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It would be impossible to throw down on paper all the additional insights and applications that Acts 2 provides. Then passage has layer upon layer of theological meaning. I guess I'll have to preach that chapter again and again in the years to come. (Peter's sermon is especially a theological goldmine!) In the meantime, here are some random thoughts that I left out of the sermon:

1. It's important to observe the *attitude* of the new covenant community, as it textures the various activities they engage in, recorded in v. 42. V. 46 says that they ate together with glad and generous hearts. There is an overwhelming note of joy.

Earlier in the chapter the disciples were accused of being drunk. Of course they weren't. But in another sense, they were. They were drunk with the new wine of the Spirit (cf. Eph. 5:18ff). The Spirit filled them with gladness and sincerity.

This joy in community and daily life was attractive – thus, they found favor in the eyes of outsiders (v. 47). The Pentecostal church is shot through with joy – a shared, infectious, contagious joy. It was the joy of knowing Christ and one another. It was the joy that comes from the Spirit (cf. the fruit of the Spirit in Gal. 5).

When all the ingredients in v. 42 are in the mix of the local church, there is a vibrant joy that wins the favor even of unbelievers. In Acts 2, the public face of the church is smiling. We need to keep that in mind – the world has seen too many grumpy Christians and too many dour church communities.

2. At the end of the chapter, it says “the Lord added to their number daily those who were being saved.” Those who received the word.....did not got their own way! They were joined to the community.

Obviously, then, the church is the place of salvation. To be saved is to be incorporated into the people of God. To be saved is to be added to the body of Christ.

Note: *The Lord* adds to the church. The church is not a merely human organization or club. It is God's new humanity. This is why salvation and church membership are so closely aligned.

That is not to say that church membership guarantees salvation. You are grafted in by faith, and you can be broken out of you don't persevere (cf. Rom. 11). But *ordinarily*, the plan of salvation includes being plugged into the covenant community. Thus: *To be committed to Christ is to be committed to his church.*

But this is a growing church. It is not stagnant; it is a community on the move. Obviously, church growth is in God's hands. But *ordinarily* a healthy church will be growing at some kind of pace.

The church at the end of Acts 2 does not yet have a full sense of her mission. That will come as the story of Acts unfolds. But already, we can say that the church has developed an outward facing ministry. The church mixed with the surrounding culture (e.g., still going to the temple, even though she is the new temple). This interface provided opportunities to show and tell the good news of Jesus' lordship.

It might look from v. 42 that this was a community totally turned inward, turned in on itself. But that was not the case. From the day of Pentecost onward, the church had a deep awareness of her mission, even though it would need to grow and deepen.

So now we can say: *A commitment to Christ is not only a commitment to his church, but a commitment to the mission of Christ through the church.*

This follows the pattern we saw in the sermon: Jesus' baptism launched his public mission; the baptism of the church at Pentecost launches her on her mission. To be a Christian is to be a part of this community, and to be a part of this community is to share in this mission.

Further, I think Acts 2 gives us some hints as to how the outward facing ministry of the church meshes with its inward facing ministry. (This is like asking: How does evangelism relate to discipleship?) The church's mission flows out of her common life together. That's why a passage that describes the interior life of the church closes with an account of her remarkable growth. *The best external witness is the quality of our interior community.* If we live together in the way v. 42-47 describe, devoting ourselves to the apostolic body of teaching, devoting ourselves to one another (including the out-poor, so that every need is met), breaking the bread together faithfully so that eucharistic worship flows out into hospitality, and praying together regularly, we will find favor in the eyes of outsiders (We'll get persecuted as well, as Acts shows – but that does not negate the point!)

The way the church reaches the culture is by being a distinctively biblical culture in her own community. The only way the church can be relevant is by being different, for only then does she have something to say that the world can't find elsewhere. That's exactly the opposite of what you hear today in many evangelical circles. People say that for the church to grow, she needs to find out what people want/like and give it to them. She needs to market herself. She needs to accommodate herself.

That strategy may make the church popular, but it will never make her powerful! No—what the church needs more than anything, now as always, is to live as a Spirit-indwelt people, as God's new temple, new humanity, new community.

3. The OT background to the Feast of Pentecost should not be missed. I only made brief allusion to this at the beginning of the sermon. Leviticus 23 indicates that Pentecost celebrated God's gifts in the ongoing harvest. Pentecost is a harvest festival, falling between the beginning of the harvest (Firstfruits, during Passover) and the end of the

harvest (the Feast of Tabernacles). [It should be noted, though, that Pentecost was also considered a kind of firstfruits festival in some passages.]

Pentecost comes “in between,” which makes sense. We live in between the first and final comings of Jesus, the beginning and end of the harvest of the nations. Thus, Pentecost celebrates the coming of the Spirit, who is given to fill the gap between the two comings of Jesus. The Spirit enables the church to fulfill her mission in the time of Christ’s absence. The Spirit is both the firstfruits of the harvest and the guarantee of the full harvest (cf. Paul’s terminology for the Spirit).

Pentecost also included offering God leavened bread, as a sign of the growth and maturation of the kingdom and the labors of the people. God accepts the waved offering as a sign that he accepts the fruits of our work.

Pentecost also included the poor. The instructions regarding the feast in Lev. 23 include commands to care for the needy in Israel (e.g., gleaning). Pentecost is harvest time, a time for everyone is to feast together and no one is to go hungry. Of course, this gets worked out at the end of Acts 2, where everyone is sharing their possessions with those in need.