


TALKINGPOINTS WALKINGPOINTS

Part 2: Portrait of a Healthy Church

2021.8.29



A publication of  the adult discipleship ministry of Triangle Community Church.

Talk together about the glory of God's kingdom. –Psalm 145:11
Love the Lord your God and **walk** in all his ways. –Joshua 22:5

Questions for Reflection or Discussion

- Read Acts 2:40-47. **If you** had been one of those 3,000 who responded to Peter's sermon that day, how might you have described it in a letter home to friends and family who'd not experienced it?

What questions would they likely have had? Would any of them have thought you were in a cult?

Which elements of the Acts 2 church life are most attractive to you? Which are most...um, *uncomfortable*?

Which elements of their church life do you think would be most transformative for you personally—and **why**?

Which of those elements of church life have you experienced personally? Tell us about it.

- Review TCC's transformational process ("**Know-Grow-Show**") in the [Sermon Summary](#). Notice how each of those three terms are described (in the "fine print" of the diagram):

"**K**now" = "Know God personally through faith in Jesus Christ."

"**G**row" = "Apply biblical truth in the power of the Holy Spirit."

"**S**how" = "Glorify God by serving and influencing others."

Which of those descriptions are at all unclear or ambiguous to you? Discuss them as a group.

How are you doing in those three areas? Place a **K**, **G**, and an **S** on the following scale:



- Pastor Doug urged us to **take personal responsibility for our own spiritual growth** (see [Sermon Summary](#)). How well do you think you're doing at that? What's an area of strength? of weakness?

Application-Challenge

How can we help each other take the next positive step?

- Determine to take responsibility for your own spiritual growth.
- Ask God to open your eyes to the needs of those around you—especially to needs in our own church family. When you become aware of a need, do something about it.
- Engage fully in worship—remember, we gather for an audience of One.
- Look for opportunities to plant spiritual seeds in the lives of your non-Christian friends.

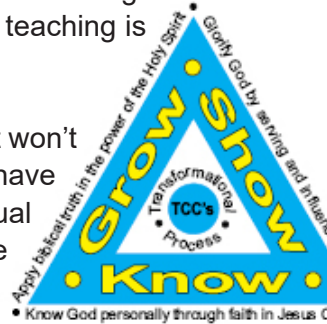
Sermon Summary (Key Text: Acts 2:42-47)

The church is a collection of imperfect people—from the leadership on down—which gathers to know Christ and to make him known. Healthy churches foster spiritual depth and commitment, and this morning we'll look at a biblical profile of a healthy church (Acts 2:42-47) which gives us **four characteristics of a healthy church**.

I. Healthy churches are learning churches. These early Christians were “continually devoting themselves” to the Apostles' teaching. They persisted and persevered in their studies, just as Jesus had commanded (Matthew 28:19-20). These were no casual learners. They were devoted, attentive, teachable disciples, and they applied what they learned. And so if we want to be a healthy church, we must be committed to being a learning church. And I think that in many ways we are. But we can excel still more. On average I spend 25 hours a week studying and crafting my Sunday messages, but offering solid Biblical teaching is only one side of the equation.

For learning to take place, the student has to be as committed as the teacher.

(a) Determine to take personal responsibility for your own spiritual growth. If you don't, it won't happen. The pastor's role is to provide the resources you need to help you grow—but you have to avail yourself of those resources. At TCC we believe that a personal commitment to spiritual growth is a critical part of the transformational process whereby ordinary people like us can be transformed into extraordinary followers of Jesus Christ. We summarize this process with three words: **“Know-Grow-Show”**.



(b) Determine to get all that you can out of each week's sermon. A person who commits himself to applying each week's sermon will see significant growth. James warns us to become “doers” of the Word rather than mere “hearers”. Each week our sermon-based community groups discuss and apply Sunday's message. And when you know you'll be discussing the sermon with others you are more likely to pay attention, to take some notes, and to think seriously about how God would have you apply it. Plus, there is real power in having the whole church focused on the same Biblical truths week after week. It helps us move in a common direction and toward a common vision or goal. So take advantage of “Talking Points-Walking Points”, either working through it on your own or in family devotions.

II. Healthy churches are loving churches. The Greek word *koinōnia* (“fellowship”) implies a sharing in common, and these believers demonstrated radical, sacrificial, compassionate love, just as Jesus taught (Luke 6:36, 38; 12:33). It is one thing to greet one another warmly on Sunday mornings. It is quite another to give sacrificially and voluntarily of your time and material possessions. Can you imagine TCC being the kind of church where everyone dares to believe Jesus when he said, “Give and it will be given unto you”? A church where people are actually willing to sell some of their possessions if necessary to meet legitimate needs within our church family? That is my prayer for TCC—that we would be known for our love, our compassion, and our generosity.

III. Healthy churches are worshipping churches. Notice that v. 42 says “the bread and the prayers”. The presence of the definite article suggests gathered meals (perhaps a reference to the Lord's Supper) and to gathered, corporate prayer times. They were a worshipping church! They worshipped both formally (in the Temple courts) and informally (in their homes) (v. 46). Their worship was both reverent and joyful (“gladness and sincerity of heart”), and I want TCC to experience this same kind of balance in our worship.

IV. Healthy churches are evangelistic churches. Jesus commands: “Go therefore and make disciples of all nations,” and v. 47 says that “the Lord was adding to their number day by day those who were being saved.” What was the secret to their growth? These Christians “enjoyed favor with all of the people.” That is, they were respected in their community. They were admired. They were well liked, and they were influential. But the growth of the early church cannot be explained in merely human terms: “...the Lord was adding to their number.” The Bible is very clear that if God were not working behind the scenes, no one would ever come to faith in Christ (John 6:44). Our hearts are just too hard.

"Five Question Bible Study" (see page below) *is a simple way to study any passage. We can use it to learn more about church life as God intends it...*

Monday—Read Ephesians 5:18-20 & Colossians 3:16.

Tuesday—Read 1 Peter 4:9.

Wednesday—Read Ephesians 4:1-3.

Thursday—Read James 5:16.

Friday—Read Hebrews 3:12-13.

Saturday—***In preparation for worshipping the risen Lord with your church family,***
read **2 Timothy 3:10-17.**

Each day, ask yourself...

- How do I see "learning" in this passage?
- How do I see "loving" in this passage?
- How do I see "worship" in this passage?
- How do I see "evangelism" in this passage?

Bible Text: _____

Date: _____



What idea particularly strikes me from this text? [Note in which verse(s) it is found.]



What question does this text raise in my mind—and how would **this text** answer it?



What about Jesus Christ—his character and/or his redemption—relates to this text?



What action must I take as a result of this text? Be concrete and specific.



With whom will I share what I learned from this text? [and what was their response?]

TCC exists in order to...

Transform ordinary people into extraordinary followers of Jesus Christ
by creating environments which help people
Know Christ, **Grow** in Christ, and **Show** Christ.

2

Grow in Christlikeness. God's Word instructs us to "**grow** in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ" (2 Peter 3:18). The Scriptures give us many yardsticks against which we can evaluate our growth, such as the fruit of the Spirit (Galatians 5:16-25) and the mind of Christ (Philippians 2:1-8). Growth in Christlikeness begins with the new birth, is founded upon yieldedness to Christ (Romans 12:1-2; Matthew 11:25-30), and continues our entire earthly life (Philippians 3:7-17).

1

Know Christ as Savior. "This is eternal life—that they may **know** you, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom you have sent" (John 17:3). Without the "new birth," people are spiritually dead and cut-off from the life of God (John 3:1-21). In this condition, any change—helpful though it may be interpersonally—does not qualify as the sort of heart-level life-transformation Christ has called us to pursue. The new birth is absolutely necessary for life-transformation. This is the starting point.

3

Show God's Light. The Bible instructs us that "in speech, conduct, love, faith and purity, we are to **show** ourselves an example of those who believe" (1 Timothy 4:12). Jesus said to his followers: "You are the light of the world. A city set on a hill cannot be hidden; nor does anyone light a lamp and put it under a basket, but on the lampstand, and it gives light to all who are in the house. Let your light shine before men in such a way that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father who is in heaven" (Matthew 5:14-16). We show God's light to believers and non-believers alike.

