



WEST COLUMBIA
CHURCH OF CHRIST

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“every disciple that is perfect shall be as his master.” Luke 6:40b

THE LOVE OF THE EARLY CHURCH

"Then fear came upon every soul, and many wonders and signs were done through the apostles. 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. So continuing daily with one accord in the temple, and breaking bread from house to house, they ate their food with gladness and simplicity of heart, praising God and having favor with all the people. And the Lord added to the church daily those who were being saved"

- Acts 2:43-47

Luke records that the apostles performed many miracles (by the Spirit's power). The result of these signs and wonders upon the people was fear (i.e., a healthy respect and reverence). There was no doubt in their minds regarding the genuineness of the miracles being performed. The people knew that God was with these men and enabled them to perform such mighty acts and preach a divine message.

Luke also paints a beautiful image of the fellowship that existed in the early church. Note the following seven descriptive phrases:

1. "All who believed were together" - They were united in thought and action (cf. Rom. 15:6). It is likely that many of them lived together in temporary quarters or in the homes of natives of Jerusalem.
2. "Had all things in common" - They did not consider their earthly possessions as just their own but were willing to share with their brethren (cf. Acts 4:32).
3. "Sold their possessions and goods" - They were willing to sell what they had that they might distribute the proceeds to needy fellow believers (e.g., Acts 4:34-37).

- Continued on page 3

NO IN BETWEEN IN 2014!

THE BULLETIN—VOLUME 40, NUMBER 42 October 19, 2014

SERMONS THIS SUNDAY:

AM: T J Bolen— Take up your cross daily, Luke 9:23

PM: T J Bolen— Not ignorant of his schemes, 2 Corinthians 2:5-11

“And God is able to make all grace abound toward you; that ye, always having all sufficiency in all things, may abound to every good work.” - 2 Corinthians 9:8

How do you say, “Thank you!”? - NO IN BETWEEN IN 2014!

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NEW TESTAMENT
CHRISTIANITY

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SERVICES

Sunday 10 AM Bible Study
Sunday 11 AM, 6 PM Assembly
Wednesday 7 PM Bible Study
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Bible Classes for all ages

*Informal Bible Study
Everyone Welcome!*
Bring your Bible questions
Saturdays 3 pm

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“PRAY FOR ONE ANOTHER” - James 5:16

REMEMBER IN PRAYER: *Margaret Herring, Stephanie Rigney, Dorothy Gray and family, Pat Joyner, Gwen Pittman, Anna Porter, also Richard Ramkinson, Wilson Burton.*

- **Anna Porter** is having great difficulty sleeping. Pray she finds relief and strength.
- **Floyd and Connie Richbourg** request prayers for a special friend of theirs, **Don Cothran**, who was to have back surgery.
- **Keith Carter** requests prayers for his sister, **Carolyn**.
- Remember also, **Margaret Herring, Stephanie Rigney, Gwen Pittman and Anna Porter** (send cards), **Dorothy Gray, Margaret Gamble (Jones’ sister), Floyd Richbourg and Carolyn Stidham**.
- Remember to pray for and send cards to those we’ve not seen for awhile.
- Pray also that we all grow in **faith, hope, love, humility, zeal, mercy, knowledge**.

"Wait on the Lord: be of good courage, and he shall strengthen thine heart: wait, I say, on the Lord." - Psalms 27:14

“AND THEY CONTINUED STEADFASTLY” - Acts 2:42

- **Bible study, Saturdays, 3pm, informal, bring friends and your Bible questions.**

"Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven." - Matthew 5:16

NO IN BETWEEN IN 2014!

Editors note: In this bulletin’s article, *The Love of the Early Church*, item 7, “simplicity of heart” does not mean a simple meal. It means “smoothness” of heart, without contention or difference—things to bump against one another ... they got along and fit together well—being in Christ.

“Who will render to every man according to his deeds: To them who by patient continuance in well doing seek for glory and honour and immortality, eternal life:” - Romans 2:6,7

Sun AM Sermon— *Take up your cross daily, Luke 9:23*

There is no problem with seeing a cross and being reminded of the blessings provided because of what Jesus accomplished on the cross. However, more needs to come to mind when thinking of the cross. The cross would not have produced a joyful image in the first century. What was Jesus instructing His disciples to do?

1. The Cross was the most horrible instrument of death.
2. Deny himself, by taking up this instrument of death.
3. If anyone wishes to come after me, they must take cross daily.

“And he said to *them* all, If any *man* will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow me.” - Luke 9:23

THE LOVE OF THE EARLY CHURCH (continued from page 1)

4. **"Divided them among all as anyone had need"** - Those Christians in Jerusalem who had a genuine need were provided for by their brethren who had means (cf. I John 3:17). One might rightly ask: "Why was the need for benevolence among these Christians so great that it compelled some to sell possessions and property?" Although no specific answer is revealed, it seems reasonable to suggest that many of those who were converted to Christ on Pentecost had come from many nations and had planned to be in Jerusalem for a short time during Pentecost. However, after being converted to Christ, they remained in Jerusalem much longer than initially planned and consequently had needs arise for which they had not prepared. This situation presented a unique opportunity for Christians to voluntarily help other Christians. The **voluntary** nature of this sharing among all must be stressed (cf. Acts 5:4). They were not practicing communism, as some have alleged. Neither the church nor the government owned or demanded all the possessions of Christians in this situation. No one was forcing an **equal** distribution of economic goods to all. In fact, there is no indication that the distribution was equal at all. Rather, some generously volunteered to help others meet their basic **needs** which was a wonderful way to show their love and unselfishness (cf. James 2:15,16; John 13:34,35). In that era, benevolence of this kind among Jews was not common and was practically unheard of among Gentiles. Those who witnessed these acts of love would have been favorably impacted. No wonder the church grew so rapidly initially!
5. **"Continuing daily with one accord in the temple"** - They were together daily in the temple (presumably for prayer and to receive encouragement and further teaching from the apostles). Their unity is again reiterated by Luke.
6. **"Breaking bread from house to house"** - The wording here is different from 2:42. It appears that this refers to common meals which they shared together in their homes.
7. **"They ate their food with gladness and simplicity of heart"** - How did they eat their meals together? With abundant joy and delight! Their meals would have been simple, no doubt, but they were content with what they had (cf. Heb. 13:5,6).

The love of these Christians toward each other is plain to see, is it not? These followers of Christ praised God, and, as a result of their conduct, were viewed with approval by the people of Jerusalem (cf. Matt. 5:16). Eventually, this "honeymoon period" would end and the Christians would be scattered abroad due to persecution (cf. Acts 8:1ff).

- **Stephen R. Bradd**, Gospel preacher, Clinton Illinois