

The First Church: Worthy Traits

THE BIRTH AND GROWTH OF THE CHURCH, Acts 2:1-7:60

The First Church: Worthy Traits, Acts 2:41-47

Acts 2:41-47 (NASB)

⁴¹ “So then, those who had received his word were baptized; and that day there were added about three thousand souls.

⁴² They were continually devoting themselves to the apostles' teaching and to fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer.

⁴³ Everyone kept feeling a sense of awe; and many wonders and signs were taking place through the apostles.

⁴⁴ And all those who had believed were together and had all things in common;

⁴⁵ and they *began* selling their property and possessions and were sharing them with all, as anyone might have need.

⁴⁶ Day by day continuing with one mind in the temple, and breaking bread from house to house, they were taking their meals together with gladness and sincerity of heart,

⁴⁷ praising God and having favor with all the people. And the Lord was adding to their number day by day those who were being saved.”

(Acts 2:41-47) Introduction: this is the first look at the early church. It shows us the traits that characterized the daily lives of believers. **It should prick the conscience of the modern-day church.**

The epistles of the New Testament shape the doctrine for the life of the church. Acts traces the application of that doctrine in the history of the early church. This passage describes the historical outworking of God's ideal in the first local church. It describes the new-born church in its prime, when it possessed a purity of devotion to the risen Lord unmatched in succeeding generations.

In this brief cameo of life in the early church, three distinguishing dimensions emerge that reveal this to be a remarkable assembly. They manifested **spiritual duties** and **spiritual attitudes**, and the result was **spiritual impact**.

1. **A people who received the Word—gladly (v.41).**
2. **A people who continued—steadfastly (v.42).**
3. **A people who stirred souls with a godly fear (v.43).**
4. **A people who were together—sharing in ministry (v.44-45).**

- 5. A people who were unified (v.46).
- 6. A people who worshipped and praised God—daily (v.46-47).

1. (Acts 2:41) Word of God: the early believers were a people who received the Word gladly.

Acts 2:41 (NASB)

⁴¹“So then, those who had received his word were baptized; and that day there were added about three thousand souls.”

1. This is the basic trait, the very first trait of a true church. It actually defines a church. A church is a people, a body of people who have received *the Word of God*.

They were not receiving.....

- | | |
|----------------------------------|-----------------------|
| 1. a set of ideas | 4. a human philosophy |
| 2. a man's thoughts | 5. a position |
| 3. a set of rules and principles | 6. a religion |

They were receiving the Word of God, the very revelation of God Himself. God had revealed Himself in Jesus Christ to His disciples. And Peter, the spokesman for the disciples, was proclaiming the Word about Jesus Christ. God had spoken to the world through His Son Jesus Christ, and the early believers had received His Word. (See below [Deeper Study #1, The Word—John 1:1-5.](#))

DEEPER STUDY # 1

John 1:1-5 (NASB)

¹ In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.

² He was in the beginning with God.

³ All things came into being through Him, and apart from Him nothing came into being that has come into being.

⁴ In Him was life, and the life was the Light of men.

⁵ The Light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not comprehend it.

([John 1:1-5](#)) **The Word— Jesus Christ, Son of God:** the *Word (logos)* is Jesus Christ. John faced a serious problem in writing to the Gentiles, that is, the non-Jewish world. Most Gentiles had never heard of the Messiah or Savior who was expected by the Jews. The idea was foreign to them. However, the Messiah was the very center of Christianity. How was John going to present Christ so that a Gentile could understand?

The answer lays in the idea of the *Word*, for the *Word* was understood by both Gentile and Jew.

1. **The Jews saw a word as something more than a mere sound.** A word was something active and existing. It was power—it possessed the

power to express something, to do something. This is seen in the many Old Testament references where *The Word of God* was seen as the creative power of God, the power that made the world and gave light and life to every man ([Genesis 1:3, 6, 11](#); [Psalm 33:6](#); [Psalm 107:20](#); [Psalm 147:15](#); [Isaiah 55:11](#)).

[Genesis 1:3 \(NASB\)](#)

³“Then God said, “Let there be light”; and there was light.”

[Genesis 1:6 \(NASB\)](#)

⁶“Then God said, “Let there be an expanse in the midst of the waters, and let it separate the waters from the waters.”

[Genesis 1:11 \(NASB\)](#)

¹¹“Then God said, “Let the earth sprout vegetation, plants yielding seed, *and* fruit trees on the earth bearing fruit after their kind with seed in them”; and it was so.”

[Psalm 33:6 \(NASB\)](#)

⁶“By the word of the LORD the heavens were made, And by the breath of His mouth all their host.”

[Psalm 107:20 \(NASB\)](#)

²⁰“He sent His word and healed them, And delivered *them* from their destructions.”

[Psalm 147:15 \(NASB\)](#)

¹⁵“He sends forth His command to the earth; His word runs very swiftly.”

[Isaiah 55:11 \(NASB\)](#)

¹¹“So will My word be which goes forth from My mouth; It will not return to Me empty, Without accomplishing what I desire, And without succeeding *in the matter* for which I sent it.”