Pastor Jim Jackson, 10/25/26
THE CHURCH, Pt. 3—God's Family Grows!
Acts 2:36-47

The church is a <u>PEOPLE</u> not a place!

At Pentecost, Peter preached the Gospel and told people to repent and be baptized. Those 'cut to the heart' agreed with the message and believed in Jesus. *Repentance is acknowledging that we don't break the laws of God, we are broken by them!* Out of their private profession came a public proclamation which led to personal passion to be with people like them. This gathering of believers was called a 'church' (Gr. *ekklesia*, 'assembly or gathering'). *The order of Christian life is—believe, baptize, and belong!* Though there's a universal aspect to Christianity, believers are to 'join a church' and belong to a local gathering for teaching, correction, and serving (Col. 1:18; Heb. 10:24, 25). No body parts are designed to not have a body. *There's no such thing as a 'Churchless Christian,' we are built to be together* (Rom. 12:4, 5; 1 Cor. 12:12, 27, 28)!

The church goes <u>MEGA</u>!

After years of Jesus planting seeds during his ministry, Peter reaps a spiritual harvest at Pentecost. Likely being at the Temple, the church explodes to over 3000 people and they get baptized at the mikvehs. If you don't like large churches you are going to hate heaven! *God has prepared the harvest, the workers must be prepared to reap it* (Matt. 9:36-38)! With Apostles as their pastors, the first church met at the Temple for large group teaching, singing, and fellowship. Then they did life together by eating and praying in small groups in people's homes. *The church can build a building, but it does not need a building to be built up* (1 Pet. 2:4, 5)!

The church is <u>DEVOTED</u>

The first believers were devoted (Gr. *proskartereó*, 'to be constantly diligent towards') to *hearing* God's word, *serving* God's people, and *giving* to God's mission. They were generous with their time, talent, and treasure as they served God's Family (Matt. 6:19-21). *You can't out-give God; no one ever went poor being generous!* The attitude of generosity is not '*what* is required?' but '*whatever* is required!' Believers saw God as owner and themselves as managers and had a paradigm shift from 'serve us' to 'service!' God gives people wealth not to raise their standard of *living* but their standard of *giving*. ***We are not to go to church, we are to be the church!***