

**Sermon Series:** “Be the Church!” – Lord of Life Lutheran, Westfield, IN – 1/17/2010

**Text:** Acts 2: 42-47

**Title:** “Inside-out-Church”

**Intro.:** *Illus.: wearing your close inside-out*

**Theme:** The Church, displayed in its local setting, is not just about outreach to the unchurched nor is it just about in-reach to the member; rather, what Christ accomplished inside each believer is practiced with each other inside the walls of the church and is taken out into the world and put into action among those who are to be saved.

### ***Starting from within--from the same starting point***

- Be “loyal to a fault” (devoted) in your common foundation in Jesus –
  1. **Illus.: Cross your finger commitment** (duplicity in promise)
  2. ***grab hold of as if life depended on it*** -- twice used – teachings of faith (42) & one of believers (46)
  3. There is nothing that can convince you to leave your Savior or his body of believers
- The marks of a believing and thriving church
  1. ***Devoted to the teachings of Christ*** (early church Didache – foundation for creed – ***don’t lose the faith***)
  2. ***Fellowshipping*** which is more than youth outings and pitch-ins but ***investing in relationship*** with each other
    - a. **Hebrews 10: 22-25** – gathered to ***encourage growth, share grace, spur service, & encourage hope***
  3. ***The sacrament of the Lord’s Supper***, its centrality on the forgiveness through Jesus Death, ***practice regularly***
    - a. Not just in large worship but more often in smaller setting/house churches because of the faith accountability
    - b. *For whenever you eat this bread and drink this cup, you proclaim the Lord’s death until he comes. 1 Corinthians 11:26*
  4. ***Prayer*** is not just given lip service but practiced with and for each other
- Being more impressed with God than yourself
  1. We promote our Savior and God, not our church or ourselves
    - a. We practice humble grace toward each other because ***church is not about our performance but God’s***
    - b. *It is because of him that you are in Christ Jesus, who has become for us wisdom from God--that is, our righteousness, holiness and redemption. Therefore, as it is written: "Let him who boasts boast in the Lord." 1 Corinthians 1:30-31*
  2. We expect and look for God to show up with his miracles in our midst
    - a. *Now to him who is able to do immeasurably more than all we ask or imagine, according to his power that is at work within us, to him be glory in the church and in Christ Jesus throughout all generations, for ever and ever! Amen. Ephesians 3:20-21*
    - b. We give him praise and credit when he does, and help each other to patiently wait on him when he tarries
    - c. **Illus.: I can’t fix you but God can**
- Value hanging out together
  1. Early Christians “***continued day by day***” to worship, fellowship, eat together, care for each other
  2. Intentionally carving out quantity of time — it is an intentional fellowship – ***be a friend to have a friend***
  3. The strong minister to the weak so that when they are weak they can be cared for by the strengthened
  4. *Rejoice with those who rejoice; mourn with those who mourn. Romans 12:15*

### ***Practicing Church inside so that we can do it well outside***

- Taking our intentional ***Random Acts Of Kindness*** on the road
  1. Early Christians not allow a need (physical, emotional, or spiritual) to go unmet– they pooled their resource (45)
  2. Utilizing the varied gifts of God’s people to care, mentor, counsel, consol, show mercy, give hospitality, lead, etc.
  3. *From Christ the whole body, joined and held together by every supporting ligament, grows and builds itself up in love, as each part does its work. Ephesians 4:16*
  4. When we learn to practice it on each other, then we become proficient to take it out in the world and share
    - a. **Illus.: Robot teaches dentists to feel patient’s pain**
- Sharing the reconciling message of Christ by allowing the loving acts of mercy to back it up
  1. *They were taking their meals together with gladness and sincerity of heart, praising God and having favor with all the people. And the Lord was adding to their number day by day those who were being saved. (Vs. 46-47)*
  2. *By this all men will know that you are my disciples, if you love one another. John 13: 35*

### **I can't fix you but God can**

Pastor Matt Woodley shared a story about his friend Theresa. Theresa was experiencing what St. John of the Cross calls a dark night of the soul—a period of spiritual loneliness and despair. Over the course of describing her story, listen to how Woodley discovered that what seemed most helpless in his ministry was actually the most helpful: After marrying the man of her dreams, [Theresa] dropped into the abyss of a deep depression. Everything went dark in her mind and body. She even started writing her obituary. Three years ago I would have had plenty of answers and solutions for her. I would have been so clever and powerful. But now I could only sit with her in her pain. We prayed. I didn't know what to do, didn't have any answers, so I said, "Theresa, I have no idea what to say, so could we just read the Psalms?" Then I read Psalm 77, an agonizing psalm of lament, and I went home. I left feeling utterly powerless, and I sure didn't think that I made her feel better. The next week another leader of our church visited Theresa. She was still suffering intensely, but when the leader asked if he could pray for her, Theresa said, "Yes, but before you pray, please read Psalm 77. I've been clinging to it all week. It's my lifeline to God." Apparently when we read Psalm 77 in utter powerlessness, God showed up in her life with power. Woodley adds: "At times the best, most powerful and most useful way to love someone is to get to the end of myself. I admit that I can't fix or change you. My words and my advice won't heal your brokenness. But I can be with you, and we can go together to the Father." **IVP Books, "Are You There, God? An Interview with The Folly of Prayer Author Matt Woodley"**

### **Robot Teaches Dentists to feel patient's pain**

Because the fear of going to the dentist is so pervasive, Japanese scientists have created a special robot that enables dentists in training to learn how to be more sensitive to the pain of their patients. If the dental trainee tugs too hard on a tooth or hits a nerve, the robot actually reacts to the pain. In fact the five-foot-three robot has been programmed to say "It hurts" and to frown when it feels uncomfortable. "Because it's so real, dental trainees can see patients' feelings and will be able to develop good skills as they treat it not as an object, but as a human being," says Tatsuo Matsuzaki, an official at robot maker Kokoro Company. "The point is that we can share people's pain without hurting people. Treatment technique is important, but it's also important to feel what it's like to be a patient." **David Slagle, Decatur, Georgia; source: Yahoo News Online, "Humanoid Robot Teaches Dentists to Feel People's Pain (11-28-07)**

### **Acts 2:42-47**

<sup>42</sup>They were continually devoting themselves to the apostles' teaching and to fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer. <sup>43</sup>Everyone kept feeling a sense of awe; and many wonders and miraculous signs were taking place through the apostles. <sup>44</sup>And all those who had believed were in the same place and had all things in common; <sup>45</sup>and they began selling their property and possessions and were sharing them with all, as anyone might have need. <sup>46</sup>Day by day continuing with one mind in the temple, and breaking bread from house to house, they were taking their meals together with gladness and sincerity of heart, <sup>47</sup>praising God and having favor with all the people. And the Lord was adding to their number day by day those who were being saved. [NASB]

### **Hebrews 10:22-25**

<sup>22</sup>let us draw near to God with a sincere heart in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled to cleanse us from a guilty conscience and having our bodies washed with pure water. <sup>23</sup>Let us hold unswervingly to the hope we profess, for he who promised is faithful. <sup>24</sup>And let us consider how we may spur one another on toward love and good deeds. <sup>25</sup>Let us not give up meeting together, as some are in the habit of doing, but let us encourage one another--and all the more as you see the Day approaching.