

# Life Together

## Միասնական Կեանք

### Acts 2:37-47

Peter gave an incredible first sermon on the Day of Pentecost.

Thousands of people were listening.

As we saw last week, Peter quoted from **Joel** and **David**. He was inviting his audience (Jewish) to realize that the **prophecy** about the Messiah had been fulfilled. Then he said, **“In the last days”** the fulfillment of God’s promise is happening...

- In the Jewish court one needed two witnesses to give evidence.

The first witness was promises in God’s Word and his second witness was:

**“God has raised this Jesus to life, and we are all witnesses of it.”** (Acts 2:32 NIV11)

- The Word of God and the apostolic witness.

That day **3000 believed and wanted to follow Jesus.**

### How did this happen?

Peter spoke with the authority of Jesus.

Just remember who Peter was.

- Peter steps out of the boat to walk... you know what happened...

- Jesus declares that he will suffer and die, yet Peter took Jesus on the side and said: **“Never, Lord!”** he said. **“This shall never happen to you!”** (Matt 16:22NIV)

In my words: “I don’t allow anyone to touch you,”

What Jesus’ response? **“Get away from me, Satan....”**

Satan wants to interrupt God’s plan of salvation.

- This is the same Peter **who denied Jesus** three times...

Wow, what happened to this man?

He is preaching like fire:

**“Men of Israel, Listen...”**

Who is he to say, **“Listen”**? Why should they **listen to a fisherman**?

Where is the authority coming from? His diplomas? His credentials?

**Don’t you love how God works? Jesus gave the authority through the Holy Spirit.**

What happened after Peter stopped preaching?

**When the people heard this, they were cut to the heart and said to Peter and the other apostles, “Brothers, what shall we do?” (Acts 2:37 NIV11)**  
**“they were cut to the heart” (Felt sharp pain)**

Only the Spirit of the Lord can do this. It penetrates the heart of the person.

**The result?**

**<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.” (Acts 2:38-39 NIV11)**

Repentance, forgiveness, baptism and they received the gift of the HS, this new beginning. NEW LIFE.

John Stott says:

“They would receive two free gifts of God-- the forgiveness of their sins (even of the sin of rejecting God's Christ) and the gift of the Holy Spirit (to regenerate, indwell, unite and transform them).<sup>1</sup>

Next what Luke describes is a great model of the early church was developed. I will call it borrowing from Dietrich Bonhoeffer, “Life Together.”

This is the new family of God. This is the **new community**; I will call it the healthy church. There is no denomination, no building. It is a **Spirit-filled community** of learning, having fellowship, service and sharing, worship and prayer.

Once I heard on the radio **Alistair Begg** giving four marks for a healthy church based on this passage:

1. The Church Is Learning
2. The Church Is Sharing
3. The Church Is Worshipping
4. The Church Is Growing

N.T. Wright gives slightly different headlines:

1. The apostles teaching
2. the common life of those who believed
3. the breaking of the bread
4. the prayers.<sup>2</sup>

## 1. Learning:

<sup>42</sup> They devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and to fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer. (42)

They **devoted** themselves to the apostles' **teaching**...

They **continued steadfastly** in the apostles' **doctrine**. (New King James Version)

We will never graduate from studying and learning the Word of God. Peter preached using the knowledge of the scriptures.

He had many personal examples that he could use. "I was a fisherman, and I was walking on the water. I denied him and, and he fed 5000 people and so on..."

Those personal experiences are important, and they can be helpful, but not the center of HIS PREACHING.

People can say: "I don't need doctrine. All I need is Jesus." Well, what does it mean I need Jesus? Who is he? What does he teach? What is the context?

Peter brought forward an important **historical event**:

**Fellow Israelites, listen to this: Jesus of Nazareth**

And then he gave **theological reasons** why Jesus died and rose. Why as sinners they needed Jesus to be their Savior and Lord.

Let me quote from 1 Peter:

**<sup>23</sup> For you have been born again, not of perishable seed, but of imperishable, through the living and enduring word of God. <sup>24</sup> For, "All people are like grass, and all their glory is like the flowers of the field; the grass withers and the flowers fall, <sup>25</sup>but the word of the Lord endures forever."**

**And this is the word that was preached to you.** (1 Peter 1:23-25 NIV11)

Then Peter adds further for continuing education:

**Like newborn babies, crave (*long for*) pure spiritual milk, so that by it you may grow up in your salvation, <sup>3</sup> now that you have tasted that the Lord is good.** (1 Peter 2:2-3 NIV11)

I urge you not to be satisfied with the Sunday morning sermons. Be involved in the weekly Bible study groups.... I urge please take this seriously.

"The first sign of a Spirit-filled church is one in which the Spirit-filled people do not flee from Scripture and seek a substitute for it but are driven to it to have their spiritual lives rooted and grounded in the Word of God."<sup>3</sup>

## 2. Sharing, loving, fellowship

Once we receive the gift of the Holy Spirit, we have now **responsibilities**. Once they accepted Christ and been baptized, they became a community. After conversion, they joined the church body. (*I wish we can learn this from early church, some think we don't need church to continue our Christian life*).

Luke says "**they devoted themselves...to the fellowship**"(42) (*koinonia*). *Koinonia* means "**common**".

"*Koinonia* bears witness to the common life of the church in two senses.

- First, it expresses what we share in together. This is GOD himself, for our fellowship is with the Father and with His Son, Jesus Christ, and with the fellowship of the Holy Spirit. thus, *koinonia* is a Trinitarian experience.

- But secondly, *koinonia* also expresses what we share out together, what we give as well as what we receive. *Koinonia* is the word Paul used for the collection he was organizing among the Greek churches, and *koinonikos* is the Greek word for generous."<sup>4</sup>

Our main theme of the year: One body in Christ, One Lord, One Baptism, One God...,

The Spirit-filled early church had common goal that brought them together **to share and express God's love to each other**.

**<sup>44</sup> All the believers were together and had everything in common. <sup>45</sup> They sold property and possessions to give to anyone who had need. <sup>46</sup> 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 2:44-46)**

This is not communism and socialism. It is not capitalism as well. This does not mean they did not have houses anymore. They met in the **temple** and **individual houses**, so they did have their private houses. But **they learned to share**. They sold lands and shared according to the need. When there was a need, they acted and reached out for the need of the person.

When Jesus' followers behave like this, they sometimes find, to their surprise, that they have a new spring in their step. There is an attractiveness, an energy about a life in which we stop clinging on to everything we can get and start sharing it, giving it away, celebrating God's

generosity by being generous ourselves. And that attractiveness is one of the things that draws other people in.<sup>5</sup>

### 3. Worship and Prayer

**<sup>42</sup> They devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and to fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer.**

**<sup>46</sup> 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, <sup>47</sup> praising God and enjoying the favor of all the people. (Acts 2:42; 46-47 NIV11)**

John Stott says

**their worship first was both *formal and informal***, for it took place both in the temple courts and in their homes.

In the temples, they continued to attend. They would not have participated in the sacrifices, but they attended the prayer services, where they participated in regular recitations of the Psalms.

And also they met in their homes. They had meals together, also they broke the bread as communion together.

**Second, their worship was both joyful and reverent.**

Luke says: **with glad and sincere hearts**

The original meaning: "in exultation (*agalliasis*) and sincerity of heart."<sup>6</sup>

-Brothers and sisters, whenever we meet to worship, we should approach to our Lord with joy, exaltation and reverence.

Stott is a very British man. Once he came to Lebanon and attended YFC concert. I think we were too loud; he politely said the trombones were loud something like that, this was 40 years ago.

Stott says: "It is right in public worship to be dignified; it is unforgivable to be dull."

**Do not get drunk on wine, which leads to debauchery. Instead, be filled with the Spirit, <sup>19</sup> speaking to one another with psalms, hymns, and songs from the Spirit. Sing and make music from your heart to the Lord, <sup>20</sup> always giving thanks to God the Father for everything, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ. (Eph 5:18-20 NIV11)**

On the other hand, to be reverent. With high respect, awe and humility we approach to our Lord.

Prayer is not a spare tire we use it when we it. No, we a live life of prayer. We give time for prayer, also our life reflect a life of prayer.

#### **4. The church is growing...**

**And the Lord added to their number daily those who were being saved.(47b)**

The point here is that **the LORD** added their numbers.

It is not my cleverness as pastor; it is the Lord's work.

Max Lucado says: **"They saw Jesus. They encountered the Christ. Their sins collided with their Savior and their Savior won!"<sup>7</sup>**

**Amen**

1. John R. W. Stott, *The Message of Acts, The Spirit, the Church & the World*, P 78
2. N.T. Wright, *For Everyone Bible Study Acts*. P 44
- 3 R.C. Sproul, *You Will be My Witnesses to the End of the Earth*, Acts. P 48
4. John R. W. Stott, *The Message of Acts, The Spirit, the Church & the World*, P 83
5. N.T. Wright, *For Everyone Bible Study Acts*. P 47
6. John R. W. Stott, *The Message of Acts, The Spirit, the Church & the World*, P 85
7. Max Lucado, *Life Lessons from Acts*, P 6