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(Continuation from last week 01/08/14)

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

2. (Acts 2:42) Steadfastness: the early believers were a people who “continued steadfastly” in four things.

Acts 2:42 (NASB)

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

It Was a Scriptural Church

Acts 2:42 (NASB)

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

The content for the church is clearly to be revealed truth. God designed the church to be a place where His Word is **proclaimed** and **explained**. Paul mandates such a priority all through the Pastoral Epistles, where he described the ongoing process to Timothy when he wrote, “**The things which you have heard from me in the presence of many witnesses, these entrust to faithful men, who will be able to teach others also**” (2 Timothy 2:2).

The first metaphor is that of a teacher teaching a teacher, who, in turn, teaches other teachers, who then teach still other teachers. Although Paul mentions only four generations of teachers, the idea is that of a continuing process. In every generation, God has raised up new links in this living chain of **faithful men** to pass on the good news of Jesus Christ to the people of their day. It was now Timothy's turn to **entrust** the gospel, and all other divinely revealed truths, to others.

Please listen to a testimony that Dr. John MacArthur once shared at a pastor's conference: In a state invitational track meet during my college years, I represented my team as the second man in the mile relay. The first man ran a fast first leg, and I did well on the second. But soon after I passed off the baton to the third man, one of our best runners, he stopped, walked onto the infield, and sat down. Our first horrified thought was that he had pulled a hamstring or twisted an ankle. I ran across the field and asked, “What happened?” “I don't know,” he replied, “I just didn't feel like running anymore.” Understandably, his teammates, the coach, and everyone else from our college were sickened and disgusted. “How could you do that?” we asked. “Don't you know you're

not just representing yourself, but your team and your school? Have you forgotten all the time the coach has invested in you and that your teammates have invested to get where we are? How could you, in one brief, selfish second, destroy all of that?"

On an infinitely more important level, countless leaders in the church have simply dropped out of the Lord's service, some with no better reason than the apathy of that collegiate runner.

A commitment to **the apostles' teaching** is foundational to the growth and spiritual health of every church. Peter wrote, **"Like newborn babes, long for the pure milk of the word, that by it you may grow in respect to salvation"** ([1 Peter 2:2](#)).

To the Romans Paul wrote, **"Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what the will of God is, that which is good and acceptable and perfect"** ([Romans 12:2](#)).

Paul's letters to his protégés **Timothy** and **Titus** also reflect the priority of preaching the Word.

1 Timothy 4:6 (NASB)

⁶ **"In pointing out these things to the brethren, you will be a good servant of Christ Jesus, *constantly* nourished on the words of the faith and of the sound doctrine which you have been following."**

1 Timothy 4:11 (NASB)

¹¹ **"Prescribe and teach these things."**

1 Timothy 4:13 (NASB)

¹³ **"Until I come, give attention to the *public* reading of *Scripture*, to exhortation and teaching."**

1 Timothy 4:16 (NASB)

¹⁶ **"Pay close attention to yourself and to your teaching; persevere in these things, for as you do this you will ensure salvation both for yourself and for those who hear you."**

2 Timothy 4:1-2 (NASB)

¹ **"I solemnly charge *you* in the presence of God and of Christ Jesus, who is to judge the living and the dead, and by His appearing and His kingdom:**

² **preach the word; be ready in season *and* out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort, with great patience and instruction."**

An elder must be one who holds **"fast the faithful word which is in accordance with the teaching, that he may be able both to exhort in sound doctrine and to refute those who contradict"** ([Titus 1:9](#)).

Acts 2:42 (NASB)

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

Bible Study: THE DOCTRINES OF THE CHURCH

Church Series: The First Church Acts 2:41-47

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01-15-14

A believer should count it a wasted day when he does not learn something new from, or is not more deeply enriched, by the truth of God's Word. The early church sat under the teaching ministry of the apostles, whose **teaching**, now written on the pages of the New Testament Scriptures, is to be taught by all pastors.

Scripture is food for the believer's growth and power—and there is no other. The church today ignores the **exposition** and **application of Scripture** at its peril, as the warning of Hosea to Israel suggests: **“My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge”** (**Hos. 4:6**). The church cannot operate on truth it is not taught; believers cannot function on principles they have not learned. The most noble are still those who search the Scriptures daily (cf. **Acts 17:11**).

Acts 17:11 (NASB)

¹¹**“Now these were more noble-minded than those in Thessalonica, for they received the word with great eagerness, examining the Scriptures daily to see whether these things were so.”**

They contain **the apostles' teaching**.