

# Outline-Growth in the Gospel

Sunday, October 14, 2012  
10:00 AM

Keywords: Gospel, Community Groups, Church health, growth in the gospel  
Key Text: Acts 2:42, Background Text: Luke 24 through Acts 2. Other misc. Scripture

Blurb for Sermon Audio: Acts 2:42-47 captures the excitement of the early church as they gathered in their homes and temple to worship and to live out the gospel. In this sermon Pastor Bruce gives the background to this exciting time in order to express the centrality of the gospel in the community groups of Missio Dei Fellowship and to help group members evaluate how their groups are doing.

## Introduction

### A. Importance of Health Check

1. Growth needs to be carefully monitored
2. Monitoring the growth of the body of Christ is critical

### B. Your Group Leaders are Shepherds

1. Your shepherds care deeply for your souls.
2. I help your shepherds, shepherd.
3. The necessity of a gospel-centered health check

### C. The Model in Acts 2:42-47

And they devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and the fellowship, to the breaking of bread and the prayers. And awe came upon every soul, and many wonders and signs were being done through the apostles. And all who believed were together and had all things in common. And they were selling their possessions and belongings and distributing the proceeds to all, as any had need. And day by day, attending the temple together and breaking bread in their homes, they received their food with glad and generous hearts, praising God and having favor with all the people. And the Lord added to their number day by day those who were being saved. (Acts 2:42-47 ESV)

1. Growth in the Gospel
  - a. The early church was devoted to the apostle's teaching-that's the gospel.
2. Growth in Relationship
  - a. The early church was devoted to fellowship-that's interpersonal relationships
3. Growth in Spirituality
  - a. The early church was devoted to the breaking of bread and prayer-that's spirituality

## I. Enthusiasm for the Gospel

### A. Devoted to the Gospel (apostle's teaching, Acts 2:42))

#### 1. Devoted themselves (ESV), continually devoting (NASB), continued steadfastly (NKJV)

##### a. Strongs

- 1) To adhere to one, be his adherent
- 2) Be devoted to one,
- 3) Be steadfastly attentive to
- 4) To give unremitting care to a thing
- 5) To continue all the time in a place
- 6) To persevere and not to faint
- 7) To show one self courageous for
- 8) To be in constant readiness for one

##### b. Devotion from the Latin "devotio"

- 1) Courage, loyalty to a leader or standard
- 2) Dedicated to the point of death
- 3) Military connotation

##### c. Dedicated to the one I love

#### 2. Devoted to the apostle's teaching meaning...

- a. What the disciples learned from Jesus when they were with him
- b. What they learned from him after the Resurrection
- c. All the Scriptures that testified to Jesus

#### 3. The evidence (Lk. 24:36-38)

##### a. The setting (who is the "they")

- 1) "they" the eleven plus the disciples on the road to Emmaus (Lk. 24:24-27, esp vs 27)
- 2) The resurrected Jesus appears (Lk. 24:36)!
- 3) "Peace to you"

##### b. The reaction of the disciples (Lk. 24:37-38)

- 1) Startled and terrified (thought they saw a spirit or "ghost")
- 2) Troubled (anxious, inward commotion)
- 3) Doubts (the thinking of a man deliberating with himself)

##### c. The reassurance of Jesus (Lk. 24:39-43, ESV)

- 1) Touch me (I am real.)
- 2) Spirits (ghosts) do not have flesh and bones
- 3) Showed them his hands and feet (evidence of the crucifixion)
  - a) Still disbelieved for joy (ESV)
  - b) could not believe *it* because of their joy and amazement (NASB)
  - c) Do you have something to eat? (further proof Jesus is not a spirit or ghost)

B. Remember, I told you the gospel. (Lk. 24:44-49)

1. You've heard this before, all must be fulfilled (Lk. 24:44)
2. Now you understand the gospel (opened their minds. Lk. 24:45-46)
3. Proclaim this gospel, starting in Jerusalem (Lk. 24:47)
4. You witnessed these things, I'm sending you (Lk. 24:48-49)
5. Wait in Jerusalem (for the power of the Holy Spirit)

C. Jesus ascends to heaven (Luke 24:50-53)

1. Anxious, frightened, troubled, doubt, turns to joy and worship
2. Continually in the temple blessing God
3. The result of receiving the resurrected Christ is worship (Acts 2:46-47)

D. Peter's sermon (Acts 2:36-41)

1. During Pentecost the Holy Spirit gives the disciples power and this result in a powerful sermon given by the formerly cowardly Peter.
2. The repentance and baptism of many follow (3000)
3. All react in worship (Acts 2:42-47)

II. Grow in the Gospel

A. Gospel is of FIRST importance (1 Cor. 15:1-5)

1. Not a new message, but a necessary reminder
  - a. Was preached to them
  - b. Received by them
  - c. They stand in the gospel
2. By which you are being saved
  - a. By which also you are saved (NASB)
  - b. The gospel saves and keeps on saving
  - c. If you hold fast
    - 1) Some had non-saving faith
    - 2) No real love for the gospel (Jesus)

3. The Gospel is of first importance

- a. Nothing deeper than the gospel to move on to.
- b. No greater priority than the gospel

4. Christ died for our sins...

- a. Appeared to Peter and the 12
- b. Church started on the basis of the gospel (Pentecost)
- c. The New Testament church is the result of the resurrected Christ proclaimed, received, held fast in (growth in the gospel)

B. Continue to Grow in the Gospel (2 Pe. 3:18)

1. Grow

- a. Not an option. Do grow.
- b. Eph. 4:15
- c. Col. 1:10

2. In grace and knowledge of Christ (the gospel)

- a. Progressive maturity is the outcome of growth
- b. Stagnation is regression, not standing fast
- c. Purpose of CG is to help all grow, because we all need help to grow!

C. Beware of things of Secondary Importance

1. Some things are related to the gospel, but not the gospel

2. In other words we no longer gather around the gospel of first importance, but the gospel of our own agenda/interests.

- a. Formalism. It's enough for me to participate in the meetings.
- b. Legalisms or moralisms. We get together to keep the rules, my rules.
- c. Emotionalism or psychologyism. We get together to vent or have therapy
- d. Social activism. Pro-life, mission, politics etc.
- e. Doctrinism. We get together for knowledge, theological expertise.

3. All the things that can replace the centrality of Christ and the gospel in our meetings.

III. The Effects of the Gospel

A. Eph. 2:1-5

1. 2:1-3

- a. Hopeless and helpless without Christ
- b. Another necessary reminder
- c. God helps the helpless

2. 2:1

- a. Dead means dead, not just sick, quite helpless

3. 2:2-3

- a. It's worse than we think.
- b. Children of wrath, condemned, children of Satan
- c. Helpful to remember what we once were

4. 2:4-5, But God,

- a. Rich in mercy
- b. Rich in love
- c. Even while yet sinners (Rom. 5:8) Christ died for us
- d. Made us alive in Christ

B. Confess our sins ( 1 John 1:9; Ja. 5:16a)

1. Gospel enables us to cultivate real relationships with one another

- a. Not superficial
- b. Goal of CG's is for deeper relationships

2. Preventive for deeper real relationships is pride and fear of man.

- a. Gospel breaks down the walls of pride.
- b. Love of the gospel dispels fear. (1 Jn. 4:18-19)
- c. "I will glory in my redeemer who is the righteous judge"

C. Col. 1-21-23

1. Col. 1:21-23, another reminder from Paul of who we were!

- a. Alienated (from God), hostile (toward God) doing evil
- b. Now reconciled (by God's initiative)
- c. Holy and blameless (because of Christ)
- d. If you continue in Christ (grow!)

2. Col. 3:5-9

- a. Actively putting to death idolatry and sin
- b. Not victimizing one another

3. Col. 3:12-13

- a. Actively putting on the characteristics of Christ.
- b. If you won't forgive, you do not understand the gospel
- c. The gospel is full of hope for personal change

D. The Gospel at work in all circumstances (Rom. 8:28-30)

1. All things are not good

- a. For those that love God all things work together for good
- b. Called according to His purpose
- c. Conformed to the image of his Son

2. Being conformed to be like Jesus is good.

IV. The Results of Gospel Growth (Acts 2:43-47)

And awe came upon every soul, and many wonders and signs were being done through the apostles. And all who believed were together and had all things in common. And they were selling their possessions and belongings and distributing the proceeds to all, as any had need. And day by day, attending the temple together and breaking bread in their homes, they received their food with glad and generous hearts, praising God and having favor with all the people. And the Lord added to their number day by day those who were being saved. (Acts 2:43-47)

Health Questions for Community Groups

1. In what ways is your group growing in the gospel? In what ways are you growing in the gospel? Conversely, what hinders you or your group from gospel growth?
2. Do you see your participation in your group as an act of worship? Why or why not? What could change in your group to make it a more worshipful experience?
3. What makes for a successful gospel-centered community group? (Hint: Chapter 3, Take this Group and Own It in Why Small Groups)

