

The Simplicity, Relevance, Power and Purity of the First Church

September 6, 2026

Last week: “Set your mind on things above...”

- **Dealing with negative thoughts**
 - Monitor your thought life/inner talk
 - Be sensitive to the Holy Spirit
 - Taking thoughts captive
 - Identify thoughts that are not correct/wholesome
 - As you mature the enemy gets more deceptive
 - Watch your words! - - Your mind is listening to everything you say
 - And,so is the enemy
 - Use the Word! - - “It is written”
- **Dealing with regrets**
 - The enemy loves to get you focused on the past
 - Time is wasted - - Emotional energy is expended
 - Learn from what you might have done different - Move on!
 - Stop stumbling on things behind you
- **Ways to keep your mind sharp as you age**
 - Challenge your mind
 - Use it or lose it
 - Keep learning

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.....and the desperate need for it today

Matthew 16:13-19 - READ

- *“I will build My church....”*
- What it is not:
 - A building - not a geographical place
 - A denomination
 - Religious institution
- What it is:
 - Church = ekklesia - - A people called together by God, assembled under His authority, *(and those to whom He grants His authority)* to represent and advance His Kingdom.

- Called out:
 - **1 Peter 2:9** - *“But you are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, His own special people, that you may proclaim the praises of Him who called you out of darkness into His marvelous light.”*
 - **John 15:19** - *“.... because you are not of the world, but I chose you out of the world,”*
 - **1 Corinthians 1:9** - *“God is faithful, by whom you were called into the fellowship of His Son, Jesus Christ our Lord.”*
 - **1 Thessalonians 4:7** - *“For God did not call us to uncleanness, but in holiness.”*
 - **1 Thessalonians 2:12** - *“...that you would walk worthy of God who calls you into His own kingdom and glory.”*
 - **Romans 8:28** - *“...to those who love God, to those who are the called according to His purpose.”*
 - Out of the world → into Christ.
 - Out of religious systems → into relationship.
 - Out of spectatorship → into participation.
 - Out of self-centered living → into Kingdom purpose.
- **“Church”** - Used only 3 times before the book of Acts
- First used in the Book of Acts - **Acts 2:47**

Acts 2:42-47 - *“And they continued steadfastly in the apostles’ doctrine and fellowship, in the breaking of bread, and in prayers. 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.”*

- **Daily in the temple (Solomon’s Porch)** - The apostles were not forbidden to go into the temple, but they were prohibited from teaching about Jesus!
 - Here they heard the testimony of those who had been with Jesus
 - They were taught the words that Jesus taught

- **Breaking bread from house to house** - Talked/discussed the teaching
 - Helped them to understand the Word
 - Learned to '*flesh it out*' - - Make it practical
- **The first church - What they didn't have:**
 - A bible
 - A building
 - A pastor
 - Church staff
 - Worship team
 - Children/youth ministry
- **What they did have:**
 - The Holy Spirit
 - The presence of Jesus
 - The apostles' teaching
 - Fellowship
 - Breaking of bread
 - Prayer
 - Signs and wonders
 - Generosity
 - Deep relationships - A profound sense of family
 - Every-member participation
 - Spiritual gifts
 - A Kingdom assignment
 - A passion to make disciples
- **Simplicity** - Uncomplicated - built on relationships - learning to love
- **Relevance** - It was meeting the deepest spiritual need of people, and in the culture
- **Power** - People were finding out that they could be used mightily by God
- **Purity** - It was/is the clearest representation of what the church should look like
- *"And the Lord added to the church daily those who were being saved."*
- **Weekly Meeting** - Sunday gathering
- **House to house** - Small groups - House church - etc.
- **Frequency** - Once a month - *or as each group decides

- **Format:**

- Fellowship
- Word - Notes/Snacks
- Prayer
- Ministry

God's promise to us: *"I'll give you as many people as you can take care of"*

- **This is 'how' we do it
- We're about to have a greater influx of people
- We've been notified by a few who say they're moving here
- Something BIG is happening!
- You have been trained for this