

Acts 2:41

by Robert F. Adcock

The sermon emphasizes the importance of the church as the body of Christ, where Jews and Gentiles are united in their faith in Jesus Christ, and the need for believers to continue steadfastly in the apostles' teaching and to be born again and baptized by the Spirit.

Duration: 40:56

Scripture: Matthew 28:19-20, Acts 2:41-47

Topics: "Holy Spirit", "Evangelism"

Description

In this sermon, the preacher emphasizes the importance of sharing the gospel of Jesus Christ and being faithful witnesses for Him. He highlights the power of the gospel to break the darkness and bring salvation to those who believe. The preacher also mentions the transformation that occurred in the disciples on the day of Pentecost when they were filled with the Holy Spirit. He discusses the significance of Peter's change from denying Jesus to boldly proclaiming Him after receiving the Holy Spirit. The sermon concludes by emphasizing the universal need for God's grace and the mission of the disciples to teach and disciple others in the ways of Christ.

Transcript

Verse 41 says, Then they that gladly received his word were baptized, and the same day there were added unto them about three thousand souls. And they continued steadfastly in the apostles' doctrine, and fellowship, and in breaking of bread, and in prayers. And fear came upon every soul, and many wonders and signs were done by the apostles.

And all that believed were together, and had all things common. And so their possessions and goods parted them to all men, as every man had need. And they, continuing daily with one accord in the temple, and breaking bread from house to house, did eat their food with gladness and singleness of heart, praising God, and having favor with all the people.

And the Lord added to the church daily, such as should be saved. And thus far in this study in the book of the Acts, we have been introduced to the wonderful glorious truth that the book of the Acts is the Acts of the Holy Spirit. And the things that we are introduced to are so important for us to know.

The book of the Acts is a transition from what we have learned in the four gospel accounts of the birth, the life, the death, the burial, and the resurrection of the Lord Jesus. How he came unto his own and his own

received him not. The Son of God was rejected by his own people, the Jews.

These are the people who, by covenant promise, were to have received their Messiah. They rejected him. And in so doing, grace opened up that wonderful avenue of entrance into the presence of God for whosoever will.

And we as poor Gentiles, we were in this world without any hope. We certainly didn't have any hold upon God by covenant promise. And this book of the Acts introduces us to something that is indeed glorious and wonderful, that God would by his grace create something that is entirely new, that was always in the mind of God, to take Jew and Gentile, the bound and the free, and make them one in Christ.

The Lord Jesus Christ made a promise, and this is what we need. Believers in Jesus Christ need to know this. That what we do for the Lord, we don't do it in our own strength.

He uses our bodies, he uses our talents and our abilities, but what we do, we do by the power of God. And the Spirit of God indwells us, and God would have the Spirit of God to fill us. And we grieve the Spirit of God any moment of any time that we allow sin to have a place in our lives.

We have to face that. We cannot look upon sin as something that is of no consequence. And if you just reflect for a moment of what it cost to provide salvation for us, the Son of God, the one that knew no sin, was made sin for us.

God laid on him the iniquity of us all. You can never look lightly upon sin. And you can sin in thought, in words, and in deed.

It's so easy to sin. But we have the power of the Spirit of God. We have that one in us that enables us.

We have power now that we never had before. We need to recognize it and know that now I am empowered from God in a very special way to live my life for the glory of God. The Lord Jesus says, You are going to receive power so that you can be a witness for me in this world.

The Lord Jesus Christ left this world and went back into heaven. He is seated at the right hand of God, enthroned in glory at this very moment. And he has left the likes of you and me, saved by his grace, to tell others, to be a witness to others of him.

That's awesome responsibility, isn't it? To think that he is depending upon each one of us to tell other people about him. That wonderful gospel of Jesus Christ, the Apostle Paul says he wasn't ashamed of it. Because to be ashamed of the gospel is to be ashamed of Christ.

He knew it was the power of God unto salvation to everyone that believed it. We have a power of God as believers to be faithful witnesses for him. And in our last session together on that day of Pentecost, when the Spirit of God fell upon them, that sound as of a mighty rushing wind filled that place.

The cloven tongues of fire that was upon each one of them, they were filled with the Spirit of God. Boy, it made a difference. What a difference it made.

We remarked about poor Peter, that man that had acted so cowardly in the face of the tormentors of our Lord Jesus Christ, in the face of just a little girl. He denied the Lord three times. And they all did, for that matter.

And you have and I have, so let's don't pick on Peter. But that man was a different man after the Spirit of God came into his soul, and he was filled with the Holy Spirit. He spoke with boldness.

He stood up before those men that, indeed, many of them could have been in opposition to the Lord Jesus Christ in a very public way. And he stood up and he preached to them. He told them what they had done.

You have taken the Lord of glory and you have crucified him. You killed him, God's only Son, His only begotten Son. And you know, we read later on in the book of the Acts, but God, He knew what you did in ignorance.

And you can be thankful and I can be thankful this morning that the Lord Jesus Christ, when He looked around at those that were there, the day He was hanging upon that cross, He could say, Father, forgive them. They don't know what they're doing. No man, no woman, no boy, no girl really knows what He's doing when He rejects the grace of God.

He rejects the Son of God as His Lord and Savior. It brought us all in sanity to go through this life and to take such liberty with the grace of God that you reject Jesus Christ as your Lord and Savior. That's madness.

But you know, you've got a lot of help. It says, The God of this world blinds the minds of those that will not believe. And the reason men are walking around in spiritual darkness today, not only because their deeds are evil and they want to flee from the light, but it's simply because the mind has been blinded.

There's been a veil of darkness that surrounds the mind, the intellect of a human being. Oh, to have that power broken, and only the gospel of Jesus Christ, by the power of the Spirit of God, will ever break that power over your life. But it can be broken.

That's the ray of hope this morning. Whosoever will, may come. Oh, may come and enter into all the freedom and the joy of God's salvation.

Know with assurance in your soul that your sins are forgiven and you're on your way to heaven. That's something to rejoice about. That's something to sing about.

That's something to share with others. Let them know they can know the same thing. All of us are poor sinners in need of God's grace.

There's none righteous, no, not one. We've all sinned and come short of the glory of God. We're all in the same boat, and God knows it.

And He knows we need that deliverance that He has provided through the person of His Son. That first verse that we read this morning says, then, that they that gladly received his word were baptized. Now, there's a condition that was strictly Jewish.

That condition does not exist today for you and me in this world in which we're living. It is not necessary for you to be baptized to be saved. Don't ever forget.

Baptism is one of the things that we're asked to do. It's called one of those ordinances of the church, baptism and the Lord's Supper. There were many, many ordinances in Judaism, just two for Christianity, but these people were Jews.

These people were those that needed to do something as an evidence that there was repentance. They're all Jews. They've been rejecters of the Son of God.

And Peter calls upon them, I want you to receive the word. I want you to receive the words concerning the person of the Lord Jesus, and I want you to be baptized as an open confession to all to see that you have truly taken a stand in which you have acknowledged, I was wrong. I was about the Son of God, and everything is being reversed in my life.

That's what repentance is all about. It's not necessary today that a man or a woman or boy or girl be baptized to be saved. You believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and you will be saved.

But as an act of obedience, every child of God should desire to follow our Lord and His desire for us to be baptized by immersion in water is evidence that we believe that His death, His burial, His resurrection was all that was necessary to save my soul. And I identify with that publicly and openly as a declaration, an open declaration of my faith in Him. But those that gladly received His word were baptized the same day.

There were added unto them about 3,000 souls, and that was some kind of meeting. My brother Worth Ellis has had some gospel meetings, but he's never seen that kind of response to the gospel. It might knock him off his feet if he were to see 3,000 souls responding at one time.

The evangelist, as he preaches the word of God, oh, he longs to see souls respond to the call of the gospel. Well, you see, the presence of the Spirit of God in His mighty power caused about 3,000 souls to respond and to receive Christ. No inhibitions, nothing else was important, and that's the way it is when you get saved.

You cast aside all of those things that have been a hindrance. You clear your mind and your soul of all those things that Satan's been using to hold you back. And you say nothing else is important but just knowing that I've received Christ.

God's Son is my Savior, and now I'm a new creature in Christ Jesus. That all important. Thank God for the gospel.

Thank God for what was done here when Peter preached. About 3,000 souls were saved. This raises a question because it says added that day unto them about 3,000 souls.

What were they added to? You can ask that question. What were they added to? We've been going over the truth concerning the Church, the Body of Christ, the Ecclesia. We're not talking about a local fellowship.

We're not talking about any specific church fellowship in Durham, across the face of the earth, wherever it is. We're talking about the One, the true Church, the Body of Christ. And believe me, if you don't belong to that one, you don't belong to God.

You may join every church fellowship that has ever existed on the face of the earth and die and go to hell. You may have been baptized. You may have been confirmed.

You may have had a lot of things done for you. But believe me, unless you have received Jesus Christ, the Son of God, into your heart, unless you've been born again by the power of the Spirit of God through the Word of God and accepted into the Body of Christ, that called-out company of people that have responded

to the gospel, you're lost. Join all the churches you want to join.

It won't save your soul. Some people raise questions sometimes, Why don't you have a membership role here at Northgate Chapel? Why don't you do that? Well, there's a reason for it. You say, You just want to be different.

No, no. First and foremost, we know that God knows everyone that belongs to Him. And I can tell you, and good sense would tell you this, I know exactly how many people and who they are that are a part of this fellowship.

And we'll touch on that in just a moment. It's by what they do. And there are at least three things mentioned that we do that certainly confirms to everybody that sees us and knows anything about us that indeed we're a part of that fellowship.

But believe me, you want to be real sure that you have Christ in your heart. You don't give Him anything. You receive from God as a gift, the unspeakable gift of God, which is our Lord Jesus Christ.

I don't like that term, give your heart to Jesus. God doesn't want you to give Him anything. He wants you to acknowledge that you're lost and that He is the great giver.

And He wants to give you His salvation in the person of the Son of God. So don't try to give God anything. Don't try to work your way to heaven.

Don't think you're good enough to get to heaven. If we got to heaven in our sins, believe me, we would be miserable in the presence of the holiness, the righteousness that prevails in that place. Have you ever seen somebody squirming in a prayer meeting? Have you ever seen someone squirming when the Word of God was opened? Well, that's just a little, little, little thing compared to what it would be if we were in the presence of God in our sins.

Now we would be squirming. Isn't that strange? Let me out of here. I don't like this place.

Well, you're going to hell. I know, but to be in the presence of God, and I'm still in my sins, how miserable we would be. The only people that are comfortable in the presence of God are those that are in Christ, that have been washed in the blood of Christ.

Their sins have been forgiven, and they belong to God. They're in the family of God. And it only takes an act of faith, receiving him, to bring you into all of the blessedness of God's wonderful salvation.

Well, I think verse 47 tells us what happened. This added to what? It says that the Lord added to the church that day everyone that was being saved. The Lord does that.

And that's one reason why we don't encourage people, come and join our church and put your name on a roll. Be sure your name is written on that roll in heaven. Be sure your name is written in the Lamb's book of life.

Oh, if it doesn't bother you, it bothers me to think of all the people that have their name somewhere written on a church roll, and they're still dead in their sins. They've never received Christ. So easy to do that.

People are encouraged, come join our church, come join our fellowship. They're still lost. They're still lost.

We don't invite people to come and join our church. We invite them to come and receive Christ. That's what's important.

Don't let Satan fool you. That's not the way to heaven. The Lord Jesus said, I am the way, the truth, and the light.

No man comes unto the Father but by me. He is the one, the only way to heaven. He is the one and the only way that you can have your sins forgiven.

It's through faith in the Lord Jesus. God knows who to add to that church. You and I could make some grievous mistakes by putting somebody in the body that didn't belong there.

God doesn't make any mistakes. God looks upon the heart and the soul of a man or a woman. He knows what you've done in your heart.

Have you truly received Christ? God knows. And if you have, you're added to the church. The one, the true church, the body of our Lord Jesus Christ.

That's where the baptism of the Spirit comes in. These people that are praying for the baptism of the Holy Ghost, they don't know what they're talking about. If you've been born again and you're in the family of God, you've already been baptized by one spirit into the body of Christ.

You can't get there any other way. That's God's way. There again, it doesn't matter.

Jew, Gentile, bound, free. That middle wall of partition has been broken down. And now whosoever will may come, we are the body of Christ, those that have trusted Christ as their Savior.

I want to read to you just a few verses found in Ephesians, chapter 2, so that you can have this confirmed in your mind, because you may want to refer to it later. In chapter 2, in verse 11, it says, Wherefore, remember ye being in time past Gentiles in the flesh, Gentiles in the flesh, who are called uncircumcised by that which is called the circumcision in the flesh made by hand, that at that time you were without Christ, being aliens from the commonwealth of Israel and strangers from the covenant of promise, having no hope, and without God in the world. That's a sad place to be.

And yet their souls today may be someone in this room today. You've never received Christ. You might search your own heart and mind and think at this moment, What am I dependent upon to take me to heaven? Well, Paul puts it so clear.

There's no covenant promise for Gentiles. There's no hope without God in this world. But now, but now, look at the difference.

In Christ Jesus ye who once were far off are made near by the blood of Christ. You want to be brought near to God, then receive Christ, receive His provision for the salvation of your soul. Then you will be added to that glorious, wonderful body, the body of Christ.

No, I don't have to have my name on a church roll to get to heaven, but I want to be absolutely sure that God knows my heart. He knows that I have received Jesus Christ, His Son. The unspeakable gift of God is the only means of salvation for my soul, and God has my name written down in the Lamb's Book of Life.

That's what I want to know. All of the traditions of men, it'll all be swept away in a moment of time when the Lord comes again. Oh, God have mercy upon those that are blinded in this world without Christ.

Well, verse 42 says that the will of God is established for all these that are beginning to enter into this new experience of being in that living body formed by the Spirit of God. These are those that have believed the gospel. These are those that have received Christ.

These are those that have openly confessed, we were wrong. The only religion ever established by God was Judaism. No other religious system can say it has God's stamp of approval upon it.

We're living in the dispensation of God's grace, and it is the gospel, the good news, that Christ Jesus came into the world. And He died upon a cross, He was buried, He was resurrected, He has ascended back into heaven. Praise God, He's coming again.

He may come today. You want to be ready when He comes. You don't want to be like that dear old man that told me just a few weeks ago, I've got plenty of time.

Oh, no. Oh, no. Today is the time of God's salvation.

Today is the only time that I could assure anyone you can be saved, you can receive Christ, that the doors of heaven are still open. Only today, today, today, there are no tomorrows. The will of God is established in such a wonderful way.

You can go back to Matthew's gospel, chapter 28, and you can read those last two verses, 19 and 20, and you are told that the disciples, the apostles were sent out to disciple or teach other men. They were to cover the face of the earth in seeking to bring men and women to Christ through the gospel and to teach them the things of God, teaching them the things that relate to the person of the Lord Jesus Christ. Well, here in this passage you just have it fortified in that the words that we have upon the pages of Scripture says, these people that had been brought into the body of Christ, the one, the true Church, they continued steadfastly in the apostles' teaching.

Peter was still teaching. He was still telling people about the person of Jesus Christ. It's inexhaustible.

You can't preach on Christ too much. And a lady told me not long ago that was a member in fellowship in a certain group of Christians, so-called, the professing church, that she looked back and tried to recall in that place how much ministry was devoted to telling the congregation about Jesus Christ. And she said, I couldn't think of any.

Talked about anything and everything but Jesus Christ. His name was seldom mentioned. Let Christ be the center of the ministry of the word of God.

The apostle Paul said, let him have that preeminent place. Let him be first. We start with Christ.

And everything in between until the day we leave this world, it is Christ. The apostle Paul said for me, to live is Christ. Well, they were persevering.

There was diligence. There was a loyalty that was taught in the teaching of Peter and the others that these believers, they needed to do something. It was that confirmation that I'm talking about.

How do I know certain people are a part of this fellowship at Northgate Chapel? They are continuing steadfast in the doctrine, the teaching of the apostles. The things that they read in the word of God, they obey those things. They're practicing those things.

And when you read those words, they were in fellowship. Fellowship is so important. Fellowship with the Lord and fellowship with God's people.

When you're in fellowship with someone, you're sharing things in common. And God sees the tie even deeper than that. He sees you as one, one in the body of Christ.

We are members of the same body. The fellowship that we enjoy. And that fellowship involves two things that we're reminded of here.

The first one is the breaking of bread. At Northgate Chapel, we put a lot of emphasis upon breaking bread. You say, why do you do that? Well, it's because the word of God tells us to do that.

It's because Jesus Christ, the Son of God, the one that died upon the cross, said, this do in remembrance of me. That's why. I know you can see that.

He said, this do in remembrance of me. That's why you do it. And you are diligent.

You are, you have that confirmation in your own soul. It's what the Spirit of God does. Do what he asks you to do.

And in so doing, you don't have a smitten conscience. I think some of the words that sometimes just chill me is for a believer in Jesus Christ to say, oh, but I'm not worthy to remember the Lord. I'm not worthy to remember the Lord.

God have mercy upon you and your reasoning. The Spirit of God never told you to say that. Every child of God that is under the blood of Jesus Christ, God's Son, with sin confessed and his soul examined before God, is invited to break bread and drink of the cup in the remembrance of the Savior who loved him and gave himself for him.

And don't make any excuses. The blood of Jesus Christ, God's Son, cleanses from all sin. The breaking of the bread, my what it does for a believer to let this get a grip upon his soul, this fellowship, this communion around the person of Christ and the breaking of the bread, you can't experience it any other way.

And I've heard people say, oh, but I'll remember the Lord every day of my life. That's wonderful. Wonderful.

You should. But we're talking about doing something that He asked us to do, something that's very special. When you come together and you break bread, you break bread.

You see that loaf upon that table. It's just a loaf of bread. That's all it is, nothing else but bread.

But, oh, for the Christian, when he sees that loaf of bread broken, it reminds him of the broken body of the Son of God. That's what it took to save my soul. His body had to be broken.

The one that had no sin had to be made sin for me. And at that point in time, there's sometimes such a feeling, unworthy wretch that I am, saved by the grace of God. His body was broken.

You have to come and break bread in the way that our Lord has spelled out. He's the one. He is the one that instituted the breaking of the bread.

He knew we needed it. We're prone to forget. Incorporately as a body, that church, those called out ones, they're there to break bread.

Oh, the things that I hear sometimes, I don't like to think about it. Sunday morning is the only time I have to sleep. I need a little rest for my body.

I'll tell you, you need a little encounter with God over His Word. You need to have the Spirit of God get ahold of you and me if we ever grow cold and we begin to think of these things as not too important. It's an option.

You can do it if you want to. Some Christians do it and some don't. Well, them that don't do it are out of the will of God.

How do you like that? How do you like that? You're not in the will of God unless you're obeying what God asks you to do. And the Lord Jesus Christ says, This do in remembrance of me. And this body of about 33,000 souls and that other 120 and we don't know how many others, they were steadfastly, they were persevering, they were diligent in their obedience to what the Lord had said do.

They were breaking bread. They did it every first day of the week. Upon the first day of the week they broke bread.

Acts 20 and verse 7. They wanted to do what the Lord asked them to do. That's what's missing among God's people today. Don't want to do what God asked them to do.

Indeed, sometimes we are just inclined to want to do what we want to do, what I want to do. My Sundays are all planned. It never includes coming at 930 to break bread.

You other Christians, you're more spiritual than I am. No, don't use any of those excuses, please. Please.

You're a child of God. You're out of the will of God unless you are doing what God asked you to do. In the early church there was power there and the Spirit of God was able to impress their hearts through the teaching of the apostles, break bread.

Your Lord asked you to do it. What about prayer? I have been in this place on Wednesday night and I've looked around and I felt a sense of shame. There wouldn't be 25 people here at a prayer meeting.

I believe at this point in time in the early development of the church, every one of them that could get one foot in front of the other, they were gathered together to pray. They believed in prayer. Do you realize what it means to say, to hear the Lord say, I invite you to come boldly with assurance to the throne of grace? Does that ever grip you, your soul? I can go into the very presence of God.

Does that move your soul to think that you can go into the very presence of God? No middle wall of partition. Everything has been broken down. You have clear access to the throne of God, to the throne of grace through the person of the Lord Jesus Christ, and you don't think it's important? God have mercy upon us.

What's wrong with us that we can have a hundred people in this place on Sunday morning and 25 people show up on Wednesday nights at prayer meetings? These were the evidences that these people belong to the body of Christ. They were steadfast. There's not a lot of steadfastness among God's people today.

That's just the truth. I'm not trying to hurt anybody's feelings. I'm just telling you the truth.

We're not persevering. We don't take it seriously. It's not important.

I'm going to mow the grass and water the garden and a thousand other little old frivolous things that ain't worth a cent. But we've convinced ourselves we don't go to the prayer meeting. Sounds like that fellow that he was on the way to the prayer meeting and he asked his neighbor, Brother, come on, let's go to the prayer meeting.

He stopped for a moment and he said, Well, I would go, but I can't think of a thing I need. He certainly had never got a grasp of what it meant to come to the throne of grace, to stand in the presence of God and be an intercessor, to pray for others that need to be saved, to pray for those that are hurting, praying for those who are brokenhearted. And here you have just this little handful of people.

They're the only ones that are interested in other people, their soul's needs, their bodily needs. They're called the faithful ones. I'd like to see this whole place sometimes filled up on Wednesday night and God's people have come to pray, to lay hold of God.

Then I wouldn't be surprised if God blessed us and gave us all that we asked for. Delight thyself in the Lord and he will give you the desires of your heart. Not a one of us in this room probably believe that.

Delight thyself in the Lord and he'll give you the desires of your heart. What's the desire of your heart? Oh, you say, I've got a lot of desires in my heart. Are you delighting in the Lord? Do you find in him everything that satisfies your soul? Well, if you don't, forget about the desires.

They're all wrong. Time's gone. We'll finish this next week, but listen.

The important thing is that you know. You know that your sins are forgiven. Those that were added to the body of Christ, they knew their sins were forgiven.

The Apostle Paul said in the last days there will come scoffers. There will come in grievous wolves. There will come in those that are Satan's ministers of righteousness.

They'll try to destroy the faith even of God's people, leave people astray. That's that day we're living in right now. Believe me, you'd better listen to God's Word.

You'd better listen to the Word of God. If you're not in Christ, you're lost and you're on your way to hell. And if you're in Christ and you're not obeying what he says in his Word, you're out of the will of God.

I can't tell it any other way. That's just the way it is. It's what God's Word says.

Let us pray. Our Father in Heaven, do receive our thanks for this opportunity of gathering this morning. It's been a stirring time in my own heart and soul.

I just pray, O Lord, by your Spirit that you would stir some hearts here present this morning. Don't let us leave this place without making that decision for Christ if we've never trusted him. For those of us that

have named the name of Christ and know with assurance in our souls that we belong to him, grant at this moment we will purpose in our hearts before thee, O God, that we will obey all that you tell us to do, and that you will indeed bless us as we delight in thee and in your sovereign will for each of our lives.

We pray thy blessing in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ. Amen. I know John's gone, but I thought it so appropriate.

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