

Pillar Bible Fellowship exists to glorify God by knowing Christ more fully, and making Christ more fully known

Pillar Bible Fellowship exists to glorify God by knowing Christ more fully, and making Christ more fully known. Before we had our first church meeting more than 7 Easters ago, that was our mission. It's integral to who we are and to what we do. We believe that it represents what God's design and desire for his church is, as we understand it from the pages of God's inerrant Word. And along with helping us set purpose, it also helps us understand priority. Where should we put our time, and where should we focus our energy?

This morning, our study is a study of Scripture, not a study of our mission statement. But in our study of Scripture this morning, it's my hope that we'll better understand our mission as the local church, and better carry out that mission. The glory of God. Knowing Christ more fully. Making Christ more fully known.

Scripture Passage: Acts 2:42-47

Peter had just preached the gospel to this large crowd gathered in Jerusalem for Pentecost. He told them that Jesus, whom they crucified, is both Lord and Christ. The Holy Spirit is working through the preaching of Peter, and the hearers are convicted and call out to Peter, asking what they must do to be saved. That day about 3,000 men were saved. Then what happened? It's not the end of the book of Acts, and it certainly isn't the end of the story for these new converts. What was their experience following their salvation? What were they busy about? What was their purpose, what were their priorities, how were they investing their time and focusing their energy? *Did they continue on with life as before, with no recognizable change, just glad that they had fire insurance in case things heated up? Would they return to their works-based religion, where they would work to earn the salvation that was freely given to them by the work of Jesus? Would they try to live a lukewarm life, with just enough Jesus to feel safe, but not so much that it would make them stand out?* No, this salvation was total. A new purpose - the glory of God. A new master - Jesus. A new community - the church. Luke, the writer of the Book of Acts, doesn't put it in these exact words, but he shows that they were about **glorifying God by knowing Christ more fully, and making Christ more fully known**. This is the work of the church, both then and now. Let's look to Luke's account of this.

To Glorify God

1. **v.42** *"And they devoted themselves..."* - This was a group that was devoted before their conversion, but now their devotion has shifted. The Holy Spirit has taken up residency in their hearts, given them new desires, and what they devote themselves to is the glory of God through the work of the local church. Their devotion wasn't to self-exalting pursuits, but to God and to each other.
2. **v.43** *"And awe came upon every soul..."* - There was a reverence, a holy fear of God, because there was an awareness of the nearness of God. He was working among them and working through them. God the Holy Spirit had come upon them and empowered them for powerful witness, that they might draw attention to the saving work of God the Son.
3. **vv.46-47** *"...they received their food with glad and generous hearts, praising God..."* - As they went about daily life with the local church they were praising God. That is, they were extolling the greatness of God. They were telling of the mighty works of God, bringing attention to the gracious provision of God, finding any and every opportunity to draw attention to the greatness of the God that had saved them. Not praising an institution, not praising a leader of a movement, but praising God.
 1. When Solomon built the Temple it was filled with the glory of God as the people worshiped. **2 Chronicles 5:13-14** *"...and when the song was raised, with trumpets and cymbals and other musical instruments, in praise to the Lord, "For he is good, for his steadfast love endures forever," the house, the house of the Lord, was filled with a cloud, so that the priests could not stand to minister because of the cloud, for the glory of the Lord filled the house of God."*
 2. So too now, when the local church is devoted to the worship of God, God's glory is manifest in that worship.

Transition: This is a God-glorifying church.

By Knowing Christ More Fully

1. **v.42** *"apostles' teaching and the fellowship, to the breaking of bread and the prayers."* -
 1. **Apostles' doctrine** - This is the Word they were won with, and it would be the Word that would continue to nourish them and mature them in their new faith.
 1. The church of God is built on the Word of God. **Matthew 16:16-18** *"Simon Peter replied, "You are the Christ, the Son of the living God." And Jesus answered him, "Blessed are you, Simon Bar-Jonah! For flesh and blood has not revealed this to you, but my Father who is in heaven. And I tell you, you are Peter, and on this rock I will build my church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it."*

2. **Ephesians 4:11–14** “And he gave the apostles, the prophets, the evangelists, the shepherds and teachers, to equip the saints for the work of ministry, for building up the body of Christ, until we all attain to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to mature manhood, to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ, so that we may no longer be children, tossed to and fro by the waves and carried about by every wind of doctrine, by human cunning, by craftiness in deceitful schemes.”

3. At Pillar Bible Fellowship this is why we give the Word such a central place. We preach the Word, we pray the Word, we memorize the Word, we sing the Word, because it is by the Word of God that the church of God is established and nourished.

2. **The fellowship** - This is a word that, sadly, has lost a lot of its meaning. GK *koinonia*. Participation, sharing, communion, contribution. Not just receiving, but also contributing.

1. The basis of our fellowship with each other is that we have fellowship with God through the saving work of Jesus. **1 Corinthians 1:9** “God is faithful, by whom you were called into the fellowship of his Son, Jesus Christ our Lord.” **1 John 1:3** “that which we have seen and heard we proclaim also to you, so that you too may have fellowship with us; and indeed our fellowship is with the Father and with his Son Jesus Christ.”

2. **v.44** everything in common (GK *koina*) - related to fellowship (*koinonia*). Shared, mutual

1. **Acts 4:32** “Now the full number of those who believed were of one heart and soul, and no one said that any of the things that belonged to him was his own, but they had everything in common.”

3. **v.45** selling their possessions - land, property (**Acts 5:1**)

1. **1 Timothy 6:17–18** “As for the rich in this present age, charge them not to be haughty, nor to set their hopes on the uncertainty of riches, but on God, who richly provides us with everything to enjoy. They are to do good, to be rich in good works, to be generous and ready to share,”

2. If there is anyone in the history of the world that would be considered rich, it's us. What are we to do with the abundance God has provided? Be generous and ready to share, especially with those in our church. The Jerusalem church helped according to need (**v.45**). Have you considered what needs there are at Pillar? Maybe you have a car and some time, and God wants you to be available to help with a transportation need. Maybe you can care for younger children so their dad and mom can enjoy a date night. Maybe you have tools or recipes to share. Maybe it's counsel, wisdom gained through experience.

3. **Breaking of bread** - This is the remembrance of the Lord's sacrifice through the bread and the cup, the Lord's supper. This was instituted by Jesus during his earthly ministry, that when they ate the bread and drank the cup they would remember his sacrifice for them. The early church was devoted to this remembrance. It wasn't just dead ritual, but meaningful remembrance. The early church practiced this regularly, even weekly.

1. In Troas - **Acts 20:7** “On the first day of the week, when we were gathered together to break bread, Paul talked with them...”

4. **The prayers** - **v.46** tells us that they were still attending the temple together each day. Not for the sacrifices, but participating in the times of prayer (**Acts 3:1**). The church was devoted to prayer.

1. The apostles saw Jesus regularly in prayer. **Luke 6** he spent a night in prayer before appointing the twelve disciples. **Luke 11** Jesus is praying, and his disciples ask him to teach them to pray. **Luke 22**, on the night of his betrayal, Jesus prayed in the Garden of Gethsemane, urging his disciples to also pray. **Luke 23** even from the cross, Jesus is praying for the forgiveness of those crucifying him. The disciples knew how vital prayer was to the life and ministry of Jesus, and how vital it would be for their own lives and ministries.

2. We'll see this carried out more through the Book of Acts. They pray for boldness in the face of persecution (**Acts 4**), they pray as they send out missionaries (**Acts 13**), they pray while they're in prison (**Acts 16**). The early church was a praying church, recognizing their dependence on God for all things.

5. This is how the early church grew up disciples, by devoting themselves to these 4 practices.

Transition: This is a God-glorifying, disciple-making church. This is a church that was glorifying God by knowing Christ more fully. But notice what happened. As they did this, Christ became more fully known.

By Making Christ More Fully Known

1. **v.43** “And awe came upon every soul, and many wonders and signs were being done through the apostles.”

- This holy fear wasn't only upon the church, but upon the non-believers as well. They knew something awesome was taking place, that God was working in this church. These wonders and signs were for the purpose of pointing them to salvation through Jesus.

2. v.47 “...and having favor with all the people.” - Isn't there something attractive and compelling about people living together like the early church was living together? And notice they were praising God and having favor with the people. What was their focus? It was on worshiping and glorifying God. As they had that as their aim it shaped their lives and interactions with each other, and with the onlooking world. **Matthew 5:14–16** “You are the light of the world. A city set on a hill cannot be hidden. Nor do people light a lamp and put it under a basket, but on a stand, and it gives light to all in the house. In the same way, let your light shine before others, so that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father who is in heaven.”

1. Isn't this wonderful? As the early church was devoted to the glory of God, praising God for his marvelous works, the onlooking world took notice. And what happens when they see good works done to the glory of God? They give glory to your Father who is in heaven. All things to the glory of God!

3. v.47b “And the Lord added to their number day by day those who were being saved.” - It was through the witness of this compelling community that God worked to reveal his glory to the world, and the Lord added to the church daily. It was as they were devoted to knowing Christ more fully that Christ was made more fully known to others.

1. As John Stott notes, the Lord didn't add them to the church without saving them, and he didn't save them without adding them to the church. This is the community of the redeemed, those the Lord sovereignly saves through the blood of his Son. And the Lord adds to this compelling community, the local church, so that it can bear even greater witness to his glory.

2. Does your pursuit of knowing Christ more fully, through engagement with the local church, gain any attention? Not that we go around blowing the horn of our church involvement, but is it what the Lord would have it be, what we have recorded for us here in Scripture? Does it mark your life in such a way that someone can't know you without knowing you as a member of the local church? Are you devoted to knowing Christ more fully by involving yourself regularly in the apostles' doctrine, fellowship, breaking bread, and prayer, together with the brothers and sisters God has called you into the church with?

Transition: This is a God-glorifying, disciple-making, soul-winning church.

Conclusion: The church exists to glorify God by knowing Christ more fully, and making Christ more fully known. The world is looking for this kind of meaning, but it won't be found outside of salvation. The world is looking for these kinds of relationships, but relationships like this can't happen outside of this redeemed community. As the Lord grew the church, these were the things they were devoted to, this is what they continued in, this is what they oriented their lives around. This is what the Lord would still have us devoted to.

Colossians 3:12-17

Family

Table Talk



April 8, 2018

GOD'S TRUTH

Pillar Bible Fellowship exists to glorify God by knowing Christ more fully, and making Christ more fully known!

Family Discussion

1. Your church family...what do you think of when you hear this phrase? What people, activities, focus and special gifts of individuals come to mind? Can you observe how your church family works together? What is the most important work or purpose of the church?
2. The book of Acts describes to us the beginnings of the church, its work, its priorities, its purpose. Can you identify those things in Acts 2:42-47?
3. What do the books of Ephesians, Romans and 1 Peter tell us about the function and purpose of the church?
4. What a blessing the body of believers, God's church, is! What a testimony to the love, grace and mercy of Christ His church is to be! What about you? Are you also a part of God's blessed church? What has God given you that blesses, encourages and builds up your church family in the knowledge and glory of God? How can you be more Christlike to your church family?

Key Verse

"And they devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and the fellowship, to the breaking of bread and the prayers.."

Acts 2:42 (ESV)

TABLE READING

Lead your kids into God's Word...

2. Acts 2:42-47
3. Ephesians 4:1-16; Romans 15:5-7; 1 Peter 4:10-11
4. Ephesians 2:19-22



Scripture Memory: Acts 2:42

"AND THESE WORDS THAT I COMMAND YOU TODAY SHALL BE ON YOUR HEART. YOU SHALL TEACH THEM DILIGENTLY TO YOUR CHILDREN, AND SHALL TALK OF THEM WHEN YOU SIT IN YOUR HOUSE, AND WHEN YOU WALK BY THE WAY, AND WHEN YOU LIE DOWN, AND WHEN YOU RISE. YOU SHALL BIND THEM AS A SIGN ON YOUR HAND, AND THEY SHALL BE AS FRONTLETS BETWEEN YOUR EYES. YOU SHALL WRITE THEM ON THE DOORPOSTS OF YOUR HOUSE AND ON YOUR GATES." - DEUTERONOMY 6:6-9 (ESV)