

***Poised for Power: The Four Pillars of Faith in the Early Church***  
***Part I: The Apostle's Teaching***  
**Matt 16: 13-19; Acts 2: 42-47**  
**July 11, 2021**

**Sermon Application:** A powerful church must have a strong foundation to build upon to complete God's mission. Jesus Christ is that foundation, and its chief cornerstone (Eph 2: 20). The early church with Christ as its foundation, further had four "pillars" of the faith that were key in the strength and power of their witness, unity, and service to Christ: The Apostle's Teaching, Prayer, Fellowship, and the Breaking of Bread (Acts 2: 42).

Today, these four pillars remain the same to us. I believe for the increasing societal challenges that both the global and local church will face in the future, we will flourish in these times as God's people, if we recommit and deepen our unity around these four pillars, to be a "powerhouse" of God's Spirit to meet the needs of our generation.

**COME AND SEE: CAST THE VISION FOR ODCC**

**I. Context: Pentecost:** The Early Church is Poised for Power by the Holy Spirit (Acts 2: 1-4)

- A. The Holy Spirit came upon and "filled to the full" the 120 in the upper room (Acts 2: 4)
- B. Apostle Peter: A "powerhouse" for God preaches and 3,000 come to Christ (Acts 2: 14-41)

**II. The Four Pillars of the Early Church: Acts 2: 42**

**A. The Early Church:**

1. ***Devoted*** themselves to the four pillars of faith (v. 42)
  - a. Devoted: Gr. *prokartereo*: "to be earnest towards", "persevere", "constantly diligent"
  - b. They did not forsake the gathering together [diligently] of themselves (cf. Heb 10: 25)

**B. First Pillar: Apostle's Teaching**

1. Apostles': Gr. *Apostolos*: "messenger", "one who is sent" [emissary of Christ]
2. **Purpose:** To hear the Word of God consistently was foundational to the development of the early church (cf. Eph 2: 19-20)
  1. By God's Word the church is: taught [of God], reprov'd [of sin], corrected [of error] and trained in righteousness (how to live rightly), cf. 2 Tim 3: 16

**C. Apostle Peter: Key Apostle in the Early Church (Matt 16: 13-19)**

1. Jesus Christ: Called him to be the "rock" [foundation to the early church]
  - a. His name, Peter, is Petra in Greek, interpreted as "a mass of rock/Rock"
2. The early church: "built" on this "rock/Rock" (v. 18)
3. The early church's foundation would be such that:
  - a. The gates of Hell shall not *prevail* against it (v. 18): Gr. prevail: *katischuo* "to overpower"
    - b. Hell's power pales in comparison to a Spirit-filled church!!***
4. Demonstrates strong leadership among the 12 in his witness to the religious leaders of his time, and in extending the gospel to the Jews (cf. Acts 4: 5-22, 9: 32)

5. Apostle Paul: Apostle to the Gentiles (cf. Acts 22: 21; Rom 1: 14-15; I Cor 9: 1)
6. All the Apostles taught (testified) to the resurrection of Jesus Christ (cf. Acts 4: 33)

### **III. The Apostles: Signs and Wonders: The Miracle Working Power of the Holy Spirit (Acts 2: 43)**

- A. Wonders:** Miracles (healing and deliverance), cf. Mark 6: 7; Luke 10:1.
- B. Signs:** Evidence of the Holy Spirit's presence and power among the apostles
  1. **Purpose:** To testify to Jesus Christ and his resurrection (cf. John 14: 12: *Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that believeth on me, the works that I do shall he do also; and greater works than these shall he do; because I go unto my Father.*)
    - a. With Christ's ascension to the Father, and the coming of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost, the church would be imbued with power from on high to do the same works that Jesus did. (Greater means "greater in number" not greater in value).

### **IV. The Apostle's Teaching and the Power of the Holy Spirit Upon the Church (Acts 2: 44-47)**

#### **Equips God's People to:**

- A. Have a reverent fear of God (v. 43)
- B. Have all things in common (social and economic barriers removed), v. 44, cf. Gal 3: 28
- C. Assess their lives to provide for other believers who had need (v. 45)
- D. Worship and fellowship *in unity* (v. 46)
- E. Have glad and generous hearts that praised God (v. 46-47)

**Result:** *And the Lord added to their number day by day those who were being saved (Acts 2: 47)*

**ODCC:** I exhort you to be devoted to the Word of God! As we are "constantly diligent" to learn and seek the teaching of the Holy Spirit through his servants, we will be empowered as a church to lead many to Christ as we ourselves know the scriptures and live them out daily to the glory of God.

Prioritize coming to church. Prioritize coming to Wednesday study. Prioritize studying the scriptures yourself. Lead a bible study in your neighborhood if you are so gifted. *Study [God's Word] to show yourself approved (2 Tim 2: 15).*

**Come and See** what the Lord will bring to your life and the life of this church as a result!