



Sermon for April 18, 2021, “The Church of the Lord”

SCRIPTURE: Acts 2:14-24, 37-42 ¹⁴ But Peter, standing with the eleven, raised his voice and addressed them, “Men of Judea and all who live in Jerusalem, let this be known to you, and listen to what I say. ¹⁵ Indeed, these are not drunk, as you suppose, for it is only nine o’clock in the morning. ¹⁶ No, this is what was spoken through the prophet Joel: ¹⁷ ‘In the last days it will be, God declares, that I will pour out my Spirit upon all flesh, and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, and your young men shall see visions, and your old men shall dream dreams. ¹⁸ Even upon my slaves, both men and women, in those days I will pour out my Spirit; and they shall prophesy. ¹⁹ And I will show portents in the heaven above and signs on the earth below, blood, and fire, and smoky mist. ²⁰ The sun shall be turned to darkness and the moon to blood, before the coming of the Lord’s great and glorious day. ²¹ Then everyone who calls on the name of the Lord shall be saved.’ ²² “You that are Israelites, listen to what I have to say: Jesus of Nazareth, a man attested to you by God with deeds of power, wonders, and signs that God did through him among you, as you yourselves know— ²³ this man, handed over to you according to the definite plan and foreknowledge of God, you crucified and killed by the hands of those outside the law. ²⁴ But God raised him up, having freed him from death, because it was impossible for him to be held in its power. ²⁵ Now when they heard this, they were cut to the heart and said to Peter and to the other apostles, “Brothers, what should we do?” ²⁶ Peter said to them, “Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ so that your sins may be forgiven; and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. ²⁷ For the promise is for you, for your children, and for all who are far away, everyone whom the Lord our God calls to him.” ²⁸ And he testified with many other arguments and exhorted them, saying, “Save yourselves from this corrupt generation.” ²⁹ So those who welcomed his message were baptized, and that day about three thousand persons were added. ³⁰ They devoted themselves to the apostles’ teaching and fellowship, to the breaking of bread and the prayers.

Introduction: Early Church

It’s a beautiful spring day. The view while driving is fantastic. The bare tree has green leaves, and flowers are in full bloom. The chirping of birds is energetic. Looking at the dynamic changes in nature, I thought of the church, the spiritual body of the Lord. May the Lord’s Church grow more and produce abundant fruit. We pray that the Simpson, Epworth, Des Moines Korean Church, and all the churches in the world will grow and bear abundant fruit.

In Acts chapter 2, the church is born and the gospel preaching begins due to the Holy Spirit coming. Also, because of Peter’s sermon, many people repent and are baptized. Through these events, the early church began. The early church that was created in this way grows into a beautiful community that fears God, serves neighbors, and spreads the Gospel.

The early church was founded on the word of the Lord. It also began with the repentance of those who heard the word of the Lord. Furthermore, it was born through the process of being baptized and professing faith publicly.

Through the appearance of the early church, I hope that we all deeply realize that the Lord’s Church is precious and makes a beautiful church.

Let’s look at how the early church grew and how it was able to fulfill its mission as a witness of Jesus Christ.



Body: What to prepare for the growth and mission of the church community

1. Church growth

The early church, which was born after receiving the word of the Lord, people's repentance, and public baptism, grows through four foundations. Let's look at the words in Acts 2:42. "They devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and fellowship, to the breaking of bread and the prayers."

First, learn the Word of the Lord according to the teachings of the Apostles.

Those who want to follow the Lord must know the word of the Lord. This means that we must grow in the grace of Jesus and in the knowledge of knowing Him. This is why our church studies the Bible in Adult Sunday School. The early church, full of the work of the Holy Spirit, was a church that eagerly taught and learned the word of the Lord. It was also a church that obeyed the apostles' authority to teach the word of the Lord. The church should strive to teach and learn the word of the Lord.

Therefore, we must pray for those who teach us the Word. And we must pray for those who want to learn the Word of God. Learning the word of the Lord is not just to increase our knowledge or cultivate our culture. Through the process of teaching and learning the Word, it is to observe the amazing work of the Holy Spirit and to fully experience the grace of Jesus Christ. I hope that we will experience the grace of the Lord through the process of teaching and learning the Word.

Then, what was the second basis for the growth of the early church?

Second, the church grows through fellowship between the saints.

It is to apply the word of the Lord to our lives and to share grace with each other. The word of the Lord is enriched through fellowship. So a German Lutheran pastor Dietrich Bonhoeffer said, "We all need each other."

In the church, some people may have strong faith and some may be weak. Those with weak faith should be able to grow their faith through fellowship with those with strong faith. Even those with strong faith must be able to experience the riches of the Lord's grace through fellowship with those with weak faith. So the Holy Spirit told us to be one body with Christ.

The Greek word Koinonia (κοινωνία), which refers to concepts such as fellowship, joint participation, the share which one has in anything, a gift jointly contributed, a collection, a contribution. As such, the ecclesial community exists not only for a personal relationship with God, but also for intimate relationships with brothers and sisters within the community.

Due to the long-lasting pandemic of covid-19, there are many inconveniences and difficulties in meeting and fellowship with each other, but we hope that our church will grow into a warm community through prayer for each other and giving comfort to each other.

Then, what was the third basis for the growth of the early church?

Third, the church grows by the breaking of bread.

The breaking of bread refers to the Lord's Communion. All who participate in Communion make a renewed decision to the sacrifice and death of the Lord. In addition, through the process of participating in the Lord's Communion, we come to know that all who participate in it are equal and without discrimination before Christ.

Problems of discrimination and inequality exist everywhere in the world. Differences in religion, country, language, skin color, and culture always bring tension and prejudice to people. However, we must not forget that Christians are all sinners in the presence of the Lord's bread and wine and are saved



by the Lord's grace. Many of the problems in our society cannot be solved in a short time. But, it doesn't mean we have to give up effort for solving problems. Instead, with a clear identity as a Christian, the church can play a role as the light and salt of the world for solving many problems of our society. The Lord wants us to do it well. So, what was the fourth basis for the growth of the early church?

Fourth, the church grows through prayer.

The church grows by setting a time and continually praying for neighbors and problems. It is not easy for us to set a time for someone and pray regularly and in the long run. It is possible because of the experience of the Lord's grace and devotion and love for others. By the way, the members of the early church were people who tried to pray. The members of the early church were a community that gathered together and made an effort to intercede for neighbors. The early church was a community that interceded not only for themselves but also for the world. A life of gathering together to pray is a very important part of the Christian community. Prayer leads us to the Holy Spirit community.

The early church worked hard to learn the Word, have fellowship among the saints, participate in the sacrament together, confess that all are sinners, and gather together to pray for intercession.

We must strive for learning the Word of God well, have fellowship with saints, realize the right meaning of the Holy Communion, and grow into a community that intercedes together.

So, what can we do to fulfill our mission as witnesses of Jesus Christ?

2. What we must prepare for fulfilling our mission as a witness of Christ?

1) Discipleship must be trained in everyday life.

Mature faith does not pop out quickly. It requires a long time of faith training. That is why we must learn the word of the Lord eagerly, gather eagerly, and strive for prayer.

2) We must train our faith so that we do not lose our faith in the face of difficulties.

When difficulties come to us, what we need to check should be able to focus on whether or not we trust in the Lord and not, rather than focusing on the cause or why this happened. This personal faith training is necessary for us to fulfill our mission as witnesses.

3) We need training to put our faith into practice.

The church is a place where we learn the Word of God when we are at peace and learn to strive for prayer. Also, it is a place to train to endure and overcome with faith when times are difficult. Furthermore, the church is a place to put our faith into practice. In order to fulfill our mission as witnesses of Jesus Christ, we must practice faith.

What I am grateful for is that our church is doing well with these things. Pray that serving our neighbors through the grace of the Lord will produce greater fruit.

Conclusion: What is life as a witness of Christ?

Now let's summarize today's sermon. Just as a healthy individual can build a healthy community, a healthy church community helps one become a healthy Christian. Therefore, we must strive to achieve a healthy church community and the kingdom of God where we live together. The church is not a place where only individual salvation and personal blessings are emphasized.

Through the church, the Lord wants to bless not only brothers and sisters within the church but also neighbors outside the church. Furthermore, we must stand as mature children of God, Disciples of Christ, and witnesses of Christ. I pray that such blessings will overflow in our church.

