

THE FIRST CHURCH

- **BUILT ON REVELATION**

In Matthew 16:15, Jesus asked His disciples, *“Who do you say that I am?”* Peter answered, *“You are the Christ, the Son of the living God”* (v.16). This was a revelation from heaven (v.17), and it was on this ‘rock’ of revelation of who Jesus is, that Jesus said, *“I will build My church”* (v.18).

The church is being built by Jesus!
The church belongs to Jesus!

- **THE PROMISE OF JESUS**

Before His ascension, Jesus had told His disciples *“Behold, I send the Promise of My Father upon you; but tarry in the city of Jerusalem until you are endued with power from on high”* (Luke 24:49).

“But you shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be witnesses to Me in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth” (Acts 1:8).

The Promise was the empowering of the Holy Spirit, to be witnesses to Jesus.

- **BIRTHED IN PRAYER**

After the ascension of Jesus, the disciples, with other brethren [120 in all] gathered in *“the upper room”* where they *“continued with one accord in prayer and supplication”* (Acts 1:13-14).

During this time of prayer, they were led by the Spirit to appoint a replacement apostle for Judas as *“Scripture had to be fulfilled”* (v.16). There had to be 12 apostles of the Lamb (Rev.21:14).

Peter stated that the one who was chosen to replace Judas had to have *“accompanied us all the time that the Lord Jesus went in and out among us, beginning from the baptism of John to that day when He was taken up from us”* (v.21-22).

Under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, Matthias was chosen and *“he was numbered with the eleven”* (Acts 1:26).

- **EMPOWERED BY THE HOLY SPIRIT**

The 120 continued in prayer and supplication. *“When the Day of Pentecost had fully come, they were all with one accord in one place”* (Acts 2:1), the Holy Spirit came, just as Jesus had promised, with signs and manifestations. *“They were all filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance”* (Acts 2:4).

Many who were in the city gathered together when they heard the sound *“And when this sound occurred, the multitude came together, and were confused, because everyone heard them speak in his own language”* v.6.

- **RELEASED TO PREACH**

Being empowered by the Holy Spirit gave the apostles boldness to preach. *“But Peter, standing up with the eleven, raised his voice and said ...”* (Acts 2:14).

Peter preached powerfully to the gathered crowd, using Old Testament Scriptures to prove who Jesus was. Finally, he said *“Therefore let all the house of Israel know assuredly that God has made this Jesus, whom you crucified, both Lord and Christ”* v.36.

“Now when they heard this, they were cut to the heart, and said to Peter and the rest of the apostles, ‘Men and brethren, what shall we do?’” v.37.

- **HOW TO ENTER**

Peter had the answer for those who were ‘cut to the heart’. He said, *“Repent, and let every one of you be baptised in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins; and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit”* (v.38).

There were four steps:

- i. **Repent** – have a change of mind
- ii. **Believe** – the preaching of the word
- iii. **Be baptised** – in the name of Jesus, for the remission of sins
- iv. **Receive** – the gift of the Holy Spirit

Peter continued *“For the promise is to you and to your children, and to all who are afar off, as many as the Lord our God will call”* (v.39).

These are the foundational steps that all need to take to be born again and enter into the church of the living God (1Tim.3:15).

These foundations are mentioned in Hebrew 6:1-2 as *“elementary principles of Christ”* that need to be laid if believers are to *“go on to perfection [maturity]”*.

“Then those who gladly received his word were baptised, and that day about three thousand souls were added to them” (Acts 2:41). Those who heard the word preached obeyed Peter’s instructions.

This was the birth of the first church!

- **THE FIRST WORKS**

The three thousand who had been added, together with the hundred and twenty, *“Continued steadfastly in the apostles’ doctrine and fellowship, in the breaking of bread, and in prayers” (Acts 2:42).*

There were four practices of the early church that they continued steadfastly in:

- i. The apostles’ doctrine

This is the teaching of the apostles. Jesus commanded the apostles in **Matthew 28:20** to go and make disciples of all nations, *“teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you.”* The apostles were faithful to pass on what Jesus had taught them.

- ii. Fellowship

Greek: *koinonia* [S.C. #2842] – *‘sharing, unity, close association, partnership, participation, communion, contributory help’.*

This kind of fellowship is only brought about by the Holy Spirit. In *koinonia* the individual shares in common an intimate bond of fellowship with the rest of the Christian society, it cements the believers to the Lord Jesus and to each other {Word Wealth SFLB at Acts 2:42}

- iii. Breaking of Bread

Referred to as the Lord’s Table or Communion. It is evident from the Scripture that the early church broke bread daily and in houses.

Jesus had demonstrated the Communion on the night He was betrayed when He took bread and broke it saying *“Take eat this is My body”*; and took the cup saying *“this is My blood of the new covenant”* (Matt.26::26-28).

Paul says in 1 Corinthians 11:28 *“as often as you eat this bread and drink this cup, you proclaim the Lord’s death till He comes.”*

Remembering Jesus at the Table of the Lord was a daily practice of the first church.

- iv. Prayers

This was corporate prayer. Believers gathering together to pray. The first church prayed for boldness to speak the words of Jesus and make Him known (Acts 4:23-31).

This is a vital part of church life. People coming together to seek the face of God, hear from God, pray the will of God, pray according to the word of God.

This kind of prayer will release the light of Christ into a situation; release the anointing; release revelation from God’s word; release salvation to the lost.

- **THE OUTWORKING**

Acts 2:43-47

Signs & wonders

“Then fear came upon every soul, and many wonders and signs were done through the apostles” (v.43)

Sharing & caring

“Now all who believed were together, and had all things in common, and sold their possessions and goods, and divided them among all, as anyone had need” (v.44-45)

Meeting together daily

“So continuing daily with one accord in the temple” (v.46a)

Breaking bread from house to house

“and breaking bread from house to house, they ate their food with gladness and simplicity of heart” (v.46b)

Having favour in the community

“praising God and having favour with all the people” (v.47a)

The Lord added to their number

“And the Lord added to the church daily those who were being saved” (47b)

- **GROWING UP IN ALL THINGS**

The five-fold ministry gift given by Christ

“And He Himself gave some to be apostles, some prophets, some evangelists, and some pastors and teachers” Eph.4:11

God’s intention is for His church to come to maturity (Eph.4:12-16).

The church is to *“grow up in all things into Him who is the Head – Christ” (v.15)*

The church that was birthed on the day of Pentecost is to grow into a *“glorious church”* in the earth (Eph.5:27)

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