



A Christian is someone who "has been reconciled to God in Christ. A Christian is someone who by virtue of his reconciliation with God, has been reconciled to God's people. This is where the great commandment comes in. A lawyer asked Jesus which was the greatest commandment out of over 600 commands in the Old Testament. Without hesitation Jesus replied, *"You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, soul, strength and mind; and the second is like it; you shall love your neighbor as yourself."* (Mt. 22:34-40)

A church is not a building with a steeple, a church is a people. Those people who have responded to God's call to be reconciled to Him through Christ Jesus. A church is a gathering of Christians for the purpose of displaying God's glory by becoming increasingly like Jesus Christ (Eph. 3:10-11).

"The church is God's missile of salt and light hurled into the world to proclaim the triumphant message of sins forgiven and lives transformed." - R. Kent Hughes, Acts

The world craves what God has provided for in the church and offers people a substitute to meet their need. Each of us crave fellowship and acceptance, so the world offers us the Pub. We see the mess around us in the world and we long to make a difference so the world offers us the

Non-Governmental Organizations (NGO's) to address these social problems. People crave spiritual connections so the world offers the Masonic Lodge or Transcendental Meditation or the Horoscope and occult.

In our previous study we saw the first of three truths for our modern world gleaned from the first church at Jerusalem: [The Characteristics of a Model Church.](#)

- The people who make up the church are saved through faith in Jesus Christ (36-41)
- The people who make up the church are committed to Scripture (42b)
- The people who make up a church are committed to fellowship (42c)
- The people who make up a church are committed to being Christ-centered (42d)
- The people who make up a church are committed to prayer (42e)

In today's study we want to look at two other truths we glean from this model church in Acts 2:44-47.

THE ATTITUDES OF A MODEL CHURCH (44-47A)

In my younger days I was fascinated with flying and spent a couple years working on attaining a private pilots license. One of the first things a pilot learns is about how important the attitude of the aircraft is to executing a safe and successful flight. Attitude simply means the direction you are pointing. In the cockpit there is an instrument called an "attitude indicator" that allows the pilot to see the attitude of the aircraft in relation to the ground.

So what were the attitudes of this model church that allowed them to successfully witness to Jesus Christ in Jerusalem, Judea, Samaria and to the ends of the earth? (Acts 1:8)

In their relationship with each other they demonstrated LOVE (44-45)

They were unified - They shared the same love, focus and desires with the others in the assembly.

Eph 4.1-3 I, therefore, the prisoner of the Lord, beseech you to walk worthy of the calling with which you were called, with all lowliness and gentleness, with longsuffering, bearing with one another in love endeavoring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace.

They were selfless – they had all in common, through love they served one another by putting the needs of others before their own (Gal. 5:13).

They were giving - Selling personal property to meet genuine needs demonstrated their love toward one another. We clearly see in verse 46a that they still owned homes 46a, yet they were willing to give up extra in order to meet the needs of those suffering. Day by day demonstrated hospitality to one another. They willingly gave to the work of God and the needs of others.

1 John 3:16-18 By this we know love, because He laid down His life for us. And we also ought to lay down our lives for the brethren. But whoever has this world's goods, and sees his brother in need, and shuts up his heart from him, how does the love of God abide in him? My little children, let us not love in word or in tongue, but in deed and in truth.

In their relationship with God they demonstrated WORSHIP (46a)

What Is Worship?

“Worship is to feel in your heart and express in some appropriate manner a humbling but delightful sense of admiring awe and astonished wonder and overpowering love in the presence of that most ancient Mystery, that Majesty which philosophers call the First Cause, but which we call Our Father Which Are in Heaven. “ - A. W. Tozer

“Worship is the believers’ response of all that they are - mind, emotions, will, and body - to what God is and says and does... Worship is a loving response that’s balanced by the fear of the Lord, and it is a deepening response as the believer comes to know God better.” - W. Weirs

These Christians lived lives of worship. Day by day they met formally in the temple and informally from house to house. Worship for them was not an event that happened once a week for an hour. They lived in an attitude of worship.

In their relationship with their daily circumstances they demonstrated JOY. (46b-47a)

Remember that it was not a popular thing in that day to be a Christian. The events of Acts 2 are taking place in Jerusalem just a few short weeks after Pilate and the Chief Priests had crucified Jesus Christ! To publicly step out and identify with this condemned man was not an easy thing. Remember that soon after this event a great persecution against Christians broke out across the Empire. In Roman cities people wishing to do business would be required to have a trading license and to obtain it they must declare Ceasar as their god. To refuse to do so would mean you were unable to do business and you might be arrested and used in the gladiatorial games in the colosseum.

Gladness of heart means to rejoice from a sincere heart. Sincere here can mean “free from rocks,” in other words there were no stones of selfishness in their heart.

Praising God produces joy. Those who fellowship together to exalt the Lord will have true happiness, while those who seek to glorify themselves will not have lasting joy (Phil. 2.1-2).

IMPACT OF A MODEL CHURCH (43, 47b)

It was an awe-inspiring church (43)

The fear mentioned here is a holy fear, a reverence that controls you because you know God is near. When Jesus visited the region of Gadara and cast the legion of demons from the possessed man the people of Gadara feared Jesus and begged him to leave their coasts (Lk. 8.37).

This first church was an awe-inspiring church. They took the church seriously because they recognized God was there! (See Acts 5:13).

The people in Jerusalem were not in awe of their facilities, equipment, sound system, choir or church program, but they were in awe of the supernatural character of the life of this church.

Signs and wonders were designed to draw attention to spiritual truth. (Acts 3.6-9). The ability to perform miracles was not given to all but to the Apostles and their closest associates (Acts. 8.13, Heb 2.3-4). Miracles confirmed Apostles as God's messengers. Today we determine who speaks for God by comparing their teaching with God's revelation of Scripture.

To the church in Galatia Paul writes,

Galatians 1.8 ... if we or an angel from heaven preach any other gospel... let him be accursed!

It was an attractive church (47b)

Their duties and their character granted them favor with the people (Gal. 5.22-23). They were open about their faith so all could see and experience their transformed lives.

Mt 5:16 "Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works and glorify your Father in heaven."

They evidenced a Spirit-filled life in their character and personal relationships that was extremely attractive.

It was a growing church (47c)

They were engaged in every-day evangelism. Evangelism flows from the life of a healthy church. People were continually being saved as they observed the daily conduct of these believers.

A Greek Philosopher by the name of Aristides wrote the following report to the King about fifty years or so after the events in the Book of Acts. It is no wonder that the early church made a powerful impact in their world!

Now the Christians, O King, by going about and seeking have found the truth. For they know and trust in God, the Maker of heaven and earth, who has no fellow. From him they received those commandments which

they have engraved on their minds, and which they observe in the hope of the world to come.

For this reason they do not commit adultery or immorality; they do not bear false witness, or embezzle, nor do they covet what is not theirs. They honor father and mother, and do good to those who are their neighbors. Whenever they are judges, they judge uprightly. They do not worship idols made in the image of man. Whatever they do not wish that others should do to them, they in turn do not do; and they do not eat the food sacrificed to idols.

Those who oppress them they exhort and make them their friends. They do good to their enemies. Their wives, O King, are pure as virgins, and their daughters are modest. Their men abstain from all unlawful sexual contact and from impurity, in the hope of recompense that is to come in another world.

As for their bondmen and bondwomen, and their children, if there are any, they persuade them to become Christians; and when they have done so, they call them brethren without distinction.

They refuse to worship strange gods; and they go their way in all humility and cheerfulness. Falsehood is not found among them. They love one another; the widow's needs are not ignored, and they rescue the orphaned from the person who does him violence. He who has given to him who has not, ungrudgingly and without boasting. When the Christians find a stranger, they bring him to their homes and rejoice over him as a true brother. They do not call brothers those who are bound by blood ties alone, but those who are brethren after the Spirit and in God.

When one of their poor passes away from the world, each provides for his burial according to his ability. If they hear of any of their number who are imprisoned or oppressed for the name of the Messiah, they all provide for his needs, and if it is possible to redeem him, they set him free.

If they find poverty in their midst, and they do not have spare food, they fast two or three days in order that the needy might be supplied with the necessities. They observe scrupulously the commandments of their Messiah, living honestly and soberly as the Lord their God ordered them.

Every morning and every hour they praise and thank God for his goodness to them; and for their food and drink they offer thanksgiving.

Such, O King, is the commandment given to the Christians, and such is their conduct.

(Apology of Aristides, Translated by Rendel Harris, 1893)

Are you a Christian? Does Christ live in you? If Christ lives in you then you are part of the church! He is producing the fruit of His character in you.

If you have been convinced by the Holy Spirit that you need to become a Christian, you can become one right now! Like these people in Jerusalem you may be saying, "*what shall we do?*" (37b)

Repent of your sin, and receive Jesus Christ by faith as your Lord and Savior! (38,36) A person is not saved by praying a prayer, but often the decision to receive Christ is expressed in prayer. Cry out to Jesus right now, "Lord, be merciful to me a sinner!"