

A Faith that Prevails
Part 5
“The Church Community”

Acts 2 NIV

38 Peter replied, “Repent and be baptized, every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins. And you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. 39 The promise is for you and your children and for all who are far off—for all whom the Lord our God will call.”

40 With many other words he warned them; and he pleaded with them, “Save yourselves from this corrupt generation.” 41 **Those who accepted (gladly received) his message were baptized**, and about **three thousand were added to their number that day.**

42 **They devoted themselves to the apostles’ teaching and to fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer.** 43 Everyone was filled with awe at the many wonders and signs performed by the apostles. 44 **All the believers were together and had everything in common.** 45 **They sold property and possessions to give to anyone who had need.** 46 Every day **they continued to meet together in the temple courts. They broke bread in their homes and ate together with glad and sincere hearts,** 47 praising God and enjoying the favor of all the people. And **the Lord added to their number daily those who were being saved.**

- **The Early Church had something Amazing in Common**

Vs. 41

Those who accepted (gladly received) his message were baptized, and about three thousand were added to their number that day.

I love this: Those who accepted (gladly received) his message were baptized?

This is what it means:

1. There were some who gladly received and some who didn't...
2. Those who did receive the message did it with glad hearts...
3. When they were saved they were brought in to something new...
4. Peter speaks of it in **Vs. 38**

Peter replied, "Repent and be baptized, every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins. And you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.

5. So these new believers were saved, baptized and filled with the Holy Spirit...
No wonder they were fun to be around...
6. When I got saved I came across a new found love for God and a new found love for God's people... How about you did you experience the same?

Vs. 41 "and about three thousand were added to their number that day."

Notice it doesn't say three thousand were added to the Roll Call Up Yonder...

It speaks of an adding to a number that already exists...

They belonging to this number...

They were apart of this together...

They were together and the Lord identified them as a whole...

Vs. 42

They devoted themselves to the **apostles' teaching** and to **fellowship**, to the **breaking of bread** and to **prayer**.

Devoted:

to adhere to

to be steadfastly attentive unto

to continue

to persevere and not to faint

to show one's self courageous

to be in constant readiness

• They Grew Together

Hebrews 10:24,25

24 And let us consider how we may spur one another on toward love and good deeds, 25 not giving up meeting together, as some are in the habit of doing, but encouraging one another—and all the more as you see the Day approaching. (*Day of the Lord's Return*)

- There is something that happens here every week that I love hearing about: **The Tuesday Morning Women's Prayer Meeting**
- I get to hear all the time about how God is moving in that group...
- There is something dynamic going on there...
- So much that even have some guys go...
- I get that Holy Spirit feeling about this group...
- We've had people accidentally show up at that group...
- Missionaries have accidentally wondered in... They grab ahold of them and pray over them and start prophesying over them...
- You never know what's going to happen...
- That's the kind of thing you read about in the New Testament...
- Let me warn you, If you show up they're liable to lay hands on you...

Hebrews 10 says:

- spur one another on toward love and good deeds...
- not giving up meeting together...
- encouraging one another—and all the more as you see the Day approaching...

• They Endured Together

Acts 8:1

On that day a great persecution broke out against the church in Jerusalem, and all except the apostles were scattered throughout Judea and Samaria.

Persecution of Christians in the Roman Empire occurred intermittently over a period of [over two centuries](#) between the [Great Fire of Rome](#) in 64

AD under Nero and the Edict of Milan in 313 AD, in which the Roman Emperors Constantine the Great and Licinius legalized the Christian religion.

The persecution of Christians in the Roman Empire was carried out by the state and also by local authorities on a sporadic basis, often at the whims of local communities. Starting in 250 AD, empire-wide persecution took place as an indirect consequence of an edict by the emperor Decius. This edict was in force for eighteen months, during which time some Christians were killed while others apostatised to escape execution.

Romans, for the most part, were tolerant in matters of religious belief and allowed countless religious sects, cults, saviors, and redeemers to proselytize without restrictions. Loyal and submissive members of society could believe in any Deity they wanted, including Jesus. Belief was a private matter of no interest to the Roman authorities. Roman cohesion was based on obedience to authority and on public pledges of loyalty to the state - epitomized by symbolical sacrifices to the Roman Gods. Contrary to later misperceptions, at first, Romans did not oppose belief in Jesus. Rather, Romans persecuted whoever refused to pledge loyalty to Roman authority, to the inclusion of those believers in Jesus that refused to sacrifice to the Roman Gods.

- During persecution the Church remained strong and even grew...
- They grew because they stayed close to the Lord and one another...
- They continued to share the Lord with others...
- The underground Church throughout the world has grown even in the midst of opposition...
- The Devil tried to snuff out the Church of Jesus with bringing persecution and causing them to scatter, this only caused the witness of Jesus to spread...

4. They are the Temple of God Together

1 Corinthians 3

10 By the grace God has given me, I laid a foundation as a wise builder, and someone else is building on it. But each one should build with care. 11 For no one can lay any foundation other than the one already laid, which is Jesus Christ. 12 If anyone builds on this foundation using gold, silver, costly

stones, wood, hay or straw, **13** their work will be shown for what it is, because the Day will bring it to light. It will be revealed with fire, and the fire will test the quality of each person's work. **14** If what has been built survives, the builder will receive a reward.

16 Don't you know that you **yourselves** are God's temple and that **God's Spirit dwells in your midst?** **17** If anyone destroys God's temple, God will destroy that person; **for God's temple is sacred, and you together are that temple.**

Closing

1 Peter 2:5

you also, like living stones, are being built into a spiritual house to be a holy priesthood, offering spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ.

In the last days a most critical part of having a faith that prevails is loving, embracing and engaging in the Community of Believers - The Church.