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(Continuation from last week 02/26/14)

# 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](#)

3. ([Acts 2:43](#)) Fear, Godly— Church: the early believers were a people who stirred souls with a godly fear.

[Acts 2:43 \(NASB\)](#)

<sup>43</sup> “Everyone kept feeling a sense of awe; and many wonders and signs were taking place through the apostles.”

### Spiritual Character

A church that fulfills the spiritual duties will find that those duties produce spiritual character. Four aspects of the first fellowship’s character may be discerned in this passage.

### It Was an Awe-Inspiring Church

#### It Was a Miraculous Church

[Acts 2:43 \(NASB\)](#)

<sup>43</sup> “Everyone kept feeling a sense of awe; and many wonders and signs were taking place through the apostles.”

One reason for the awe the first fellowship inspired was the **many wonders and signs** performed by the **apostles** (cf. [Mark 16:20](#); [Hebrews 2:4](#)).

[Mark 16:20 \(NASB\)](#)

<sup>20</sup> “And they went out and preached everywhere, while the Lord worked with them, and confirmed the word by the signs that followed.] *[And they promptly reported all these instructions to Peter and his companions. And after that, Jesus Himself sent out through them from east to west the sacred and imperishable proclamation of eternal salvation.]*”

[Hebrews 2:4 \(NASB\)](#)

<sup>4</sup> “God also testifying with them, both by signs and wonders and by various miracles and by gifts of the Holy Spirit according to His own will.”

Some of those miracles are described in the succeeding chapters (cf. [Acts 3:1-10](#); [Acts 5:12, 15-16](#); [Acts 9:32-35, 40-42](#)).

**Acts 3:1-10 (NASB)**

<sup>1</sup>“Now Peter and John were going up to the temple at the ninth *hour*, the hour of prayer.

<sup>2</sup> And a man who had been lame from his mother's womb was being carried along, whom they used to set down every day at the gate of the temple which is called Beautiful, in order to beg alms of those who were entering the temple.

<sup>3</sup> When he saw Peter and John about to go into the temple, he *began* asking to receive alms.

<sup>4</sup> But Peter, along with John, fixed his gaze on him and said, “Look at us!”

<sup>5</sup> And he *began* to give them his attention, expecting to receive something from them.

<sup>6</sup> But Peter said, “I do not possess silver and gold, but what I do have I give to you: In the name of Jesus Christ the Nazarene—walk!”

<sup>7</sup> And seizing him by the right hand, he raised him up; and immediately his feet and his ankles were strengthened.

<sup>8</sup> With a leap he stood upright and *began* to walk; and he entered the temple with them, walking and leaping and praising God.

<sup>9</sup> And all the people saw him walking and praising God;

<sup>10</sup> and they were taking note of him as being the one who used to sit at the Beautiful Gate of the temple to *beg* alms, and they were filled with wonder and amazement at what had happened to him.”

**Acts 5:12 (NASB)**

<sup>12</sup>“At the hands of the apostles many signs and wonders were taking place among the people; and they were all with one accord in Solomon's portico.”

**Acts 5:15-16 (NASB)**

<sup>15</sup>“To such an extent that they even carried the sick out into the streets and laid them on cots and pallets, so that when Peter came by at least his shadow might fall on any one of them.

<sup>16</sup> Also the people from the cities in the vicinity of Jerusalem were coming together, bringing people who were sick or afflicted with unclean spirits, and they were all being healed.”

**Acts 9:32-35 (NASB)**

<sup>32</sup>“Now as Peter was traveling through all *those regions*, he came down also to the saints who lived at Lydda.

<sup>33</sup> There he found a man named Aeneas, who had been bedridden eight years, for he was paralyzed.

<sup>34</sup> Peter said to him, “Aeneas, Jesus Christ heals you; get up and make your bed.” Immediately he got up.

<sup>35</sup> And all who lived at Lydda and Sharon saw him, and they turned to the Lord.”

**Acts 9:40-42 (NASB)**

<sup>40</sup> “But Peter sent them all out and knelt down and prayed, and turning to the body, he said, “Tabitha, arise.” And she opened her eyes, and when she saw Peter, she sat up.

<sup>41</sup> And he gave her his hand and raised her up; and calling the saints and widows, he presented her alive.

<sup>42</sup> It became known all over Joppa, and many believed in the Lord.”

As noted in an earlier discussion of [Acts 2:22](#), wonders and signs were designed to attract attention and point to spiritual truth.

**Acts 2:22 (NASB)**

<sup>22</sup> “Men of Israel, listen to these words: Jesus the Nazarene, a man attested to you by God with miracles and wonders and signs which God performed through Him in your midst, just as you yourselves know.”

The response to Peter’s healing of the paralyzed man in Lydda ([Acts 9:32-34](#)) shows that purpose clearly.

**Acts 9:32-34 (NASB)**

<sup>32</sup> Now as Peter was traveling through all *those regions*, he came down also to the saints who liv

<sup>33</sup> There he found a man named Aeneas, who had been bedridden eight years, for he was paralyzed.

<sup>34</sup> Peter said to him, "Aeneas, Jesus Christ heals you; get up and make your bed." Immediately he got up.

The people of that region, after witnessing the healing, “turned to the Lord” ([Acts 9:35](#)).

**Acts 9:35 (NASB)**

<sup>35</sup> And all who lived at Lydda and Sharon saw him, and they turned to the Lord.

Peter’s raising of Dorcas elicited the same response in Joppa ([Acts 9:42](#)).

**Acts 9:42 (NASB)**

<sup>42</sup> “It became known all over Joppa, and many believed in the Lord.”

Our Lord did His miracles for the same reason. In [John 14:10-12](#) He said,

**John 14:10-12 (NASB)**

<sup>10</sup> “Do you not believe that I am in the Father, and the Father is in Me? The words that I say to you I do not speak on My own initiative, but the Father abiding in Me does His works.

<sup>11</sup> Believe Me that I am in the Father and the Father is in Me; otherwise believe because of the works themselves.

<sup>12</sup> Truly, truly, I say to you, he who believes in Me, the works that I do, he will do also; and greater *works* than these he will do; because I go to the Father.”

The ability to perform miracles was not given to all, but was limited to the apostles and their close associates (such as Philip; cf. [Acts 8:13](#)).

[Acts 8:13 \(NASB\)](#)

<sup>13</sup>“Even Simon himself believed; and after being baptized, he continued on with Philip, and as he observed signs and great miracles taking place, he was constantly amazed.”

The writer of Hebrews said,

[Hebrews 2:3-4 \(NASB\)](#)

<sup>3</sup>“How will we escape if we neglect so great a salvation? After it was at the first spoken through the Lord, it was confirmed to us by those who heard,

<sup>4</sup>God also testifying with them, both by signs and wonders and by various miracles and by gifts of the Holy Spirit according to His own will.”

[2 Corinthians 12:12 \(NASB\)](#)

<sup>12</sup>“The signs of a true apostle were performed among you with all perseverance, by signs and wonders and miracles.”

**God attended the preaching of the apostles with miracles to confirm that they were indeed His messengers.** With the passing of the apostolic age, and the completion of the canon of Scripture, the need for such confirmatory signs ended. **Today we can determine who speaks for God by comparing their teaching with God’s revelation in Scripture.**

Although the sign gift of miracles is no longer extant, God still performs miracles in response to the prayers of His people. They are not; however, public signs like those in the apostolic era. The greatest of all miracles God performs today is the transformation of rebellious sinners into His beloved children, who are becoming like His Son. Such miracles occur in the life of the church that is committed to the fulfillment of its spiritual duties.