



The Church - The Community of Believers

Key idea:

The Church is the community of those who have personally responded to the Gospel, gather for worship, and care for one another.

Key text:

Acts 2:36-47

“Therefore let all Israel be assured of this: God has made this Jesus, whom you crucified, both Lord and Christ.”³⁷ When the people heard this, they were cut to the heart and said to Peter and the other apostles, “Brothers, what shall we do?”³⁸ Peter replied, “Repent and be baptized, every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins. And you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.³⁹ The promise is for you and your children and for all who are far off — for all whom the Lord our God will call.”⁴⁰ With many other words he warned them; and he pleaded with them, “Save yourselves from this corrupt generation.”⁴¹ Those who accepted his message were baptized, and about three thousand were added to their number that day.⁴² They devoted themselves to the apostles’ teaching and to the fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer.⁴³ Everyone was filled with awe, and many wonders and miraculous signs were done by the apostles.⁴⁴ All the believers were together and had everything in common.⁴⁵ Selling their possessions and goods, they gave to anyone as he had need.⁴⁶ Every day they continued to meet together in the temple courts. They broke bread in their homes and ate together with glad and sincere hearts,⁴⁷ praising God and enjoying the favor of all the people. And the Lord added to their number daily those who were being saved.

Key points:

1. Repentance and faith in response to God’s Law and His Gospel is still the only way to become part of His people and His Kingdom.
2. Those who believe the Gospel are united with Christ and receive all of the covenant blessings earned by Jesus for God’s people.
3. When I was united to Christ by faith, I was also united to other believers in the Church and called to walk in fellowship with them.

4. The Church is not a building or an organization, but rather the community of believers.
5. As the community of believers the Church:
 - a. Is comprised of those who have personally responded to the Gospel of Jesus Christ.
 - b. Gathers together to worship God.
 - c. Fears God and experiences His powerful work in its midst.
 - d. Loves and cares for one another.

Questions for discussion/application:

1. What part of Sunday's teaching stood out most to me? Why?
2. Why is it important to understand that the Church is comprised of believers who have repented of their sin and responded to the Gospel in faith?
3. In what sense was I united with other believers when I became a Christian?
4. Is the unity I have with other Christians something that is automatic, something I have to work for, or is it both?
5. Look at Luke's picture of the early church in Acts 2:37-46. How close do the believers seem to be with one another? What words would I use to describe the relationship between these new believers? Is it possible to even think of any of them trying to live in isolation from other Christians?
6. If every Christian has been united to Christ, given the Spirit, and has God's written word, then why do we need other believers? Is it really important for us to live in fellowship with other Christians?
7. How does Luke describe the worship of the early Church in Acts 2:42? Have I seen a similar pattern of worship in churches I have attended?
8. How important is it for me to gather with other believers to worship? Is it a priority in my own life? Why should it be?
9. Does the description of the church in Acts 2 require physical presence? Can I experience this type of community virtually? Why or why not?
10. Who will I call or see to encourage this week? What specific members of BRCC will I commit before God to call or spend time with in person?