

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

4. (Acts 2:44-45) Church— Unity— Ministry: the early believers were a people who were together and who shared in ministry.

Acts 2:44-45 (NASB)

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

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

It Was a Sharing Church

It Was a Joyful Church

Acts 2:46b-47a (NASB)

⁴⁶Day 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,

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

It comes as no surprise that a unified, miraculous, sharing church was also a joyful church. *Agalliasis* (gladness) is the noun form of the verb *agalliaō*, which means “to rejoice.”

One of the key reasons for that joy was the **sincerity of heart** they manifested. *Aphelotēs* (sincerity) appears only here in the New Testament. It literally means “simplicity” and derives from a root word meaning “free from rocks,” or “smooth” (A. T. Robertson, *Word Pictures in the New Testament* [1930; reprint, Grand Rapids: Baker, n.d.], 3:39-40). There were no stones of selfishness in their hearts.

Praising God also produced joy. To praise God is to recite His wonderful works and attributes. The goal of the first fellowship was to exalt the Lord, and that produced true happiness. Those who glorify themselves and seek the preeminence will never know lasting joy. Joy comes to those who give God glory. Paul expressed that truth to the Philippians when he wrote, “**If therefore there is any encouragement in Christ, if there is any consolation of love, if there is any fellowship of the Spirit, if any affection and compassion, make my joy complete by being of the same mind,**

maintaining the same love, united in spirit, intent on one purpose” ([Philippians 2:1-2](#)).

It is critical for the church to pay close attention and heed what is being said in this point.

1. The *professing believers* were true believers.

They were those “that [truly] believe” (see below [Deeper Study # 8, Believe—John 2:24](#) for discussion that shows true belief is the commitment of all one *is and has*).

DEEPER STUDY # 8

John 2:24 (NASB)

²⁴ “But Jesus, on His part, was not entrusting Himself to them, for He knew all men.”

([John 2:24](#)) **Believe— Commit**: the word “entrusting” or “commit” (*episteuen*) is the very same word “believe” (*episteusan*) (cp. [John 2:23](#)).

John 2:23 (NASB)

²³ “Now when He was in Jerusalem at the Passover, during the feast, **many believed in His name, observing His signs which He was doing.**”

This gives an excellent picture of *saving faith*, of what *genuine faith* is—of the kind of faith that really saves a person.

1. Saving faith is not head knowledge, not just a mental conviction and intellectual assent. It is not just *believing the fact* that Jesus Christ is the Savior of the world. It is not just believing history, that Jesus Christ lived upon earth as the Savior just as George Washington lived upon earth as the President of America. It is not just believing the words and claims of Jesus in the same way that a person would believe the words of George Washington.

2. Saving faith is believing in Jesus, *who* and *what* He is, that He is the *Savior* and *Lord* of life. It is a man giving and turning his life over to Jesus. It is a man casting himself upon Jesus as Savior and Lord.

3. Saving faith is commitment—the commitment of a man's total being and life to Jesus Christ. It is a man's commitment of all he *is and has* to Jesus. It gives Jesus everything; therefore, it involves all of a man's affairs.

The man trusts Jesus to take care of **his past** (sins), **his present** (welfare), and **his future** (destiny). He entrusts his whole life, being and possessions into Jesus' hands. He lays himself upon Jesus' keeping,

confiding in Him about his daily necessities and acknowledging Him in all the ways of life.

He follows Jesus in every area and in every detail of life, seeking His instructions and leaving his welfare up to Him.

It is simply commitment of a man's whole being, all he is and has, to Jesus.

There are **three steps** involved in faith, steps that are clearly seen in this passage. ([Romans 10:16-17](#))

[Romans 10:16-17 \(NASB\)](#)

¹⁶“However, they did not all heed the good news; for Isaiah says, “LORD, WHO HAS BELIEVED OUR REPORT?”

¹⁷So faith comes from hearing, and hearing by the word of Christ.”

1. There is the step of *seeing* ([John 2:23](#)) or *hearing* ([Romans 10:16](#)). A man must be willing to listen to the message of Christ, the revelation of truth.

[John 2:23 \(NASB\)](#)

²³“Now when He was in Jerusalem at the Passover, during the feast, many believed in His name, observing His signs which He was doing.”

[Romans 10:16 \(NASB\)](#)

¹⁶“However, they did not all heed the good news; for Isaiah says, “LORD, WHO HAS BELIEVED OUR REPORT?”

2. There is the step of *mental assent*.

A man must agree that the message is true, that the facts of the case are thus and so. But this is not enough. Mere agreement does not lead to action.

Many a person knows that something is true, but he does not change his behavior to match his knowledge. For example, a man knows that eating too much harm his body, but he may continue to eat too much. He agrees to the truth and knows the truth, but he does nothing about it. A person may believe and know that Jesus Christ is the Savior of the world and yet do nothing about it, never make a decision to follow Christ. This man still does not have faith, not the kind of faith that the Bible talks about.

3. There is the step of *commitment*.

When the New Testament speaks of faith, it speaks of *commitment*, a *personal commitment to the truth*. A man hears the truth and agrees that it is true and does something about it. He commits and yields his life to the truth. The truth becomes a part of his very being, a part of his behavior and life.