

The Early Church

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[0 : 0 0] let's look together then at the second chapter of the acts of the apostles and we'll be concentrating mainly on verses 40 to 47 although we will have a brief look at the whole chapter because the whole chapter is all connected so we couldn't really look at verses 47 without looking at it in the context of what's taking place because we cannot just say today well acts chapter 2 is the early church so we translate it exactly and we are going to be like that today because it just wouldn't work out because things were different in those days to how they are today but there are principles and that's the way scripture it is throughout the principles that are given to us and the principles we need to take and to walk by and to be encouraged by so we take the principles of the early church and apply them to church today and hopefully that's what we'll see and what we'll be able to be encouraged and walk by so we'll just read verses 40 to 47 again just to to keep in mind what it is we're looking at so from verse 40 and with many other words he testified and exhorted them saying be saved from this perverse generation then those who gladly received his word were baptized and that day every three thousand souls were added to them and they continued steadfastly in the apostles doctrine and fellowship and the breaking of bread and in prayers then fear came upon every soul and many wonders and signs were done through the apostles now all who believed were together and had all things in common and sold their possessions and goods and divided them among all as anyone had need so continuing daily with one accord in the temple and breaking bread from house to house they ate their food with gladness and simplicity of heart praising god and having favor with all the people and the lord added to the church daily those who were being saved amen so from the beginning of the the second chapter you find it saying when the day of pentecost had come uh this was uh the day of pentecost uh the 50th day that's the the meaning of the 50th day uh after uh i forget now um it was the 50th day after um the passover um and it says the day of pentecost had fully come they were all with one or in one place so who's that it's talking about it's talking there of the disciples of jesus but it's also talking of other believers who were there there was there was a number of them um who were there in one place but it's easier uh in one place with one accord now church today can we say that that we come together with one accord it depends where we go doesn't it because if we go into a church that we're not comfortable with we're not in one accord with these people and if we go to another church that we're not comfortable with we're not on one accord either and if some people come here they might not like the way we do so there can't be that today but there should be because we're worshiping the same god now if there are things we're doing which are ungodly if there are things we're doing which are unscriptural then absolutely people should christians should raise their hand and say listen this isn't right but if we cannot say that what somebody else is doing is unscriptural we need to be with one accord with our brothers and sisters like i say unscriptural things should not be part of the church

anyway but suddenly it says in verse two there came a sound from heaven as of a rushing mighty wind and it filled the whole house in which they were sitting now this sound of the rushing mighty wind some people have dismissed it as being something that the disciples and the believers in that room experienced and nobody else did but it's quite clear that it wasn't just them who experienced it because it says in verse six when this sound occurred the multitude came together and were confused because everyone heard them speaking in his own language so those who were gathered for this time in the jewish calendar who weren't part of that room heard the sound that all came together asking the question what's going on why is this now that's what can happen see when we think say of the the revival it's often referred to the revival in barbis say that people uh because it's what we think of as being the closest uh time of revival on uh to us on the island here things were happening and people were being made aware things were happening unbelievers were being made aware things were happening and they came together and they asked questions why is this

what is happening here why are people behaving in this way something was changing and of course we see what it is because it says that they were being filled in verse four they were being filled with the holy spirit and began to speak with other tongues okay so the people there were being filled with the holy spirit should we today as a church we're looking to be filled with the holy spirit absolutely yes you should ephesians chapter 5 verse 18 says do not be drunk with wine in which is dissipation or debauchee but be filled with the spirit now the the original meaning of be filled with the spirit is be continually filled with the spirit so that means that ephesians chapter 5 is not saying that it is a simple one-off thing because when we're converted the holy spirit comes to dwell in us but that is not what it's talking about when it's talking in ephesians 5 of the filling of the holy spirit because it's if it's a one-off thing why does ephesians 5 then say be continually filled with the holy spirit so every day we need to ask for more of the holy spirit we need to ask him to fill us anew and that's what was happening here they were being filled with the holy spirit but they were speaking with other tongues and this was a miraculous event for that day for that particular reason that there were so many jews from all over nations it spoke of there from verse 9 down to verse 11 nations from all over the place so people with different languages and there was a miracle taking place at that time by the power of the power of the holy spirit and people were able to hear in their own language now can you put yourself in this place at this time think about what was happening there because they knew that these men weren't from their location that's like somebody from the south of england coming up here and and but then having a completely different language shows that we just don't have and us then all of a sudden breaking out and starting to speak to them in their own language they'd be freaked out i would be but these people were wondering whoa how are we able to hear all of this in our languages the holy spirit a miraculous event but at that sound it says all of them came together the sound of the mighty rushing wind so everyone has gathered together now it's perfect isn't it perfect for a sermon because we need people to preach the gospel now when i think i've spoken it a little earlier today when we leave our house on a sunday or on a wednesday

and we say i'm going to church you know we we think of going out to church building that's that's often you you know when i when i speak to christians and i say what does church mean to you christians will say well could i go on a sunday and it never says that so what is the church we spoke of it earlier the body of believing people now when the church comes together and prays together and does what acts asks us to do what the word of god asks us to do there is power but when we're not doing what the word is telling us to do there isn't power we need to recognize that first and foremost at this point the church was together because it says that at the beginning they were all with one accord in one place doesn't it so the church were together the believing people were together correct so if that's the case these people had power because the holy spirit came upon them they were praying together doing the things jesus had asked them to do and that's what we're going to look at later in the chapter so when they've all come together what happens like i said it's it's prime time for a sermon isn't it when people come together who don't know jesus that's when to preach the gospel there's no point in preaching a a sermon to the unconverted if you're preaching just to converted people is that so if you have a room full of converted people a room full of christians there's no point in in preaching an evangelistic sermon to these people is that no what needs to happen there is that teaching takes place and we build each other up and then the word says we then go and make disciples of all nations so the church comes together prays encourages each other builds itself up goes out preaches the gospel are we sitting here tonight and just expecting people to come in the unconverted to come in and we're just saying no one's coming no one's ever coming to church no one comes out of church okay no one was coming to this church yes the jews were there and they were they were in that area religious people but at that point they weren't believers you need to recognize that they were religious people now we've got plenty of religion all around us plenty of religion right across this country pharisaical religion not christ-centered religion and i think i prayed their missionary organization see us as the unreached that's the truth our country is less than two percent christian that makes us an unreached country an unreached nation that should really shake us as christians so we need to be together and peter stands up sees the opportunity and stands up because people are mocking aren't they they're saying these people are full of new wine some people were some people were sitting up and taking notice but others you always get the mockers don't you because you always will and we shouldn't be surprised at that what we said earlier there'll be those who will attack the church that's fine be prepared for it be ready for it and it's fine don't get annoyed with them pray for them don't get angry

with people pray for them that's what we need to do we need to behave in a christ-like manner if someone's going in your face respond in kind just respond in a kind way don't give them what they're giving you so it says verse 14 in verse 13 they're full of new wine they're claiming but in verse 14 peter stands up and he starts a sermon with this he raises his voice shouts out the main of judea all the dwell in jesus let this be known to you and heed my words you'd expect him to start a sermon with uh something about jesus

that's funny but he doesn't he says these people are not drunk he's defending what is being said because whoever is lies you need to you need to recognize lies and and hold it up and say no no you can attack us but you're not going to say x y and z about us that isn't true peter saying no these men are not drunk this is early in the morning these men have not been drinking wine it's not even it's not even gone long enough in the day to be drunk with wine so he says no so what does he do he dives straight into a prophecy from the old testament from verse 17. he says this is what was spoken by the prophet joe why does why does he do that why does he do that why does he go straight into a prophecy because that was his bible that's the simple reason the bible he has the words of god that he has to hand are the old testament so he has to use that we today have the old and the new to to call but in those days he had the old testament so he brings out the prophet joe and he he says from the prophet joe from verses 17 to verse 21 that that the prophecy says the spirit is going to be poured out on all men and it says in verse 21 at the end of the prophecy it shall come to pass that whoever calls in the name of the lord shall be saved now then he points out their sin doesn't he he points to them in their sin because he speaks of jesus and he speaks of the crucifixion and he speaks of the things that they've done now of course that's what we need to hear but that's what unbelievers need to hear as well so there are there are simple things here remember i said at the beginning we need to take um the the parts of scripture that it we don't need to do exactly what peter does we don't need to say right this is what jewel says or whatever we need to take scripture and what it teaches us and then go out into the community ourselves so joel is pointing there to the prophecy and he's telling them this is what god said was going to happen this is what's happening today but then he says to them actually you know what this isn't just going to happen today i'm actually going to point to you and say you are sinners and you need to be saved so ourselves we don't like saying to people you know what there's sin in us because people are like sin i don't want to hear about it but some people when you speak to them of their sin it cuts them in here and it just does because the word of god cuts when we tell people about jesus they might say to us i'm not interested no interested but you can be sure some of these people that we speak to go home and think about it they don't just say i'll dismiss it and then just walk home and and don't think about it again when you speak to people of jesus some people will dismiss it and they'll go home and won't think about it again some people will go home and think about it because some of us have done that we know that so he speaks to them of their sin and he speaks to them of the crucifixion and the resurrection that's important so we need to point out as well that jesus not only died for us to cleanse us from all of our sin but he's a risen christ he's alive some people again might just turn to you and say not really interested that didn't happen he's not alive he's a fictional character so that's okay that's okay if people say that that's fine but what peter was doing here was standing in faith wasn't he he's taking the word of god so it's the principles we're looking at taking the word of god and taking it to people okay if the people won't come to us let's take the word of god to them what do we find then brothers what shall we do you see the people it seems were cut to the heart weren't they in verse 37 when they heard this they were cut to the heart and said to peter and the rest of the apostles men and brethren what shall we do you know when i came under of conviction conviction of sin what was the question i asked what do i do what answer did i get trust in jesus what was it repent of your sin literally the minister said repent of your sin and put your trust in jesus and that day i did and that was 10 years ago is there a more simple answer to give somebody peter gives the answer there peter said in verse 38 repent and let every one of you be baptized in the name of jesus christ for the remission of sins and you will receive the gift of the holy spirit simple answer but it's the principle we take with us today isn't it please don't sit and and like many church folk do we think that sometimes that church attendance is the be all and end all of our walk if i go to church two ends and i go in the midweek meeting surely that's good and yeah that is good but we're going to find just as we look at at the end of this chapter and the main point we're going to look at is that it didn't just stop at them meeting like that it didn't just stop them worshipping like that this was 24 7 church it was on all day mnd without end while we're on the serve now the question is are we prepared for 24 7 church or are we just quite happy doing two ends on a sunday and one midweek

and we're good to go at that because if we're good to go at that you probably don't want to hear the rest of this because the rest of it is difficult and it means us actually getting our hands dirty with each other if we want to because they did so he asked them to be saved from this perverse generation is our generation any better are we any better and on that day three thousand souls were saved one of the most simple sermons you'll hear you'll hear he speaks out a prophecy so he's taking the word of god to them he's pointing out their sin and then what do we do to be saved what do we do that was it so the principle for us if we want to be evangelistic in our outlook is simple take the word of god take it to your friends your family your neighbors wherever you want to go with it take it share the word of god with people i'm not saying people will be saved just like that that's where we're going but if we're sharing the word of god that's what peter did he took an opportunity to share it and he shared it so does it take a minister to preach before souls are saved [20 : 26] what was necessary for salvation that day was simply the word of god and the application of the holy spirit and why are we not seeing many people saved in our country today that's a serious question for any church to be asked why are we not seeing people being saved and of course there are people being saved one here one there so on we're not seeing uh large parts of our country being saved at all two percent less than two percent that's what's christian in this country why the early church thing what did they do so this is really what we're we're going to look at just for the last week while they devoted themselves to four things our text says they continued in verse 42 steadfastly in the apostles doctrine and fellowship the breaking of bread and in prayers these four things now it suggests there's massive power in these four things they devoted themselves to the apostles teaching so what do we mean by the apostles teaching because they were only men weren't they they weren't jesus they weren't god but it says here that they devoted themselves to the apostles teaching well we have to remember that the new testament was given to us by these men so it's the word of god that they were preaching and teaching so that's what they devoted themselves to so why was that important well they had been given knowledge of the gospel hadn't they the good news had been given to the apostles and they were the first men to go out with it now we're to follow the example of christ he had the good news and is the good news shared to his apostles who shared it with the early church who shared it with the next lot and the next lot and the next lot is we're part of this story me and you guys we're part of this church the same church and they've been given knowledge of the gospel we've been given knowledge of the gospel but are we hiding it or are we going to share it says in romans 10 13 14 whoever calls in the name of the lord shall be saved how then shall i call on him in whom we have not believed and how shall we believe in him of whom of whom they have not heard they can't call on somebody they don't hear about we need to be people who understand that we are ministers of the gospel it's not just the guy who stands in here on a sunday anyone in here who is a christian is a minister of the gospel one who ministers the gospel to somebody else who takes the gospel it's good news but we don't behave like it's good news sometimes we just sit and we're like you know when i walk into my own church up the road sometimes i'm like man is this good news do we actually have good news how many people are smiling in here today sometimes we need to just realize it is good news no it's not something we need to be somber with you know communion time when we look at communion time sometimes we walk into church and everyone's in a black tie and yes it says remember the lord's death till he come but he is risen we need to remember that it says remember his death until he come that doesn't mean getting dressed up in black it means that we're to remember that he died for us to cleanse us from our sin that is a joyous thing

Romans 10 faith comes by hearing and hearing by the word of god faith comes by hearing we were teaching we need to teach john 14 6 jesus said to him i am the way the truth and the life no man comes to the father but by me when was the last time you you as a christian told somebody with jesus like actually consciously said you know what the next door neighbor the next door neighbor's unconverted i need to just share the gospel i need to share my testimony tell them about jesus when was the last time we did that any of us the apostles teaching was also necessary for keeping spiritually healthy matthew 4 4 says it is written man shall not live by bread alone but by every word that proceeds from the mouth of god and first peter 2 2 says as newborn babies desire the pure milk of the word that you may grow thereby this is a challenge not just to you guys it's a challenge to me because i don't do this the way i want to because i find it easier just to sit at home and kick my shoes off and put my feet up that's the honest truth i find it easier to do that i find it easier to do that and i know x y and z is maybe somebody's in hospital someone from my church is is poorly i know i

could go and visit them kick the shoes off and i'll be at work find the terry on well that's doing a lot of good for the church isn't it no it doesn't and i know i could do it but i'm just lazy sometimes i do do it and you know all those times that i do do it god blesses you there is no getting away from the fact that he blesses you for obedience just you know when you need to do something now that doesn't mean we always need to be out because we'll burn out you need to be careful that your minister doesn't have too much weight on his shoulders either because he will burn out we need to be careful of that we need to share this together and that's exactly what we're going to look at in a second the apostles teaching was one thing they devoted themselves to the apostles teaching why because it's the word of god that's the first thing the church church needs isn't it the word of god needs to be on our lips in our hearts and on our minds the word of god we need the word even for the necessity to know the will of god but the second thing they devote their time to and devote it say steadfastly devoted themselves to is fellowship now we think of fellowship as what a cup of tea slice of cake have a yarn is that our fellowship because that isn't at all what fellowship means that's part of it there's nothing wrong with having a yarn and a cup of tea absolutely not because i like a yarn and a cup of tea so there's absolutely nothing wrong with that but is that what it's all about is that what fellowship is because so often we hear well we'll have uh we're gonna have our monthly fellowship or whatever up the road and and what it is mainly is just a a blether and a cup of tea and somebody will share a testament but fellowship in this sense of the word in the sense of the word that we're left with here isn't about that there's relationship in it there's partnership in it there's companionship in it and the stewardship in it these four things are part of fellowship what do i mean by that then relationship how well do you know each other a reasonably small congregation how well do you know each other it should be really really well in a biblical sense you should know each other really really well relationally in order to be able to pray for each other our congregation at the road is pretty large we've over 200 people it's really hard actually to become relational with that amount of people so it's difficult you can be relation relation with some but i i think it's easier to be relational in a smaller church so relationship one john 1 3 says this what we have seen and heard we declare to you so that you and we together may share in a common life that life which we share with the father and with the son jesus christ see the relationship there what we have seen and heard we declare to you so that you and we together may share in a common life but it's not just sharing a common life me to you you to each other you to me it's sharing that life with christ that's what we're called to sharing together in christ because we're sharing with him what about partnership hebrews 3 1 therefore holy brethren partakers of the heavenly calling consider the apostle and high priest to our confession christ jesus it says partakers of the heavenly calling there's partnership with christ we need to recognize that but we are partners in the gospel there's a partnership with each other and jesus christ in the gospel so relational partnership these two things go hand in hand they must do but what about companionship we need the filling of the holy spirit his companionship but we need companionship with each other as well assembling together as a whole body acts 2 42 assembling in smaller groups second timothy now i would like you to study these things yourselves because i just certainly don't have the time to go through it all otherwise we'll miss the bus again tonight assembling the smaller groups meeting together one-on-one sharing and community communicating truth together building up one another when was the last time you actually saw someone in here and encouraged somebody and just put your arm around the shoulder and say you know what thanks for doing the door every sunday i can in or thanks for cleaning the church thanks for being there and just being someone i can talk to you when's the last time you encouraged each other in that way just little things because i guarantee you little things like that make a massive difference difference a massive difference to your church there needs to be sharing together in worship not just here but do you call in on each other and say let's have the books together let's read together let's pray together you just call in on each other and do that because that's what they were doing early church were doing that because it tells us they were doing that what about stewardship giving now this is a big one as well because it's not just giving we think of right we take your wallet out we'll give money it's not just simply other dad is it it's about giving of us in the service of others of the church so it's a believing people that's what we're looking at it's about giving of ourselves to other people how much do you give to each other so what things were they steadfastly concerned with doctrine of the apostles fellowship what about breaking of bread what does that mean when it says breaking of bread does it mean communion all the time were they going around every day going around every day having communion in each other's homes i don't think it was i think it means that they were eating together they were going home to

home

at various times and just sharing together do you see do you see the concept that is coming out of what uh is written here it's sharing life together it really is it's not just about meeting today and then seeing each other on whatever night we have your prayer meeting on is it a tuesday or wednesday i don't know it's about sharing life together that's what they were doing when was the last time you invited someone in your congregation who you don't normally speak to when was the last time you invited them round for a meal someone who you maybe just see on a sunday or a wednesday or whatever remember when was the last time you just said you know what i'm going to make a bowl of soup i'm going to invite them round for a a bowl and actually get to know that person you might find that you have a lot more in common than you thought that person being in common would be jesus breaking of bread together now that also means communion that's inferred in that but it doesn't mean they were having communion every time they met together it doesn't mean that the last thing it says is about prayers private prayer is important isn't it really important but corporate prayer sharing a prayer is really important too that's what we do now praying like that together shouldn't just be on the prayer meeting in here as a church we need to meet together and pray together eat together share together worship together live life together confess our faults one to another together you know this is sharing in the gospel sharing with jesus christ it's what he's asked us to do it's what's written there but i can't speak for you guys as a congregation so i actually just do not have a clue maybe you guys do this really well maybe you still do it at all i can only speak for my own congregation and what i find is that there are pockets of people who will cook for each other but they won't take certain other people to eden at home there are pockets of people who will speak with each other and they won't speak with other people in the congregation and it's very much kind of uh we click here we click there because there's over 200 people it's not the way it's supposed to be we're meant to be sharing it's meant to be 24 7 church daily it says so the prayers matthew 18 19 to 20 again i say to you that if two of you shall agree on earth as touching anything that they ask it shall be done for them of my father which is in heaven for where two earth are gathered together in my name there am i in the midst of them does that mean that god is not with you when you're praying on your own no but it does mean that there is a particular power when two or three people are gathered together praying about something that is critical to them it's important that's what god is saying james chapter 5 is any sick among you let him call for the elders of the church and let them pray over him anointing him with oil in the name of the lord and the prayer of faith shall save the sick and the lord shall raise him up and if you have committed sins they shall be forgiven him but do you see that if any sick is among you let him call for the elders it's calling for corporate prayer it's calling for more than one person to come together as the church and to pray in faith really important but if you look and i'll let you look at these things when you go to your own homes and i hope you do look at them these things are broken down for you by the end of the chapter because from verse

43 to 47 it gives an overview of exactly what they were doing fear came upon every soul many wonders and signs were done by the apostles and all of the need were together it says had all things in common sold their possessions and goods now does that mean we just sell our houses sell our cars and we think no but if we have if we have surplus and somebody is in need don't let that go unmet as a church meet that need we need to because they shared with each other and it doesn't just mean sharing life together it means sharing together everything all that we have share it if god has given you an abundance share it that does not mean leave yourself in poverty in order to help somebody else get a new tv that's of course doesn't explain they sold their possessions goods parted them to all men as every man had made and they continuing daily again we return to they continued daily with one applaud in the temple they were of one mind you see how the church was together there's a togetherness there and we're so divided and it's so poor and we need to work you know we can say it's pure but we need to work at repairing relations with our brothers and sisters and i am speaking 100 to myself because i have brothers and sisters up the road who oh well you know maybe don't get on with them that well i need to work at that because we need to pray together in the gospel we worship the same god continuing dealing with one accord in the temple breaking bread from house to house they ate their meals with gladness and a single nest of heart we were praising god having favor of all people and the lord what does it say added to the church daily such as should be saved if we're not seeing people getting saved we're not meeting them and we're not meeting with each other as we should because i believe there's power when the church comes together because that's what it teaches come together share together worship together pray

together love each other and first peter 3 8 says in closing finally all of you be like-minded be sympathetic love one another be compassionate be humble if we can be these things our church will have a very different look from the outside and from the inside so let's try together to look at what the bible says about what church is like and should be like and look at the principles that god has given us in order to change how we worship together in order to affect the outside world because the only way it can happen let's pray