

# THE CHURCH'S BACKSTORY

## Devoted to Jesus

1-9-22

- The book of Acts tells us the story of the first century church. It didn't begin as an institution. It began as a movement.

“**ekklesia**” (Church) actually means: an assembly or gathering.

1. A \_\_\_\_\_ message.

*Matthew 16:13-18* - When Jesus came to the region of Caesarea Philippi, he asked his disciples, “Who do people say the Son of Man is?” <sup>14</sup> They replied, “Some say John the Baptist; others say Elijah; and still others, Jeremiah or one of the prophets.” <sup>15</sup> “But what about you?” he asked. “Who do you say I am?” <sup>16</sup> Simon Peter answered, “**You are the Christ, the Son of the living God.**” <sup>17</sup> Jesus replied, “Blessed are you, Simon son of Jonah, for this was not revealed to you by man, but by my Father in heaven. <sup>18</sup> And I tell you that you are Peter, and on this rock I will build my **church**, and the gates of Hades will not overcome it.”

*Acts 1:6-8* - So when they met together, they asked him, “Lord, are you at this time going to restore the kingdom to Israel?” <sup>7</sup> He said to them: “It is not for you to know the times or dates the Father has set by his own authority. <sup>8</sup> But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses. . . .”

2. An \_\_\_\_\_ mission.

*Acts 1:8-9* - “. . . in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth.” <sup>9</sup> After he said this, he was taken up before their very eyes, and a cloud hid him from their sight.

*Acts 2:14-16* - Then Peter stood up with the Eleven, raised his voice and addressed the crowd: “Fellow Jews and all of you who live in Jerusalem, let me explain this to you; listen carefully to what I say. <sup>15</sup> These men are not drunk, as you suppose. It's only nine in the morning! <sup>16</sup> No, this is what was spoken by the prophet Joel. . . .”

*Acts 2:22-24* – “Men of Israel, listen to this: Jesus of Nazareth was a man accredited by God to you by miracles, wonders and signs, which God did among you through him, as you yourselves know. <sup>23</sup> This man was handed over to you by God’s set purpose and foreknowledge; and you, with the help of wicked men, put him to death by nailing him to the cross. <sup>24</sup> But God raised him from the dead, freeing him from the agony of death, because it was impossible for death to keep its hold on him.”

*Acts 2:32-39, 40* – “God has raised this Jesus to life, and we are all witnesses of the fact. <sup>33</sup> Exalted to the right hand of God, he has received from the Father the promised Holy Spirit and has poured out what you now see and hear. <sup>34</sup> For David did not ascend to heaven, and yet he said, ‘The Lord said to my Lord: “Sit at my right hand <sup>35</sup> until I make your enemies a footstool for your feet.”’ <sup>36</sup> Therefore let all Israel be assured of this: God has made this Jesus, whom you crucified, both Lord and Christ.’ <sup>37</sup> When the people heard this, they were cut to the heart and said to Peter and the other apostles, “Brothers, what shall we do?” <sup>38</sup> 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. <sup>39</sup> The promise is for you and your children and for all who are far off – for all whom the Lord our God will call.” . . . <sup>41</sup> Those who accepted his message were baptized, and about three thousand were added to their number that day.

3. A \_\_\_\_\_ devotion.

*Acts 2:42* - They devoted themselves . . .

“**Devoted**” means: To be earnest towards, to persevere, be constantly diligent, or to attend tirelessly all the exercises.

A. To \_\_\_\_\_ spiritually (seeking God)

*Acts 2:42* - . . .to the apostles’ **teaching** . . .

B. To \_\_\_\_\_ with others (building community)

*Acts 2:42* - . . .and to the **fellowship** . . .

“**Fellowship**” means: *koinōnia*: “partnership,” or “sharing.”

Those who receive Jesus Christ become partners with **Him** and with all **other believers**.

*1 John 1:3* - We proclaim to you what we have seen and heard, so that you also may have fellowship with us. And our fellowship is with the Father and with his Son, Jesus Christ.

The church is where you can experience relationships the way they were **meant** to be.

*Acts 2:42-43* - ...to the breaking of bread and to prayer. <sup>43</sup> Everyone was filled with awe, and many wonders and miraculous signs were done by the apostles.

C. To \_\_\_\_\_ each other (building community and unleashing compassion)

*Acts 2:44* - All the believers were **together** and had everything in common.

*John 13:34-35* - "A new command I give you: **Love one another**. As I have loved you, so you must love one another. <sup>35</sup> **By this** all men will **know** that you are **my disciples**, if you **love one another**."

This connection was both with Christ and others.

D. To \_\_\_\_\_ generously (unleashing compassion)

*Acts 2:45* - Selling their possessions and goods, they gave to anyone as he had need.

The church is where our time, talents, and treasures are invested for **eternity**.

*Acts 2:46* - 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...

*Acts 2:47* - ...praising God and enjoying the favor of all the people...

E. When we seek God, build community, and unleash compassion we are on mission with Jesus.

*Acts 2:26* - ...And the Lord added to their number daily those who were being saved.

The church is where people get adopted into God's **family**.