



“The Living Community of the King”

Acts 2:42-47

May 15, 2022

This morning’s message is titled, “The Living Community of the King,” and with this, we finish up the short series that we had together in the book of Acts.

As we get started, I want to let you know that August 19, 1997, was a very, very sad day for me. That was the day that the golden retriever that I grew up with died. Her name was Molly. She was just a great and joyful dog. I was at work when her body expired. I remember coming home and seeing the abnormal look on the faces of those in my family.

Then my mom let me know the Molly had passed and that she was in the garage. Mom had her there on a blanket and had adorned the body with flowers from the garden. That being the case, I remember that I was struck because that was the first time that I had dealt with remains. Whatever God designed that body to be, it was not that anymore.

This week I came across a sentence in my reading and study that stopped me in my tracks. It was written by a man by the name of John Stott from his book on Acts as he opened up his thoughts on the great chapter of Acts Chapter 2. He said and I quote, “As a body without breath is a corpse, so the church without the Spirit is dead.”

There in that quote, Stott just flat out compared any gathering that calls itself a church, without the flow and the power and the presence of the Spirit of the Living God, in reality it is nothing more than a stiff corpse.

That is a bold reminder that without the power of the Holy Spirit moving with freedom in our midst, everything that we are trying to do here is impossible. There can be no life in the fellowship of the church, there can be no true understanding in our minds, there can be no true love that is divine in nature in our relationships, there can be no purity in our lives, no vitality in our worship, without the power of the life of God through the Holy Spirit activated and animating everything. The Holy Spirit is the life and the power source.

Praise God, that even in eternity past knowing the sin that was going to enter the human race, God willed that He would raise His church to life in the power of the Holy Spirit. Even in the earliest days of the prophetic record, we have men of God carried by the Holy Spirit, promising a gift from the Father.

That gift is the Holy Spirit, not only dwelling with the people God, but coming to reside within the people of God, and coming to dwell in the church, giving the church life from Heaven. Brothers and sisters, that is what we want. We don’t want to be a part of a dead corpse of a body. We want to be those who are filled with the Spirit and the power that He alone can give.

Here in Acts Chapter 2, we have this wonderful record of the day of Pentecost when King Jesus, risen from the grave and exalted to the Father's right hand, by His own authority poured out His Spirit upon His church, so that the Spirit would no longer just be residing with the people of God, but entering into them and regenerating them and giving them life. Here we see this wonderfully compelling glimpse of the life that the Spirit of God gives to His people; what He did back then and what He continues to do today.

Simon Peter, freshly filled with the power of the Holy Spirit as we read on Easter Sunday, stood up with divine boldness from Heaven and he confronted the very people who were calling for the crucifixion of Jesus Christ. They were in the streets of Jerusalem, surely mingled with many pilgrims that were there for Pentecost, and Peter preached the Gospel.

This was powerful and the people were cut to the heart with conviction. They knew their sin and then the stream of grace opened up. The grace of God was at work the whole time. Then the people called out, "What shall we do?" Then Peter gave them the good news, saying, "Get baptized. Repent! You are going to receive the gift of the Holy Spirit." Then the Spirit came and three-thousand people were saved that day; raised from death to life.

As we look at what comes next at the end of Acts Chapter 2, we see what it looked like when that community of faith was activated by the power of God. We read this, asking Him that He would make us love this, long for this, and that He would perform these things in us.

Let's read what is here for us. Acts Chapter 2, starting in Verse 42. What came of those three-thousand people that were saved that day, along with the one-hundred and twenty people that preceded them that were gathered in the faith in Jerusalem?

⁴²And they devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and the fellowship, to the breaking of bread and the prayers. ⁴³And awe came upon every soul, and many wonders and signs were being done through the apostles. ⁴⁴And all who believed were together and had all things in common. ⁴⁵And they were selling their possessions and belongings and distributing the proceeds to all, as any had need. ⁴⁶And day by day, attending the temple together and breaking bread in their homes, they received their food with glad and generous hearts, ⁴⁷praising God and having favor with all the people. And the Lord added to their number day by day those who were being saved.

Amen! May the Lord add blessing to His Word as we study it together here this morning.

In this passage of Scripture, we see a window into that early church that became a church alive with the power of the Holy Spirit. As we see what the Spirit of God was doing in them, we see what He can and will do in us. It is like the jumper cables from Heaven were connected to those people. The ignition was turned on and boom, there came life, and here we have a portrait of what that life looked like.

I want for us to notice very quickly one of the first phrases that is used here at the beginning of Verse 42. The Spirit of God was supercharging the people from within. The response that was

being brought about was devotion, wasn't it? This verse says that they devoted themselves to certain things.

That language of devotion can be translated they were *continually devoting themselves*. This is talking about something that was ongoing. It was present and it was active and it was continuous. The language of devoting themselves, it means that they were adhering to these things with strength.

They were being steadfastly attentive to these things. They were giving unremitting care to them. They were persevering in them so as not to faint. They were ongoing in these things that they were devoted to in the power of Almighty God, who was working these things out in them.

So we look at what it means to be devoted. This is what the Spirit wants to do in us. He wants to help us to be devoted to the things of the Lord so that God will be glorified by what the power of His gracious working does when a community of sinners is raised in new life.

We are going to look at three ways that the people were devoted. They were devoted to reverent worship that is defined in the first couple of verses. Then they were devoted to loving generosity. They were also devoted to joyful hospitality. All of these things are the signs of life; fruitful, joyful life in the Lord. Let's take a closer look here and pray as we are working through this that the Lord will be activating these things in us as a church.

As the Community of the Exalted King, the One who is right now enthroned in Heaven at the Father's right hand,

1. Let's devote ourselves to reverent worship (2:42-43)

We see the portrait of this worship as it is laid out for us in Verses 42 and 43:

⁴²And they devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and the fellowship, to the breaking of bread and the prayers. ⁴³And awe

This reverence. This fear of the Lord. The fear of the Lord being the wonderful, exhilarating experience of reverence before the Throne of God.

⁴³And awe came upon every soul, and many wonders and signs were being done through the apostles.

As far as the wonders and signs go, what we read in the pages of biblical revelation is that there were points in redemptive history where miracles from God came in clusters at very important pivotal junctures.

So we have the Exodus as God was working through Moses, and there was a flurry of miracles that God performed through Moses and Aaron as He was redeeming the Israel of God from its captivity. Then moving forward, miracles subsided some.

Then we go to the dawning of the prophetic age with Elijah and Elisha. At the beginning of all the illustrious prophets that would come, we see that God was doing these mighty miracles through them. Then we don't have the same outbursts of miracles proceeding through history after them.

Then came the Messiah! Then came King Christ into the world. Then came a burst of miraculous activity as the Christ, the Son of God, came down from Heaven incarnated. He performed miracles. Then following Him, He empowered His apostles to perform miracles as well as He was authenticating through them the continuation of His teaching ministry. Jesus was concluding the body of doctrine that would be the faith. So we see these clusters of miracles that happened throughout redemptive history.

Now we know that God is perfectly capable of performing miracles in our day, although I would understand that the next cluster will be coming at the end of the age when King Jesus prepares for His glorious return. Some awesome things are going to be happening.

While we don't have this same cluster that was characteristic of various times in history, God is free to perform a miracle where He wants, when He wants, and in whom He wants. By His wisdom, He does so according to His design.

But also what we see here in this text is that in His wisdom, God has given great power to the elements of worship that we see laid out for us in Verse 42. These aspects of worship are definitive for this entire age that we are living in as we look forward to the return of Jesus Christ. These are things that are ongoing and they are charged with power for the life of the church.

You might say that this is the Lord's nourishing health program for the body of Christ. These are the things that God was prompting and these are the things that they, with their own human volition, were saying, "We are in. We are going to go with what the Holy Spirit is doing." So these are the things that we devote ourselves to as well.

What are the four different aspects of worship that are laid out for us here in this text? First, we see that they were devoted to:

The apostles teaching: The very first evidence of the Spirit that was now manifested in their lives was the hunger and the desire for the Word of God, and they devoted themselves to the apostles teaching. The Holy Spirit opened up a new school in the city of Jerusalem that day. The instructors were the apostles who would also be training others to be teachers too. There were three-thousand-one-hundred and twenty new pupils in the university of the Messiah. We see this here.

They were taking in the Word of God, and someone might say man that's so cool. What an amazing experience for them! They got to sit under the teaching of the likes of Peter and James and John, Boanerges—you wonder if there was thunder in their preaching, even though we see that they learned tremendous love, didn't they?

You would think they got to hear from Simon the reformed Zealot, and Matthew the reformed Tax Collector. How cool to be able to sit under the teaching of Peter and John, and all the others. Wouldn't that be cool? That would be cool.

Well, guess what? I've got good news for you. That is what we are doing! Their instruction and the life-giving doctrine and truth and gospel realities that come from the heart of God down to the church, it is here in the Bible, the bread of life, the truth of God recorded in a book, charged with power to give us health, strength, and vigor in the things of God.

Here we are at Bethel Grace in year forty, looking into the next forty. Pray that Bethel Grace will never be apostate, drifting from the plain, exact teaching of the Bible. Let's pray that we will be hungry for it; that we want pastors and teachers to give us what the Bible teaches. All of it. Old Testament. New Testament. All of it belongs to King Christ, and it reveals who He is, who we are, and His will for us.

They were devoted to this teaching, and devotion was sparked by the life of the Holy Spirit. Let's pray that we will be devoted as well, as we read the Bible. Pray that the Lord will give us a longing just to spend time with Him, reading His Word, consuming this manna that comes from Heaven, and longing for good teaching of the Bible.

Let us pray for those who teach in our church, listening not only on Sundays but also when we gather at various times in the week. Do you know that we have a whole audio archive? Big and famous teachers have their audio archives, so do the men here at Bethel Grace as they, with God's help, are trying to speak into the life of the church.

Pray that we will be hungry for books that help us to understand the Bible. Books that are preaching and teaching in written form. So teaching comes vocally and teaching also comes in written form in books. We just praise God for the way that He is activating people in the church to hunger for teaching and to provide it.

This is life and let's pray that the Lord will bring us to repentance to any apathy that we have about the Living Word of God, because the apostles teaching is first on the list. We continue and see that they devoted themselves also to:

The fellowship: To the fellowship of the church. Perhaps you have learned that in the pages of the New Testament, which was originally written in Koine Greek, there are a whole constellation of Greek words for love, each one with a different shade of meaning.

Perhaps you have heard of *phileo*, which is brother tenderness and warmth and affection and love. Perhaps you have learned of *storge*, which is parental love for children. Perhaps you have heard of *agape*, which is sacrificial servant-oriented love that is kind of like the leather shoes of living out the will of God.

But here in this text, underlying this word, there is another Greek word that I think belongs under the umbrella of those words for love. It is the Greek word *koinania*. We have a group in our

church that has named itself Koinania, as it is coming together in community to support marriages in the church.

Koinania is a Greek word and the essence of it is sharing. It is going into things with commonality. It is entering into the experiences of the faith and of life in this world together. It is like being in the same boat with each other.

Even better, koinania is about being in each other's shoes, like that old saying—if you really want to know what someone is going through, don't just get in their boat, try and in walk in their shoes for a while. Koinania is a matter of trying to do that, but the Holy Spirit empowers that. It is kind of an intimacy of experience and life.

There are beautiful expressions of koinania throughout the pages of the New Testament. Perhaps one of the most beautiful is in Paul's discussion and teaching in I Corinthians Chapter 12 through 14 but especially in Chapter 12, where he was saying, "Church, you are joined together as one body. Just like in your body, when one part suffers, the whole body suffers with it. As one part is honored, the whole body is honored."

This fellowship is joining together in the experiences of following Christ, of worshiping Him in fellowship. So we devote ourselves to fellowship. Who are the people in this church that you truly know? Who are the people in this church who truly know you? I know we are not going to have complete intimacy with all two-hundred or so people that are here, but each person needs to have people that they are vitally joined to. This is the will of the Lord. This is what the Spirit provides, and He is working to activate. Let's not resist what He wants to do, but say, "Spirit, connect me deeply with the people of this church."

There is going to be more about fellowship in the major points Two and Three, but then Peter also said that they devoted themselves to:

The breaking of bread. If we wanted to get a very literal translation of the phrase that is used here, the definite article, in other words the word *the* is used in that phrase not once but twice in the Greek. So it is the breaking of the bread.

That is important to highlight because several times in the writings of Luke, he mentioned just the breaking of bread. That is more of a general expression of just taking your meal; just having lunch or dinner. In fact, even in this very paragraph that we are studying, it is used that way. In Verse 46 it says:

⁴⁶And day by day, attending the temple together and breaking bread in their homes, they received their food with glad and generous hearts

That breaking of bread is speaking about having a meal. You need to be nourished. But the phrase in Verse 42, it is the breaking of the bread. This is tipping us off to something very important when we notice that it comes in a series of words that is speaking of the sacred worship of the church.

When Peter said they were devoted to the breaking of the bread, he was talking about their practice of the Lord's Supper. The ordinance of Communion, or if you prefer, the Sacrament of Communion. It is the practice of remembering and savoring the cross and the One who was nailed there, His very presence giving the bread and the cup for our spiritual nourishment.

In their worship, they were devoted to the remembrance of Jesus Christ their Savior, and in particular, the atonement that He provided by His death on the cross. This was pulling them repeatedly into the wonderful knowledge that they were sinners saved by grace and upheld by the love of the Messiah in their lives.

We praise God for the Lord's Supper. So we practice it with the sacred sense that Jesus is at work among us, reminding us of the central theme of the core reality of God's gracious salvation. In God's inspired Scripture grammar is important, so on Good Friday I was gripped by the present active tense used in a very important and familiar verse, Romans Chapter 5 and Verse 8, "God demonstrates his love for us in this, while we were still sinners, Christ died for us." Christ substituted for us.

This verses does not say that God demonstrated His love for us, but it says that He demonstrates it in an ongoing way. He continues to highlight and to bring a sparkling light upon the powerful nature of His love. He demonstrates in an ongoing way His love for us in this, Christ died for us.

So the Lord, by use of the preaching of the Word and the table of the Lord's Supper, is going to be constantly putting the cross of Jesus before our eyes. So we devote ourselves to practicing this joyfully, reverently, being taken close to the heart of our Messiah, who shed His blood for us. This gives life. It is life-giving. So we continue praying that the Lord will keep us so very close to the foot of the cross, even as we know that we are released in the power of the empty grave.

There is one more aspect of this sacred worship of the exalted King.

Prayer: Verse 42 says that they devoted themselves to prayer. Once again, there are many words in the underlying Greek for the word *prayer* in the New Testament as well. They come to us in the various English words like supplication, and petition, and confessions, and intercession.

You can be sure that that church was practicing all of them, but what we have here is the word for prayer that is just focused on worship; the kind of prayer that recognizes the glory and the holiness and the power of who God is. And its heart is filled with the expressions of praise and worship for God and for who He is.

So this is at the heart of a healthy church alive with the Spirit. They are praying in all of these ways and, for sure, in the midst of their prayer, is praise to God. I love our prayer gatherings, when we are gathered together and we open it up to praise. The expressions of praise that are released from the people in the church are so nourishing to my own heart, and I pray that they will be nourishing to yours as well.

I love to see people praying on Sunday mornings, but understand that this is not an individual praying in the presence of other people, this is a person leading on behalf of others and as that person is praying publicly, you are joining Him in that prayer.

Have you ever heard of the word *amen*? Do you know what that word means? It means, so be it, and it is an expression of agreement. So in all of us reserved conservative Baptists, maybe there should be a little bit more of this vocalizing of the amen. But especially during prayer, when it is done, if you have agreed, we say amen. Prayer is a part of our community of worship together.

Now as we move forward in the book of Acts, these aspects of the reverent worship in the church are expanded upon. There are lots about its teaching, with lengthy discourses that came from Peter and Paul and Stephen and others. From these, we get glimpses into their prayer gatherings, which are so powerful and doctrinal, filled with rigorous and wonderful language of the sovereignty and the power and the attributes of God. It so good! These were the kind of things that were filling their prayers. Their study of the Word was informing the way that they prayed.

Here in this paragraph, it does not expand as much on the teaching content or on the prayer life, but it expands upon the fellowship, the sharing of life together and how that was manifested as the Holy Spirit was prompting and moving among them. So following the pattern, with God's help, let's be devoted as well to similar aspects of fellowship.

As the Community of the Exalted King,

2. Let's devote ourselves to loving generosity (2:44-45)

That is what we see them doing in these verses, and that is what He will do among us as we are filled with His powers. We see in Verses 44 and 45:

⁴⁴And all who believed were together and had all things in common. ⁴⁵And they were selling their possessions and belongings and distributing the proceeds to all, as any had need.

So maybe for our forty-fifth year, we will purchase some territory in Nevada and set up a big commune. I jest, and must be careful.

In case you're wondering, no, we have not come across an early experiment in communism in the early church. The apostles were not forcing or requiring anyone to dispose of private property. They were not trying to do this across the board, vigorously compelling people to part with all of their goods, then making an attempt to redistribute everything equally everywhere. That is communism and that is a failed system, as we have seen throughout the world.

Instead, what we see here is something different. What we see here is the joy of voluntary, Spirit-prompted generosity in the life of the early church. God Almighty is the Ultimate Gift-giver. God gives gifts and when He is at work in the hearts of His people, He is going to prompt

generosity within them too, so that they too desire to give gifts and rejoice in doing so, finding the teaching of Jesus to be true that it is better to give, than receive.

It is awesome when you see how people are benefited by what is given. As you look at what is here in the book of Acts, what you see is that while it was very common, it was free. People were giving freely in an ongoing way. They saw a need and knew they had the means to help, so they did. There was a generosity that was characterized in the church with the Holy Spirit pulverizing the idol of greed, and those people had life and joy in being generous to one another.

In Acts on the day of Pentecost, there were many that were gathered together from the various nations—Jews from all over the country, coming in to celebrate. Those Jews that got saved, they were not going back. They wanted to get established there, so they needed help making ends meet. Can you imagine that? So the Jerusalem saints helped them out. That might be one aspect of this.

Initially the people had favor in the streets of Jerusalem, but the time came when people began to get excommunicated from synagogues, which meant ostracization from life. There would be even more need and they were helping each other along the way. This was triggered by the work of the Holy Spirit who gives.

So we read this and let us pray together that we be generous with what we have. God has given to us, so that we can be generous like Him. This is the teaching of Scripture. It can come out in very, very practical ways.

You might be aware that there is a family in the church that is struggling to make ends meet. What can you do? If you are one of those who prefers not to let the right hand know what the left hand is doing and since gasoline is so expensive, perhaps you can purchase a gas gift card and secretly put in the window panel of their car and run away.

Or you can go to Trader's Joes and get a big bag of groceries and wait until you know they are home. You can then leave the bag on their porch and then play Ding Dong Ditch. Or you can go up to them and tell them they are on your heart and that you want to help them, then give them a gift. Perhaps if you have the means and hear of someone struggling, you can pay rent for them. By the way, Bethel Grace, there is our Deacon's Fund, where the family of God contributes to help one another in times of need. We can give to that fund on Communion Sunday.

But God, the Great Giver of Gifts, prompts generosity in the hearts of His people. That generosity, as the Spirit fills our lives, is vitality. It is something that brings joy, so we need to pray, "Lord, I live in a very materialistic culture and I like material things more than I ought to. Help me to love the material things I can give to others, even as I see how You are providing for me." Then enjoy the good gifts the good Father gives to His church.

So we see this generosity that was there marking that early church. Now we continue to one final point of what we see the Holy Spirit did in them. This final point about the nature of their fellowship is also something that is very timely, because we are living in a day where many people are stating their lack of relational connection. I came across an article in recent weeks

called, “The Lonely Crowd Churches Dying Due to Friendlessness.” Churches dying. Do you remember the morbid imagery I started off with? The dying crowd. The lonely crowd. Churches dying due to friendlessness.

In the article, the author goes on to explain the problem is not with friendliness, but it is with friendlessness. It is easy to find people to give you a nice warm greeting at church on Sunday but when it comes to really, truly being connected in life, that is where a lot of people are struggling.

You would be surprised that I have heard echoes of this certainly here among us at Bethel Grace. From more than just one person. Several people that have been here many, many years are saying that their closest friends are not here in the church. And I don’t think that is how God wants it to be. I know it is a struggle, but there are holes that need to be filled.

There are others who are running around like chickens with their heads cut off, wondering how they are going to keep up with everything. But here is what we know. The Holy Spirit, He wants to have people connected deeply, deeply in the church. Sharing in this common salvation. Sharing in this portion of the Spirit.

Therefore, need to make this a priority. This is something that the early church devoted themselves to, and, powered by God, this was something they were decisive about. So looking at what is next, we see a wonderful way in which the Lord provides that need of connection between people.

3. Let’s devote ourselves to joyful hospitality (2:46-47)

Look at what comes next in Verses 46 and 47:

⁴⁶And day by day, attending the temple together and breaking bread in their homes, they received their food with glad and generous hearts, ⁴⁷praising God and having favor with all the people. And the Lord added to their number day by day those who were being saved.

We see that they were attending church together, you might say. They were the church and they were attending services that were in the temple. They had a section called Solomon’s Portico. There was a lot of teaching, a lot of praying that was going on there.

Then they were breaking bread in each other’s homes. Now this is the more normal use of the phrase. Just having food together. Having Taco Bell or Chick-fil A., or In-N-Out Burgers, or the First Century equivalence thereof. Or maybe having home cooked pots of tomato soup or chicken fingers. Just the things of life! They were getting into each other’s homes and eating.

Brothers and sisters, let’s get into each other’s homes and eat! It is not rocket science. What is the old Baptist motto? Meet, greet, pray, and eat! But, of course, all of this in conjunction with sacred worship. They were worshiping together, then there was the follow-up to their worship.

They were spending time with each other in an informal sense, just being together. It is good when it is in homes, but it can also be in a restaurant. There are so many places where hospitality can be practiced. Hospitality being the love of new people.

We need to ask the Lord to break our resistance to hospitality. Apathy can set in even in the flesh of those who know Jesus. May the Lord break it so that we can know the joyful exuberance that we see recorded here in this text. Do you see it? *They received food with glad and generous hearts.* With glad hearts. This is a strong word. It is all about exuberance.

The word gladness can be translated exultation. It is high joy. Extreme joy. Gladness that spills over. This same language is used in the Doxology of Jude, speaking to the time that you will be presented as a follower of Christ before God with exceeding joy. If you want a little bit of surfing language, they were stocked as a result of the time worshiping and the time being together.

With glad and generous hearts. That generous part interested me because if you read the various English translations, the word *generous* is translated with a different word almost every time, but it is the only time this word is used here in this exact form in the New Testament.

So the word here for generous not a common word. It gets translated in various ways as we try to figure out just what the Holy Spirit was prompting Luke to convey. This verse says that they were meeting with generous hearts. The NASB and the NIV says with sincere hearts. KJV says with singleness of heart. It could be translated with simplify of heart.

What is this talking about? The good old resource called *The Strong's Concordance* helped me out this time. The literal meaning of that word generous is something I didn't expect. The meaning of this word is *without rocks*. Without rocks? It is used to speak of a field that is cleared away of all the stones and all of the things that would hinder growth. So with rocks removed, the field is a smooth surface.

You might say that it is the exact opposite of hard-hearted fellowship. Instead of hearts hardened with suspicion and reservations, all that hardness is cleared away and there is sincerity. There is generosity. There is simplicity. These people were just getting real with each other, talking about the joys and struggles of life.

Even in the elation of their newfound faith, these people would find that there were trials and difficult times and anxieties that invaded. So they would have been sharing with one another about life as they ate. There is this simplicity and sincerity in the family of God, saying that I can be real with people that I'm gathered with.

Okay, Bethel Grace, House of God's Grace, how are you doing? Fine. Sometimes you have to ask, "how are you doing really." The answer might be great! If you are in one of those patches where the sun is shining and the birds are chirping, say so. Or if you are burdened and you are downcast, say so.

Do you know how we can have this kind of elation, this kind of joyful fellowship with one another? You use the FORCE with each other. You talk through the things of life using the FORCE, the acronym. You talk about how family is going. You talk about occupation; how that is going.

If you are retired, you talk about how you are using your retired years and if it is going how you thought it would be going. Recreation. What do you like to do? How are taking care of your body which is called the temple of the Holy Spirit? C—Christianity. What have you been learning? Then in the midst of it all, E, you do it with an encouraging tone, seeking to point out how you see God at work in their lives. This is the kind of conversation that can last for an hour.

A conversation can be either totally exhausting or replenishing. Now I know that there are some hard things when we get into things like conflict resolution, but even conflict resolution where the strength and the Spirit of God activates resolution, you can go in lumbering but come out skipping.

But just day to day conversations can be totally draining for some people, or totally replenishing based on whether or not you are actually talking about real things. Some people are worn out by having conversations about the weather or other surface issues with people they barely know. You are introverts, right? But exuberance is brought out when you are at a table and are talking about the things of life and things of the Lord. This is the joy that is being spoken of here.

By the Spirit of God, let us pursue this kind of authentic connection in our church, because we need it. I'm trusting the Spirit of God to trigger you, not in a bad way but in a good way. Pray that the Spirit will prompt you.

I was reading in a book about pilgrim theology and Mike Horton said that yes, the Spirit is going to turn the introverts into extroverts, as they reach out to people. Let it be grass roots and let us just be the church reaching out to people, to share a meal with, and in conversation with about life, because that is part of Spirit-filled church life.

Finally, there is a final sentence that really should have an entire sermon unto itself. We will read it to gloriously crown this:

⁴⁷...And the Lord added to their number day by day those who were being saved.

Jesus the architect of the church. Jesus the author of faith. Jesus the great human resource director, adding people to the church according to His sovereign will, saving people and when they get saved, they get added to the church. That is how it works.

Now may the sovereign Lord be at work in our church in the same way that He was at work in that church. The Spirit is living and present. The Spirit can and will move in our midst. Let's run after what He is prompting in us.

Let's close in a word of prayer.

