

## Message Summary

The greatest example of devotion is surely Christ Himself. His love compelled Him to seek and save the lost (Mk. 10:45). He was in tune with the Father's will (Jn. 17) and Spirit's leading (Mk. 1:45), even into temptation in the wilderness (Mt. 4). Relational and communal, Christ's devotion extended not only to the Godhead but also to us. Christ delighted to spend time with those He saved. His generosity and hospitality compelled Him to give everything. This same Christ whose devotion drove his ceaseless obedience also empowers us towards devotion.

Acts 2:42-47 pictures a model church. Running from distractions, they devoted themselves fully to the purpose of Christ even after He ascended. The apostles' teaching was foremost. Though they lacked all of the written Word we now enjoy, they nonetheless gave themselves fully to hear and obey the spoken Word of God through His prophets and apostles. They gave themselves to fellowship: to the intentional, purposeful community surrounding table fellowship with God through communion and one another through meals together. They devoted themselves to selling their own possessions and distributing to all in the church body who had need.

The New Testament is chalked full of "one another" passages that instruct us how to live together in community. To name just a few: faithful hospitality provides context for fellowship with believers and gospel witness to unbelievers (1 Pt. 4:9-10). The Holy Spirit invigorates us to love deeply (Jn. 13:34), and Paul's application is to outdo one another in showing honor (Rm. 12:5-16). We are to hold our own interests loosely and be quick to submit to one another (Eph. 5:21). As we walk in love toward one another, we are to stir others to do the same (Hb. 10:24), show grace to the humble (1 Pt. 5:5), and display gospel forgiveness when necessary (Eph. 4:32).

As the early church devoted themselves to these things, the Lord was faithful to add to their number daily. The church was devoted not only to their current members, but to seek and save the lost around them. The early church's devotion was not a mere artifact of history; it is an example to the church today of how to devote ourselves fully to the Lord and a warning against the worldly distractions to which we are so often prone. It embodies the heart of God for the church He promised to build (Mt. 16:18), and by whose grace alone we can rightly pursue this same devotion.

## WHY IT MATTERS

### *Digging Deeper*

What temptations toward distraction are unique to our culture today? How does the gospel address them particularly?

What did your devotion to God look like when you first became a Christian? Do you have that same excited zeal for devotion today? Why is devotion so difficult to maintain over long periods of time?

Romans 12:10 commands us to "love one another with brotherly affection" (Rm. 12:10). What is the place of emotions (even "hemotions") in the Christian life? How can we stir our affections more to love God and others?

## NOW WHAT DO WE DO?

### *Group Discussion & Application*

*Use the following questions to examine what the sermon and its text mean, to apply the Word to your life, and to guide how you pray. Please note that you don't have to use all of the questions. These are just options (along with the digging deeper section) to help you frame the family/small group discussion.*

1. Are you devoted or distracted?
2. What are you personally most inclined to be distracted by? What is prone to squelch your devotion to God?
3. Are you devoting yourself to the apostles' teaching? Are there other resources that take a more dominant place than Christ's teaching?
4. How/To whom are you showing hospitality (1 Pt. 4:9-10)?
5. Are you outdoing others around you in showing honor (Rm. 12:10)?
6. Are the tools of technology distracting rather than enabling you?
7. Are you stirring others towards love and good works (Heb. 10:24)? How can you do so even more this week?
8. Do you, like God, make a practice of showing grace to the humble (1 Pt. 5:5)?

## ***Prayer***

- Pray for Our Church:
  - Thank God for Christ's devotion – to the Father, to the Spirit, to God's mission, and to us
  - Pray that our church would be devoted to the apostles' teaching, to fellowship, to the breaking of bread, and to prayer (Acts 2:42)
- Pray for Our Community:
  - Pray that people in the Gadsden area would see the futility of distractions and seek a more meaningful object for their devotion
  - Pray that the Lord would give add to the church day by day those who are being saved
- Pray for Our World:
  - Pray that God would give faithfulness to Christ Fellowship to preach the gospel in our Jerusalem, Judea, Samaria, and to the ends of the earth
  - Pray that the Lord would give our church body great generosity to meet needs around us, local and global, in the name of Jesus