

Acts 2:42-47

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[0 : 0 0] Can we turn back please to the passage that we read earlier, the book of Acts. I'm going to look this morning at verses 42 to 47, page 1094.

Go into many of the Christian booksellers and you are confronted by many books of a similar theme.

Books about the life in the church. How we must connect with the world outside. How to be seeker friendly.

How to be relevant to the culture in which we find ourselves in. Books that have various programs and techniques that are presented as a possible way forward for your congregation to grow and to expand.

To make churches full of programs and activities that touch those outside and those also inside the church.

[1 : 3 0] To the young people, to children, to single parents, to immigrants, to divorced couples. All various ministries.

Now those are important and they have a part to play in the church. But very often the business of the church becomes very busy.

And God himself is often overlooked. In other churches, there's a tendency to do and say the same things.

To initiate very little. We're happy with the status quo. We are happy with our doctrine. We're happy with our practice. We know the right things about God.

We know the right words to say. But even though we have the doctrine right, the practice, We often again tend to forget God himself.

[2 : 4 0] God is often missed out, ignored, forgotten. Do we here enjoy the presence of the Lord God himself?

We may know that we are loved by God. We can point to the scriptures and get the texts and prove it to ourselves. But are we excited by the fact?

Are we encouraged by that truth? Are we in love with him? To come to this passage, It would be easy to just see it as a checklist of things done in the early church And tick them off.

And look at them and say, Well, there was teaching. We do that. There was fellowship. We do that. And we can tick them off. Communion, prayer. And we think, well, we're doing pretty well.

But are we missing out? Are we looking at God? This passage cannot be understood If we do not grasp that truth, And especially if we see it in verse 43a.

[4 : 0 2] Beginning of verse 43. Everyone in this early church, Everyone was filled with awe.

The Greek literally says, Every soul was filled with awe. With wonder. With delight. They were enraptured with God.

But who are these people? Some commentators think that the people who are afraid Are those who are sitting outside of the church. But I don't think that's the case.

This is not a case of outsiders looking in. These are believers. These are some of the thousands That have come into the church After Peter's Pentecost serve.

And they are filled with awe. They cannot get their minds Around this message. Around this God.

[5 : 08] Around this Jesus. This is the attitude. This enrapturedness. It's an attitude of believers. Not of unbelievers looking inside.

These believers. These new converts. These disciples. Who a few weeks ago Had been petrified. Are filled with awe.

They are captivated with God. They are now beginning to see God as Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

These are terms that we use. And it trips off the tongue. Father, Son and Holy Spirit. But for a monotheistic Jew.

This is mind-blowing stuff. God. Father. Son. And now there's this Holy Spirit. What's He doing?

[6 : 07] Watch this power. Look at these people coming and joining us. And following Christ. They are enraptured with God.

They are enraptured with what He has done in Christ. This passage. The context is where the sermon Talking about who Christ is.

What. Who He is. He's greater than David. He's risen from the dead. He's ascended into heaven. We've seen it. It's real.

Believe us. They're enraptured with Christ. And they're amazed At what He's doing.

Look at this. From this band of petrified believers In an upper room. Scared to go out. Scared to open the doors. They're now preaching in the temple.

[7 : 07] Going out with confidence. They are realizing what God has done for them. They realize that they have been rebellious.

That they have been part of the group that has shouted Crucify Him! Crucify Him! They realize their sins. They realize their mistakes.

But they realize the grace of God. Even for sinners. They are amazed. They gaze upon God.

They think about Him. They are in awe and wonder. What has God done? Sending His Son. What has the Son done? Going to that cross.

What is the Holy Spirit doing for us? Look at the strength we've got. Our tongues are free. We are praising Him. We are preaching about Him.

[8 : 10] We are not afraid. We are going out with power. They are filled with awe and wonder. You cannot understand this passage unless you grasp that fact.

And we today need to grasp that fact for ourselves. We come before the living God.

We come before Father, Son and Holy Spirit. We come to a Savior who saves. Who is glorious.

Who sits on the throne triumphant. And can say over powers and principalities. I've won! And we need to be in awe of Him.

And take Him seriously. And think of Him again and again. We can fill our churches by doing lots of things.

- [9 : 18] That every day of the week. But if it pushes Christ to the periphery. Don't do it! Because we need to be enraptured with Him.
- We can perform the duties. Take them off the list. But it doesn't matter if we are not filled with awe and adoration for Christ.
- We can start any program we want. But we mustn't put Christ to the side. What do we want for ourselves?
- Surely it must be to be close to Christ. Christ looking to Him. Wondering what He would have us do.
- Say. Think. Act. Initiate. Being close to Him. What do we want for our families?
- [10 : 22] Do we want them to be successful and prosperous? Or do we want them to be filled with awe and wonder? As children before a Heavenly Father.
- Surely that must be our goal. We can have busy churches. But please. Let's not be busy without being enraptured with Christ.
- It's more important that we are satisfied with Him. Than being successful. Or implementing programs that seem to be almost automatic.
- Implement program. Turn handle. See blessing. And this hand on Christ. What would be the point? Surely. Like these early converts.
- This early church. We need to be looking to Him. Seeing what He's done. Thinking of the sermon of Peter. And looking at the various stages.
- [11 : 32] Of His acts. Of His ascension. Of His grace. To sinners. Such as us.
- To give us. Another chance. Let's be enraptured. With Him. But how? How do we become enraptured?
- What? Well we read in verse 42. They devoted themselves to the apostles teaching. And to the fellowship. To the breaking of bread. And to prayer.
- To learn to be enraptured. You need to be devoted. They experienced Christ. But they wanted to learn more about Him.
- They needed to draw alongside Him. To learn more about God's plan. His purpose. His power. His majesty. His holiness. His grace.
- [12 : 30] His mercy. And get it all in one sermon. They needed to learn more. They needed to meet.
- To experience Christ. And to go on with Him. It's a love affair with Christ. And love affairs. If they're really worth their salt.
- And true to their name. They demand time. And effort. And knowledge. You need to get to know the person you love.
- You need to go on with them. You hear of love at first sight. That may be true. It might not be. But you certainly for love to continue. You need to know.
- To experience. Together. Anything else. Is infatuation. Or daydreaming. To be in love.
- [13 : 28] Requires. Relationship. And a relationship with God. Comes through time. And by experiencing Him. And through His word. The word preached.
- The word read. And prayed over. The people. The people. In this early church. Devoted themselves. To the apostles teaching. They heard the sermon.
- They repented and believed. They heard of Jesus Christ. And His life. And His death. And His resurrection. And His ascension. And His death. And His death. And His death. But they didn't stop there.

They're going back into the Old Testament. They're getting the promises. And they're seeing how wonderfully fulfilled they are in Christ. They devoted themselves to the teaching.

The term in Greek is like they attached themselves. They stuck. They came alongside. They were in close proximity to the teaching.

[14 : 28] They were not casual. There's a sense of commitment here. It's not a casual relationship. They're not casual in their attendance.

Or in their attention span. They're devoted. They are gazing. And reading. And learning.

And praying. What must we do to be saved? Was their question. But that wasn't the place where they stopped.

After they got their answer. They went on. They learnt more. And if we want to be devoted to the Lord.

We need to hear about Him. We need to be devoted to that teaching. Be in close proximity to it. To experience it. To hear it.

[15 : 25] To learn more. To go deeper. Rather than paddling on the edges. To learn more about Christ.

To soak it in. This morning. As I looked out of the window. There was a wasp. On the window pane. And I could look at this wasp.

As it's stuck there. On this window pane. Soaking in the rays of the sun. Probably amazed.

That the sun's out so early. And so warm. But there. Soaking in. Getting what it requires to warm up in the day.

For His wings to work properly. Is attached to that window. Getting close to the rays of the sun. And we need to be close to the sun.

[16 : 26] The sun of God. And to devote ourselves to His teaching. Soak ourselves with Him.

Know Him more. Experience Him more. Be with Him more. To know the doctrines.

To understand God as Father, Son, as Holy Spirit. If you want to be enraptured. You've got to be near.

You've got to be close and personal. You need to see Him and hear Him. To understand Him. And look what happened.

There's a community being built here. The earthly community of God. The enraptured people are coming together. People who have truly and wholeheartedly in love with God and Christ.

[17 : 29] And devoted to His words. Are starting to change. And to meet together. And it impacts relationships that they have.

One with another. You notice here there is a unity. They were devoted not only to Christ. But they're devoted now to each other. Because they share things in common.

They share a common experience. In a triune God. They're all in awe of Him. They share this experience of meeting with Him personally. And they are in communion with each other.

Committed to one another. Because they have surrendered to the King. They're united together. And notice that they're loving. You see in verse 44 following.

All the believers were together. They're unity. And had everything in common. Selling the possessions and goods they gave to anyone as he had need.

- [18 : 29] There is love in action. They've experienced the love of Christ. And it's impacting on themselves.
- Sharing with each other. Not just time. But also their talents. And their resources. Including their money.
- To help their brothers and sisters in Christ. They sold their properties. And their possessions. To share with those who had need.
- What disturbing verses for us. Today. In 2007. A bit uncomfortable. As we sit here. And then we think about ourselves.
- Do I love like that? Is my love sacrificial? These people could not bear to see their brothers and sisters go without.
- [19 : 28] And in our congregations. There will be people who are in need. In this world. In the church world. Why? There are our brothers and sisters in great need.
- Beware we feast. Whilst in our congregations. Or at the doors of our congregation. There are those in need.
- The community was filled with a unity. It's filled with a love. And it's filled with worship. Here's a snapshot into the.
- Not weekly. But the daily worship. Of the people of God. In Jerusalem. Meetings. Formal in the temple.
- Informal at home. The breaking of bread. There's prayer in this. Among the people. They are taking God seriously. They know there are troubles ahead.
- [20 : 29] They know. By. By. Stepping aside. By following Christ. Stepping out of the social. Strata of the day. That they will face. Difficulties.
- Be shunned. And worse. And so they pray. And look at the answers to the prayers. They see many wonders.
- And signs. Done by the apostles. They are seeing God in action. Their prayers are being answered. And if you look through Luke's gospel and Acts.
- You notice how prayer. Is very prominent. They are praying. They are meeting together. And they are praising God. Every day.
- They continue to meet together. In the temple courts. They broke bread in their homes. And ate together. With glad. And sincere. Hearts. Praising God.
- [21 : 30] And enjoying. Favor. Of all. The people. Praising God. They are a. United. Loving.
- And worshipping. Community. They are glad. And joyful. They have sincere hearts. They have reverent worship.
- God was in their midst. And they knew it. Could see it. Could experience it. And so they praised. And they gave thanks.
- And they worshipped. They were in awe. And an adoration. And if we are in awe. And an adoration.
- And if we. Are looking to him. And we are learning to be. Enraptured by his grace.
- [22 : 29] And who he is. That that's going to impact us. It must impact us. As a church. As a believer. As individuals. So where there is strife.
- And disunity. There shouldn't be. If we are looking to Christ. Then all of that. Should be put to one side.
- Anything that causes strife. And disunity. Must be brought under. The kingship of Christ. They were. Not ignoring those.

Who are in need. And their worship was real. And vibrant. And full of exultation. And joy. So when we come.

To worship God together. Let's not come with that. Oh well. It's Sunday. Better go. Better do. The usual. This is not the mundane.

[23 : 30] And the ordinary. This is the glorious. And we are invited in. Let's be in awe. Let's be. Enraptured. With Christ. And if we do. Then we may know. The very blessing of God. Because as we.

Were praising. Verse 47. Praising God. And enjoying the favour. Of all the people. And the Lord. Added. To their number. Daily. Those.

Who were being. Saved. You heard the phrase. The church. It's so heavenly minded.

It's of no earthly. Use. That's a lie. A real lie. It's been. When we are. When we are. Heavenly minded.

[24 : 27] And when we do. Take the things. Of Christ. And God. Seriously. Then we are. More available. Our hearts.

Are ready. For the Holy Spirit. To work in them. To say. I want you to do that. You need to do that. I'll empower you. I will help you.

I will guide you. You trust in me. Keep your eyes on me. Because God has great things. To do. Our God is powerful.

And mighty. The teaching. Of these apostles. The preaching. Of Peter. And others. In Jerusalem. Was making an impact. Because the Lord.

Was behind it. Before it. Above it. And under it. It was for him. It was his work. And he was blessing it. The Lord.

[25 : 25] Was adding. There is this. Idea that. There is a continual. Movement. It's not just. Pentecost. Stop. Three thousand. Stop. That's enough. We can't deal with it anymore.

There is a growth there. As the Lord. Was adding to their number. And the Lord. Was saving. Them. These people.

Were joining. They weren't joining. An institution. They were coming. To a Savior. And to people. Who were. In awe. Of Christ.

There was. Numerical growth. Yes. But there is. Spiritual growth. There. As they learn. More and more. Of the Savior. This is not.

An occasional. And a sporadic. Activity. But a steady. An uninterrupted. Growth. Because. Of a flow.

[26 : 22] Of God's Spirit. And an adoration. In the people. If we want God. To bless us. And I'm sure.

We all do. Then we must be. In awe of him. Our people. We must all be. In awe.

Of him. The Father. The Son. And the Holy Spirit. We must take. Him. Seriously. Who he is. What he has done.

We must take his. His loveliness. Seriously. His grace. Seriously. His mercy. Seriously. May it never be. Mundane.

May the story. Never grow. Tired. And weary. Because unless. We take him. Seriously. How do we expect.

[27 : 18] This world. To take him. Seriously. Unless. We. Are in love. With him. How do we expect. Other people. To be in love. With him. May the fear.

Come upon us. May it be true. Of us. Today. That we. Are in awe.

Of Christ. That we fear him. With trembling. With thankful hearts. May every soul.

Here this morning. Be. Close to him. But filled. With awe.

Let us pray. Lord. Our God. Forgive us.

[28 : 18] For as we. Look upon your word. As we. Think about. Things. Of. Your earliest. Church. There. In Jerusalem. We.

Realize. That often. In our own lives. As individuals. As also. In a congregation. We have grown. Cool. Perhaps.

Even cold. That there is. A familiarity. But very little. Fervor. Lord.

God. Forgive us. Help us. To realize. To realize. That. You are not. An idea.

To be talked about. You are not. To be used. As an inference. For an argument. We are not to come to you.

[29 : 13] Because of. Family tradition. We are to come to you. Because you are God. And God almighty. You are. You are. You are.

You are. You are. You are. You are. You are. You are. You are. You are. You are. A shocking. And present. Reality. And we. Must fall down.

Before you. And as we fall. Would you help us. Lord. Lord. And.

And. You. Be silent. But speak to us. And lead us. And guide us. And help us. In all that we do.

That there would be. An impact. In our lives. In our congregation. That you would be. With. Us.

[30 : 09] And help us. To live. In awe. And adoration. For we do not deserve.

This at all. Amen.