



***What is so significant about the conduct of this first congregation of the gospel church? Pastor leads his family in today's "Hopewell @Home" passage. Acts 2:40–47 prepares us for the morning sermon on the coming Lord's Day. In these eight verses, the Holy Spirit teaches us that the though the first congregation of the gospel church was composed so largely of those who had murdered Christ, the repentance that Christ gave them by His Spirit reordered their life priorities, financial priorities, time priorities, and heart priorities. Thus may all who come to Christ rest upon Him to do to them and in them!***

**Saturday, February 26, 2021 • Read Acts 2:40–47**

Questions from the Scripture text: What did Peter add to this original response (v40)? How had some received this word of response (v41a)? What happened to them? What was added (v41b, cf. 1:15)? How did they continue (v42)? In what four things of the apostles did they continue? Then what came upon whom (v43a)? And what were done through whom (v43b)? How many of those who believed were together (v44a)? What did they have in common (v44b)? But what did they do as needs arose (v45)? How often did they continue where with one accord (v46)? And what did they do from house to house? What effect did this have upon their meal times? What was their general attitude toward God (v47)? And reputation with others? And what did Who do daily?

What are they like, who are saved from out of a crooked generation? Christ shows that His church is not full of the worthy but of the repentant by making the first iteration of it almost entirely out of those (v41) who were complicit in His murder! Truly, by His Spirit, our Redeemer is a great Giver not only of remission but of repentance.

What did the new believers' repentant, Spirit-filled lives look like? This is an important question for everyone who wishes to be repentant and Spirit-filled—which is to say, for every true Christian. And what we see in this passage is that this repentance, this change of mind, reorders believers' life priorities, financial (material) priorities, time priorities, and heart priorities.

**First, repentance unto life reorders believers' life priorities.** The apostles' doctrine (theology/teaching), the apostles' fellowship, the apostles' breaking of bread, and the apostles' prayers are all public exercises of the ordinary means of grace... i.e. exercises of public worship. These are the things in which they continue steadfastly (i.e. to which they are devoted). It was this public worship, in particular, to which God responded by bringing fear upon every soul.

Only through the apostles were wondrous signs done (v43b), but the rest of the three thousand exhibited the Spirit in this tangible way: they prioritized the public worship of God above all else. We too should exhibit the Spirit in this tangible way. A repentant, Spirit-filled life will be expressed in devotion to public worship via the ordinary means of grace.

**Second, repentance unto life reorders believers' financial priorities.** “All who believed were together and had all things in common” (v44). This is marvelous, since earlier in the chapter much was made of the different ethnicities and backgrounds of those who heard and responded to the pouring out of the Spirit. But now it was that very Spirit Whom they had in common, and Who had given them Christ in common, so that they considered any gift from the Lord to have been given for the purpose of the good of His people.

In our original nature from Adam, we are selfish, but when we receive a new nature from the Last Adam, we come to prefer others to ourselves (cf. Phil 2:2–5). Thieves no longer steal, but work hard with their hands so that they may have something to give to others in their time of need (cf. Eph 4:28). This was not some form of communism—or else there would be nothing to sell as needs arose in the manner described in v45 (cf. 5:4).

**Third, repentance unto life reorders believers' time priorities.** There was only one day per week that they were required to be gathered. This is established in the fourth commandment, which gives us six days for all that labor and work that is ours, and reserves only one day not for work exertion but for worship exertion. But one wonderful side-effect of being eager to meet one another's needs is that they were able to meet together more often.

In fact, v46 tells us that they met daily with one accord in the temple. We do not imagine that they had to pressure one another to do so, or that there was any question about what they would spend their extra time upon. They were glad to meet whenever they could. Now, believers in this era—especially in what we sometimes call the first world—have much more discretionary time than before. If our churches are full of repentant, Spirit-filled believers, we will find them desiring to gather as often as possible in these congregational exercises of the means of grace.

**Finally, repentance unto life reorders believers' heart priorities.** One who has not been satisfied with God in Christ finds his heart inhabited by the hideous conjoined twins of covetousness and grumbling. He desires and does not have; he neither gives God thanks nor glory (cf. Rom 1:21), and he is continuously in conflict with others (cf. Ja 4:1–3).

But these believers were delighted with the fellowship that they had in Christ Himself in the public worship (v46a), and when they returned home that fellowship would continue even over simple meals (v46b–c). No longer did they crave more and more material or fleshly things, and this simplicity (“humility”) of heart went hand in hand with gladness.

Glad and thankful hearts overflowed in words and songs of praise (v47). And as one might expect of someone who is cheerful and thankful and content and generous, all who knew them thought graciously (and gratefully) of them.

The Lord responded to their praise of Him by using their praiseworthy worshipful lives to add daily to the church those who were being saved. Surely, we who believe desire to live such lives and to see Him respond and use us as He continues to save. Let us seek from Him repentant, Spirit-filled lives.

Which of these four aspects above do you find most needful of growth/improvement in your life? Who can cause this to happen? What does He use to do so? What is your plan for availing yourself of this as you look to Him grow you?

Sample prayer: Lord, what a blessed effect You produced in that first great congregation that You began to gather at Pentecost. And we thank You that You grant unto us the same repentance by the same Spirit even today. Forgive us for when we aim at less than a repentant, Spirit-filled life. Grant unto us to work out our own salvation, by Your Spirit's working in us the desire for such a life and the practice of such a life, for we ask it through Christ, Who is our Life, AMEN!!

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**(The following is a machine-generated transcription. Please be aware of—and patient with—transcribing errors. If there is something confusing or obviously erroneous, you are invited to listen to the audio recording referenced above)**

Acts chapter 2 verses 40-47. These are God's words. And with many other words, you testified and exhorted them saying be saved from this perverse generation. Then those who gladly received his word were baptized. And that day about 3,000 souls were added to them and they continued steadfastly in the Apostles' doctrine and fellowship and the breaking of bread.

And in prayers, then fear came upon every soul and many wonders and signs were done through the Apostles. Now all who believed were together and had all things in common and sold their possessions and goods and divided them among all as anyone had need. So continuing daily with one accord in the temple and breaking bread from house to house.

They ate their food with gladness and simplicity of heart, praising God, and having favor with all the people and the Lord added to the church daily, those who are being saved. So far the reading of God's inspired and earned word.

We have seen already the great encouragement that baptism, gives even the greatest of sinners to turn from their sin and trust in Jesus, because he is the one he has defeated sin and death. He's the one who's paid for all our sin and he having taken his seat in glory has poured out his Holy Spirit.

And it is by his power that he gives repentance. And so we can know for sure, that Jesus from who he is from his own power from his own, goodness, is the one who gives repentance and faith and makes those things effectual and the life. Well we also have much encouragement from who it was who were first baptized and added to the church and who they were.

That's better because he was plural there who they were, who were first baptized and added to the church. And what came of their repentance and faith. There are those who say in our culture that specific sinful orientations cannot be changed. Cannot be defeated in the Christian's life and it is certain that sanctification will not be perfected and this life.

But repentance is real and sanctification is real. And what God does in the believer reorders or reorient. Him completely. So, don't let anyone tell you that sexual orientation cannot be changed, especially if you are someone who has difficulty with those things. At any time in your life then we pray to God that we won't be beside with such temptation for any for any kind of perversion fornication and adultery.

And divorce are also perversions and they've been accepted for much longer than some of the alphabet soup horror that has become acceptable in the last 20 years. But also, don't let anyone the devil or your own flesh. Tell you that your anger orientation. Cannot be reoriented and you once of a man who and he was asked during his trial at a Presbytery about his conduct in a previous session of that trial in which he had lost his temper, and he was asked about his temper tantrum, and he said, it's my hot Middle Eastern blood, and one of the elders in the Presbytery gently asked, Did the Lord Jesus, have Middle Eastern blood and we understand what that man was saying that a Christian may kill and fight against, and is required to do mortal battle with who he used to be in his former nature by way of the new nature that he has from the Lord Jesus himself as applied to us by the Holy Spirit.

Well, we see wonderful things here in verses 43 through 47. We see that you are saved from this perverse generation. So repentance is repentance from the perversion or the crookedness that we that we began in to the straightness. And the righteousness of the Lord Jesus, the DC that 3,000 souls were added to them.

And these three thousand souls were primarily made up of those who had conspired seven weeks ago. To murder the Christ. What a wonderful start for the church, so that everyone who comes into the Church of Jesus Christ comes into a church. Whose first congregation was almost entirely made up of murderers By the end of the day of Pentecost, which had started out with 120 church members.

There were 3,120 church members 3,000 of whom were complicit in the murder of Jesus or had that that complicitness called down upon them as a curse by their own parents. Do you see how there's hope for every Christian to see how the Lord Jesus has established his church to be a church?

Not of those who became good enough to join, but those whom he has brought to repentance from what they were and faith in him. And is now he is now conforming them to himself so that the church is full of people who may have at one point perhaps even recently in their lives, been in bondage to the most horrible sin.

And yet now they are reordered, reorient. It. And so what does That repentance reorder and reorient? Well first of all, it reorders, our life priorities and they continued steadfastly. They continue to devotedly earnestly passionately zealously in what in the apostles, doctrine and fellowship and the

breaking of bread. And in prayers Now, verse 42 is describing what happens daily with one accord in the temple.

There's also what happens outside of public worship breaking bread from house to house. Now, that's a different breaking of bread than verse 42. Verse 42 is describing that which is done with the apostles, they became people who are devoted to public worship Whenever the ordained servants of God, We're preaching and teaching they wanted to be there.

Now, this doesn't mean that every one of them attended every meeting and the temple. Obviously there are responsibilities and yet that was what they were devoted to. They did everything else and they were to do everything else as unto God and for his glory. But if there was a choice, If there was a possibility of getting their work done in such a way as to make room and be able and it's such a time as to be able to attend the public worship the public preaching, and teaching they would do it.

And so they had their life priorities reordered, so that they could hear preaching so that they could have that fellowship with one another. And the tying here in the verse of the doctrine which is teaching, really and fellowship indicates what their fellowship was about. These people did not get together to hear the apostles teach and as soon as the teaching time was done, talk about how the Jerusalem giants did last night in their game.

Or, you know, what the Herod that you know, the most recent iteration of Aaron's was conspiring to do and was surely going to happen soon or how awful Rome was. And now that the kingdom had come, we would reconstruct society and take over the world. No, the fellowship is tied to the teaching of the Apostles.

They would hear the preaching and teaching and then they would have their common life in consideration of and meditation upon that teaching. Especially and of course, the apostles didn't just give them the teaching that they had fellowship in hearing and then fellowship later in discussing. Did you know that public worship is a fellowship time?

There's probably think about changing the way we talk about things because the best fellowship that we ever have is between call to worship and Benediction, You don't have worship and then begin fellowship. Later, Our first fellowship is in the worship of God Because we're having fellowship with God. And with one another in the assembled worship service, Do you think your fellowship is better with one another when you're having fellowship?

Just with one another Erwin, you're having fellowship with one another, and with God, through the apostolic, preaching and teaching and the breaking of bread. At the table, When we have a family meal and we wait for one another, because the Lord Jesus is breaking himself, his his physical body, to his mystical, body, and feeding us, feeding his family, as it were.

Because the Lord, Jesus is raising the toast for us all to drink together and signifying. The family covenant, with our Father, who's in heaven, This is a great fellowship. And how intimate is the fellowship of prayer. As we break our minds unto God, the old saying is, and we open up thought and feeling and desire onto God.

Having been shaped by the word that we have heard preached and having been brought to confidence by the signs that he has given us that we pray together. This is the great fellowship isn't well, that was the first thing that was reoriented was their life priorities. That second thing reoriented is their financial priorities.

Fear comes upon every soul and many signs wonders and signs are done through the apostles that the wonders and signs were one of the things that God used to attest to the truthfulness and the certainty that of the apostles teaching. But one of the other things that the Lord used to affirm, what this was the reorienting.

Excuse me of the financial priorities of the people. Now all who believed were together and had all things in common and sold their possessions and goods and divided them among all as anyone had need. And so you read verse 44 and some fools, say, ah, communism. They're all together and had all things in common.

Well, if they had all things in common then who were these odd balls in verse 45, who had possessions, and why is it that rather than the elders commanding or sorry? In this case, the apostles, there were no elders. Yet the apostles commanding, what would be sold? Each one would sell his own of his own volition.

As Peter would tell Ananias later that he didn't have to sell his stuff and after he sold it, the money was his due. And he, you know, the the Santa Ananias wasn't withholding because God requires communism, but it was lying because God requires truth telling but they're willingness to do.

So their willingness to do so was like the signs and wonders the apostles, perform signs, and wonders to the others perform signs and wonders know, what do they do? Well, the way they thought about their possessions was kind of a sign and wonder. That's the reason Communism doesn't work.

There's nobody's willing and then everybody becomes miserable and a few people at the top, take everything from everyone else because they're not willing either. But this worked because it was the cheerful intentional giving as they chose of those who have been reoriented. They're not just reoriented towards God for the public worship.

That they're reoriented about the purpose of their possessions towards one another. So God reoriented their life priorities worship first and everything else, bent to facilitate attending, whatever actions elements of public worship, they could. And the second place financial priorities reoriented, and in the third place, time, priorities reoriented. So, continuing daily with one accord in the temple, the beginning of verse 46 and then the Lord added to the church daily.

Those who were being saved. Well, addition to the church comes by baptism. And so we see that they weren't just living in their houses from day to day. They would have as much public worship as they possibly could. Oh, we know and God's in God's law. Only the Lord's.

Day gathering is explicitly commanded, but the apostles were there, and the temple every day teaching, and the congregation would gather. The congregation would gather, and they would have their fellowship in the preaching and the teaching, and then they'd have fellowship in the Lord's supper and fellowship in prayer, and the Lord was converting people.

So they would also have fellowship in in baptism and and they were spending, not just the Lord's day, but as much time as it could in in public worship. And then when they got home from Temple or when they left the temple, They wouldn't each one go to his own home because the reorientation of their their resources, how they would use their money, their financial reorientation, and they're reorientation of their time led to an outbreak of hospitality as more infectious than COVID.

So when I left, you could find the that congregation a thousands in a comparatively much smaller number of households because they broke bread from house to house and ate their food with gladness and simplicity of heart. So so they weren't tired of each other. At the end of the day, very wanted to spend as much time.

Even when the public worship was not available or feasible, You couldn't just have your meals in the temple courts. You would have to have that other hunger that was satisfied. That first Corinthians 11 says to do at home and they were doing so from from house to house. So their life priorities were reoriented towards public worship and the actions elements of public worship.

Their financial priorities were reoriented, their time priorities were reoriented doing as much of this as they could and then their heart priorities were reoriented. They were satisfied with daily bread. Their daily bread. They were glad and they ate. It was simplicity of heart. Their hearts. Now, did not go after a million other pleasures of this world and the desire for the praise of men, they had all that they could want in the Lord and as the Lord gave them bread, they were thankful for what the Lord gave them and the simplicity of heart enabled them to be grateful.

Contentment does not ever come by the addition of things. Contentment comes by satisfaction with Christ and therefore with whatever such things as he is, pleased to give in addition to himself. Because we're already satisfied with just him, that's gladness and simplicity of heart. It also means that if Christ gives you bananas or mushrooms by way of your parents that you will be thankful because you are content with him and his goodness and you'll eat your food with gladness and simplicity of heart.

It is transforming to the heart to be satisfied. With the Lord. Jesus sounds like a wonderful life. I enjoy the family time at the table to eat their food with gladness and simplicity of heart, what a wonderful life. Well, what's the key to having a wonderful life like that?

It's not a reorientation of circumstances. That's the real orientation of the heart can buy the Lord Jesus Christ. And so they've praised God had favor with all the people. There were full of praise unto God, and they were the kind of people. Now. The more, they preached Jesus and the resurrection, the more they made enemies of certain people.

But generally speaking, They became pleasant generous. Simple people. The kind that even the unbeliever by the natural law of God that he has continued to maintain. And as a witness to himself in the creation, even the unbeliever could see that whatever had happened to them, was good. That would violently oppose.

If they weren't being converted, what had caused that, which was good, but the Lord gave them favor with all the people. So This congregation went from being selfish murderers to having their their order of priorities in their life reoriented, the financial priorities reoriented. Their time priorities reoriented and their heart priorities reoriented and because God did it for such a congregation.

As that, you may have good confidence. Having the same baptism from the same Savior, the same faith. Same gospel applied to you by the same spirit, whatever it is that you must have reoriented that there is the power. And the goodness in the Lord Jesus for you in that turn from your sin, trust in him, It all comes from him.

Let's pray. Thank you. Lord. Jesus that those whom you justify you, glorify that those whom you begin to work, you continue to work in them to will and to do according to your good pleasure and you complete that work. We thank you that you show us. Not only that our food is from you, but especially that our repenting is from you that in U is all the goodness.

So that we might as part of the work that you do in us have hearts full of praise unto you. We thank you that you chose to make the membership of the first congregation of your church. A lot of such people as these so that we might be encouraged.

Despite the fact that you have made the membership of our church out of such people, as we are, truly from you and in you as all of the righteousness, all of the goodness, all of the power. And then you, we have all of these in abundant even infinite supply.

So blessed your name and we ask to see the fruit of it in our lives that your Holy Spirit would even use this time that we have spent considering your word to produce. Some of that fruit which we ask in your name, Lord Jesus and your people here. Say, Amen.