

The Devotion of The Church Sunday, May 9, 2021

- * It seems that in these present times The Church has lost focus of it's God ordained devotion!
- * First and foremost, the devotion of The Church should be the Author and Finisher of our faith! Our devotion to God!

Hebrews 12:2 (NKJV)

2 Looking unto Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith, who for the joy that was set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame, and has sat down at the right hand of the throne of God.

- * Secondly, our devotion is to that which He is devoted to!!!! That which makes us more like Him!

John 6:53-65 (NLT)

53 So Jesus said again, "I tell you the truth, unless you eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink his blood, you cannot have eternal life within you. 54 But anyone who eats my flesh and drinks my blood has eternal life, and I will raise that person at the last day. 55 For my flesh is true food, and my blood is true drink. 56 Anyone who eats my flesh and drinks my blood remains in me, and I in him. 57 I live because of the living Father who sent me; in the same way, anyone who feeds on me will live because of me. 58 I am the true bread that came down from heaven. Anyone who eats this bread will not die as your ancestors did (even though they ate the manna) but will live forever." 59 He said these things while he was teaching in the synagogue in Capernaum. 60 Many of his disciples said, "This is very hard to understand. How can anyone accept it?" 61 Jesus was aware that his disciples were complaining, so he said to them, "Does this offend you? 62 Then what will you think if you see the Son of Man ascend to heaven again? 63 The Spirit alone gives eternal life. Human effort accomplishes nothing. And the very words I have spoken to you are spirit and life. 64 But some of you do not believe me." (For Jesus knew from the beginning which ones didn't believe, and he knew who would betray him.) 65 Then he said, "That is why I said that people can't come to me unless the Father gives them to me."

- * WE MUST CONSUME THE LIFE OF JESUS CHRIST! We must be

fascinated with His life! We must be driven to become like Him! This must be our devotion!

- I. As The Lord ascended He told His followers to go and share His message of good news! He even told them that He would send the Holy Spirit to empower them to do so!

Luke 24:44-49 (NLT)

44 Then he said, "When I was with you before, I told you that everything written about me in the law of Moses and the prophets and in the Psalms must be fulfilled." 45 Then he opened their minds to understand the Scriptures. 46 And he said, "Yes, it was written long ago that the Messiah would suffer and die and rise from the dead on the third day. 47 It was also written that this message would be proclaimed in the authority of his name to all the nations, beginning in Jerusalem: 'There is forgiveness of sins for all who repent.' 48 You are witnesses of all these things. 49 "And now I will send the Holy Spirit, just as my Father promised. But stay here in the city until the Holy Spirit comes and fills you with power from heaven."

- A. From there the message of this wonderful Gospel of Redemption went forth!

1. The words of Jesus began to come to fulfillment!

Acts 2:1-4 (NLT)

1 On the day of Pentecost all the believers were meeting together in one place. 2 Suddenly, there was a sound from heaven like the roaring of a mighty windstorm, and it filled the house where they were sitting. 3 Then, what looked like flames or tongues of fire appeared and settled on each of them. 4 And everyone present was filled with the Holy Spirit and began speaking in other languages, as the Holy Spirit gave them this ability.

2. Peter explains that this is the beginnings of redemption as promised by our Lord!

Acts 2:16-18 (NLT)

16 No, what you see was predicted long ago by the prophet Joel: 17 'In the last days,' God says, 'I will pour out my Spirit upon all people. Your sons

and daughters will prophesy. Your young men will see visions, and your old men will dream dreams. 18 In those days I will pour out my Spirit even on my servants—men and women alike—and they will prophesy.

3. This is God's promise to empower us all to tell the story of redemption!
- B. Notice what was said throughout Acts and the Epistles or the Letters to the Churches!
1. The early Church DEVOTED themselves to the apostles' teaching!

Ephesians 2:20 (NLT)

20 Together, we are his house, built on the foundation of the apostles and the prophets. And the cornerstone is Christ Jesus himself.

2. You and I have been given the command to share this awesome Good News! We are instructed to build upon this awesome foundation! But to be careful how you build!

1 Corinthians 3:10 (NLT)

10 Because of God's grace to me, I have laid the foundation like an expert builder. Now others are building on it. But whoever is building on this foundation must be very careful.

3. THIS MUST BE OUR DEVOTION!
4. AND THESE ARE THE TOOLS OF DEVOTION!

2 Timothy 3:16-17 (NLT)

16 All Scripture is inspired by God and is useful to teach us what is true and to make us realize what is wrong in our lives. It corrects us when we are wrong and teaches us to do what is right. 17 God uses it to prepare and equip his people to do every good work.

- II. As the Church began to move forward, spread and become established in the world, the behavior of the followers was impacted! They began to be "built together" for The Lord!

Acts 2:42 (NLV)

42 They were faithful in listening to the teaching of the missionaries. They worshiped and prayed and ate the Lord's supper together.

Acts 2:42 (TPT)

42 Every believer was faithfully devoted to following the teachings of the apostles. Their hearts were mutually linked to one another, sharing communion and coming together regularly for prayer.

Acts 2:42 (The Voice)

42 The community continually committed themselves to learning what the apostles taught them, gathering for fellowship, breaking bread, and praying.

- A. From the scriptures as well as history itself, we realize that the Table of The Lord was what drew Christians together!
 - 1. Even through various differences we see in scripture among churches in different regions, the communion table always brought believers together as common followers of Christ!
 - 2. How and why have we allowed this intimate time with our Savior to so divide us these days?
 - 3. I realize the answers are varied and maybe even a little complicated, but considering it all... we should be ashamed of ourselves!
 - 4. ...ashamed that we hold so many other things more tightly than we do our Lord Jesus!
- B. Out of this life built around the Table of The Lord was a devotion to The Lord through prayer.

Acts 4:27-31 (NLT)

27 "In fact, this has happened here in this very city! For Herod Antipas, Pontius Pilate the governor, the Gentiles, and the people of Israel were all united against Jesus, your holy servant, whom you anointed. 28 But

everything they did was determined beforehand according to your will. 29 And now, O Lord, hear their threats, and give us, your servants, great boldness in preaching your word. 30 Stretch out your hand with healing power; may miraculous signs and wonders be done through the name of your holy servant Jesus.” 31 After this prayer, the meeting place shook, and they were all filled with the Holy Spirit. Then they preached the word of God with boldness.

1. Question: Doesn't promotional activities, and begging people to come join your church sound a little trite?
2. There is nothing inherently wrong with exposing your outreach and ministry activities to the community, but do you not think that the same devotion of the believers in Acts that produced God's presence in their midst would draw people?
3. Prayer of genuine devotion - the building shook with God's presence - they were filled with The Spirit - they ministered with boldness!
4. God commands The Church to be devoted to: His Word, to fellowship, Communion and Prayer!
5. **BECAUSE HE WANTS US TO EXPERIENCE HIM!**

C. THE CALL OF THE CHURCH IS TO REVEAL GOD TO TO PEOPLE!

1. If God is among us, He will draw people and they will come to see Him! (That's what was common in Acts!)
2. If you merely want people to come and be a part of your activities, then you will have to constantly spin the message and improve the "wow factor" from one week to the next!
3. **OUR DEVOTION TO GOD AND EACH OTHER IS WHAT SUSTAINS MINISTRY AND BUILDS THE CHURCH AND ESTABLISHES THE KINGDOM!**

