

I. Introduction

- a. Do you recall the story of Hezekiah when he was dying? (2 Ki. 20:1) In those days Hezekiah became sick and was at the point of death. And Isaiah the prophet the son of Amoz came to him and said to him, "Thus says the LORD, 'Set your house in order, for you shall die; you shall not recover.'"
 - i. Instead of planning his funeral, Hezekiah prays.
 - ii. How does God respond? (2 Ki. 20:4-5) ⁴ And before Isaiah had gone out of the middle court, the word of the LORD came to him: ⁵ "Turn back, and say to Hezekiah the leader of my people, Thus says the LORD, the God of David your father: I have heard your prayer; I have seen your tears. Behold, I will heal you.
 - iii. Of course, Isaiah turns back and delivers the word from the Lord.
 - iv. All over, right? I mean God has spoken. (2 Ki. 20:7) ⁷ And Isaiah said, "Bring a cake of figs. And let them take and lay it on the boil, that he may recover."
 - v. Why the figs? God didn't need figs to heal Hezekiah. However, God often chooses to use means to accomplish his purposes.
- b. Today, we will see several means by which to grow in grace...to grow in the knowledge and fear of the Lord.
 - i. Is food a means by which your body is strengthened? Yes! But we are not merely a body are we? Our soul needs to be nourished too. That's why Jesus said while being tempted, (Matt. 4:4) "It is written, "'Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that comes from the mouth of God.'"
- c. In our text this morning, Luke gives us the result of those who responded to the gospel and were filled with the Spirit. This is, in many ways, the ideal church. Let's see what we can learn.

II. Main Point

- a. Because these people received the Word and were saved, the Holy Spirit begins to build a new community and here's how.

III. Outline

- a. Means of Grace for continued strength
- b. Awe and Validation
- c. In Reach, worship, and Out Reach
- d. The Lord added those being saved

IV. Exposition

- a. We must see this as the result of the salvation they received as well as the gift of the Holy Spirit.
 - i. It seems clear that we see this picture of the ongoing work of the risen and reigning Lord Jesus. The disciples continue to do and teach what Jesus had given them. The work had begun because the Spirit had been poured out as promised.
 - ii. In verse 42, the first thing you hear is that they were devoted themselves to four things.
 1. They were devoted to the apostles' teaching
 2. They were devoted to the fellowship
 3. They were devoted to the breaking of bread
 4. They were devoted to the prayers
 - iii. What does it mean to be devoted?
 1. The word is a combination of two words: towards and to endure. So, it means to work towards enduring.
 2. As I searched for how this word was used throughout the bible, I found it used only one place in the OT, which is Numbers 13:20. I then cross-referenced the Hebrew word, which lead me to a word that means to grow strong, strengthen, and be courageous.

We know that Moses told Joshua to be strong and courage as they entered the promise land. How was he to do that? By meditating on the Word of God.

3. Fast forward to Acts 2:42. What's the connection? They devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching. In other words, they were to meditate on the Word of God to be strengthened for endurance.
 4. It's the same word used back in 1:14 when it says that they devoted themselves to prayer while they waited on the Spirit to come.
 5. It's the same word used in verse 46 when it says (Acts 2:46) Every day they devoted themselves to meeting together in the temple, and broke bread from house to house.
 6. We must see that one of the main purposes of their togetherness around these fundamental things were to be strengthened by the Lord to endure to the end. They will need it very soon when persecution arises.
 7. We need it. Life is a battle.
- iv. So, they were devoting themselves to four things.
1. First, the apostles' teaching. The apostles had the responsibility to minister the Word of God. Jesus had disciplined them through teaching.
 - a. The apostles will train others in the ministry of the word. They must because they will not live forever. The apostles are teaching the disciples what Jesus taught them. If they fail this on, what hope do those have yet to be born?
 - b. They do this in formal settings. They do this while breaking bread which is sharing a meal together. In every way possible, they are devoting themselves to the word as though it is as important as eating. It is their life!
 2. They were devoted to the fellowship. What is fellowship? Well, fellowship is "having a share in" and "giving a share in".
 - a. We have a share in the gospel. And because of that we have a share in the Holy Spirit and presence of God. As John explained in his first letter, (1 Jn. 1:1-4) That which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we looked upon and have touched with our hands, concerning the word of life-- ² the life was made manifest, and we have seen it, and testify to it and proclaim to you the eternal life, which was with the Father and was made manifest to us-- 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. ⁴ And we are writing these things so that our joy may be complete.
 - b. The "giving a share in" comes out of the fact that we have a share in the Kingdom of God. God has been so good to us in forgiving us of our sins and giving us the Spirit that we become like the gracious God He is. We share with others—food, money, and even our own lives.
 3. That's why the next thing they were devoted to was to the breaking of bread. To break bread together is to eat together. I don't think the Lord's Supper is in view here just yet.
 - a. It's like when Jesus broke bread for the 5,000 who were in the wilderness and his disciples distributed the bread to everyone who had their fill.
 - b. The bread must be broken to share it. It didn't come from Kroger already sliced in a bag.
 - c. Eating a meal together was serious business. The Pharisees complained about Jesus eating with tax collectors and sinners. It meant something important. So important that if you follow what happened in Galatians chapter 2, Peter broke

1. Surely, this was a result of the apostles teaching things like (Lk. 12:32-34) ³² "Fear not, little flock, for it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom. ³³ Sell your possessions, and give to the needy. Provide yourselves with moneybags that do not grow old, with a treasure in the heavens that does not fail, where no thief approaches and no moth destroys. ³⁴ For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also.
 2. So there were people who did not need anything. They even had a surplus. While others found themselves in need. The gospel does amazing things to people. They never knew it was more blessed to give than to receive until they met Jesus.
 3. In other words, they reached in among themselves to give and share because of the transformation in their hearts through the gospel and the Spirit.
- iv. Next we see in verse 46 that they were devoted to meeting together at the temple day by day as well as eating together in their homes.
1. The temple was the only place large enough for a gathering of this size. It was also public. We will soon see that the apostles were there teaching and they will soon be arrested for it. More disciples are added at the beginning of chapter 4 because of this.
 2. Their public presence like this was part of the outreach. People would hear the message and have some questions. These new believers were being gracious towards all the people.
 3. I can't help but think they did just as Jesus did when he ate with tax collectors and sinners. They would invite those who would listen to share a meal with them. There they could observe their glad and generous hearts.
 4. Most certainly, they would bless the food as Jesus did. It says in verse 47 they were praising God.
 5. This is what life ought to look like for a group of believers. In-reach and outreach are fundamental elements of a church.
 6. They were people who had a share in the Kingdom and it was enough and they wanted others to share in it and sing about it too.
 7. When you are a people like this: (Heb. 10:34) ...you joyfully accepted the plundering of your property, since you knew that you yourselves had a better possession and an abiding one.
 - a. You know you have a better possession than anything that could be offered in this world because at least the possession we long for is an abiding one. It last forever.
- d. The amazing result of living life devoted to the means of grace. The Lord added day by day those who were being saved.
- i. (Acts 2:47) And the Lord added to their number day by day those who were being saved.
 - ii. The Lord added to their number as his people strengthened themselves...devoted themselves to the teaching of the apostles, to the fellowship of sharing and giving, to breaking bread together, and to the prayers.
 - iii. They are carrying out the mission Jesus left with them. (Matt. 28:19-20) ¹⁹ Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, ²⁰ teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age."

V. Conclusion

- a. I want you to ask yourself what you are devoted to.
 - i. Are you devoted to the word—regularly reading it on your own, with others, and eagerly learning from the preaching of the word?

- ii. Are you devoted to the fellowship of sharing in and giving of this glorious gift of the gospel and your personal resources?
 - iii. We ought to be eating meals with each other here and in our homes on a regular basis. Sharing food with each other is a great place to invite others in and not only share bread but share the bread of life—Jesus.
 - 1. I suggest that all of us start asking someone over for lunch after the morning service. It's a place to start. Prepare every week as though you were going to find someone to join you. And when you are asked by someone to come over say yes even though you have food prepared. Eat it another day.
 - iv. And finally, are you devoted to the prayers? Daily prayers on your own, praying with others, and praying in the assembly? Corporate prayers are for us all. You join in by listening and agreeing with the one praying.
- b. Now, for the unbelievers among us. You need your sins forgiven. You need a church family to devote yourself to these means of grace with. The only way to be saved is that you repent and be baptized in the name of Jesus. You must call upon him to save you and he will.