

Converted Living

Grace Bible Chapel

Outline: The Acts of the Apostles – Acts 2:43-47

March 19th, 2017

Context: Following the message of Peter, belief by 3,000 and their baptism, Luke gives us a commentary on the saved life of these new converts. There is much to learn and apply from this recorded life of the earliest church. Although the culture of the day displays some unique aspects, the change of heart and life of a new believer in Jesus Christ remains consistent to this day. By Luke showing us what occurred with these transformed Jews, we can learn what to expect within our own culture when hearts are converted through the new birth. The elements true then continue in the same salvation the Lord brings today.

What we do see is a complete transformation of the thinking, living, attitudes, priorities, affections, and focus of these who have been awakened from darkness to light.

Broad outline of Acts (underlined is the immediate context).

- VI. The Power Needed (Acts 2:1-6:7)
- D. Salvation Message (Acts 2:22-42)
- E. Saved Living (Acts 2:43-47)

Key Words

- awe
- together
- common
- believed
- sharing
- one mind
- gladness

Introduction:

- Peter has preached to the very people who had caused the crucifixion of Christ. They had witnessed supernatural activities (Pentecost), & Peter had explained, using Scripture that Jesus was the Messiah. Many of these then believed.
- All of these men being preached to by Peter are believers in Jehovah God, are religious, moral, & sincere in the practice of what they believe. The problem is they have not been transformed / converted or what Christ called been “born again.”
- But, after hearing the Word, and being convicted by the Holy Spirit (Vs. 2:37) they believe and began a new life in Christ.
- Last week we closed out with Vs. 42 –
 - Here is their radical change of life, change of thinking, & thereby change of doing: “continually devoting,” where was their interest? Where was their time spent? What did they want to be doing? – continually – what they gave themselves too – their focus, their concerns – here is what it looks like:
 - “Apostles teaching” (the Word today) – in contrast to attitudes of dragging people to church - they loved taking in the Word of God.
 - “Fellowship” – these obviously wanted to be around others of like mind – *birds of a feather flock together!*
 - “Breaking of bread” – a reference to the Lord’s table – they wanted to worship the true God – to thank God for sending His Son.
 - “Prayer” – they now had a relationship with God whereby they desired to converse with Him about everything.

Point: None of these characteristics of this church were forced, conjured up, no-one was beating them over the head, this was their heart, their new mindset.

- Here was a people who heard the Word correctly taught, came to conviction, repented to show their faith, & then began to live the transformed Christian life.
- As the first effective message used of God to build His church, we have a template of the converted response of true salvation.
 - The culture was different, the circumstances (not having the NT), but the fact of true conversion never changes – “if any man...new creation.”
 - There are powerful adjectives describing the attitude & conduct of these.

- As we study this, why is the trend of many Christians today unlike what we study here? - I believe we have multitudes of deceived people, claiming Christ, but have not come to Christ - their lives are not transformed.

Point: One of the key reasons for studying the Bible, & particularly an inspired history is to test ourselves – Ask ourselves – am I like this? If not, why not?

E. Saved Living (Vs. 43-47) – what does the converted life look like!

1. Senses awakened (Vs. 43)

- **Vs. 43** – “sense of awe” – phobos – fear, a special form of fear, Luke 5:26 – used in the same sense as here, where individuals have met God, they know He is in what is happening to them, to each other, and to their lives.
 - Why translated a sense of awe – something special has happened to them, like nothing before. God has invaded their thinking & their lives.
 - It is no wonder “the fear of Lord...of wisdom” – to have a true sense of God, a true world changing understanding of His great salvation changes everything.
 - “kept feeling” – genomai – (460 times) most often translated “became” or “become” – it speaks of the fact of the transition in their lives – they became these kind of God awareness people, God fearing, viewing God foremost.
 - “wonders and signs” – keep in mind they did not have the Bible, but they did have the Apostles, & just as the miracles of Christ’s were used to validate Him as Messiah, these continued miracles were used to validate the Apostle’s message of Messiah prior to the writing & completed canon of Scripture.

Point: today we have the supernatural completed 66 books– nothing like it, to read it, study it, is to know its genuine glorious authority. It is like no other book. It is the book written by God to man. And, even beyond the Apostles, this book is complete, exhaustive, perfect to inform & bring us to eternal life (2 Tim. 3:16-17).

2. Special relationships (Vs. 44-45, 46b) – we continue examining this early church.

- **Vs. 44 – 45** (go together) Some have tried to make this communal living, or even communism – that is not what is being taught – there are two things here:
 - “Were together” – it does not mean living together (for that would be impossible) it means together of the same mind. They agreed together!
 - I started to use here – singleness of heart – for that is what they had.
 - Christ brings people together – the point of agreement is around Him & His Word (today), self goes away, fades, & the truth in Christ becomes so prominent that all other matters of difference become unimportant.
 - Unity around Christ removes many complications – God’s Person & way is singular, & nothing else really matters by comparison.
 - Amos 3:3 “how can two ...agreement” 2 Cor. 6:14 – this has much to do with affection & love. Association of agreement on Christ & His Word the most significant matter & love go together.
 - Remember Christ’s command (John 15:17) “This I command...love”
 - 2ndly - “all things in common” – behind this is a different way of viewing possessions – possessions were no longer the priority, people were the priority. Self sacrifice was the priority. Love for others was the priority.
 - The church today is to function similarly – we are to help one another.
 - This is not an admonition for some to be lazy – that too is not love, but for those genuinely in need to be helped by those who have the ability to help.
 - God’s people are generous.
 - 1 John 3:16-18 – (many texts) but this one sums it succinctly.

- **Vs. 46b** – Also seen at 46b – “breaking bread from house to house” – what is this? It is the “Lord’s Table” – they were continually celebrating Christ’s work on the cross – this was the center of their worship, with love, faith, and union.
- Separately “taking their meals together”_This is eating together, enjoying each other – this is friendships around Jesus Christ. How do I know? Notice: “with gladness and sincerity of heart” – this was their entertainment. It was what they wanted to do!

Point: Nobody had to drag them to something. It was where these wanted to be. Ultimately, all of us do what we want to do! Is this you? Some are introverts, some have real excuses, etc.. – but, do you want to be around others who love the Lord?

3. Super joy Vs. 46-47 – “gladness” – noun form of the verb agalliasis meaning to rejoice. And in **Vs 47** – “praising God” – this is what characterized them – note “from sincerity of the heart” – It was not drummed-up, it was the real them!

- Christian joy is deep, because it comes from God Himself.
 - It is no wonder the announcement of Christ was “I bring you good news of great joy” Luke 2:10.
 - Jude 24 – here “great joy” or lit. “exceeding great joy” is the expression of those standing before God in the day of judgment – the worst day, the most serious day! Do you know what is in store for you if you are in Christ? Eternal joy, not just here & there, but always! Read Rev. 21.
 - The worlds joy is superficial, fluff, temporary, hollow – but Christ stated “I have overcome the world.” Why are we often found mopey, forlorn – it is because we lose sight of our God, His Word, His truth!
 - Why real joy? - Rom 14:17 – our world & attitude is not everyday circumstances, up & down like a roller coaster (things only), but “peace and joy in the Holy Spirit.” Our anchor is what God has given us within, & promised by giving us His Spirit. This is the song “*it is well with my soul!*”

Point: When you are feeling low, go to Acts 16 & read about Paul & Silas in the filthy jail, locked in stocks singing praises to God – that is faith with joy in the Lord.

Point: How could they do this? They knew & believed the sovereign plan of God & that nothing can separate from the love of God (Rom. 8:38) “For I am convinced...”

4. Sincere faith (Vs. 46) – why this joy? – they had sincere faith, real faith!

- Back in Vs. 44 – it states “all those who had believed” – the matter driving all their actions was their “faith.” Faith in Jesus Christ & sins forgiven in Him.
- **Vs. 46** – “day by day continuing...one mind...temple” – The temple was the place to discuss the Scriptures, worship, & witness. The idea of “day by day” & “continuing” is there was no let up. What they believed had changed them.
 - Correlate with “sincerity of heart” (not sincerity of emotions) means their faith was real / lasting. There was no let-up, no cooling down.

Point: I have met many people who at one time were hot for God, but now icicles grow where heat once was – where are you? Have you let up, cooled down, allowed other matters to take precedence over your relation to God, His church, His people?

5. Stirring testimony (Vs. 47a)

- **Vs. 47a** – “praising God” – this was their outward testimony to others.
 - Think of the Pharisee’s – the religious leaders of the time – what was their testimony? Don’t do this, & don’t do that! It was not praising God. It was not gratitude, not gratefulness. It was turning God’s word into rules, it was frowning, it was judging, it was being critical.
 - Satan can duplicate religion, but one thing he cannot do is praise God.
 - True praise to God is the ultimate test of profession – are you praising God?

- Why are these praising God? They saw themselves delivered from the world, flesh, & Satan.
 - They knew they were being prepared for the glory to come for another life, a glorious life – Christ said “I go to prepare”...
- “having favor with all the people” – It means that initially the general mass of people were not initially disturbed by these new believers. That would come as it did with our Lord Jesus. Why were they not disturbed?
 - Not only were they not doing anything illegal or immoral, they were not threatening others, or acting offensively to others.
 - True Christianity is beautiful & a benefit to society, not a detriment.
- What is the general thought of a Christian today? Sadly, a rigid joy killer.
 - Christianity has been reinterpreted into something sad, negative, ugly.
 - Yes, it is a narrow way – but a way that leads to life – abundant life!

6. Sovereign recognition (Vs. 47b)

- **Vs. 47b** – “And the Lord” – who was really building the church? The Lord.
 - Anyone who has experienced this change understands why the praise & why all the other changes of attitude & outlook – but there is yet something else!
 - I believe they realized more & more this wonderful change was entirely do to the grace & mercy of God.
 - They came to the realization of the truth about themselves – dead in trespasses & sins, but God had “made them alive” Eph 2:1-5.
 - They also were amazed at the way God did it, by crushing His own Son on behalf of sinners.
 - And further, now they are the recipients of the gift of God – the Holy Spirit within, as Paul stated “sealed (by the HS) in Him with the HS of promise” (Eph. 1:13). All of this is overwhelming – bringing thanksgiving & praise to God – Rom. 11:33 was the heart, the mindset of the transformed Paul.

Closing:

- Do you share this mindset - studying this, thinking on it brings a test, do you pass the test? Do you have the same kind of heart as these early transformed believers.
- Maybe some here have this but it has been suppressed by lethargy, sidetracks, spiritual laziness. It is time to re-engage! Recapture, reset our thinking.