

## Commitment to God - Worship [Sermon Notes]

Acts 2:42-47

A family driving a large camper pulled up in front of the church just as the pastor started toward home. Desiring to be friendly, the pastor introduced himself and expressed his admiration for the camper. The man of the family told him rather proudly: "This camper sleeps eight people." Then he asked: "What is the capacity of your church, Pastor?" The beleaguered pastor replied rather glumly, "Oh, it sleeps about eighty."

It is embarrassing sometimes how little the modern day church resembles the church that first Pentecost. The sound of a windstorm, tongues of fire, disciples speaking in different languages, thousands being added to the church and lots of excitement. Excitement everywhere.

The Church was born on Day of Pentecost - we can learn from it. Last week we saw there were five features of the way the church ministered in its earliest days

### 1. They committed themselves to God - Worship

*42 They devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and to the fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer. Everyone was filled with awe, and many wonders and miraculous signs were done by the apostles.*

### 2. They committed themselves to one another - Fellowship

*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,*

### 3. They committed themselves to learn - Discipleship

*They devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching*

### 4. They committed themselves to serve - Service

*44 All the believers were together and had everything in common. 45 Selling their possessions and goods, they gave to anyone as he had need.*

### 5. They committed themselves to share - Evangelism

*They broke bread in their homes and ate together with glad and sincere hearts, 47 praising God and enjoying the favor of all the people. And the Lord added to their number daily those who were being saved.*

Today we are going to look at the first of these - Commitment to God - Worship.

These were exciting times, people were coming to Christ. The power of God was being manifested everywhere. Their worship seemed to consist of a number of elements.

- The apostles teaching
- Fellowship, breaking of bread
- Prayer
- Praising God

All activities of a worshipping Church

What is worship and what did it mean to the early disciples?

Worship - worth-ship.

The reverent love and devotion accorded a deity, an idol, or a sacred object.  
The ceremonies, prayers, or other religious forms by which this love is expressed.  
Ardent devotion; adoration.

An expression of worth. When we worship, we indicate to God what we think He is worth to use. We express by what we say and do what we think His love, His grace, His forgiveness and His gift of eternal life are worth.

Worship like other things in our faith is something that is a logical part of our faith that can be understood and operated with our heads. But it is felt with our hearts too.

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Its the same as the Fact-Faith-Feelings progression we examined with faith. You don't need to have a specified set of feelings to worship.

We worship because we want to say thank you. It is a natural progression from understanding what God has done for us in Christ. But worship is also something that we feel too - it is something that absorbs our emotions and leads us to act. I can say thank you for something but my subsequent actions and attitude also say something about how grateful I am.

Some people say, if you worship, you must worship in a prescribed way. But actually our ability to say thank you to God and the method that is meaningful to us can be quite personal - Sunday@seven.

This was an important time in the history of the Church - the people could remember Jesus without any difficulty. They could see the power of God. The Holy Spirit was being poured out on them.

What was their response?

They did all these things we read about in verses 42 to 47.

Luke uses some quite strong words to describe their attitude

devoted  
filled with awe  
glad and sincere hearts

It was exciting - are we excited by our faith? Or has it gone dry? Personal Testimony.

So what did their worship consist of?

## ● It was multifaceted and there was a sense of the power and presence of God

Let's start with the last comment first - there was a sense of the power and presence of God.

One Christmas Eve the telephone rang in the office of the Pastor of the church in Washington, D.C. that President Franklin Roosevelt attended. "Tell me Reverend," the voice inquired, "are you holding a Christmas Eve service tonight?" When advised that there would certainly be a service that evening, the caller asked, "And do you expect President Roosevelt to attend your church tonight?" "That," explained the Pastor patiently, "I can't promise. I'm not sure about the President's plan for this evening. But I can say that we fully expect God to be in our church tonight, and we feel secure in the knowledge that His attendance will attract a reasonably large congregation."

Worship always starts with the presence of the One we have come to worship. Just that should make us feel careful about what we think and about what we say - more importantly our attitude. We all may need to consider those times we have come into God's presence and have taken Him lightly.

We are in the presence of a Holy God - the creator of the universe. We are in the presence of the Lord Jesus Christ. The Holy Spirit testifies all this to us. Where is our heart and mind tonight? What is our expectation?

43 Everyone was filled with awe, and many wonders and miraculous signs were done by the apostles.

The worship and the life of the church was exciting because God was doing things. Why isn't worship exciting? No sense of God's presence and power. There's no expectation - no wonder no-one comes. No wonder we can't get people out to more than one service on a Sunday. If you expect nothing, you are never disappointed.

The disciples devoted themselves to four things

- apostles teaching
- the fellowship
- the breaking of bread
- prayer
- praising God (further down)

There is the sense in which we do exactly the same things 2000 years later. There was a huge thirst to grow in their faith and we can see that from the way in which Luke uses the word devoted - they devoted themselves to all this. Why - because they realised that spiritually and eternally that this was the most important thing they should be doing.

**Apostles' Teaching** - the Bible - studying God's word

**The Fellowship** - meeting together - but as we shall see in a later week, fellowship is much wider than meeting together to worship together. We grow because we grow together.

**The breaking of bread** - breaking of bread is both general and specific. The people came together and devoted themselves to the breaking of bread. Agape meals. But within this it is clear that they remembered the Lord in the breaking of bread. Why - because this was what the Lord had stipulated on the night He was betrayed.

Central to their worship was the breaking of bread - why - because it was important. It was not just communing with one another, it was recognising that Jesus was there with them - where two or three are gathered together - this was special -

recognising it was through His broken body and shed blood. And we take it so lightly....

**Prayer** - we've said much about this already in the past few weeks. Here it was, right at the centre of their worship - and they devoted themselves to it.

And the challenge that comes to us through all this is that they DEVOTED themselves to all this - how about all this?

It's challenging isn't it? If you thought that was challenging then it gets WORSE!

**They praised God** - and it looks as if they were doing it most of the time. Sometimes people equate praise and worship. That's not so - worship is expressing to God what He's worth. It's not about words. I say this because it is the modern trend to see Worship as music ministry with a few words and a bit of prayer attached. I want to see really vibrant worship here. I want to be minister of a Church where people love to sing God's praises, where they come with an expectancy to see the power and presence of God at work. But if that is the sum total of what their worship means, then my experience is that God does not allow you to appreciate it for long! Why? Worship involves the word - and listening and living with the apostles' teaching, it is a commitment to one another, it is a yearning to meet with Jesus in the breaking of bread. And as we shall see it is a lifestyle thing. Worship involves the whole of your life - one day I'll do Romans 12:1-2 with you. A lifestyle thing? Let's continue on.

### ● **They did it all daily**

Every day they continued to meet together in the temple courts.

They met daily. Woshipping together etc - it was a daily occurrence. It became integrated as part of their lives. Wow! And here we are. And we thing coming twice on a Sunday a strain! And getting out in the week!! I've got my life. I've got my family. I've got things to do. One of the losses of the Reformation was a drift away from a pattern of daily worship. We don't think it's important- the Lord added daily

Daily worship quenches the thirst in our souls. What might happen if we worked worship into our schedules? What do I mean I hear you thinking - coming here every day to worship? Well it wouldn't do you any harm. But if our worship was about the power and presence of God then we'd want to meet to just praise Him, to thank Him, to glorify Him.

### ● **They worshipped everywhere**

One of our problems is we believe that church buildings and services are the context for the worship of God. This is one of the great lies of satan. Church buildings weren't even invented until the 4th century. Well, they did worship in the temple courts - but don't forget that that was a hostile place. But they worshipped there.

One another's homes - they worshipped together as they visited one another - not a house groups - they had meals together in each other's houses.

They broke bread in their homes and ate together with glad and sincere hearts, 47 praising God and enjoying the favour of all the people

The other place in Acts 2 we find the disciples worshipping on that first day was out in the streets. Ed Silvoso - the Church was born in the marketplace. It was born as disciples praised God. Worship on the streets? Personal testimony. Worship is part of our witness. Whereas I believe in evangelistic programs, my desire is to see people coming into this church and they so experience the presence of God that they trust Christ there and then. Maybe the same should apply to our house groups. Maybe the same should apply to those who visit our homes. Maybe that should apply to any sphere of life in which we are involved. We are the People of God so others should see the worth of God - the worship of God - in us and respond to His presence in us - what a challenge!

How much of our worship is part of our lives?

As we come around the Lord's table this evening, let's recommit ourselves to Him.

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