed one of the things I love about Scripture. You can spend your entire life digging into this book, and you'll never reach the bottom. There are always connections you haven't seen before. Details you've read a hundred times, that suddenly jump off the page.

And they pointed out one of those details from the passage we looked at last week. In Ephesians 2:21, the Apostle Paul writes, "In him (Jesus) the whole building is joined together and *rises* to become a holy temple in the Lord."

And that makes sense because buildings rise. Except the word Paul uses that's translated *rises* can also mean grows. The building grows. It's kind of strange when you put it like that because buildings don't grow. Trees grow, flowers grow, bodies grow. It almost sounds like Paul is mixing his metaphors.

But we know that what is being built up and joined together is not bricks and stones. That's not what the Church is made of. The Church is made of people begin built up and joined together in Christ. God is joining us together so that we can grow together in Him.

And I think that's important because there is a version of Christianity that says, "You know, I love Jesus. I believe the Bible. I go to Church when I don't have other things going on. I'm good!" But the picture of the Church that we see in the New Testament is completely different. The picture it paints is that you cannot become everything that Jesus intends for

you to be by following Him alone. We were built for one another. And the clearest example we have of this is in our text today. **Acts 2:42-47.**

I love this passage so much. I can almost feel my heart start racing when I read it and imagine what these early days of the Church were like. These verses tell the story of this young, Christian community, experiencing God in ways they never have before. They were witnessing the Holy Spirit's power revealed through wonders and signs performed by the Apostles. They shared their possessions with those who had need. They worshiped together and ate in each other's homes.

And this new, radical community experienced the favor of all people, even nonbelievers. They were marked by the joy and warmth of the Spirit's presence among them.

I think we miss the beauty of this passage if we only think about it like a **prescription** for how to do church. If we just boil these 6 verses down to: "Do these things and you'll experience community like this." Instead of being a prescription for how to "do church", I think these verse are more of a **description** of what happens when a group of people are wholly devoted to Jesus and one another.

When people are being built and joined together by Jesus, they grow into a community that is marked by the same worship and devotion and generosity and witness that we see in this passage. And really, the takeaway for us today is that **Healthy churches aren't built by consumers, but by committed followers of Jesus devoted to Him and one another.**

Consumers ask, "What am I getting out of this?" Committed followers ask, "What can I give?" Consumers look for a church based solely on meeting their needs. Committed followers look for ways to meet the needs of others. Consumers show up when it's convenient. Committed followers build their lives around Jesus and His people.

They open up their lives to one another. They pray for one another. Serve one another. Carry one another's burdens. Committed followers of Jesus don't just **go** to church together, they truly belong **to** one another.

And because that's their focus, I think it's why Luke is able to write in **verse 44...(READ)**

This used to be the part of the passage that lost me. It's like, *ah, that just seems a little too utopian*. Devoting themselves to teaching, praying together, sharing meals, even sharing resources...I can see all of that. But having **EVERYTHING** in common?

I'm like, "I love my wife and I'm whole-heartedly devoted to her, but neither one of us would say that we have **everything** in common. In fact, on most days, we just hope to have **a few things** in common!"

But I don't think Luke means these people with very different backgrounds and stories all the sudden had the same personality, preferences, and opinions. How boring is that?! I think what he's trying to show us is that they had the most important thing in common.

They were devoted to Jesus. And because Jesus was at the center, all of the things that could have divided them paled in comparison to the ONE THING that united them. And that kind of community still happens today. In fact, we get to see a beautiful picture of it right here at Sherwood Oaks within our Iglesia Hispana ministry.

People in this part of our church family have come from different countries, different cultures, and have different stories and experiences, but when they come together, they unite under Jesus as one family. Let's check out this video that isn't just about a ministry happening in our church building. It's a picture of Acts 2 lived out among us...(I/H Video)

Iglesia Hispana is a picture of a group of Jesus followers who don't just **go** to church together, they truly belong **to** one another. They are meeting needs, sharing life, sharing burdens. And today, they want to share lunch with us in the Fellowship Hall after the 11am service. Come join us!

Healthy churches aren't built by consumers, but by committed followers of Jesus devoted to Him and one another. When Jesus says in Matthew 16, "I will build my church..." He meant for us to be built **for** one another. And that kind of community is not only a blessing to be a part of, but it draws more people to Jesus because of what they see in us.

Luke ends this section in verse 47 say, "And the Lord added to their number **daily** those who were being saved."

Their devotion to Jesus shaped their devotion to one another. And their devotion to one another became a witness to the people around them. You see, the Church was NEVER built for just itself. Yes, the Church was built for "one another," but the Church was also built to reach One More.

One more person who needs hope. One more person whose marriage is falling apart. One more single person who feels alone and wonders if they are loved. One more teenager wondering if anyone sees them. One more neighbor carrying something no one else knows about. One more person who has spent years believing there's no way God could love someone like them. One more.

The reason we devote ourselves to Jesus and gather to learn and worship and share life together isn't just so we can stay safe in some "holy huddle." It's so we can be raised up and sent out to invest in others and invite them to find and follow Jesus with us.

Jesus is still building His Church. He's building us with one another. He's building us for one another. And He's sending us out to reach ONE more. As we close, let me ask you a few

questions. These are actually questions I've come back to over the last several years as I think about where we are as a church, but I think they also help us think about our own involvement in it.

1) Are we a part of a movement or a meeting? Are we a part of something that God is doing that's bigger than ourselves, or do we just meet once a week to sing some songs, listen to a sermon, and then go on about our lives?

2) Are we making a difference by serving others or simply putting on a service? If Jesus made a tangible difference in people's lives and WE are his followers, then shouldn't we be making a difference in our community as we serve others? It's why our focus is on being the best church **for** our community, not in it.

3) Are we on mission, or are we just going through the motions? I don't know about you, but I want to be a part of a church that is on mission for Jesus. I want to be a part of a church filled with people whose desire is to not just **go to** church, but **be** the church.

I want to be a part of a Church that gathers together around our common identity and purpose found in Jesus and then scatters throughout our community to be His hands and feet. To be a part of what he is doing to bring this world back to himself and heal the brokenness in our lives caused by sin.

I want to be a part of a Church that gathers up to worship Jesus so we can scatter out to show His love to others and invite them to join us as we follow Him.

A Church like that is made up of people like that. And so, what might the Lord be calling you to today? What next step is He inviting you to take in trusting and following Him?

Invitation and Response