

First Church Members

What can we learn from the first Christians mentioned in Acts 2?

First, these people were devoutly religious, but lost in sin (2:1-5). They kept the feast of Pentecost and travelled great distances to worship in Jerusalem, but they were lost in sin.

Second, these people were impressed with the preaching, but needed convicting and converting (2:6-37). They were amazed and impressed by the tongue-speaking, but they were soon convicted by the preaching of scripture. Many today are impressed, but still unconvinced, unconvicted, and unconverted (Ezekiel 33:30-33; Mark 6:20).

Third, these people were in a crooked generation, but they saved themselves from it (2:38-41). They were willing to come out of their crooked generation and be different. Many today are satisfied with their evil generation (Matthew 11:16-17).

Fourth, they were from diverse backgrounds, but they were unified (2:42-46). They came from different countries with different languages, but they were united upon the word of God.

What can we as Christians learn from this? We can learn to be more than just religious, to be saved from sin, to be truly convicted and converted, and to be truly united with others. - *Chris Reeves*

Sentence Sermons

- Our bitter world cannot be sweetened by our sour religion.
- The smallest good deed is better than the greatest good intention.
- It is possible to live straight in a crooked generation.
- A smile is an inexpensive way to improve your looks.
- Train up a child in the way that he should go, and go that same way yourself.

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Assembly Times
Sunday: 9:30 am, 10:30 am, 6 pm
Wednesday: 7 pm

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For though we walk in the flesh, we do not war according to the flesh, for the weapons of our warfare are not of the flesh, but divinely powerful for the destruction of fortresses.
- 2 Corinthians 10:3-4 -

The Failure of A Successful Man

- Luke 12:13-21 -

¹³ Someone in the crowd said to Him, “Teacher, tell my brother to divide the *family* inheritance with me.” ¹⁴ But He said to him, “Man, who appointed Me a judge or arbitrator over you?” ¹⁵ Then He said to them, “Beware, and be on your guard against every form of greed; for not *even* when one has an abundance does his life consist of his possessions.” ¹⁶ And He told them a parable, saying, “The land of a rich man was very productive. ¹⁷ And he began reasoning to himself, saying, ‘What shall I do, since I have no place to store my crops?’” ¹⁸ Then he said, ‘This is what I will do: I will tear down my barns and build larger ones, and there I will store all my grain and my goods.’” ¹⁹ And I will say to my soul, “Soul, you have many goods laid up for many years *to come*; take your ease, eat, drink *and* be merry.”” ²⁰ But God said to him, ‘You fool! This very night your soul is required of you; and *now* who will own what you have prepared?’” ²¹ So is the man who stores up treasure for himself, and is not rich toward God.”

In this account of Luke 12:13-21, Jesus was teaching important lessons to his disciples in the presence of a multitude and one in the crowd made a request of Jesus (Luke 12:1,13). While Jesus was teaching some spiritual lessons, this man had his mind on earthly things (his family

inheritance). Jesus used this opportunity to teach some valuable lessons about possessions in the parable of “the rich fool”.

When you read about this rich man, the first thing you realize is that he had several positive characteristics. For example, this man was rich – “a certain rich man”. This man made his wealth honestly through farming – “the ground ... brought forth plentifully”. This man had foresight – “he reasoned within himself”. And, this man had resolve – “This will I do”. These are all positive characteristics to emulate in our lives today.

However, when a change of fortune came for this rich man, there was a problem. A change of fortune, whether good (like this rich farmer) or bad (like Job in the Old Testament), reveals one’s character. There are some people who gain a level of success and they allow it to “go to their head”. They are no longer “down to earth”, but they are filled with pride, superiority, immorality, etc. Saul, in the Old Testament was like this and he changed from humility (1 Samuel 10:20-24) to pride (1 Samuel 13 and 15).

When this well-to-do farmer got richer, he exhibited some negative characteristics. He thought about his gifts, but forgot about his giver - God (Psalm. 24:1; James 1:17). He thought about keeping, but forgot about giving (Matthew 6:19-21; Galatians 6:10; 1 Timothy 6:17-19; 1 John 3:17). He thought about his physical body, but forgot about his spir-

itual soul (Matthew 4:4; 2 Corinthians 4:16 – 5:10; 1 Timothy 4:8; 6:6-11). He thought about his life (“many years”), but forgot about his death – “this night” (1 Corinthians 15:32-33; Hebrews 9:27; James 4:13-15). He thought about life as “eating and drinking”, but forgot about life as serving God (Ecclesiastes 2:1-11; 12:13-14). And, he thought about himself (“I ... my” = 11 times), but not about his God (Luke 12:31,34).

Consider how many times Jesus says or does something in his ministry against a person’s money or possessions. Covetousness (Gr. *pleonexias*) means “a desire for more; always in a bad sense” (Mark 7:22; Luke 12:15; Romans. 1:29; 1 Corinthians 5:11; 2 Corinthians 9:5; Ephesians 4:19; 5:3; Colossians 3:5; 1 Thessalonians 2:5; 2 Peter 2:3,14). The covetous man is actually the rich poor man (Revelation 3:15-19). The solution is to get our minds off of earthly things and on to heavenly things (Colossians 3:1-2, 5).

This rich man is the kind of person that many today would call a “good business man”. Many would look up to him and want to be like him. But, this is the very person Jesus warned against. He was a fool. He had obsessions with possessions. This story is about the failure of a successful man. Will you live and die like him? Will his story be your story too? - *Chris Reeves*