

# The Forming of a Spiritual Believer Community

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## INTRO.

Last week I shared with you the first foundational piece – of the DNA that helped to form a true spiritual community ... I also shared some of my frustrations I see in the present-day church community or better yet – the church culture ... Today's church culture often mirrors modern consumerism more than the Spirit-birthed community we find in Acts 2 ... It appears the church has traded devotion for distraction - - impartation for information - - and mystical encounter for institutional programming.

So today – let's make an honest evaluation ... Let's ask - - What does it truly mean to be a spiritual believer living within a mystical community? ... What would that kind of community actually look like in 2025? ... Please don't misunderstand where I want to go with this ... I'm not trying to reproduce what they had in Acts 2 ... This isn't about nostalgia – it is about the now.

But a deeper question would be - - What does a mystical community look like today – formed by people who have had a true Pentecostal experience in this present age? ... We must understand – our God is a present God ... He's not interested in recreating an old thing ... He's preparing to birth a new thing ... And He's looking for a people who are ready to become the dwelling place of that new thing.

## TRANS.

In order to discover what a true spiritual culture looks like – we must examine our text through a foundational lens ... We need to go deep – beneath the surface – into the spiritual DNA of this

early community ... In Acts 2 – we see the outward expressions of a Spirit-formed culture – powerful, visible, and supernatural ... But let me caution you: mimicking an action does not create a culture ... You can copy the form, and still miss the fire ... To truly understand what birthed this mystical community – we must go deeper ... We must discern the inner heart-changes – the deep work of the Spirit – that gave rise to these outward manifestations ... Only then can we ask: Are those same transformations alive in us today?

## Today's Text

### Acts 2:41-42a New King James Version

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

## Let me Remind you of Peter's Plea

Last week, we uncovered the foundational principle – a personal decision every believer must make – if they are going to break free from the pull of the world – and become part of a truly spiritual community ... Peter puts it bluntly - - “Save yourselves from this wicked and perverse generation.” ... This wasn't just a gentle invitation – it was a radical call ... And if I may expand upon that – it was a demand for separation ... A call to break ties with the culture of this world – so that one might enter into a new culture – one that flows in harmony with your new nature in Christ.

This is where I have noticed – many struggle in their faith journey ... They haven't yet realized that you cannot live as a spiritual being – while clinging to a mind that is still programmed by worldly patterns ... Unfortunately – this is where religion often steps in ... Religion attempts to bridge the gap – creating a safe, hybrid culture that blends spiritual language with worldly mindsets ... In doing so – they have constructed a religious culture – where the lost and the saved can comfortably coexist – but without transformation.

Let's be clear – this was not the call that Peter issued to the religious crowd ... Peter didn't call for coexistence ... He called for consecration ... He called for a clean break – because without it – all they would form is another religious sect ... In fact, society gave them that label: the sect of “The Way.”

Now, I won't dwell on this too long – but I will say this ... If you are not willing to make a clean break from this wicked and perverse generation – you cannot become part of the mystical community your spirit longs for – the very community you were created to belong to ... So, let's walk this road together ... Let's discover what characteristics marked these early believers – what spiritual transformations they experienced – so that we might trace the same inward work of the Spirit – within our own hearts.

### **A Heart That Gladly Receives the Word**

**“Those who gladly received his word...” (Acts 2:41)**

The early believers were pierced to the heart by Peter's message ... But notice their response ... They weren't offended ... They didn't get angry ... They didn't become defensive or abusive in their language or behavior ... Instead, they responded with gladness of heart ... They completely received what Peter had to say ... This kind of response is not natural – it is supernatural ... It's deeply mystical in nature ... Before there was any doctrine, any formal teaching, any discipleship – there was a posture of the heart ... These believers came with open hearts and teachable spirits ... Because of that posture, Peter's words went deep into their spirits – and what was produced was gladness, joy, and a radical response: they were baptized.

### **Now Contrast That with Today**

Sadly, what we often see today is the opposite spirit ... Most people don't come with open hearts – they come with closed filters ... They don't have teachable spirits – they have debating spirits ... Today, many are postured for argument rather than alignment ... Self-preservation

rather than Spirit transformation ... Defending their ideology rather than surrendering to revelation ... They don't listen to hear – they listen to respond ... They don't receive teaching as an invitation to grow ... They receive it as a threat to their belief system ... So, they filter every teaching through the lens of - - Personal experiences - - Political ideology - - and Religious ideology - - Or whatever podcast, preacher, or influencer matches their own worldview ... If it doesn't line up – they push back, criticize, and sometimes even attack.

### **A Deeper Issue: Suspicion vs. Discernment**

We have been trained by this world to be suspicious, and in some ways – that instinct has served us – but it has also stunted us ... There is a big difference between being suspicious and being discerning ... Suspicion is a worldly mechanism of self-protection which builds walls ... Discernment is a spiritual faculty of divine guidance which builds pathways ... Suspicion isolates – while discernment illuminates ... Suspicion is rooted in fear – while discernment flows from faith ... If we want to be part of a mystical community, we must ask the Spirit to tear down suspicion and awaken us to true discernment.

### **Mystical Revelation Over Religious Instruction**

**“They devoted themselves to the apostles’ teaching...” (Acts 2:42)**

### **The Apostles’ Teaching**

Now catch this – the apostles weren't distributing a syllabus for a 10-week course on theological theory ... They weren't leading a classroom – they were unveiling living truth from a risen Christ ... A Christ who not only indwelt them, but now rested upon them ... What they taught wasn't passed down from human tradition – it was breathed out by the Spirit – a direct revelation from the Spirit of Christ, in mystical union with their spirit ... They weren't parroting their religious upbringing ... They weren't merely repeating what they heard Jesus say three years prior ... They were imparting divine revelation ... Fresh - Spirit-born truth – that came from the deep well of union with the glorified Christ.

## **The Nature of Apostolic Teaching**

True apostolic teaching is always Christ-centered ... Its aim is not moral performance, but mystical union ... It doesn't revolve around behavior management – it draws you into spiritual transformation ... It's not about memorizing doctrine – it is about encountering the indwelling Christ ... It's not focused on group conformity – it is focused on individual revelation that leads to collective harmony ... This is not instruction for the mind alone ... It is revelation for the spirit ... And the goal? ... To awaken the Christ within you – to activate your spirit – and to help you to live from that place of divine union.

## **Diversity Within Mystical Community**

In a true spiritual culture ... Each person walks in their lane ... Each member functions as the body part they were designed to be ... There is no pressure to conform – there is freedom to become ... Unity flows through diversity – not uniformity ... This is the true intent behind apostolic teaching ... To help each person align with their design, and mature into the fullness of Christ in them.

## **Apostolic Teaching Confronts the Hybrid Church Culture**

Let's be honest – this kind of teaching is rejected by the masses today - - Why? ... Because it goes against the grain of the modern, hybrid church ideology ... It confronts - - Institutional control - - Religious comfort - - Consumer Christianity ... Apostolic teaching doesn't entertain – it awakens ... It doesn't pacify – it pierces and that makes many uncomfortable ... But in a mystical community – this kind of teaching is not only welcomed – it is devoured ... Because hungry hearts aren't looking for instruction – they are longing for impartation.

## **Devotion – “They Devoted Themselves”**

### **What Does “Devotion” Really Mean?**

The Greek word used here is “proskartereō”, which means - - To persist obstinately in - - To continue steadfastly - - To be consistently committed over time ... We're not talking about an

emotional high that fades after a Sunday service ... This kind of devotion speaks to spiritual endurance – a loyalty that refuses to quit – no matter the cost ... These early believers weren't casual listeners – they were covenant people ... They held fast to the mystery of Christ, and they did it together ... They weren't adding spirituality to their schedule – they were centering their lives around the Word, the Spirit, and the Body ... Devotion reveals desire ... What you stay devoted to – reveals what you truly value.

### **Devotion Creates an Atmosphere**

Devotion is not just a feeling – it becomes an atmosphere ... And that atmosphere begins to shape a spiritual culture - - Where the Word becomes essential - - Where the Spirit is honored - - Where the Body of Christ becomes family – not an audience ... These people weren't playing games ... They understood the gravity of what they were stepping into – and the possible cost of their decision ... Unlike the modern church – where faith is often marketed for convenience – their devotion had consequences.

### **What Does Devotion Look Like?**

Gathering regularly – not just when it's convenient ... Linger long – not watching the clock ... Receiving humbly – not critiquing from a distance ... Responding with action – not just saying “Amen” and moving on ... They weren't consumers of Christian content ... They were participants in divine transformation.

### **Mystical Implications of Devotion**

**A Deep Hunger for His Presence** ... Not just for what He does – but for who He is – in me.

**Loyalty to His Voice** ... Even when it convicts, corrects, and confronts my comfort.

**Commitment to Community** ... True spiritual believers do not isolate themselves ... They are embedded in spiritual family – they belong and they build together.

Devotion is what separates church attenders from mystical carriers of the kingdom ... It is the spiritual oxygen of a true believer ... It's not flashy ... It's not trendy ... But it's the fire that keeps burning.

## TAKE AWAY

A mystical and spiritual community begins with a decision - - - "Come out from among them and be ye separate." ... It starts with a heart that says yes to separation from worldly culture and yes to surrender to the Spirit ... An atmosphere is formed when hearts are truly devoted ... Devoted to apostolic teaching – not as mere knowledge – but as living revelation ... Now catch this – the first ekklesia was not built on theologically polished sermons or flashy programs ... It was built on hearts wide open – hearts that gladly received the apostolic word ... It was a community formed by people who were deeply surrendered, and continually devoted to the centrality of Christ and the strength of spiritual family.

## As we prepare to go home today, ask yourself:

Do I gladly receive the Word, even when it cuts deep or challenges my comfort? ... Am I open to Spirit-given revelation, or am I simply gathering more information? ... Is my life marked by devotion, or just occasional inspiration? ... A mystical community doesn't just happen – it is formed by hearts consumed by the Pentecostal experience ... That experience births a heart that is surrendered – sustained by devotion – and fueled by revelation.

## Closing Prayer

Father – we are on a journey – to understand the mystical truths that formed this ekklesia in Acts 2 ... We don't want to reproduce this assembly – but rather be infused with the same revelations they have – which formed this assembly ... Lord – over the years we have heard numerous sermons on this text ... We have been taught over the years what a church culture should look like ... Help us to grasp these revelational truths we have discussed ... The truth of

separation and importance of coming out from among them ... The truth of devotion and commitment to apostolic teaching ... Father – this week – speak to us by Your Spirit ... Work upon our hearts that we may be open and teachable to your revealed truths – even when it makes no sense ... Lord – as we go – may we walk in Your grace and truth – in Jesus name – Amen.