

SERMON TRANSCRIPT

07.26.2026 | Christian Community | Acts 2:42-47 | Dr. Ben Day, Senior Pastor

If you have a Bible this morning, I want to invite you to turn with me to Acts chapter 2. We're in the fourth week of a servant series through the book of Acts and what we are doing as we walk through the book of Acts is we are seeing the way that the Word of God and the Spirit of God worked in and through the early church. And something that I've just been trying to remind us of every week that we've been walking through Acts is that this is not just the story of how the Word and the Spirit worked in the early church, but it's the story of how the Word and the Spirit work in the church. Acts is not just a story of history, it is our story. It is one that we continue to live in. So just if I've not made it clear as we begin this series through Acts, I just really want to make it clear this morning, here is why I want us to study this book. Because I want us to be a church where the Word of God and the Spirit of God is at work, just like it was in the book of Acts, just like it was throughout church history. My prayer is that the Word of God and the Spirit of God would be at work in our church right now that we might be able to carry out the mission of God and live for the glory of God.

You know, we just came off of a series of a few months of walking through the book of Nehemiah. One of the things that we were looking at in the book of Nehemiah was that God is constantly rebuilding and renewing his people. One of the questions we might ask is, well, what is he rebuilding and renewing us for? And the answer is right here in the book of Acts. He is rebuilding and renewing us as people continuously that we might glorify him, that we might carry out his mission, testify to his goodness and his greatness, be witnesses to Jesus to the ends of the earth. And so what we are seeing here in the book of Acts is a follow up from our study of Nehemiah. God is going to constantly rebuild and renew his people that we might be the people he's created us to be.

That's especially important for us to consider as we come to the passage this morning because what we're looking at in Acts chapter 2 is the birth of the church. We covered the first part, really the majority of Acts 2 last week, where the spirit came at Pentecost and empowered the apostles to speak in languages where people could understand them and Peter preached the word of God, the gospel of Jesus Christ. Thousands came to be saved and the church of Christ was born. What we see in these verses is the beginning activity of the church. What we see here is really the beginning of the Christian community. What we see in this passage is really an answer to the question of what happens when the spirit of God and the word of God work in and through the people of God. It's here in this passage, it is the community of the believers. It is the Christian community. This is what we want to see for us today because this is what we are called to be as the people of God. As the church of Jesus Christ in 2026, we want to see the word of God and the spirit of God empower and work in us and through us that we would have this type of Christian community.

Let's read just a few verses from Acts chapter 2 as the church begins to live out their mission in community. Acts chapter 2 starting in verse 42. Luke writes, "And they devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and the fellowship, to the breaking of bread and the prayers. And awe came upon every soul, and many wonders and signs were being done through the apostles. And all who believed were together and had all things in common. And they were selling their possessions and belongings and distributing the proceeds to all as any had need. And day by day, attending the temple together and breaking bread in their homes, they received their food with glad and generous hearts, praising God and having favor with all the people. And the Lord added to their number day by day those who were being saved."

I don't know if you know this, but there is an epidemic going on in our country. It's a loneliness epidemic. A few years ago, the U.S. Surgeon General put out a report talking about the devastating effects of social disconnection that is happening in our country. It's really plaguing our whole nation. It said that the social disconnection that we're feeling that was already existing long before COVID but has really increased since COVID is having a very negative effect on our community and even our health. In fact, the U.S. Surgeon General said that the social disconnection that we are feeling in our country has a mortality impact of about smoking 15 cigarettes per day. Which to me just made me think of maybe like making a joke about taking up smoking just so you could connect with people because that would be better for your health. But I don't think I should go there, so I'm not going to make that joke. But there's this real effect that is happening on us as people because we're lonely.

People all around our world are longing for community. In fact, so many organizations, so many businesses are creating spaces trying to foster community. So many businesses are making a lot of money off of trying to give people a place for

community. You should think about the fact that coffee shops and bars and restaurants try to create a third space kind of environment that outside of home and work you've got this place where you can meet with people. You think about the way that social clubs and fitness classes will try to give you the chance to connect with people for a pretty high monthly rate. I was even reading a New York Times article that bath houses are making a comeback. Those things from like 2000 years ago from like Greek and Roman culture in New York City, people are gathering at bath houses because they're just longing for connection. It seems that our world is feeling the need for community, but I have to tell you, I think that in order for us to find true community, I think we need more than just the right space and the right common interest to bring us together.

There seems to be something deeper that is needed for true community to happen. One of my favorite books on the topic of community is a book called *Life Together* by Dietrich Bonhoeffer. Dietrich Bonhoeffer was a church leader in Germany during the time of Nazi rule. And at one point in his ministry, he was leading an underground seminary, which people were really kind of living in a kind of a secret commune. And he wrote about the community of God's people and the ways that that we can live together in community. And one of the things that he says, I think is so profound in the book is that if you're actually just really wanting community, you'll never actually really find it. Because if you just kind of long for community, what you're really hoping for is kind of what he calls a wish dream. They'll actually be shattered when you actually get around people. In fact, here's a quote from *Life Together*. Dietrich Bonhoeffer says, "The person who loves their dream of community will destroy community, but the person who loves those around them will create community."

You see, our world is longing for community, but if we're just searching for community, I don't think we're ever going to find it. The center of true community is love. And this is what makes Christian community so unique. This is what we see here in this passage and what we still experience today and what we as the church still have to offer the world. And that is, we have a true community that is centered on love. Let's not center on a love that we necessarily come up with ourselves or we always feel towards each other. It's centered on the love of God. You see, God created Christian community. When we talk about community, we're not talking about something we have to create. God actually created this new community. What we are called to do as the believers of Jesus Christ, as the church today, is we are called to cultivate that community that he has created. That love that he has that is at the center of our community, we are called to foster it, to grow in it, that we might be a set-apart community in this world.

And to do that, to cultivate the Christian community that we are called to exist in, I think we need to understand some things about the nature of Christian community. And that's where this passage is really helpful. I think that leading up to this passage, we really see the foundation for Christian community. And what we see in these verses in particular is the fruit of Christian community. And I think when you understand that, when you understand what the foundation for true community is, and you understand the fruit that true community produces, you are then able to cultivate this community that God has brought us into and see it be what God wants us to be. So let's just consider those two sections. We'll spend just a little bit of time on that first part, the foundation of Christian community. And the foundation of Christian community is very simply the gospel of Jesus Christ.

The foundation of Christian community is the gospel of Jesus Christ. That might sound like a very basic truth if you are been around the church, if you've been a Christian for a long time. But I think it's one that is so foundational that we shouldn't just start talking about what we do as a community without first addressing this foundational truth. Now to understand where this truth kind of comes from, we do have to back up a little bit to where we were last week. So you might remember, Pastor Clark mentioned this during our prayer time and I referenced it earlier, that last week we considered the first part of Acts chapter 2. When the Spirit of God came and spoke through the apostles and the gospel of Jesus Christ was preached, the people said, "What shall we do to be saved?" And Peter says, "Repent, be baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus, and you'll be saved and you'll receive the promised Holy Spirit." And he says this in verse 40, It says, "With many other words, he bore witness and continued to exhort them, saying, 'Save yourselves from this crooked generation.'"

Now think about this call from Peter here. Save yourselves from this crooked generation. What Peter is not saying is that you can do something to save yourself. He's already made it clear that salvation is only in what Jesus has done and trusting in what Jesus has done. So he says, "Save yourself." He is saying really, "Be saved." But he says, "Be saved from

this crooked generation." Now I think when Peter says that, he's not saying that that generation of people were especially bad. It's not like he's saying, "Oh, those millennials are just terrible," or, "I can't stand Gen Z." He's not saying that there's something wrong with that particular generation. He is talking about all of humanity. He is saying that when we live in this world on our own, following our own desires, we are part of a crooked generation. We are part of sinful humanity. We are part of, as we read earlier in the service, the kingdom of darkness. We are part of a community that is sinful.

What Jesus has come to do is to save us out of that kingdom of darkness and bring us into a kingdom of light. What Jesus has come to do is to bring us out of a crooked generation, a sinful community, and to form a new community of people for himself. Sometimes we think about the gospel of Jesus Christ just being the fact that you can be forgiven of your sins and be in a right relationship with God. That's very true. That is what the gospel says. But the gospel even says more than that. The Bible doesn't just say that you are forgiven of your sins to be in a right relationship with God as if that is an individual experience. The Bible says that when you trust in Jesus, you are united to him and you are united to all those who trust in him. That you are not only brought into communion with God, but into communion with other believers in Jesus. This is why that every time we come to the Lord's table and we take of the Lord's Supper, or what we call communion, we are not only remembering that Jesus' death brings us into communion with God, but we are coming around the table together remembering that Jesus' death brings us into community with each other. This is why I say true Christian community isn't something that we create. It's not something we create by having a service time and getting people to come to a worship service. We don't create community by forming community groups or having social activities or doing things to get people together and talk about their faith. God has created the Christian community by saving us and bringing us together as a new people. Sometimes I think we think that the gospel forms us into a community because it just gives us something that we can agree on. As if we're all just like fans of the same team. We can all rally behind something. But it's actually much deeper than that.

The good news of Jesus Christ is that you have been brought into a new community that God has created and it has been secured by Jesus Christ. In other words, you don't have to do anything to belong to this community. You don't exist as part of the community of God, the people of God, the Christian community by doing anything special. You don't exist to be part of this community by the gifts that you can bring, the ways that you can contribute. You don't deserve to be a part of this community because all the good things that you do or how well you live. The Bible says you belong to this new community because of what Jesus has done. Because Jesus has died, has risen, and now reigns as King, you now can be part of this kingdom of light. You see how that's different than what the world so often puts out there in terms of community. Where you can find a place to belong as long as you pay the dues or as long as you are interested in this or as long as you will kind of live up to the standard.

The Christian community says that you are part of the community simply by what Jesus has done. It is only by your faith in Him that brings you into this new people. The Christian community puts love at the center. Bonhoeffer said if you just want community, you'll actually never find it, but you'll create community when you have love for people. This is what makes the gospel the foundation of Christian community because it is founded in the unconditional, unearned love of God. That God loved us while we were still sinners and sent Jesus to die for us and brought us into this new community. How do we live in this community? How do we cultivate what God has already created? By continually reminding ourselves of this gospel message. Continuing to rebuild upon this foundation. This is why we often come to the Lord's table. We regularly come and partake of communion because it re-centers us on the gospel. This is why we will constantly be talking about the good news of Jesus Christ. Because it's not just an elementary or introductory part of being a Christian. It is the whole of the Christian life. It is how we exist in community. How are we going to have a love for God and a love for each other that creates true community? It is only by continually reminding ourselves of this good news of Jesus.

And then what happens is the church just begins to live as this new community. I think it's so interesting that as you move from verse 41, when it talks about thousands of people getting saved, it just says, "And here's what they began to do." It doesn't say that they got together and they drafted up a constitution and bylaws. It doesn't say that they started to form different ministries and programs and create all these clubs to facilitate connection and community. It just says they just began to do these things. Don't get me wrong, I'm not saying there's anything bad about any one of those things that might exist in a church. Programs or ministries or places to connect. But what I'm saying is, this is

what happens when the Word of God and the Spirit of God really works in the people of God. We just begin to live in this community. This is why I would call what we see in verses 42 through 47, "The Fruit of Christian Community." What we should see in these verses isn't so much a checklist to say, "Okay, are we doing all these things well enough as a church?" But rather we should say, "Here's what really happens when we're really founded on the gospel of Jesus Christ. Here's what really happens when the Spirit of God is at work among us. We are believing this Word of God that has been preached." This is what will happen amongst the people of God.

Here's the fruit of Christian community. We see it in these verses at the end of Acts chapter 2 and I'll just break it down into three parts. The first fruit of Christian community is a growing love for God. True community that God has created that we can cultivate by our faith in Jesus Christ and our remembrance of the gospel is marked by a growing love for God. God is at the center of Christian community. God's love is what formed our community. God himself is love. If we do not grow in our love for God, we will not have a true community. We can seek to be devoted to loving each other. We can try to do good things in our city, in our community and show love to other people. But if we don't love God, if his love is not at the center of our community and we're not continuously growing in our love for God, then we will lose the foundation in which we are supposed to build. We will not have the community that he has created us to be.

Notice what it says in verse 42 that the people devoted themselves to. It says, "They devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and the fellowship, to the breaking of bread and the prayers." Luke says, "Here's what they just began to do. The gospel is preached, people believe and here's how the church just begins to act." He says, "They were devoted to these things." Meaning they were earnest, they were committed. They were giving their time and their lives to these things. What were they giving their time to? Well, they were devoted first to the apostles' teaching. They were people who had been with Jesus, who had walked with him, who had heard what he had taught, who had seen what he had done, who had witnessed him be crucified and then raised from the dead. These apostles were filled with the Holy Spirit and they were teaching other people who Jesus is, how he had fulfilled all the promises of God, what it means to follow him.

This is what we have in the scripture today. Our New Testament was written by apostles or those from the apostles taught. They were devoted to the apostles' teaching so that they could learn more about Jesus and about what God had said through him. And this is why we come together to study God's Word. When we come to God's Word, corporately, individually, we are meeting God there as he has revealed himself to us. And we are growing in our knowledge and our love of him. When we study God's Word, we are devoting ourselves to the very things that the early church was devoted to. They were devoted to the apostles' teaching together in the fellowship. It says that they were devoted to the breaking of bread. Most biblical scholars believe this is talking about the taking of the Lord's Supper or communion. That they were regularly doing what Jesus had said. When Jesus had taken that Passover meal, he had broken the bread and said, "This is my body." He had poured out the cup and said, "This is my blood." He said, "Do this in remembrance of me."

And they were following that command. They were regularly coming together and remembering the sacrifice that Jesus made. When we regularly come together and remember how our Savior's body was broken so that we might be saved, his blood was shed so that we might be brought into a new covenant, we will surely grow in our love for God. That he loved us first, reflecting on that great truth will cause us to grow in our love for him. They were devoted to the apostles' teaching, the breaking of bread, and the prayers. Together, as a people, as individuals, they were spending time in communion with God through prayer. Just as any relationship doesn't grow unless you spend time in communication with that person. So our relationship with God will not grow unless we spend time in prayer. But when we are devoted to time in prayer, our love for the Lord will grow.

Let me just say how encouraged I am that I see so much of this in our church. I am just so encouraged when I look around and I see the ways that we are growing in our love for the Lord so often. I see the fact that when our children come together for kids' ministry, it's not just child care. It is a time for them to learn more about God and his love for them. I love that our youth ministry, they are going to camp this week. I love that when they get together, it's not just a time to hang out. It is for building relationships with each other, but it's also about growing in their love for God, their knowledge of God. I love that we have community groups that want to be together as people, but also want to study God's word and apply it to their life. I love that they might grow in their love for God, that we spend time in service and

in special ways in prayer together as the people of God. I just love how I can see this in our church, but we can tell that we are growing in our love for God, not just in always the activities that we do, or the programs or ministries that we have, but really if we are captivated by the love of God. Notice it says in verse 43, as they were devoting themselves to these things, it says, "And all came upon every soul, and many wonders and signs were being done through the apostles." The Spirit is doing miraculous things through his people, just as he was at the beginning of Pentecost. And we know that the Spirit doesn't always show up in miraculous ways, as we talked about last week, but I do think the effect is always the same. That to grow in your love for God means your soul is in awe of God, of his greatness, of his goodness, of his grace and his mercy towards you.

Can I just ask you this morning, is your soul in awe of God? I have to tell you so many times in my own life I get distracted. I take my eyes off of who God is, of what Jesus has done, and my soul isn't captivated by him like it should be. Maybe that happens to you as well. A mark of growing in our love for God is that our souls are in awe of who he is, of what he has done in our lives. He is at the center of true community. His love is what forms us. Are we growing in our love for God? That's the first fruit of true community. The second fruit of true community is an active love for one another. First, we're going to be marked if we're living in true community as the people of God by a growing love for God. But secondly, we'll be marked by an active love for one another.

So back in verse 42, we won't turn back there, but if you just think about what Luke said, he said, "They devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and the fellowship." The word fellowship in Greek, in which the New Testament was originally written, is a word, *koinonia*, and it has a deep meaning to it. Fellowship in the New Testament doesn't just mean like you're getting together and you're having food. Sometimes that's what we talk about when we mean fellowship. We just mean a time to hang out, a time to share a meal together. And that's part of fellowship, but when it says they were devoted to the fellowship, when the Bible speaks of *koinonia*, it's talking about something much deeper, something much more intimate. The fact that God has brought us together in Jesus Christ.

We're going to have a members meeting after our service and we'll welcome in some new members. And I always like to remind our whole body, but especially our new members, that we don't use the language of membership because we want you to think that you're joining some club. We use the language of members or membership to talk about the body of Christ, that we are members together of one body. That our connection that we have with each other is as close and as intimate as each member of your body. And there should be that type of care and consideration of each member of our body as if they existed as part of our body. That's what we see here. There's this deep fellowship that's happening and it's marked really in two ways. One way is through the fact that they were just freely giving of all that they had. One of the ways that we see their love active towards one another is that they were freely giving. Look at what it says in verse 44 and 45. It says, "And all who believed were together and they had all things in common. And they were selling their possessions and belongings and distributing the proceeds to all as any had need."

Isn't it kind of interesting that they just began to do this? They believe the gospel message, the Holy Spirit comes inside them and then they just begin to have all things together in common. They begin to be generous and share with those who have need. Why would this be a fruit of community? Why would this be a sign of the Spirit and the Word working in the people of God? Well, I think for one, when you come to realize that your worth is found in Jesus Christ and not in the money or the resources you have, you're much more free to give of what you have. Maybe in the apostles' teaching they began to tell them what Jesus said, that you can't serve both God and money. That God is a gracious master who sets you free to live in how He designed and money is a cruel master which you can never have enough. Maybe as the people learned this, they just began to realize, "I don't need all of this. It should go to those who are in need." And they began to freely give. But I think another reason is because they were meeting together. They loved each other. They wanted what was best for each other. They saw someone's need. They said, "Why not take what I have and give to meet that need?"

Let me just say, we don't see this fully or perfectly and I'm not saying this should always be what it looks like in the church. But we do see this fruit in our church even today. I am encouraged when I see the way members and attenders of our church give so sacrificially. We have people who give not just to our general fund but even specifically to our benevolence. We have money that is given so that we might help people who are in need. We have deacons in our church who get to know our church body in real ways so they know their needs. And then they give of that benevolence fund and in so many other ways to meet those needs. And it's not just all financial. I know there's people in this room

who have given their time to serve those who are in need. I know there's people here who have given rides because someone needed transportation to a doctor's appointment to run an errand. I see within our community a love for each other that is active, that we can see in visible ways. But so many times we don't meet needs because maybe we don't know about them. There might be some of you, you might have been coming to this church for a while, but you've not allowed anybody in close enough to actually know what's going on in your life. Maybe no one here actually knows your needs and therefore they can't meet them. I wonder today if you would allow people in a little bit more that we might show that active love for each other.

They knew what was going on in each other's lives because they weren't only devoted to freely giving of what they have but also to frequently meeting. This is the second sign of kind of this active love. They were giving generously but they were also meeting frequently. Verse 46, "And day by day they were attending the temple together and breaking bread in their homes. They received their food with glad and generous hearts." They're generous with all that they have because they're meeting together and they know what's going on in each other's lives. Listen, I'll just say we've now lived here in San Francisco for about six years and I found that living in the city so often presents challenges to meeting with people. Schedules are busy. Transportation can be difficult. Parking can be a pain. Sometimes there's just not space for you to meet with people. Sometimes it can be a real challenge to meet with people but we need to be intentional about this. One of our core values in our church is community and in that description of community we talk about authentic and intentional relationships.

The fact that we recognize that we need to make space for this. That true community doesn't just happen only on Sunday mornings but as we do life together, as we meet with each other throughout the week, an active love in which we actually get to know each other. Would you prioritize these chances to meet together? Would you be intentional about being with other believers? This is why we have community groups. This is why we have discipleship groups so that people can get to know you, what's going on in your life. And whatever you're experiencing in this season. We'll be able to have this active love for each other when we know each other. Giving generously, meeting frequently. You know sometimes you can read that and you can think, "Man, here's these thousands of people that are always at the temple, are always in their homes." I bet you they were a pretty insular community. I bet you they really formed their tight knit community and anybody who was on the outside was just kind of left out because they're giving all their time to each other.

But it's actually just the opposite. You see, true community that is really centered on the love of God actually pushes you outward. The love of God is like a centrifugal force. That when you're really centered on it, it actually pushes you outward because God's love is a pursuing love. It's always going after those who don't yet know His love. In the same way, if we're truly a community that is growing in our love for God, it will be shown in the ways that we love each other, but it will also be visible to the outside world. The last fruit of Christian community is a compelling love for others. As the people are gathered together and they're devoted themselves to growing in their love for God, and it's showing up in the way that they love each other, something unique is happening.

I mentioned a few weeks ago when we began to study the book of Acts that there's good historical evidence to argue that what was happening here in Jerusalem has now re-shifted the whole world 2,000 years later. When you look at the influence Christianity has had, especially on the Western world, it's really in many ways turned the whole world upside down. And we see it happening here in Jerusalem in the early days. Notice what Luke says in verse 47. Notice what Luke says in verse 47. Now make no mistake, you keep reading the book of Acts, you'll know that this is not always the case. There's many times when the people outside the church stand against the people of God. Many times people outside the church will try to oppose the gospel message going forth. So it's not that we could say that we always, as a true community, will experience favor with all people, but there should be times. There should be times whenever our love for each other, our generosity towards each other, the ways that we're always reaching out to those outside of our community, inviting them in, the way we welcome in strangers, gives a compelling picture of God's love that draws other people.

And many times that our community should be in favor of all people because people see something different within us. I really think in our culture today, in San Francisco in 2026, this is one of the most compelling things that the church has to offer. Think about the loneliness epidemic we were talking about earlier, how people are just longing for community.

What if people really saw in the church a community that is built on unconditional love, a community that is created by God and cultivated by the people of God as they grow in their love for God and they are active in their love towards each other. They see people who really see each other's needs, meet each other's needs, give each other grace and love. How would that compel people to want to be a part of what God is doing here? I really believe if we were living out this community in a visible way, that we would see what they saw in verse 47, that God would add to our number day by day those who are being saved. I really think if we were truly living out this community that it would be so compelling that we would see many come to Christ. If I could be honest, I've been trying to say throughout this sermon ways that I'm encouraged by what I see in our church, and I am in so many ways. But there's always room for growth.

And I honestly believe that as we look at the end of this passage and we see them show their compelling love to others and seeing many people come to salvation, I think this is probably an area where we can grow as a church. I'm not saying we don't ever reach out to the community, I think we do. I know there's many in our church who are so faithful to witness in their workplaces and to their family members and to invite people to church. But I honestly believe that we as a church could grow some in our love for those outside of our church, giving of our time to be devoted to reaching them with the gospel. I'll be very honest with you, I'm preaching to myself as much, if not more, than I am to you when I say this. One of my prayers have been that I as a pastor would grow in this, in my love for those who don't yet know God. In my intentionality to go out and share the love of God with them. It's something I want to grow in, but I want our whole church to grow in.

As we go through the book of Acts in a couple of months, we're going to take a little break from the book of Acts and do a five week series on evangelism. Just considering what does it mean to love those who are not yet part of this community? What does it mean to go to them and show the love of God? And I want us to focus on this and I want us to grow in this, not just because I want more people in our church building, not just because I want more baptisms, although I think that would be great. It's because this is a fruit of true Christian community. If we're really growing in our love for God, we're really coming back to that gospel message on a regular basis. If we really love each other and are active in that love, then it will show to the outside. Just as multiplication is a sign of life, people coming to faith in Jesus is a sign of a healthy Christian community. And I want it to be true in our church. So even this morning, as we come to the table in just a moment, as we sing after we come to the table and we sing the words, "Let Christ be magnified," I'd pray that that would become even more true. That in our lives, in our neighborhoods, in our city of San Francisco, that Christ would be magnified.