

The Community of Saints

Bible Class for 4-26-20

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1. The Church in Acts

It is difficult for us to think about the church without including some of the details that are common to our experience today, such as buildings, denominations, synods, circuits, etc. Such things may be very important, but are not the essence of the church.

The Book of Acts provides insight into the earliest of days for the Christian church. There, as well as in the various Epistles of the New Testament, we find important understandings about **what the church is, how it functions, and what it is to accomplish.**

What do the following passages say about the Holy Spirit?

Acts 1:5

Acts 2:1-4

John 16:13-14

2. The Spirit's Workshop

Read Acts 2:17-37

Why were the people "cut to the heart?"

Acts 2:38-41

To what does Peter direct them, and what is the outcome?

What specific blessings of Baptism are described here?

Acts 2:42-47

What does Baptism lead to regarding life with others?

Who is blessed by this community, both inside and out of it?

3. Production and Distribution

Name some companies that are in the business of **manufacturing**:

Name some companies that are in the business of **distribution**:

Martin Luther: *"We treat of the forgiveness of sins in two ways. First, how it is achieved and won. Second, how it is distributed and given to us."* (LW 40:213)

Where was forgiveness achieved and won?

The death and rising of Jesus

Where is forgiveness distributed and given?

Through the Word and Sacraments, the "means of grace."

How is the Holy Spirit the connecting link?

Read Matthew 16:18-19

John 14:26

John 15:26

How is the Ascension of Jesus related to the sending of the Spirit?

Read Acts 1:6-11

4. **Life in the Church**

What are some "vital signs" a doctor checks for your health?

What are some "vital signs" or characteristics of the early church?

Read Acts 2:42-47

- 1) *Devotion to Apostles' teaching/Word*
- 2) *Devotion to fellowship – sharing community together*
- 3) *Devotion to prayer*
- 4) *Devotion to breaking of bread/common meal*
- 5) *Devotion to sharing with those in need*

How are these also vital signs of the church of today?

React to this statement:

"The church is like the mother that conceives and bears each Christian through the Word of God."

For next week: The church gathers for worship because_____