

# Being Christ Centered

## Acts 2:22-41

Video: This is Church

Church that is mobile, active, accountable/shared

Acts = see different images of what the first church looked like,  
= what makes a healthy church

### A healthy church is...

- Not numbers, but growing
- Not economics, some of the most healthy churches are the poorest – depend upon God more
- Fastest growing churches from conversion growth = Asia 10x pr

Acts = Healthy church is

1. Spirit empowered (last week)
2. Peter = Christ is at the center – preaching, teaching, purpose, ministries...obvious? Not so. Distracted by activities, worry, music, ... **Christ at centre of activities, thinking, attitudes**

***"I am a historian. I am not a believer. But I must confess that as a historian, this penniless preacher from Nazareth is irrevocably the very center of history. Jesus Christ is easily the most dominant figure in all history!" ~ H.G. Wells***

- *If an unbeliever recognizes the significance of Jesus, how much more should we believers?*
- *Problem is we get distracted and Jesus is sometimes shelved in favour of focusing on building projects, worship styles, activities, policies, self interest groups, finances...*
  - *In a healthy church, nothing can replace Jesus*

***Peter's message Acts 2 teaches us that church needs to have Jesus at the center of all it does = a Christ Centered Church!***

**A Christ Centered Church sees Jesus as:**

1. Accredited by God (vs. 22)

## By miracles – proved Jesus sent by God

- Early church days, no one denied the miracles of Jesus
  - Mathew 12:22ff – “it is by demons he drives out demons”
  - even strong arguments vs. Jesus by Jewish scholars did not deny the miracles He did but rather attributed it to Him being a sorcerer
  - Illust. Morgan’s school religion “Miracles?”

**1 John 5:9-12** - We accept human testimony, but God’s testimony is greater because it is the testimony of God, which he has given about his Son. <sup>10</sup>Whoever believes in the Son of God accepts this testimony. Whoever does not believe God has made him out to be a liar, because they have not believed the testimony God has given about his Son. <sup>11</sup>And this is the testimony: **God has given us eternal life, and this life is in his Son.** <sup>12</sup>**Whoever has the Son has life; whoever does not have the Son of God does not have life.**

- God testified about Jesus by showing His power through him
  - **Miraculous power still today – greatest example is giving sinful deserving death the gift of life – overcoming sin, death**
  - God is constantly doing the miraculous – we get distracted, too busy sometimes to notice
  - The Miraculous - Pray for it! Anticipate it! Look for it! – Testify to it when you see it!

## **2. Purposed by God (vs. 23)**

**Ransom – God’s purpose = to pay our ransom by offering Jesus**

- **Movies – held captive for payment, no pay=death,**
  - **If Christ is not at the centre – we reject that payment, choose death**
- **God’s purpose = to reconcile people back to God - Hearts of evil men but also the plan and purpose of God - they accomplished what God had planned**

**Colossian 1:18-23** - And **he is the head of the body**, the church; he is the beginning and the firstborn from among the dead, so that in everything he might have the supremacy.<sup>19</sup> For God was pleased to have all his fullness dwell in him,<sup>20</sup> and through him to **reconcile** to himself all things, whether things on earth or things in heaven, by **making peace** through his blood, shed on the cross.<sup>21</sup> Once you were alienated from God and **were enemies** in your minds because of [g] your evil behavior.<sup>22</sup> But now he has **reconciled** you by Christ’s physical body through death to present you **holy in his sight**, without blemish and **free from accusation** - <sup>23</sup> if you continue in your faith, established and firm, and do not move from the hope held out in the gospel. This is the gospel that you heard and that has been proclaimed to every creature under heaven, and of which I, Paul, have become a servant.

- **Live as peaceful people – not fighting against God but working for/with God – stop rebelling!**
- **Live as free people – no longer does sin have power over us! No longer condemned! – joy!**

### **3. Raised by God (vs.24, 31-32)**

**Witnesses (v.32) of the resurrection of Jesus**

**2 Timothy 1:8-10** - So do not be ashamed of the testimony about our Lord or of me his prisoner. Rather, join with me in suffering for the gospel, by the power of God. <sup>9</sup> **He has saved us and called us to a holy life**—not because of anything we have done but because of his own purpose and grace. This **grace was given us in Christ Jesus** before the beginning of time, <sup>10</sup> but it has now been **revealed through the appearing of our Savior, Christ Jesus, who has destroyed death and has brought life and immortality to light through the gospel.**

- **Jesus resurrection = reveals His grace to those who trust God**
- **God's plan all along was to raised Jesus back to life = destroyed death and brought eternal life to people**
- **God raising Jesus gives us reason for hope - eternal life by the grace of God**
  - **Live as committed people – Can survey 50% = “regular”**
  - **Live as hopeful – realizing this is only a brief stoop on the way!**
    - **Less emphasis on life now**
  - **Live as holy people – set apart for His use. How can God use me?**

#### **4. Exalted by God (vs. 33-36)**

##### **Lord and Christ**

- **Place of authority, dispenser of Holy Spirit – further widespread proof of the Lordship and Messianic Jesus**

##### **Acts 5:28-32**

‘We gave you strict orders not to teach in this name,’ he said. ‘Yet you have filled Jerusalem with your teaching and are determined to make us guilty of this man’s blood.’ <sup>29</sup> Peter and the other apostles replied: ‘We must obey God rather than human beings! <sup>30</sup> The God of our

ancestors raised Jesus from the dead – whom you killed by hanging him on a cross. <sup>31</sup> **God exalted him to his own right hand as Prince and Saviour that he might bring Israel to repentance and forgive their sins.** <sup>32</sup> We are witnesses of these things, and so is the Holy Spirit, whom God has given to those who obey him.'

○ **Jesus being exalted/authoritative in our lives leads others to Him/His authority – to repentance**

- **Is Jesus in the place of authority over your life? As Saviour/Lord?**
- **What is battling with Him?**
- **Authoritative = being there for every part of our day, living as if He is there!**
  - **How would our day look different?**
- **Is He exalted above all things in His church at Harmony?**
  - **Leaders - How would our ministries be different? Board meetings? Fellowship? What we pray about, what we think about, how we treat others, how we act...**

Reflection – heads bowed

Do our attitudes, actions, words reveal;

- The Miraculous power of God?
- The Purpose of God to reconcile people to Himself
- The Grace given to believers of eternal life

- The Authority of God in our lives

Are we being the healthy church God desires us to be?