

Walking In The Way Of Jesus; Devoted Followers
Considering the path from the tomb to the world

Chris: Last Sunday, “devoted”.

What you show devotion to is a mirror into your heart.

What captures your heart demands your devotion.

These believers were devoted to God and devoted to one another. (Love God & love others)

Because of the presence of the Holy Spirit in the lives of these believers, we can see a naturally supernatural power flow out of their devotion.

For us today, this devotion plays itself out through everyday moments as we learn to allow the Spirit of God to guide us and use us as He sees fit.

Acts 2:40-47 NKJV

*⁴⁰ And with many other words he testified and exhorted them, saying, “Be saved from this perverse generation.” ⁴¹ **Then those who gladly received his word were baptized; and that day about three thousand souls were added to them.** ⁴² **And they continued steadfastly in the apostles’ doctrine (teaching) and fellowship, in the breaking of bread, and in prayers.** ⁴³ Then fear came upon every soul, and many wonders and signs were done through the apostles. ⁴⁴ Now all who believed were together, and had all things in common, ⁴⁵ and sold their possessions and goods, and divided (distributed) them among all, as anyone had need.*

⁴⁶ So continuing daily with one accord in the temple, and breaking bread from house to house, they ate their food with gladness and simplicity of heart, ⁴⁷ praising God and having favor with all the people. And the Lord added to the church daily those who were being saved.

Proskartereo (Greek) to persevere, continue steadfastly.....to give constant attention to a thing

Translation comparison of Acts 2:42

“devoted themselves”

“continued steadfastly or steadfastly continuing”

“continually devoting themselves”

Amplified Bible; *“They were continually and faithfully devoting themselves”*

What are the results of these Devoted Followers?

Acts 3:12-15 NKJV

*¹² So when Peter saw it, he responded to the people: “Men of Israel, **why do you marvel at this? Or why look so intently at us, as though by our own power or godliness we had made this man walk?** ¹³ The God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, the God of our fathers, glorified His Servant Jesus, whom **you delivered up and denied** in the presence of Pilate, when he was determined to let Him go. ¹⁴ But you denied the Holy One and the Just, and asked for a murderer to be granted to you, ¹⁵ and killed the Prince of life, whom God raised from the dead, of which we are witnesses. ¹⁶ And His name, through faith in His name, has made this man*

strong, whom you see and know. Yes, the faith which comes through Him has given him this perfect soundness in the presence of you all.

Unspoken proclamation.....we are “Devoted Followers”, it is Jesus and His Spirit not us!

Acts 4:13 NKJV

*Now when they saw the boldness of Peter and John, and perceived that they were uneducated and untrained men, they marveled. **And they realized that they had been with Jesus.***

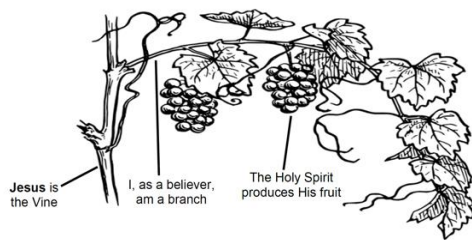
Unspoken proclamation.....these men are “Devoted Followers”, it is Jesus and His Spirit not them that is doing all of this!

Peter experienced a shift in his inner man. The Spirit of God affected his weaknesses and insecurities at the deepest levels. His ministry to others was completely about Jesus through the power of the Holy Spirit.

A reminder of Galatians 5:22-26 NLT

²² But the Holy Spirit produces this kind of fruit in our lives: love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, ²³ gentleness, and self-control. There is no law against these things!

²⁴ Those who belong to Christ Jesus have nailed the passions and desires of their sinful nature to his cross and crucified them there. ²⁵ Since we are living by the Spirit, let us follow the Spirit’s leading in every part of our lives. ²⁶ Let us not become conceited, or provoke one another, or be jealous of one another.



I am attempting to connect the dots for us together.

This idea of devotion, continuing steadfastly, or continually devoting themselves fits perfectly with the concept of vine and branches.

Our western church approach almost seems to proclaim a message that says, detach from the vine when necessary or uncomfortable then reattach when you are in trouble.

We have coined terms like backslidden to describe our disconnect or total lack of desire for God

This concept of a “devoted follower” in the NT was based on a devotion to Father, Son, and Holy Spirit because of the forgiveness of sin, the freedom of soul, and the soundness of mind that was experienced by these people from all different backgrounds.

As we have been proclaiming, it was an inside out spiritual experience that affected every single aspect of their lives.

We are not considering the Acts of the Apprentices as a convenient or comfortable pursuit!

Hardship and suffering can be endured with a joy and purpose when someone is a “devoted follower” of Jesus Christ, the Son of the Living God.

Hold up Voice of the Martyrs as an example of people all over the globe who are imprisoned and persecuted because of a belief in Jesus of Nazareth.

We seem to have a different cultural starting point in the western world than the eastern world that records how things transpired in early days of New Testament narrative.

It was a much different world. A much different culture with much different expectations. The culture was Jewish and pagan with at best a tolerance for Christ followers. Others had disdain and hatred for these “devoted followers” of Jesus of Nazareth.

In America, most of us have been raised in a culture that for the most part has Christianity as part of the cultural history.

Do you feel you are entitled to whatever you desire? Entitlement expects devotion and loyalty but does not give it.

Do you feel that others are supposed to see your needs, address your desires, and then stand by you for emotional support?

Shopping cart visual VS the different types of tools

Consumer VS Contributor

A **consumer mentality** toward church tends to focus on what is comfortable and convenient. What I have found in the church is that a preoccupation with pursuing comfort and convenience typically leads to complacency.

A **contributor mentality** toward church tends to focus on learning and helping.

A **consumer mindset** can be self focused.....What do you have to offer me?

A **contributor mindset** is about learning and helping.....I want to learn, help me learn. How can I help?

We must consider the words we use and what they mean to us
I am not condemning anyone for the impact of our culture on our thinking or expectations.

What I am attempting to address is that we must acknowledge this influence on our thinking and expectations when it comes to Christ and His Church.

The devotion of a follower of Christ inherently necessitates ownership and responsibility.

A consumer mindset must be addressed so that it can be molded and modified by The Holy Spirit.

We must learn to share and see the needs of others. (Take the groceries out of the cart and share with other people)

There are literally hundreds of ways to contribute to Christ and His church.
MVC is different because we are striving to encourage you and empower you to follow your heart. Everything does not have to be MVC approved or sanctioned.
We are trying to train up and encourage “contributors” for the kingdom of God.

We must move toward being “Contributors”. As devoted followers then sacrifice becomes a response that is natural because the mission is larger than the individual. Suffering is something that is embraced because our Lord suffered.

As we experience shared suffering then there is a deep sense of comradery. This comradery is community.

A community with contributors, participants, and Christlike apprentices.

This process is by grace through faith in Jesus Christ, the Son of the Living God.
It is a personal choice to take steps toward being a “devoted follower” of Jesus.