

Acts 2:42b

Fellowship

Devoted: Week 2

Introduction

Building update...

Grab your bibles and turn to Acts 2...

Last week we kicked off *a new series called Devoted* where we're looking at what it looks like to be devoted to Jesus...

Here's what I think the reality is... I think for many of us, we **want** to be devoted to Jesus, but if we're honest we don't really know what that looks like...

For others, you might **think** that you're devoted but you're not- and I think a large part of it is a lack of clarity on what devotion when it comes to Jesus looks like...

And then there's some of you that need to **reorient** around the gospel and reestablish your devotion...

Because here's the reality, being devoted to Jesus is more than just something that you say- it changes the way that you live... It reorients your life and reestablishes your rhythms...

- Devotion to Jesus means that you're devoted **to the things of Jesus** and you live them out... That you're devoted to things that keep you centered on Him...

We see this clearly in the early church... That their devotion to Jesus led to a wholistic life reorientation where Jesus was at the center...

So, what we're doing is unpacking **what devotion to Jesus looks like** practically and how it should play out in our lives...

And there is no better place to look than **Acts 2**... We're taking a deep dive in to **Acts 2:42-47** looking at what God's Word shows us devotion to Jesus looks like...

If you're here and you're not a Christian here's what I want you to see- the gospel is such good news that has changed us and realigned us and what we devoted to...

As followers of Jesus, we want our lives to orient around what Scripture lays out for us understanding it is for our good and God's glory- that's what we want to be about... The bible is our guide **to** Jesus and **how to live in light of Jesus**...

- And it's through that we experience an incredible source of life, power and community- something that you also have the opportunity to experience through Jesus...
- I want you to see Him and the benefits of being devoted to Him!

Let's jump in...

Acts 2:41-47

41 So those who accepted his message were baptized, and that day about three thousand people were added to them. **42** They devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching, to the fellowship, to the breaking of bread, and to prayer. **43** Everyone was filled with awe, and many wonders and signs were being performed through the apostles. **44** Now all the believers were together and held all things in common. **45** They sold their possessions and property and distributed the proceeds to all, as any had need. **46** Every day they devoted themselves to meeting together in the temple, and broke bread from house to house. They ate their food with joyful and sincere hearts, **47** praising God and enjoying the favor of all the people. Every day the Lord added to their number those who were being saved.

Let me hold up again for you *the thesis of this series*:

The gospel compels our devotion

3000 people get saved... And it's these 3000 people that devoted themselves to the things the text lays out here... And these things would become **marks** of the church...

Here's the thing, they hadn't heard a sermon on these things they were devoted to, they weren't told to do these things... It was just the natural overflow of their response to the gospel and the work of the Spirit in their lives...

What we see here is a **new community** that's formed around the message of Jesus... This was and is God's intent for the church... And the way that this community distinguishes itself is through its unique devotion...

*In the same way this should be true of us here at Image Church... This is a model for us!

But listen for ***our devotion to be in line with their devotion, to be faithful to the model that God's given us- we have to behold who they behold!*** JESUS!

It's the person and work of Jesus that brings together this new community and reorients them and how they live and what they are devoted to, we want the same to be true for us!

As we dive into the things that they were devoted to, ***when you see a disconnect-*** you need to understand that it's a ***gospel issue***...

The gospel is a powerful thing that brings transformation and reorientation... It brings new, life, a new objective, new family...

*If the gospel isn't at the center of our lives, then we will not be ***devoted*** to the implications of the gospel that we see here...

- The starting line is that you were dead but through the finished work of Jesus you've been made alive, and this changes everything...

For some of you, you might that you've never really surrendered to Jesus... Others of you need to reorient in light of your salvation!

And let me just say this before we look at the next thing... The ***shock and awe*** of the gospel wears off quickly for us... That's not a good thing... it is a sad reality that shows how weak we are...

But the beauty of the ***devotion*** that we see here is that it helps us keep our eyes oriented on who God is and what He's done for us through Jesus... ***And the implications it has for our lives!***

So, these places of devotion are not burdens they are blessings!

Ok, so last week we talked about their devotion to the Apostles teaching, let's look at the next thing they're devoted to, ***they were devoted to fellowship***...

Question: what do you think about when you think about fellowship?!?

Here's what I think about: Pot-luck in the Fellowship halls and *Mrs. Murals Chocolate cake!*

- My dad was a senior adult pastor...

Some of yall, this ***is where you tried to discern by the power of the Holy Spirit what you should eat that was made by people you have never met***...

Then you know how it goes sit around a table with people you don't really well, you have some surface level talk and then go home... Welp, we fellowshiped today...

Here's the thing I want you to see and understand, that's not what fellowship is... Fellowship is so much more than that!

Fellowship is a deep and intimate thing... It's a word that's used to describe our relationship with God...

- **1 Cor. 1:9** *God is faithful; you were called by him into **fellowship** with his Son, Jesus Christ our Lord.*
- **2 Cor. 13:13** *The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the **fellowship** of the Holy Spirit be with you all.*
- **1 John 1:3** *what we have seen and heard we also declare to you, so that you may also have **fellowship** with us; and indeed our **fellowship** is with the Father and with his Son, Jesus Christ.*

This word was also used to describe a marriage and the life together that happens there...

- *College students, you can't use this as a defense to get intimate when you're not married...*

The world **Fellowship** in **Acts 2** means *sharing in activities or privileges with others in an intimate group...*

Fellowship is a bond among believers, that plays out by sharing in the things of Jesus together, practicing the things of Jesus, that happens through life together...

You can't faithfully fellowship if you're not in life-on-life relationships...

- This is such a big miss in our culture, and we wonder why we struggle spiritually...

Example: Think about a team... Being part of a team makes you better... Whether it's in sports or in corporate America... Being part of a team pushes you, it keeps you focused...

- When you disassociate from the team you miss out on the benefits of the team... The ability to grow and stay motivated...

The same is true when it comes to Christianity- so many people are missing out on the ability to grow and be motivated because you lack participation...

At the end of the day, we have to understand ***growing in Christ is a group project!*** And it happens around the message of the gospel and the people of God...

Somehow, we've been blinded into thinking that somehow we can navigate Christianity on our own, and yet when we look at the Bible **we never see that!**

We need to be in a place where we're owning sin, rejecting idols... Where we're stirred toward the things of Jesus...

- This happens when you share life together...
- This happens when we're committed together...

Flesh out...

Here's something else that's important to see, this fellowship that we see here, this bond between believers... ***Fellowship formed around Jesus and exists because of Jesus...***

- This is not around affinities...
- Not around friendships...
- Not around preferences...

Example: Mark Dever *Compelling Community*- Gospel plus 1, gospel revealing community...

Practicing fellowship means laying down preferences and centering on the person of Jesus and committing your life to others who are doing the same thing...

There is a unity that this brings as well...

- *Flesh out...*

When we make friendships the main objective, we will always be let down...

- Fellowship can lead to surprising friendships...
- Those are friendships that can withstand anything because their built on a different foundation...

Something else that I think is evident from the text is **Fellowship happens through intersection**...

Their life-on-life relationships formed around the things they did in everyday-life...

When you think about the biblical context... How unique their culture was...

- They had rhythms of their life that happened with other people that were centered on Jesus and done in light of Jesus...

What are you already doing and how can you do it with other believers?

Here's the other thing we see in this fellowship, that's fleshed out even more clearly in **verse 44 and 45** ... But **Fellowship in not only sharing your life but sharing your stuff**

Here's the crazy thing... We're really quick to teach our kids to share, we talk about it with them, we discipline them when they don't do it...

- But somehow there is a disconnect that happens when we become adults... It's like sharing isn't for us any more... Just for the kids...

But what we need in the early church is that they **held all things in common, and they even sacrificed to meet the needs of others...**

So not only did they share what they had, they sold what they had to share the proceeds with people that had needs!

One guy said it like this: *"They weren't "going into attics" looking for things to share they were going into "closets and treasure chests."* (quote by Jeremy McClain)

And in case it's not clear enough here, **1 John 3:17** says: **If anyone has this world's goods and sees a fellow believer in need but withholds compassion from him—how does God's love reside in him?**

Being the church means that you share in the needs of others... That you love, serve and help others with compassion as you respond to the gospel and the love and service that God has given you through Christ.

We have to understand that being part of **the church** is so much more than just coming to a gathering on the weekend...

But for us to do that we have to get back to the heart of what fellowship is: *sharing in activities or privileges with others in an intimate group... IOW doing life together...*

And we have to start seeing the church for what it is... A family understanding that **the gospel transforms us on an individual level but it also transforms us on a communal level as well.**

Let me speak to generosity a little bit more here because this is a huge part of fellowshiping together, ie: sharing in the things of Jesus together... Generosity was a big deal for Jesus and it was for the local church as well!

Acts 4:32-35 **32** Now the entire group of those who believed were of one heart and mind, and no one claimed that any of his possessions was his own, but instead they held everything in common. **33** With great power the apostles were giving testimony to the resurrection of the Lord Jesus, and great grace was on all of them.

34 For there was not a needy person among them because all those who owned lands or houses sold them, brought the proceeds of what

was sold, 35 and laid them at the apostles' feet. This was then distributed to each person as any had need.

Generosity within the church and through the church...

- *Press in here...*

Conclusion [VAMP]

Fellowship is a bond among believers, that plays out by sharing in the things of Jesus together, practicing the things of Jesus, that happens through life together...

The question you have to ask is **are you in life-on-life relationships where this happens?** If not then you have to ask *has the gospel really transformed your life?* Because this was a natural overflow for them here in **Acts 2**....

To be Devoted means: *To persevere in some activity, to be continually committed, to be persistent, dedicated.*

Push against objectives...

Appeal to Christian

Appeal to non- Christian