Acts Sermon #4 Merced Christian Church

The All-In Church

Review:

Acts 1:8 The story of growth of the church.

Acts 2 The Holy Spirit sounds the starting gun—the paradigmatic gospel sermon

Acts 2:42-47 This is a picture of the ideal Christian church—one composed of people who had personally witnessed Jesus and one led by the apostles. A paradigmatic church. A model church.

Let us look carefully at this church and ask ourselves how well we fit this ideal model.

What characterized this church?

Acts 2:42 Worship is the first thing mentioned. Worship is important.

What does it mean to worship?

We say worship service, but that is redundant. It is like the Rio Grande River.

To worship is to serve. To worship is the honor God, to sit at his feet and to learn from Him. But it also involves fellowship.

Their worship was composed of four things:

The Apostle’s teaching

The Fellowship

The Breaking of Bread

Prayer

1. the apostle’s teaching.

Our worship ought to include declaration of the Word of God. Preaching (and teaching).

Like Paul said to 2 Timothy 4:1-5 We need to preach the word, whether people like what they hear or not.

Are you willing to hear strong Bible-based preaching and teaching?

That’s what we are going to have around here.

v. 3 This time has already come. In many churches preaching repentance is not popular. Teaching God’s view of marriage and divorce and sexual purity will empty the pews!

Calling people to live the fully devoted life of a disciple will have the same result it had when Jesus did the same.

Are you looking to have your ears itched? It’s OK. You are good. You don’t need to be that committed.

We are going to passionately teach God’s love and his grace (which everyone likes to hear) and also call people to biblical discipleship/commitment and to repent of sin (which itching ears do not like to hear).

We will even preach and teach about judgment at times. Very unpopular.

God has many qualities, and his love is one of them, but God has other qualities like his holiness and his justice.

Ex: The cherubim are not chubby rosy-cheeked, milk-toast, smiling creatures.

God is a jealous God.

Are you OK with that?

Itching ears want to hear:

That’s for the “disciples,” but not for regular Christians.

A “modern” tithe is 5%.

Living together? God’s grace covers that.

All you need to do is “accept Jesus.”

Prosperity gospel

Like Paul said in Romans 6:1 Shall we sin that grace may increase? Heaven forbid!

As for us, we will continue to preach the Word!

2. fellowship

The early church hung out together.

v. 46 Every day they continued to meet together. Every day!!!

We only meet 2-1/2 times per week (plus discipling time)

We need more than that! (not more formal meetings)

v. 46 They had meals together in their homes. Is this something you do? (breaking bread in their homes is an idiom for sharing meals together, whereas “to the breaking of bread” is the Lord’s supper)

A Jesus church is one in which lives are shared together. Quiet times together, picnics, barbecues. Double dates with other members.

Me in Boulder. I became the super-fellowshipper, so they gave me the keys.

3. breaking of bread (sharing the Lord’s supper). Many churches (not to be named) do the Lord’s supper 1/month or even less. We need to remember Jesus on a regular basis. Early church: did this weekly.

The Lord’s Supper is not merely a ceremony. We will honor and emphasize and practice the Communion around here.

(but I am not spending a lot of time on this now)

4. prayer. Our worship needs to include prayer, but our lives need to include prayer. We will have a late-night prayer session coming up very soon.

Prayer is not just something we put into our worship service and check off the list.

Q: Are you DEVOTED to prayer? OK. Great! How much time did you spend praying this week?

Worker to boss: I am devoted to this job. OK Great. What is the evidence of this devotion?

Athlete to coach: I am devoted to \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_.

Coach to athlete: How much time to you spend training?

We need to pray TOGETHER.

Let’s look at one of the group prayers that they had:

Acts 4:23-31

Notice this: They raised their voices together in prayer to God.

They prayed for boldness. They prayed for God to act to intervene.

The place was shaken.

We need this. Your Bible group needs to meet from time to time to pray together. Prayer in worship is good, but not enough.

Keep your finger in Acts 4.

Another example:

Acts 13:1-3

The church had a big decision to make.

They fasted and prayed.

The Holy Spirit intervened

Q: How did this work? Did a note fall from the sky.

No!!! When we pray, expecting God to speak, he will speak to us.

As a church, we have big plans:

Interns in Fall.

People moving here.

Campus ministry, many baptisms.

Do you want God to be involved? We need to pray TOGETHER.

We need to be a church like the church in Jerusalem. If so, then I guarantee the need will be met.

Let’s have faith!!!

We have talked about worship. What about church life more generally. What was that like?

Back to Acts 2:

v. 44-45 Needs were met. Gal 6:10 Let us do good to all, but especially to those in the church family. We do not need to be embarrassed that we take care of our own first.

v. 46 They ate together. Superbowl parties, March madness parties, birthday parties, started dating parties, got a promotion parties.

The church should be the funnest place in town.

Yeah, we hear and apply strong preaching, but we also enjoy one another.

Let’s continue to Acts 4:32-37

They were a true family.

All needs were met. Even homes and land were sold.

“Back in the day” of our movement this was commonplace for our special contributions.

Will anyone rise up like Barnabas did? (v. 36-37)

What is your worship life like? What is your church life like?

Preaching/teaching of the Bible. No itching-ear scratching!!!

Blow-away fellowship

Great worship with singing, fasting, the Lord’s Supper

Prayer. Group prayer. Time devoted to group prayer.

Church life? Needs met, meals eaten together, financial sacrifices made.

What will be the result?

Acts 2:47 The Lord added to their number daily those who were being saved.

Can you catch this vision?

At first, they were very well received, and they grew rapidly.

Acts 4 The beginning of persecution.

4:1-7 What were they preaching? The resurrection!

Next sermon: Persecution!