

**THE BREAKING OF BREAD**

Acts 2:42

**Intro:** How many times have you heard someone say about another person, that he (or she) once made a profession of faith in Christ, but his life remained unchanged. Or perhaps you have heard it said about some person that he (or she) started out great, but it didn't last, and now he doesn't even go to church.

The text I have chosen for tonight says that those early Christians "continued." They not only started, but they kept going. And Luke, the writer of Acts, said it this way:

41 Then they that gladly received his word were baptized: and the same day there were added unto them about three thousand souls.  
42 And they continued stedfastly in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship, and in breaking of bread, and in prayers (Acts 2:41-42).

"Continued stedfastly" means that they were constantly and intently attending to "the apostles' doctrine and fellowship, and in breaking of bread, and in prayers." This did not start and then quit, but they started and never stopped. Obviously there must have been those who were more zealous than others, more devoted to the Lord than others were, but this was the way that true Christians, true believers in Christ, those who had truly been saved, could be identified. They gave evidence right away of having been saved, and those evidences continued to be manifest in their lives.

Remember what the Apostle John had to say along this line in 1 John 2:19:

19 They went out from us, but they were not of us; for if they had been of us, they would [no doubt] have continued with us: but they went out, that they might be made manifest that they were not all of us.

But what did they continue in? Luke mentioned four things. The first was:

**I. "THE APOSTLES' DOCTRINE."**

Who were the apostles? They were those twelve men, plus the Apostle

Paul, who were the first teachers in the Church. Gradually others joined them as teachers, but they were teaching what the apostles' taught, and the apostle's taught what the Holy Spirit taught them, and the Holy Spirit taught them what the Lord Jesus wanted the whole church to know. And their teachings are contained in the epistles of the NT.

Now the Lord Jesus, and then the Apostles drew heavily from the OT, and, in the case of the Apostles, from the teaching of the Lord Jesus. So we can say that there was a very definite interest, and a very strong interest, in the teaching of the Word of God. It is very doubtful if a person is more interested in being entertained when he goes to church, than he is in hearing the Word of God, is really saved. A true Christian can't get enough of the Word of God. He always wants more. And he is not only interested in hearing it taught, but he is interested in reading it for himself. And there is another reason for his interest in the Scriptures. He wants to live to please God, and he soon learns that there is all that he needs in the Bible to teach him how to live a life that pleases God, and has the blessing of God.

But there is a second mark of identification of a true Christian:

## **II. "FELLOWSHIP."**

This is a word which points to church. It has to do with a Christian's relationship with God, but it also has to do with a Christian's relationship with other Christians. The early Christians couldn't wait from Sunday to Sunday to get together; *they often met every day in the week with the Lord's people to hear the Word of God in the presence of others who loved God and His Word.*

The third thing that marked those early Christians was:

## **III. "THE BREAKING OF BREAD."**

This is what they called "the Lord's Supper." It was also called "communion," which is another word for fellowship. I will come back to this in a moment, but I will just mention now that this was a major point in the lives of those early Christians.

The fourth characteristic of those early Christians was:

#### IV. “PRAYERS.”

This became one of the outstanding characteristics of the Apostle Paul. He gave himself to prayer from the very beginning of his life as a Christian. When the Lord sent Ananias to find Paul just after he had gotten to Damascus, the Lord said, “Behold, he prayeth” (Acts 9:11). And we know that Paul continued to pray throughout his life. But in addition to that he taught believers how to pray. His prayers are among the richest passages in the NT. The NT church was a praying church, and true churches give equal emphasis to the preaching of the Word and to prayer.

It is very instructive to find these verses at the beginning of Acts because they point the way that all Christians will desire to go, and the way true churches will go. We pray not only to bring our petitions and burdens to the Lord, but we pray because we love the Lord, and we want to be with Him, and we want to worship Him, and we want to thank Him for all of the many blessings he gives to us each day. We have had a day of prayer today, and I trust it has really been a day of prayer for all of us.

But now let me go back to:

#### V. “THE BREAKING OF THE BREAD.”

Why did they observe what we call now the Lord’s Supper?

Let me give you four reasons very quickly, but I hope that you will remember them.

##### **A. Reason #1: They observed the Lord’s Supper because this is one thing that the Lord wanted them to do.**

None of them had been with the Lord in the Upper Room on that very memorable night. None of them had heard Him say, “This do, in remembrance of Me.” The Lord wanted this supper to bring them back to thinking about His death on the Cross, for whom He died, why He died, and what was accomplished by His death. He knew that they would never fully understand all that can be known about the Lord’s death, but He wanted to remember that He died. He also was raised from the dead, but the death of Christ was where their salvation was secured – and that is true for all of us who have believed from that day to this.

But how would they know all of this? And this leads me to my second reason they observed the Lord's Supper.

**B. Reason #2: They observed the Lord's Supper because the apostles told them to observe it.**

How thankful those early Christians must have been that there were faithful men who were careful to tell them what the Lord wanted them to do. We are living in a day when there is too little of this. So many, too many, who call themselves Christians are doing what they think ought to be done. Too little attention is paid to the writings of the Apostles. That is our guide to Christian living, and that is our guide to the ministry of the church.

But there is a third reason:

**C. Reason #3: They observed the Lord's Supper because they wanted to, they wanted to please the Lord.**

It probably took some time for them to understand the meaning of the Lord's Supper, but it was enough that the Apostles had told them that this is what the Lord wanted them to do. God works in the hearts of His people to cause us, and to enable us, to do what is pleasing to the Lord. If in the beginning of our experience as the people of God, this is the only reason we have, *this is enough!*

But it was not long before they realized that they had a fourth reason:

**D. Reason #4: They observed the Lord's Supper because they had learned that they *needed* to observe it.**

Can we give too much time to remembering the broken body of our Lord Jesus Christ, and His shed blood? Is this not where we often find afresh real balm in our sufferings and real peace from all of the turmoil of the day? And don't we have to confess that it is so easy for us to lose sight of the awful price that our Lord paid to deliver us from the judgment of God, and to give us forgiveness of our sins and life forevermore.

**Concl:** So let us remember these four reasons as we come to the Lord's Table tonight. And let us seek the blessing of the Lord as again our thoughts turn to Calvary, that amazing manifestation of God's love for

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each of us, and the depth to which our Savior had to go to lift us out of our sins and guarantee that one day will be in heaven with Him, dressed in His righteousness and bearing the very likeness of our dear Savior.