

Acts 2:41-47

“Then they that gladly received his word were baptized: and the same day there were added unto them about three thousand souls. And they continued stedfastly in the apostles’ doctrine and fellowship, and in breaking of bread, and in prayers. And fear came upon every soul: and many wonders and signs were done by the apostles. And all that believed were together, and had all things common; And sold their possessions and goods, and parted them to all men, as every man had need. And they, continuing daily with one accord in the temple, and breaking bread from house to house, did eat their meat with gladness and singleness of heart, Praising God, and having favour with all the people. And the Lord added to the church daily such as should be saved.”

What Christianity is!

Sociology professor Dr. Elaine Walters found that for love to persist, it has to move beyond that first romantic frenzy into a warm intensity of deep friendship. Forgiveness is the capacity to accept reality as different from what one expected. Forgiveness of a person is the acceptance of one who has qualities that one, if given the chance, would not naturally accept. Forgiveness carries one into a dimension of life that is beyond where we would be if left alone. Relationship, friendship and forgiveness is what Christianity is all about!

God provided a means for people to find forgiveness before Him through the substitution sacrifice of His Son: “In whom we have redemption through his blood, even the forgiveness of sins” (Colossians 1:14). This provision must be personally received by faith as a free gift: “For by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God” (Ephesians 2:8). This point of decision secures a relationship to God by the “making alive of a person’s spirit” by the indwelling Spirit of God: “Jesus answered, Most assuredly, I say to you, unless one is born of water [natural birth – the flesh] and the Spirit [spiritual rebirth – the Spirit], he cannot enter the kingdom of God. That which is born of the flesh is flesh, and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit” (John 3:5-6).

The wonder of this new relationship is that it involves the adoption of the believer into the family of God: “But as many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become children of God, to those who believe in His name: who were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God.” (John 1:12), and privileges each believer with the opportunity of being a friend of God: “Ye are my friends, if ye do whatsoever I command you. Henceforth I call you not servants; for the servant knows not what his lord does: but I have called you friends; for all things that I have heard of my Father I have made known unto you.” (John 15:14-15).

The responsibility and beauty of this new relationship is the ability God gives His family to forgive others as God Himself forgave them: “Take heed to yourselves: If your brother trespass against you, rebuke him; and if he repent, forgive him. And if he trespass against you seven times in a day, and seven times in a day turn again to you, saying, I repent; you shall forgive him.” (Luke 17:3-4). This new freedom of human forgiveness carried the church into a “dimension of life” described in scripture as the bond of love and the unity of the Spirit: “And all that believed were together, and shared everything they had. ... continuing daily with one accord.... and singleness of heart, Praising God, and having favour with all the people.” (Acts 2:45-46). Friend, does this describe *your Christianity*?

What is my response:
