**Marks of the Lord’s Church**

*Acts 2:40-45*

**Introduction**

1. The Day of Pentecost in Acts 2 is the first record of men being saved by Christ.
2. Luke records, ***“And the Lord added to the church daily those who were being saved” (Acts 2:47b)***.
   1. Those who were added to the church were the saved.
   2. Those who were the saved were those who were added to the church.
   3. **There is a close relationship to being saved, and being added to the church – they are synonymous.**
      1. **Ephesians 1:3-14** – ***“in Him”*** we have all things that pertain to salvation. (*Spiritual blessings, adoption as sons, acceptance, redemption by blood, forgiveness of sins, an inheritance*).
      2. **1:22-23** – To be ***“in Him”*** is to be in His body – His body is the church.
3. Paul records that there is only one body, which indicates one church **(cf. Ephesians 4:4)**. (Logical because Jesus only had one body.)
4. **Because there is only one church – one place of salvation and justification before God – it is imperative that we be able to identify that church.**
   1. U.S. currency contains certain markings which indicate authenticity.
   2. This money is easily recognizable, and is familiar with most at a glance. But there is counterfeit money as well.
   3. A recipient of the bill may hold it up to the light to see watermarks and other marks which indicate authenticity.
   4. **The same should be true for the church if there is in fact one. The Holy Spirit has been clear about the marks of the Lord’s one church.**
   5. **By looking at scripture, we can determine what characteristics, activities, etc. the one church possesses.** 🡪(**cf. Acts 2:40-45**)
5. Marks of the Lord’s Church.
6. Entry
   1. **Acts 2:47b** – Those who are saved are those who have gained entry into His church.
      1. Salvation from sins. **(cf. Romans 3:23)**.
      2. The entrance into the church occurs when forgiveness, or remission, of sins occurs.
   2. **Acts 2:37-38** – Peter, by inspiration, told them to repent and be baptized for the remission of sins.
      1. **Some argue that “for” in this verse means because of, not in order that.**
      2. For – *eis* – a primary preposition; to or into (indicating the point reached or entered), of place, time, or (figuratively) purpose (result, etc.) (STRONG – definition of Greek work)
         1. Preposition – PRE-Position – the position is not yet attained. (It is attained in repentance and baptism.)
         2. “‘For’ (as used in Acts 2:38 "for the forgiveness...") could have two meanings. If you saw a poster saying "Jesse James wanted for robbery", "for" could mean Jesse is wanted so he can commit a robbery, or is wanted because he has committed a robbery. The later sense is the correct one. So too in this passage, the word "for" signifies an action in the past. Otherwise, it would violate the entire tenor of the NT teaching on salvation by grace and not by works.” (STRONG – comments on a text.)
         3. **These comments by Strong are contradictory to the NT teaching on the subject.**
      3. **Matthew 26:28** – same Greek word – *eis* – is used. Jesus did not shed His blood ***because*** of the remission, but ***in order that*** we might have remission of sins.
      4. **The entry into the ONE true church, i.e. the Lord’s church, is baptism.**
         1. ***1 Corinthians 12:13 – “For by one Spirit we were all baptized into one body.”***
         2. ***Acts 2:41 – “Then those who gladly received his word were baptized; and that day about three thousand souls were added to them.”***
         3. Many other scriptures support this truth.
7. Activity
   1. Apostles’ Doctrine
      1. The church is a group of disciples – ***“And the disciples were first called Christians in Antioch” (Acts 11:26)***.
         1. Disciple – a person who is a pupil or an adherent of the doctrines of another; follower. (*Dictionary.com*)
         2. Christian – of Christ; follower of Christ; disciple of Christ.
         3. The Lord’s church follows, and adheres to Christ’s doctrine.
      2. **Matthew 28:18-20** – Apostles’ doctrine = Christ’s doctrine, for Christ sent them by His authority, and they were to teach only what He taught.
         1. **John 14:26; 16:13** – They would be guided by the HS.
         2. **It was not up to the men what would be taught, but Christ.**
      3. **2 John 9** – This is the only doctrine acceptable.
      4. **Any addition or subtraction to or from this doctrine is a mark of a church which does not belong to Christ.**
   2. Fellowship
      1. *koinōnia* – partnership, i.e. (literally) participation, or (social) intercourse, or (pecuniary) benefaction.
         1. *Koin* – root word connoting “sharing”
         2. **Continuing in fellowship denotes the disciples’ interactions with each other as they shared in things which they had in common.**
      2. What did they have in common, and what did they do to act on that?
         1. **Acts 2:5, 9-11a** – Many men of different countries and languages gathered at Jerusalem, as Jews, to worship.
            1. They were having fellowship as Jews.
            2. They were very different, but had the Jewish faith in common, and shared in worship and spiritual things.
         2. **Acts 2:36-37** – They realized their faith was wrong, and they were in sin.
            1. **When they responded correctly to Peter’s instruction (v. 38) they shared something new in common.**
            2. **Ephesians 4:4-6** – They shared all of the “one’s” in Christ.
         3. **This fellowship is not simply the understood commonality, but the acting on that commonality. It was a spiritual fellowship which they engaged in during worship.**
         4. ***The Lord’s church is not marked by social fellowship, but spiritual.***
         5. Some of the specifics are mentioned following 🡪
   3. Breaking of Bread
      1. ***“Breaking of bread”*** is a phrase that was used commonly to denote eating regular meals.
         1. This is not what the HS had in mind. They already continued in eating common meals. Everyone does.
         2. **This has to have a spiritual reference in mind due to the list it is included in.**
      2. **Acts 20:7** – This is a *“breaking of bread”* which the disciples specifically gathered for. It was something they were doing AS Christians 🡪
      3. **Matthew 26:26-29** – *“breaking of bread”* is a reference to the Lord’s supper which Christians are commanded to observe.
         1. It is the memorial of His death.
         2. **They *“continued in”* this in that they did it often.**
      4. **The Lord’s church is marked by taking the Lord’s supper, as commanded, on every first day of the week, as given as an example, and implied.**
   4. Prayer
      1. God communicates to us through the *“apostles’ doctrine”* and we communicate to Him through *“prayer.”*
      2. It is a vital part of a Christian’s life, and is commanded – ***“pray without ceasing” (1 Thessalonians 5:17)***.
      3. **1 Timothy 2:1-4, 8** – This is something we do together in the assembly.
         1. Assembly implied by “men” – *anēr* – man; male.
         2. In same context women are silent **(v. 12),** because they are not permitted to speak in the assembly (**cf. 1 Corinthians 14:34**).
      4. **The Lord’s church is marked by the consistency in prayer.**
   5. Benevolence
      1. **Acts 2:44-45** – The commonality possessed by Christians in Christ as members of His church leads them to a care and affinity for each other.
         1. **This leads to us doing something for one another when we are in need.**
         2. This was commanded by Paul. It is done every first day of the week as we have been prospered – **1 Corinthians 16:1-3**
      2. **2 Corinthians 9:7** – This was to be done in a cheerful manner.
      3. ***The Lord’s church is marked by consistent giving on the first day of the week as a matter of worship.***
         1. **It is also marked by the temper of spirit in giving, as well as the amount – as you have been prospered and purposed in your heart.**
         2. Any other way suggests that church is not the Lord’s.
8. **Are you a member of the one church described by the Holy Spirit?**

**Conclusion**

1. The only church that was predestined to salvation is the Lord’s church.
2. For this reason, it is important to understand without a doubt that you are a member of that church.
3. If you wish to be, there is nothing restricting you except yourself. Will you come?