



BE THE CHURCH

Acts 4:32-6:4
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Watch Church!

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NCCC

When those outside the new movement of Christ followers would “watch church” – what did they see?

In 21st Century America, when those outside the Christian movement “watch church” – what do they see?

❖ **A body of believers.**

- No “big names” in Christianity
 - “Since, then, you have been raised with Christ, set your hearts on things above, where Christ is, seated at the right hand of God. Set your minds on things above, not on earthly things. For you died, and your life is now hidden with Christ in God.” – Colossians 3:1-3
- *“I have given up my claim to individual significance.”*

❖ **A spirit of generosity.**

- Acts 4:32-34; Acts 6:1-4
- *“I am not attached to or defined by what’s mine.”*

❖ **A people walking in holy fear.**

- Acts 4:34-5:11
 - “great fear” seized them – not a paralyzing fear, but a motivating fear
- *“God inhabits a unique, sacred space in my heart and I will not let my relationship with him become ordinary.”*

❖ **A people of high ethical standards and scrupulous honesty.**

- *“I strive to be thoroughly honest in my relationship with myself, with God, and with others.”*

❖ **A people who gathered together.**

- Acts 5:12-13
 - Why gather? It keeps Christ real & tangible in our midst
 - Otherwise, we live *carnally*. Spiritual rhythms & exercises (disciplines) are physical things we do that keep us spiritually strong.
- *“I make it a habit to regularly encounter God through spiritual disciplines, including fellowship with other believers.”*

❖ **An attractional community**

- Acts 5:12-16

- Outsiders wanted what they had!
- What is that, for us?

➤ *“When others observe my life, they see something worth emulating.”*

❖ **A people who *lovingly* proclaim truth.**

➤ Acts 5:17-42

- “We must obey God rather than human beings!”
- Peter’s answer gives the *reason* they preach – they believe in the resurrection and God’s desire to bring people to repentance and forgiveness
- The restriction they were facing was based on *content*, not *form*
- *The truth of the Christian message does not depend on form or setting!*
- Hence, Gamaliel: Leave them alone...if this is from humans, it will burn out. If it is from God, you won’t be able to stop it!
- Therefore, we need not act desperately or militantly; God is behind it!

➤ *“I am confident the power of God is in the gospel, so I don’t need to be harsh, or belligerent, or confrontational.”*

❖ **Thinking It Through**

Use the italicized statements that come at the end of each section above. Discuss them with your small group, or personally reflect on them: How truly do those statements describe you?

You can also use these prompts in prayer, asking God to reveal truth to you:

- *How important is it to me to be personally, individually significant?*
- *Am I too attached to my stuff? Is my heart generous?*
- *Have I created for you a unique, sacred space in my heart? And do I live in deep respect and honor of you?*
- *Do I strive to be thoroughly honest in my relationship with myself, with you God, and with others?*
- *How often do I encounter you, God, outside of a church service, and who’s on this journey with me?*
- *Does my life attract people to Christianity, or turn them away?*
- *Am I harsh when I represent you, or do I carry a calm confidence in your power?*