

1/14/24 - SERIES: FOR EVERYONE (#6)

PASTOR ROB

Our Church
vs.

First Church
vs.

God's Intent

'Great Cause'
Promotes
Community

- Recap: What is the Church supposed to look like?.....is it at all consistent with God's intent? We're looking at Acts 2...which is a picture of the very first Church. Pastor Rob reminds us of his prior analogy: a precious silver coin with two parallel, concurrent and compatible sides: 1. Community.....to help us help each other grow in faith; 2. Great Cause.....for us to reach the whole world and promote faith in Him. Since that very first Church in Jerusalem, that seed has expanded/grown around the entire globe. So last week, sermon focused on 'Community'...this week...the 'Great Cause'. Note: as a Community, we are more of a family (ie. all children of God); as relates to the Cause, we are more of a team. The greek word "koinonia" expresses the tension of the two-sided coin...where Christians reach a state of fellowship and community BECAUSE of this like-minded, united-in-purpose Cause.

- Last week, we reviewed Act 2: 42-44 which is all about community, caring for each other, unity in Christ.....now, Verse 45 says let's sell everything!

- Acts 2:45-47 - - And they were selling their possessions and belongings and distributing the proceeds to all, as any had need. (46) And day by day, attending the temple together and breaking bread in their homes, they received their food with glad and generous hearts. (47) praising God and having favor with all the people. And the Lord added to their number day by day those who were being saved.

- So, are we required to be socialists, even communists??? No!!! First, they still had possessions (eg. their homes).....secondly, this is a 'story'.....there's no commands.....no imperatives.....this early Church was simply, by grace and freedom, *compelled*!! Why? JESUS CHANGES EVERYTHING! We respond to Jesus' life, teachings and sacrifice by doing positive things! We downplay material things which pale to eternity with Christ! Example: Tithing...which we gladly do and are 'compelled'....is counter-culture in today's world!

- God's Spirit is with our Church today....just as it was with the Church of 2,000 years ago. Illustration: how we funded (in excess!) the Mexican Seminary in less than four weeks.....final #: \$369,380!!! This is NOT about rules.....we do what we do out of love for Jesus!!! Pastor Rob speaks of how he was 'compelled' in his own life story.....and we all have the same Great Cause.....Jesus!

- Verse 46....'day by day'.....they were devoted.....to community AND the Cause. They made their presence and growing numbers known at Solomon's Portico (the east side of Herod's Temple)....with perhaps exponential effects.....miracles...direct prayer with God...etc. Again, 'devoted'!!! Likewise, we are devoted today.....our Church's dynamic community presence has powerful effects.

- 5 things a Church (over the ages and now) should do: 1. Living intentionally (like the coin); 2. Teaching the Scriptures; 3. Fellowship/caring for one another; 4.

JESUS Changes
Everything!
Then & Now!

Purpose/Devotion --- Not
Rules

5 Church
Purposes

Prayers and worship of God; 5. Devotion to making Jesus' name great (the 'Cause').

Faith
Produces
Joy!

- Why illness, suffering, injustice....should we thereby turn our backs on God? No!!!!....we walk forward.....that's called faith! We make the effort (however difficult)...we devote ourselves to it.... and we are supported by God's grace in making His name great.resulting in joy. That's what Jesus did on the cross....for us!!!

Confront/Over-
come the
Culture -

- National polls reflect about 35% of people look favorably on Christian churches...our Church shows us, though, that its possible to extend/reach out to portions of the 65% in favorable ways (devotion, service, unconditional favors, etc.). Our pursuit of the 'Cause' CAN result--even counter-culturally-- in favor! **JESUS IS OUR GREATEST EXAMPLE!**

Pursue 'The
Cause' &
Imitate
Jesus!

- In the early Jerusalem, people also recognized the compulsion, devotion, generosity, modeling and unity of the Church.
- Then and now, you couldn't deny the presence of Jesus amongst us!! We are now all priests with access to God....The coin is finally dropping! The Church is not a building....its about people and their devotion and about eternity! Its about the Cause and the ultimate impact on the entire world.....and its growing! Because Jesus changed our lives!

Producing A
Growing Church
In Him!

- Pastor Rob's Mom/Dad married 59 years.....posed question to his Dad "what would you say to a Christian as to why stay involved in local Church ".....his Dad cited Hebrews 10: 25: 'Don't forsake gathering together with other Believers'. "Then he reminded me of a beautiful illustration:"... (image of wood burning campfire on screen)....the Church is a lot like a camp fire- -fire can change the world....it brings life- -light- -warmth- - a beacon- - that symbolizes our Church. Added imagery: a single log, by itself, will burn out; the logs burning together will feed on itself and grow.....brighter and brighter....taking fiery logs out to start new fires.....metaphorically: the Cause producing our growing Church in Christ.
- Again, see the last words of Verse 47:.....'and the Lord added to their number day by day those who were being saved.'

JESUS IS FOR EVERYONE!!!!!!