

Last week I spoke on the importance of understanding the attributes of the church, and mentioned these basic ones: Unity, Pillar and Ground of the Truth, Holiness, Singularity [Only one church].

This morning I would like to speak of our Mother, the church. She is the bride of Christ, and is also the mother of all the people of God, called to nurture and bring them up to the maturity and perfection of the saints.

It was not a mob that was collected in the Upper Room on the days preceding Pentecost. It says that the eleven apostles, whose names are given, lived in that upper chamber.

I am not certain that all 120 stayed there all the time, day and night. I expect that the apostles were there constantly, and perhaps all the rest, but I would not be surprised if many of them came and went. But the basic attributes of the church were present, even more so than what I preached last week. I would like to consider these things:

- I. Unity: there was only one church and there were no divisions among them.
  - A. What was the basis of this unity: I think we find it in Ac 2:42 “And they continued steadfastly in the apostles’ doctrine and fellowship, and in breaking of bread, and in prayers.”
  - B. The unity that they had before Pentecost continued after Pentecost, and it was in the apostles’ doctrine and fellowship, and in breaking of bread, and in prayers.
  - C. This unity is commanded for the saints: the doctrine includes both the Gospel and the Government of the church.
- II. Order: Government.
  - A. They had a way of making decisions, under the leadership of the apostles, who had been appointed by Christ as the leaders of the church; See Eph. 2:19ff.
  - B. Peter took the lead in this, but only presiding; the idea of a papacy is far removed from this. Jesus gave special pre-eminence to Peter, but not as a bishop over the whole church and over all the apostles. Peter also preached on the Day of Pentecost and preached to Cornelius, the first gentile converts; but he wasn’t the only, or the chief preacher; it just means that Christ by His Spirit was guiding His church as He had promised.
  - C. They appointed a replacement for Judas Iscariot in an orderly way.
    1. They nominated two, probably by the apostles.
    2. They cast lots, wanting to leave the decision to God. Pr 16:33 The lot is cast into the lap; but the whole disposing thereof is of the LORD.
    3. This was also under inspiration: Verse 17. “Part” means “lot” or inheritance, from the days of the dividing of the inheritance of Israel in Canaan.
    4. Judas was one of the twelve and had an inheritance in the kingdom, but had forfeited it by his treason. So a successor had to be chosen to complete the inheritance.
    5. This was done by lot. “Lot” still has the idea of a piece of land that is owned by right.
    6. This was not a vote by the people or by the Apostles, for that would have nullified the idea that the decision was left to God.

## III. There was preaching and declaration of the truth of Scripture: vs. 16-22

- A. There is no church without an ordained and faithful ministry. Eph. 4, in order for the church to grow up. The church began to grow up under the ministry of Peter, making a responsible decision under prayer, committing it to God.
1. This would set the pattern for all the ages to come. The church would pray and nominate; and elections would be held. Why not lots, because we are not choosing an apostle, which must be chosen by God himself. The completion of spiritual Israel.
  2. Why not Paul? He was apostle to the Gentiles; this is Israel and it was fitting that this be done at the first, as the first order of business.
  3. From this embryo proceeding would come growth, maturity, and more in the days to come.
- B. The Apostles were special witnesses of the Resurrection.
1. They were a chosen group, from the beginning. Since John's baptism and the ministry of Christ. Vs.21,22. VERSE 26
  2. The office was a bishopric: an overseer. The apostles were ordained by Christ to this work; they would sit on twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel. Not literal thrones, but given authority to teach and establish the new Israel of God, to which the gentiles would be added.
  3. This included ministry and apostleship. Vs. 25
- C. Why the resurrection:
1. All are witnesses, but the Apostles preeminent.
  2. Resurrection must be preached along with the passion and crucifixion.
  3. Our redemption is unto newness of life.
  4. The church is governed from heaven by the risen and enthroned Christ.
  5. He sends the Spirit to defend us, order, establish justice and equity, destroying the power of the devil.
  6. The apostles were chief, but not the only witnesses.
  7. Go in and out. Vs. 21; I Kings 3:7ff. Solomon used this phrase. The sheep go in and out under the leadership of Christ. This speaks of order and purpose.

## IV. There was a roll of members, by name. verse 14, 15.

- A. This also continued. Ac 2:41 Ac 2:47 Ac 5:14 Ac 11:24
- B. 1Ti 5:9 Let not a widow be taken into the number under threescore years old, having been the wife of one man,
- C. Ac 6:1 And in those days, when the number of the disciples was multiplied, there arose a murmuring of the Grecians against the Hebrews, because their widows were neglected in the daily ministrations.
- D. Ac 6:7 And the word of God increased; and the number of the disciples multiplied in Jerusalem greatly; and a great company of the priests were obedient to the faith.
- E. Ac 16:5 And so were the churches established in the faith, and increased in number daily.
- F. Probably among those added to the number were the 500 to whom Christ appeared after the resurrection. 1Co 15:6 After that, he was seen of above five hundred brethren at once; of whom the greater part remain unto this present, but some are fallen asleep.

G. Women were also in the number, vs. 14. “Brethren” means relatives. Ac 5:14 And believers were the more added to the Lord, multitudes both of men and women.)

V. Finally, it was a place of prayer: vs. 14, 24.

A. For guidance.

B. For the Holy Spirit.

1. They already had a portion, for Christ had said “receive ye the Holy Spirit’

2. But what came was something special that we will see as we continue.

C. God’s house is a house of prayer for we cannot order our affairs aright without the Holy Ghost.

D. Jesus said that our Father would give us the Holy Ghost if we would ask Him:

Luke 11:

2 And he said unto them, When ye pray, say, Our Father which art in heaven, Hallowed be thy name. Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done, as in heaven, so in earth.

3 Give us day by day our daily bread.

4 And forgive us our sins; for we also forgive every one that is indebted to us. And lead us not into temptation; but deliver us from evil.

5 And he said unto them, Which of you shall have a friend, and shall go unto him at midnight, and say unto him, Friend, lend me three loaves;

6 For a friend of mine in his journey is come to me, and I have nothing to set before him?

7 And he from within shall answer and say, Trouble me not: the door is now shut, and my children are with me in bed; I cannot rise and give thee.

8 I say unto you, Though he will not rise and give him, because he is his friend, yet because of his importunity he will rise and give him as many as he needeth.

9 And I say unto you, Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you.

10 For every one that asketh receiveth; and he that seeketh findeth; and to him that knocketh it shall be opened.

11 If a son shall ask bread of any of you that is a father, will he give him a stone? or if he ask a fish, will he for a fish give him a serpent?

12 Or if he shall ask an egg, will he offer him a scorpion?

13 If ye then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children: how much more shall your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to them that ask him?

Application:

1. We will not come short of anything, if we give ourselves to the Scriptures and follow them faithfully. They are a complete and perfect work of the Spirit and will make the man of god fully furnished for every good work.

2. Let us pray diligently alone and with each other for the gift of the Holy Spirit:

a. For strength for the day: fathers, mothers, children, officers, etc.

- b. For grace for the fruit of the Spirit to be seen in our lives: Love, joy, peace, long suffering, meekness, humility, faith etc.
  - c. Christ is the vine, we are the branches, the life is the Holy Spirit who is given to us by Christ, vivify us, making us live fully in all spiritual abundance.
3. Let us thank God for His wonderful gift of the church, our mother, the bride of Christ, which nurtures us and feeds us and comforts us and encourages us.

Amen and Amen. God bless you.