

### SERMON GUIDE:

June 25, 2023, Pastor Jason Smotherman

### HOLY SPIRIT DRIVEN CHURCH

### DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

1. Listed are the 13 characteristics of the church in Acts 2:
  - Repentance
  - Baptism
  - Receiving the gift of the Holy Spirit
  - Devoted to Apostles Teaching
  - Devoted to Fellowship
  - Devoted to Breaking Bread
  - Devoted to Prayer
  - Wonder and Miracles were present
  - Generosity
  - Public gathering of worship
  - Joy-filled meal times
  - Favor with People
  - Growth
2. How many of these qualities are present in the church today? Which ones? How do we obtain the characteristics we do not have?
3. Why is repentance and baptism linked together in Acts 2:38?
4. What does growth look like according to Acts 2:47? Was it measured by church attendance?
5. What is your biggest takeaway from this series entitled Holy Spirit thus far?

### SERMON NOTES

The Holy Spirit driven Church was marked by 13 distinct characteristics.

#### Acts 2:37-47

**37** Now when they heard this they were cut to the heart, and said to Peter and the rest of the apostles, "Brothers, what shall we do?" **38** And Peter said to them, "**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** For the promise is for you and for your children and for all who are far off, everyone whom the Lord our God calls to himself." **40** And with many other words he bore witness and continued to exhort them, saying, "Save yourselves from this crooked generation." **41** So those who received his word were baptized, and there were added that day about three thousand souls. **42** And they **devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and the fellowship, to the breaking of bread and the prayers.** **43** And awe[d] came upon every soul, and many **wonders and signs were being done** through the apostles. **44** And all who believed were together and had all things in common. **45** And they were selling their possessions and belongings and **distributing the proceeds to all, as any had need.** **46** And day by day, attending the temple together and breaking bread in their homes, they received their



food with glad and generous hearts, **47** praising God and having favor with all the people. And the Lord added to their number day by day those who were being saved.

## **1. REPENTANCE**

Before Peter's sermon, people in the crowd viewed Jesus as a man.

They believed He was a prophet, whether true or false.

That is much less than what Jesus Christ claimed to be—Lord and Christ. All who come to Jesus must repent. They must change their minds. **To change your mind in this kind of repentance is to change your way of living.**

It means that entrance into the church is not through absorption.

It is not through being connected to a family of Christians.

**The only way to get into the church is to make a personal decision.** Your faith and belief must line up with what the church bore witness to in Jesus Christ. The biblical church must teach and practice repentance.

Repentance is the first word for becoming a Christian. Today people stress the word *believe* more than the word *repent*. Believing in Jesus is important.

### **Acts 16:31**

'Believe in the Lord Jesus, and you will be saved.'

Believing in Jesus is like repainting a fence or a wall. A fresh coat of paint makes a thing look new and beautiful again. But repentance is like scraping the old paint off the wall. You must scrape the old stuff off to get the new coat to adhere as it should.

There is no sense in believing in the Lord Jesus Christ if you are not determined to turn your life over to God and ask Him to change you.

## **2. BAPTISM**

### **Acts 2:38**

'Repent and be baptized ... for the forgiveness of your sins' .

Repentance and baptism are closely connected.

Both involve the washing away of sins.

Repentance is the spiritual act whereby the sins are washed away.

Baptism is the physical act that symbolizes the washing that is taking place inside.

Peter did not say, "Be baptized someday if you feel good about it."

Too many Christians have become lax about following Jesus 'example and instruction to be baptized. If you have repented and believed in Jesus, you are under a scriptural obligation to be baptized.



In Matthew 28:19, Jesus told His followers to baptize new disciples ‘in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.’ ” So in Acts 2:38, why did Peter say to be baptized ‘in the name of Jesus Christ?’ ”

Was Peter teaching baptism in the name of Jesus only? No.

What Peter was saying was clear to the Jews at that time.

Baptism was familiar to Jews as a common element of religious life.

For example, a Gentile proselyte had to be baptized to convert to Judaism.

Some Jewish sects required baptism as part of the initiation rites.

John’s baptism symbolized repentance from sin.

Being immersed in water symbolizes leaving the old life and taking on a new life.

Peter was saying this baptism is different from all others.

It is baptism in the name of Jesus. He was not trying to set forth some new view of the doctrine of the Trinity or some opposite baptismal formula.

He was simply saying that this baptism is in Jesus ’name.

Those who are baptized in Jesus ’name are identifying themselves with Jesus as their Lord and Savior.

### **3. RECEIVING THE GIFT OF THE HOLY SPIRIT**

Repenting and being baptized are two things we can do.

**The third mark of a biblical church is something God has to do for us.**

#### **Acts 2:38**

You will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit

This gift is also a promise.

#### **Acts 2:39**

**’The promise is for you and your children and for all who are far off—for all whom the Lord our God will call’ ”.**

Jesus promised to send the Holy Spirit in John 14:16–18, 25–26 and Acts 1:4, 8. In **Acts 2:33**

Peter said of Jesus: ‘ “Exalted to the right hand of God, he has received from the Father the promised Holy Spirit and has poured out what you now see and hear.’ ”

The promised gift has evidence that can be seen and heard. It should not be difficult to judge whether a person or a church has received the promised gift of the Holy Spirit. Such a gift can be seen and heard by those who receive the gift and those who observe it.

Those who do not receive this gift will be lacking in two key areas: worship and evangelism.

That’s why the Holy Spirit is given. **The Holy Spirit leads us to God in worship. He also leads us into the world in power.**

Without the Holy Spirit, the church is reduced to mechanical formulas to keep its members and reach out in a small way to others. The church must realize that only God can build it. The Spirit



of God will descend only upon people whose hearts are poured out, broken, open, and dependent on God.

Receiving the gift of the Baptism in the Holy Spirit or praying with someone else to receive that gift is not difficult. The believer must follow four important steps.

1. Obey what Peter told the crowd (Acts 2:38). **Repent**, receive Jesus as Savior, and be baptized in water. Have you been born again? If not, turn toward God now. Repent of your sins and accept God's forgiveness (1 John 1:9). Have you been baptized in water to show that your sins are forgiven? If not, then obey the Lord and be baptized in water. **Baptism** in water is important. It is the first act of obedience for a new believer. As we obey what God commands, it gives us confidence when we pray (1 John 3:21–22)

2. Look at what God promises about the baptism in the Spirit. We need faith to receive this blessing from God. **Faith** comes by hearing God's Word (Romans 10:17). What does the Bible say about the promise of the Spirit's fullness? Read Acts 2:33, 38–39; John 7:37–39; 14:16–17; and Luke 11:11–13.

**Realize that the promise of the baptism in the Spirit is for you.**

3. **Ask and get ready to receive this precious gift the Father is offering you.**

Luke 11:13 states that God will give the Holy Spirit to those who ask Him. So ask! Pray something like, "Father, I believe Your promises are true. I believe the gift of the Holy Spirit is for me, today, right now. By faith, I have already received Your gift of salvation. Now by faith, I trust You to baptize me in the Holy Spirit. I expect that You will enable me to speak in a new language. I open my life to You. I reach out in faith to receive the gift of the baptism in the Holy Spirit. I thank You in the name of Jesus. Amen."

4. **By faith do your part to receive this gift.**

The story of Peter walking on the water illustrates the believer's part (Matthew 14:22–33). It took God's help for Peter to walk on the water toward Jesus. Likewise, only God can enable you to speak in a language you do not know. God is ready to do His part. But you also have a part in the miracle. Jesus did not force Peter to leave the security of the boat. Neither did He pick up Peter's feet and cause him to step out onto the water. Jesus simply invited Peter to walk to Him. Peter's part was to begin walking. The miracle was not that Peter walked. He was using his feet in the way he used them each day. **Likewise, the miracle of speaking in tongues is not that you talk. You will talk with the same tongue and voice you use each day.** Just as it was Peter's choice to start walking and stop walking, **it is your choice to start talking and to stop talking. God will do His part, but you must do your part.**



**Devoted to doctrine**

The next ten hallmarks of a biblical church share an important purpose. They all are essential for incorporating new believers into the church. Winning souls is not enough. People must be integrated into the family of believers. Acts 2:42–47 gives ten important ways the church can assimilate new believers.

Acts 2:42 lists four things to which the believers devoted themselves.

***Devoted* means to strongly follow, strongly persist in, and be totally committed to.**

These four things are core requirements of the church. We must be totally devoted to them or the church will lack the dynamics it needs.

**4. DEVOTED TO THE APOSTLES TEACHING**

First, the believers devoted themselves to the apostles’ teaching.

Doctrine is important in building the church.

Some people have made the mistake of valuing experience more than doctrine.

We must not be caught up in a subjective experience that is without an objective reality based on God’s Word.

One needs to be taught to live Christ’s way. The apostles could teach this with authority since they had been commissioned by the Lord to do so.

**The church has always used the teaching of the apostles as an anchor.** If it cannot be proved from the apostles’ teaching, then it has no place as doctrine in the church.

The apostles had the words of Jesus. That was their doctrine. All the New Testament does, after the Books of Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John, is to explain and develop for our understanding the teaching of Jesus. **Doctrine is not complex.** It is basic and essential to our lives as Christians. Every church and every believer must be devoted to doctrine.

Teaching of the Apostles	Scriptures
1. The Scriptures are the inspired words of God, without any errors.	Acts 1:16; 4:25; 2 Tim. 3:16; 2 Pet. 1:20–21
2. There is one true God. He exists as a Trinity of three persons: the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit.	Matt. 28:19; John 14:16–17 Acts 17:24–31; 2 Cor. 13:14
3. All humans, except Jesus Christ, have sinned.	Acts 22:14; Rom. 3:23; Heb. 4:15; 1 Pet. 2:22



4. Salvation is available only through Jesus Christ. He shed His blood on the cross as God's Lamb, to redeem us from our sins. To be saved from sin and judgment, a person must repent, and trust in Jesus as Savior and Lord.	Acts 2:38; 4:12; 10:43; 13:38-39; 26:15-18; Eph. 1:7; Rev. 5:6-10
5. All who receive Jesus as Savior must be baptized in water.	Matt. 28:19; Mark 16:16; Acts 2:38; 8:12-13, 36-38; 9:18; 10:47-48; 19:5; 22:16
6. The Lord's Supper reminds believers of the Lord's death and return.	Matt. 26:26-29; Acts 2:42; 20:7; 1 Cor. 11:23-26
7. The baptism in the Holy Spirit comes with the immediate outward sign of speaking in a new language. This is a gift the Father wants to give each believer, after being born again. This gift brings power to witness, serve Christ, and live above sin.	Acts 2:4; 10:45-46; 11:15-17; 19:1-7
8. Miracles, signs, wonders, healings, speaking in tongues, and other spiritual gifts are the church's inheritance until Jesus Christ returns.	Acts 3:1-10; 4:30; 5:15; 6:8; 8:13; 12:1-17; 15:12; 19:11; 28:1-9; Rom. 1:11; 1 Cor. 1:7; 12:1-14:40; 1 Thess. 5:19-20; 2 Tim. 1:6; Heb. 2:4; James 5:14-16
9. God requires His children to live holy lives. This is possible as we choose to walk in the Spirit.	Acts 5:1-11; Rom. 8:1-2, 13; 12:1-2; 1 Cor. 6:9-11; Gal. 5:19-21; Titus 2:11-14; Heb. 12:14; 1 Pet. 1:15-16; Rev. 3:4-6
10. The church is the spiritual family of God. It is a fellowship based on the blood of Jesus and created by the Spirit. The church serves in three directions. She evangelizes outward to the lost. She worships upward to God. She ministers inward to build up her members. All the ministry of the church depends on prayer and the Holy Spirit.	Matt. 28:18-19; Acts 2:38-39, 47; 13:47; Rom. 12:1; 1 Cor. 14:12; 2 Cor. 5:11; Eph. 4:29; 1 Thess. 5:11; Heb. 13:15; Jude 20
11. Jesus rose victorious over death. He ascended to the right hand of the Father. He will return to reward believers. They will be with Christ forever.	Acts 1:1-11; 2:20; 3:20-21; 23:6; 24:21-25; 26:8; 1 Cor. 15:51-52; 1 Thess. 4:16-17; Titus 2:13
12. Jesus will conquer Satan, the Antichrist, and evil. He will judge the disobedient. They will suffer in the lake of fire forever.	Matt. 8:12; 13:49-50; 25:31-46; 2 Thess. 2:1-12; Rev. 14:11; 20:10-14

**5. DEVOTED TO FELLOWSHIP**

**Fellowship is *koinonia*.** It stands for close interpersonal relationships among believers and the Lord. The Christian life is not meant to be a lonely life. God intends us to come alongside one another in fellowship. That involves more than acknowledging the person’s presence. It means recognizing and connecting with those who gather for worship. **The church has an obligation to make everyone feel welcome and included.** The challenge of the church is to carry that *koinonia* into every part of the church, then out the doors and into our homes. **Christians must welcome and embrace each other so there are no lonely people and no prayer requests that go unnoticed.**

**6. DEVOTED TO BREAKING BREAD**

*Breaking bread* refers to what we call communion. God never intended for communion to be ten minutes at the end of a service once a month for grape juice and crackers. He intended it to be a shared meal. Recall that Jesus, at a meal, introduced the bread and the cup (Matthew 26:26–29). Thus He transformed the Passover meal into a reminder of the new covenant. Part of communion should involve taking the cup and breaking the bread as a sacramental sign. It is more than just an eating experience. It is a transaction. God is involved. The broken bread symbolizes the broken body of Christ. The new wine is a sign of His shed blood. When early Christians ate together, part of that always included a sacramental sign of Christ’s presence in their midst.

**7. DEVOTED TO PRAYER**

They devoted themselves to prayer. It was not an option. The book of Acts tells us how they did it. They had times of personal prayer. They also prayed together at set times. Because they were good Jews, they were used to setting aside certain hours for prayer. People gathered for prayer in the temple at 9 a.m. and 3 p.m. Ongoing prayer was crucial to the life of the church. It is just as vital today.

<b>The early church was a praying church.</b>	
<b>When did the first believers pray?</b>	<b>Acts</b>
They prayed as they waited to be filled with the Spirit.	1:14
They prayed as they chose an apostle to replace Judas.	1:24
They prayed as a way of life.	2:42
They prayed on the way to the prayer meeting.	3:1
They prayed when they were threatened and persecuted.	4:24–31
They prayed for those who served the tables.	6:6

They prayed when they were dying.	7:59
They prayed for new believers to be filled with the Spirit.	8:15; 9:17–19; 19:6
They prayed before eating.	10:9
They prayed when believers were locked in prison.	12:5
They prayed for their missionaries.	13:3
They prayed when they chose church leaders.	14:23
They prayed when they were bleeding in prison.	16:25
They prayed when they said good-bye to friends.	20:36
They prayed for the sick to be healed.	28:8

## **8. WONDERS AND MIRACULOUS SIGNS**

In this earliest church, “Everyone was filled with awe, and many wonders and miraculous signs were done by the apostles” (Acts 2:43). Only God can bring about such signs and wonders. Notice that the miracles were being done by the apostles. Perhaps this was a way God chose to confirm their doctrine and teaching. Does this mean the rest of the church was not seeing miraculous things happen in answer to prayer? Not at all. God answered prayers. But the incredible kinds of things that stirred the whole community happened through the apostles. The Holy Spirit chooses when and where to work in such ways. All we can do is pray and ask God to make those things present.

## **9. GENEROSITY**

“All the believers were together and had everything in common. Selling their possessions and goods, they gave to anyone as he had need” (Acts 2:44–45). No one was forced to give or to share. But when believers really fall in love with the Lord and are in *koinonia* fellowship with one another, they are sensitive to needs in the Body. It becomes unthinkable to live in luxury when another brother or sister has to go without the basics of life.

It can be hard to know who is truly in need. Some people try to lie and cheat others. Generous giving might encourage some to be lazy. The church worked out solutions to such problems. They worked out committees and systems. Those who refused to work were not to be fed. But the main point is that the body of Christ must be aware of and work to meet needs in its midst.

## **10. PUBLIC GATHERING FOR WORSHIP**

The believers continued to meet together every day in the temple courts. Day by day, the church showed solidarity when they came to learn, grow, and participate in worship. The act of gathering together was a witness to the world. Although the church had home groups and gathered in *koinonia* fellowship, it did not neglect larger occasions for being together. The early





church made it a priority to come together. They were not isolated. At first they met daily, later weekly. It is essential for us today—as it was then—to give ourselves to public worship.

### **11. JOY-FILLED MEAL TIMES**

“They broke bread in their homes and ate together with glad and sincere hearts” (Acts 2:46). Although the believers’ food had not changed, their meals now became glad times. The Lord had done something in their lives that made them look at the same food in a different way. Sharing a meal with other believers was an act of love and fellowship that helped keep their hearts glad and sincere.

### **12. FAVOR WITH PEOPLE**

The twelfth quality of a biblical church is another one they could not control. We cannot control how other people react to us when we follow Christ. Sometimes the church does not have favor because the world has turned against it and persecuted it. Later we will see that the church often grows through persecution. But Paul said we should pray for those in authority over us so we can live quiet and peaceful lives (1 Timothy 2:2). Having peace with and the favor of those in the world is a gracious gift of God. Seeking to live in peace and favor should be a quality of the church whenever possible.

### **13. GROWTH**

The last mark of a vibrant church in Acts 2 describes its growth. “The Lord added to their number daily those who were being saved” (Acts 2:47). Growth is a natural part of a spiritually healthy church. Rather than evangelism being an activity of the church reserved for special occasions, Acts 2:47 portrays it as an activity of God. It was God who granted regular growth to a vibrant Christian community.

The believers had no control over this except to be faithful witnesses for the Lord. The church witnessed, but the Lord added to their number. Although we have a responsibility to witness, only God can grow a powerful, biblical church.