

Being an Acts 2 Church – Growing
Acts 2:42-47

- I. After taking the time to talk about Worshipping, Sharing, and Connecting ...
 - A. We turn our attention to Growing.
 - 1) We often use the word discipleship.
 - 2) It means, “Growing to become like Christ.”
 - B. Here’s the idea:
 - 1) We encounter Jesus and begin to read the Bible, pray; we’re trying to understand what it means to be His follower.
 - 2) We’re eating what the Bible calls “milk” – spiritual food for beginners.
 - 3) 1 Peter 2:2 – “Like newborn babies, crave pure spiritual milk, so that by it you may grow up in your salvation.”
 - 4) God wants us to grow and mature in much the same way that a baby grows and matures – organically, naturally, and by degrees over time.
 - C. Many of us can identify times of steady growth, times of quick growth, and probably times of slow growth.
 - 1) It doesn’t happen (usually) at a nice even pace.
 - 2) Circumstances being what they are – sometimes something dramatic happens that spurs our growth forward.
 - a) Those times can be painful.
 - b) But they also bear spiritual fruit.
 - 3) ***Lysia Kurtz’s story.***
- II. Growth happens when we allow ourselves to be taught.
 - A. “They devoted themselves to the apostle’s teaching and to the fellowship.” – Acts 2:42.
 - B. There are two key factors to growth:
 - 1) Allowing ourselves to be taught.
 - 2) Devoting ourselves to being taught.
 - 3) Let’s say more about each one.
 - C. Allowing ourselves to be taught.
 - 1) Growing implies a willingness to be taught new things.
 - a) That means admitting that you don’t know it all.
 - b) It means you possess a humility that recognizes where you really stand before God.
 - 2) Honesty with yourself.
 - a) Too puffed up to be taught.
 - a. See, he is puffed up; his desires are not upright— Habakkuk 2:4
 - b. Pride makes us hard to teach.
 - D. Growing implies a devotion to being taught.
 - 1) A decision, a setting of the will. A fixing of your eyes on the prize.
 - a) I press on toward the goal to win the prize for which God has called me heavenward in Christ Jesus. – Philippians 3:14.
 - b) This is not a hobby – it’s a full time occupation!
 - 2) Perseverance – it requires long-term commitment.
 - a) Discipleship takes a lifetime.
 - b) Guys – the commitment thing. It’s not us.
 - c) Here’s the thing: that’s a lame excuse.

- III. Growth happens in context. (or “in place.”)
 - A. That means simply this: you grow by interacting with other Christians.
 - 1) Iron sharpens iron.
 - 2) Growth is accelerated by contact.
 - B. The reverse is also true.
 - 1) You stop growing when you pull away from the fellowship of believers.
 - 2) You really can’t do this by yourself.
 - 3) You don’t find this lone ranger Christian thing anywhere else except in the United States.
 - a) In this respect we are unique in the world.
 - b) And that’s NOT a good thing.
 - C. The church has a lot of folks who have stopped growing for just this reason.
 - 1) “Though by this time you ought to be teachers, you need someone to teach you the elementary truths of God’s word all over again. You need milk, not solid food! ¹³ Anyone who lives on milk, being still an infant, is not acquainted with the teaching about righteousness. ¹⁴ But solid food is for the mature. *Hebrews 5:12-14*
 - 2) Amy Grant put it well in a song a few years ago. We’ve got a lot of fat babies.
 - D. The crucible for growth in the church is small groups.
 - 1) Sunday school, Monday, Tuesday, other studies.
 - 2) Living, talking, failing, succeeding; all with others in relationship.
 - 3) That is where growth happens.
- IV. How important is this?
 - A. I believe that God wants us to have life and to have it more abundantly.
 - 1) John 10:10 – “I have come that you might have life, and to have it more abundantly.”
 - 2) Is that what you want?
 - B. That means growing to become more like Christ.
 - 1) That happens in community.
 - 2) That happens through discipleship.
 - C. What will it cost you to struggle through your discipleship on your own?
 - 1) It will cost you peace.
 - 2) I will cost you love.
 - 3) It will cost you a faith that sees God working in the world for goodness.
 - 4) It will cost you hope in difficult times.
 - 5) It will cost you power to do what is right and resist evil.
 - D. It will cost you exactly the abundant life Jesus said he came to bring you.
 - 1) The price is too high.
 - 2) Seek the solid meat of the word.
 - 3) Grow in Christ. Become more like him.