

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

## I. Intro - A Strange Year for the Church

- A. Strangest year for the Church in my lifetime
- B. Coronavirus - could not meet at all for months
- C. Inside meetings with masks and many can't come
- D. We are finally meeting together outside so most can come if they want
- E. What exactly is the Church? Do we need the Church?

## II. The Call To Repentance and Faith

- A. Background: Peter preaches on Pentecost
  - 1. The Holy Spirit filled the 120 and crowds gathered
  - 2. Peter preached about Jesus from the Old Testament
  - 3. Peter then declared Jesus as Lord and Messiah  
“Therefore let all Israel be assured of this: God has made this Jesus, whom you crucified, both Lord and Christ.” Acts 2:36
    - a. They had rejected and killed Jesus
    - b. God overruled, raised Jesus, & made Him Lord of all
  - 4. The foundational message is the Lordship of Jesus
- B. The call to repentance and faith
  - 1. The people respond to Peter's preaching  
When the people heard this, they were cut to the heart and said to Peter and the other apostles, “Brothers, what shall we do?” Acts 2:37

- a. They do not make excuses or deny God's verdict
  - b. They humbly acknowledge their guilt
  - c. This is the first step in responding to God - humbly admitting God's Law is true and I am guilty
- 2. Peter's reply  
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. <sup>39</sup> The promise is for you and your children and for all who are far off — for all whom the Lord our God will call.” Acts 2:38–39
    - a. Repent - turn from your sin to God
    - b. The promise - receive God's promise by faith
    - c. Baptism - the public declaration of their repentance and faith, of their new allegiance to Jesus as Lord
    - d. This is the way into God's Kingdom for everyone - you, your children, all who are far off (v39)
  - 3. 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.

## III. United to Jesus and His Church

- A. The people respond  
Those who accepted his message were baptized, and about three thousand were added to their number that day. Acts 2:41
  - 1. About 3,000 people responded in repentance and faith and were baptized in water
  - 2. The specific call requires a specific response

B. These people received the Spirit - united with Christ  
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... <sup>41</sup> Those who accepted his message were baptized, and about three thousand were added to their number that day. Acts 2:38, 41

1. Repent and you will receive the Spirit
2. Over 3,000 did - and received the promise!
3. To receive the Spirit is to be united with Jesus and all His saving benefits.
4. Those who believe the Gospel are united with Christ and receive all of the covenant blessings earned by Jesus for God's people.

C. They were also united with the Church - God's People  
Those who accepted his message were baptized, and about three thousand were **added to their number** that day... <sup>47</sup> praising God and enjoying the favor of all the people. And the Lord **added to their number daily those who were being saved**. Acts 2:41, 47

1. Added to their number (2x)!
2. When these people repented and believed they were not only united to Christ but also became part of the Church, God's Holy people.
3. To be united to Christ by faith is also to be united to His people the Church.  
Question 69: Does God call you to live the Christian life by yourself?  
No, 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. There is no such thing as a Christian that is not part of the Church. To be united with Christ is to be united with His Body, the Church.
5. We are not only part of the Church - we are also called to live as part of the Church.

#### IV. The Community of Believers

A. The Church is the community of believers

**Those who accepted his message were baptized**, and about three thousand were added to their number that day... <sup>47</sup> praising God and enjoying the favor of all the people. And the Lord added to their number daily **those who were being saved**. Acts 2:41, 47

1. Those who accepted the message - believers - were added to the Church.
2. Those who were saved - believers - were added to the Church
3. The Church is not a building or an organization - it is the community of believers, those who have personally responded to the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

B. The Church is the community of believers who gather to worship God together

They devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and to the fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer. Acts 2:42

1. A description of early worship gatherings
2. Teaching of Scripture, fellowship, the Lord's Table, and prayer - the means of grace
3. This was not a sporadic activity of the believers - it was their regular practice

They **devoted themselves** to the apostles' teaching and to the fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer... <sup>46</sup> **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, Acts 2:42, 46

- a. Devoted - gathering for Word, fellowship, Table, and prayer was a consuming passion for them
- b. Every day - this was their regular, consistent practice

4. The Church gathers to worship - this is our DNA.
5. This is why even persecuted churches continue to try and gather - they can't help themselves.
6. No amount of personal devotions, listening to teachings, or reading books can replace gathering with other believers in person to worship God.
7. This is why when plagues and pandemics have prevented public gatherings it is such a cause of grief and loss - we were made to gather.

C. The Church is the community of believers who fear God and experience His powerful work

Everyone was filled with awe, and many wonders and miraculous signs were done by the apostles. Acts 2:43

1. They were filled with awe: fear (φόβος) of the LORD
2. God was powerfully working among them, and this led to the fear of the LORD
3. The Church is not a community of entertainment or consumers of religious services, but of those who experience God's powerful Presence and fear Him.

D. The Church is the community of believers who love and care for one another

All the believers were together and had everything in common. <sup>45</sup> Selling their possessions and goods, they gave to anyone as he had need. <sup>46</sup> 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, Acts 2:44–46

1. This is not a random group of people but a true community
2. Common - κοινὸν - same root as 'fellowship'
3. They not only met for worship, they also met in each other's homes for meals and fellowship.
4. They not only gave to the church but shared their possessions to help each other out.
5. The Church is not a community of people who share in religious activities once a week but rather those who share life together, loving, praying, and caring for one another.

## V. Applying the Word

- A. Have I responded to Jesus in repentance and faith?
  1. This is the only way into God's people
  2. Many Jews thought they were 'in' by birth or culture - but Peter said they had to repent and believe!
  3. Have I repented of my sin and looked to Jesus in faith?
  4. Have I declared this publicly in baptism? If not, see me!

## B. Am I walking with the community of believers at BRCC?

1. If you were united to Jesus by faith, you are called and commanded by God to walk in unity and fellowship with other believers!
2. This is not about having my name on a roll (or in a computer program!), but about actually being part of the community of believers?
3. 2020 has made all of this more difficult - but we MUST walk as part of the community!
4. I urge everyone who possibly can - gather with us each week while we can meet outside!
5. If you can't - make it a HIGH priority to call others or meet outside somewhere for fellowship
6. We were created for community, and we are re-created in Christ for the community of the Church - and 2020 does not change that!

## C. Communion

### The Church - The Community of Believers

Acts 2:36-47  
August 30, 2020  
Communion  
Hebrews 13:20-21

Teaching keywords: Church; catechism; community; fellowship

Grace and peace to you from him who is, and who was, and who is to come, and from His Holy Spirit <sup>5</sup> and from Jesus Christ, who is the faithful witness, the firstborn from the dead, and the ruler of the kings of the earth. To him who loves us and has freed us from our sins by his blood, <sup>6</sup> and has made us to be a kingdom and priests to serve his God and Father — to him be glory and power for ever and ever! Amen. Revelation 1:4–6

“Therefore let all Israel be assured of this: God has made this Jesus, whom you crucified, both Lord and Christ.” <sup>37</sup> When the people heard this, they were cut to the heart and said to Peter and the other apostles, “Brothers, what shall we do?” <sup>38</sup> 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. <sup>39</sup> The promise is for you and your children and for all who are far off — for all whom the Lord our God will call.” <sup>40</sup> With many other words he warned them; and he pleaded with them, “Save yourselves from this corrupt generation.” <sup>41</sup> Those who accepted his message were baptized, and about three thousand were added to their number that day. <sup>42</sup> They devoted themselves to the apostles’ teaching and to the fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer. <sup>43</sup> Everyone was filled with awe, and many wonders and miraculous signs were done by the apostles. <sup>44</sup> All the believers were together and had everything in common. <sup>45</sup> Selling their possessions and goods, they gave to anyone as he had need. <sup>46</sup> 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, <sup>47</sup> praising God and enjoying the favor of all the people. And the Lord added to their number daily those who were being saved. Acts 2:36–47