

Acts Chapter 2 – The reality and presence of God

Based on a [SUNDAY NT SERMON: "SIGNS OF THE KING" BY TIMOTHY KELLER – ACTS 2:37-47](#)

Devoted to Community – caring for each other

It says v44 "All the believers were together and had everything in common."

Although this an economic example of community we know from other parts of the Bible that community has to do first of all with what is in the heart. For example, in the church if somebody comes to me and says, "Do you know what? I don't like the way in which you are treating your children." What if I say, "That's none of your business?" I have no concept then of community, no concept of what the Bible says the church is. I'm a radical, individualist, but I have no idea about Christian Community, because you see... my sins are your business. The Bible says, "... confess your sins to one another ..." "Bear one another's burdens ..." That means we don't just share our money, though we do. We share our joys. We share our mistakes. We share our sorrows. Now you can very artificially press this kind of community on people but it has to grow in an organic, natural way, but I tell you, our society values are absolutely against this. The only thing that can really create community is the presence of God.

Any two people, no matter how different they are in every other way, who through Jesus Christ have experienced the presence of God, there is community there. The relationship between two Christians outweighs any other relationship you have on the basis of your race, on the basis of your gender, or on the basis of your social status.

You are a Christian first and you're white second. You're a Christian first and you're black second.

You're a Christian first and you're wealthy or poor second.

You're a Christian first and you're English/Scottish/Welsh/Irish second.

Are you devoted to Community? Do you take time to think about "... confess your sins to one another ..." "Bear one another's burdens ..."?

Do you declare the exploits of God to your Christian brothers and sisters?

Devoted to Social Compassion – caring for others

In v45 it says "Selling their possessions and goods, they gave to anyone as he had need".

The difference between a real Christian and a moralistic person is not that Christians repent of their sins. My friends, lots of moralistic people repent of their sins. The difference between Christians and non-Christians, the difference between real Christians and moralistic people is Christians also repent of their best deeds.

In other words, they also recognise even the best things they've ever done are filthy rags in God's sight, and I have to rest wholly and completely in what Jesus has done for me. Now if you are a moralist, if you're basically a Pharisee, if you basically believe God saves you and loves you because you're a pretty good person, you're going to look at needy people, and you're going to say, "Pull yourself together and get sorted."

If, on the other hand, you know you're a sinner saved by grace, when you look at a person who smells terrible, who has no resources, no mind, nothing left, you say, "I realise I'm looking in a mirror. I realize this is what I look like to God spiritually" - and you're generous.

Only an encounter with God through Jesus Christ can you have that kind of spirit, and any church that is compassionate like that, manifests the presence of God in its midst.

Are you devoted to Social Compassion because of the compassion God has already shown you?

Devoted to Evangelism

In v47 it says “praising God and enjoying the favour of all the people. And the Lord added to their number daily those who were being saved”.

In v13 it says “Some however, made fun of them and said, “They have had too much wine” “. I don’t think the mockery stopped after the first day.

In 2Timothy 3v12 it says “In fact, everyone who wants to live a godly life in Christ Jesus will be persecuted”

The fact is anybody who is living a consistent, Christian walk will polarize people. That means there will be some people who will say, “You are remarkable. You are amazing. You are fascinating to me. I want to talk to you about my problems. I want to find out what’s going on in your life. I want to get to know you better. Tell me more about this Jesus.” Or you’ll have people who are extremely upset with you, offended by you, and angry at you for even mentioning Jesus.

You may go through seasons where there is a lot of popularity and seasons where there is persecution. It might be happening at the same time, but only if you are **absolutely not** living a consistent, Christian life will nobody notice.

The fact is, whenever the church is the church, it’s getting both: a terrific amount of growth through attraction and.... persecution.

Being devoted to evangelism comes with a cost. And what are we to do in the face of the persecution mentioned in 2 Timothy? Be devoted to evangelism.

2 Timothy 4v2 answers by saying “Preach the word; be prepared in season and out of season; correct, rebuke and encourage – with great patience and careful instruction.”

Let us forever declare the exploits of God to all with ears to hear, for as it says in Acts 2v39 “The promise is for you and your children and for all who are far off – for all whom the Lord our God will call.”

Devoted to Worship

They praised God in the temple and in their homes. Verse 43 says there was awe, and intimacy and glad, generous hearts.

Tim Keller says “You know, real worship is characterized both by an awe and an intimacy at the same time, not just sober dignity that eventually makes the place seem like a funeral home, and not just “gee, wish, golly, and God’s a wonderful guy who makes us feel warm and fuzzy,” but both together.

There is both an awe and an intimacy, and the reason for that is God will reveal his face to us as a group when we come together and worship him.

He promises to reveal it to those in worship who receive Christ as Saviour and Lord.

The purpose of the gospel of Jesus Christ is to give you something that enables you to stand before God face to face today and on the day of your death.

To stand in the presence of God, that is what the Gospel is about.”

Every day they worshipped God, meeting with Him face to face in awe and intimacy – that is our privilege too if we know Christ as Lord and Saviour.