

## Rooted: Why is the Church Important?

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The church is designed to be a family

And like any family

There are some weird members... in the family

Some of you... have met the weird members

Some of you... are the weird members

In fact, if you've never met the weird church people

You probably are the weird church people

There are some weird members... in the family

But I still love the church

It can truly bring out the best in us

But, unfortunately, church can bring out the worst as well

As a pastor of a church that often connects with people who have been burned by the church

I have seen my fair share

Like the young woman who had grown up in her legalistic church

As a teenager, she had made some bad decisions

And done some things she shouldn't have done

One of those decisions led her to be pregnant

And then raising a baby by herself

When she found out she was expecting

The church shunned her

So she left

Fast forward six or seven years

I'm sitting in her apartment living room

Because that little boy

At six or seven years old

Had chased a ball out into the street

And been hit and killed by an oncoming car

Devastated

She had turned to the only church she had ever known

The one that she'd grown up in

The one that had shunned her

And that she had walked away from

She reached out to the church

Set up an appointment with the pastor

Met him in his office

Where he quickly got to the bottom line

He told her that her little boy had been killed

As a punishment from God for her sin

So she needed to accept it and

I think this is a quote

“Just get over it”

I was part of a church in college

That became like family to me

Freshman, sophomore, junior years

They fed us

And loved us

And patiently allowed us to succeed and fail at ministry

And then the summer before my senior year

They had a major fight

So when I came back to start my senior year

It was like my family had gotten divorced

I could go with “dad”

Or I could go with “mom”

Or – like I did

I could just walk away

A friend of mine was part of a church split

Where one side

Actually brought chains to the church

And literally locked the other group out

So that they couldn't worship God in *their* building  
Cause you know how horrible that would be  
To worship God... in *their* building

Its like I picture us

You know, last week we talked about how we'll all stand before God  
To be evaluated for what we've done in this life

I picture them standing before God

And God saying

Help me understand what you were doing there?

Like ... tell me your thought process there

The church can bring out the worst in us

But the church can also bring out the best in us

My life will never be the same

Because of loving men & women – the church

Who invested in me as a kid growing up

Youth outings

Weeks of camp

And patiently dealing with squirrely, squirmy, struggling to pay attention  
me in Sunday School week after week

I'll never be the same

Because of their investment

So many of us

Can trace our spiritual roots

Back to “the church”

Back to men & women who loved us

And lovingly pointed us to God

And so many of us

Right now

Are helping young people in this church

Put down spiritual roots

So that they become men & women of God

Who can point their heritage back to us

And together

We can do things

We could never do on our own

The church can bring out the best in us

There’s just nothing like the church when she’s getting it right

The world just doesn’t know what to do with it

Because she doesn’t fit into any box

Let me give you a picture of this:

**Grab a Bible and turn to Acts 2**

I remember when WellSpring launched 18 years ago  
We were in Spring Hill Elementary School  
And we just wondered if anyone would show up  
253 people came that day  
And for almost 2 decades now  
God has been changing life after life after life

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So Acts 2 is the Grand Opening of the Church  
Peter gets up to deliver a message to the people  
And he must've wondered  
What's going to happen when I speak?  
Will people listen politely and then walk off?  
Will they arrest me?  
Whip & crucify me like they did Jesus?  
So he delivers the message  
And verse 36 is his conclusion

**Read Acts 2:36**

Jesus is Lord  
And Jesus is Messiah – Savior

**Read Acts 2:37**

They were cut to the heart  
Many of the people in the crowd had heard Jesus teach  
And knew something was different

But never responded  
Some of the people in that crowd had shouted  
“Crucify Him” just a few days ago  
They were cut to the heart  
And asked – what do we do?

Verse 38

**Read Acts 2:38**

Repent – make a change  
Set out in a new direction  
And be baptized

**The Greek word baptizó (βαπτίζω) literally means “To dip or submerge”**

God chose to take a physical thing that everyone is aware of  
We’ve all taken baths  
So He chose to take a physical thing that we all know about  
To signify a spiritual thing we all need  
Forgiveness of our sins

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“Repent – and be baptized – for the forgiveness of sins”

God longs to purify us from our sins  
So that  
He can fill us with His Spirit  
In the Garden of Eden  
Before Adam & Eve sinned  
God walked along with Adam

And with Eve

Everyday

And now – because Jesus has offered forgiveness of sins

God can once again walk with us

Everyday

**Read Acts 2:39**

We're a part of that promise today

And then verse 40

**Read Acts 2:40**

“With many other words”

A good sermon

The Bible says it right here

A good sermon has many words

God said it - don't blame me

He warned them; and he pleaded with them, “Save yourselves from this corrupt generation.”

A corrupt generation is not modern invention

But you've got to be intentional

To save yourself from it

Verse 41

**Read Acts 2:41**

I want to focus in on 2 parts of this verse:

#1 – Those who accepted his message were baptized

The church – over the years – has been so good at making simple things complicated

But this cuts through it

If you accept his message

And remember from verse 36 what his message was

Jesus is Lord

And Jesus is Saviour

If you accept that message

And have never chosen to be baptized

You've never been dipped or submerged

We'd love to share that experience with you

We've had 11 baptisms in the last month

We have one more scheduled for today

And we're hoping to have a bunch more next week

If you accept his message

That Jesus is savior and lord

But haven't done that yet

We'd love to have you join us next week

If that's you

Or if you'd like to talk to someone about it but don't want to do that in a crowd on Sunday morning

Go to [www.WellSpringChristian.org/baptize](http://www.WellSpringChristian.org/baptize) or click this QR code

There's a link to a sermon on baptism there you can watch

And if you know you want to do that

You can fill out a form and we'll be in touch to answer any questions you might have

Let's look at verse 41 again

**Read Acts 2:41**

So those who accepted his message were baptized

And about 3000 were added to their number that day

3000 baptisms happened that day

You know I'm a nerd

So I had to think this through

3,000 baptisms in one day

We know it was morning, so they got some time

But if they're talking with each person

Answering any questions

Making sure they understand fully

Let's say 10 minutes each

If Peter was doing all of the baptisms

It would take him 500 hours

So that's not it

Let's say all 12 apostles performed baptisms

Now we're to about 40 hours  
But it says it all happened that day  
After Peter preached many words  
  
If all 120 were baptizing  
You're still over 4 hours  
So I think you're seeing Peter or Andrew or Matthias meeting with someone  
Listening to their story  
Talking and praying with them for more than 10 minutes  
Then baptizing them  
And when they came up out of the water  
Peter would grab the next guy in line  
And the guy who just got baptized would get the one after that  
3,000 were added to their number that day  
3,000 people converted to Christianity  
3,000 people who began to minister that day  
Man, I want to see the video

And who were the 3,000?

I mean, think about it for a second

Who were the 3,000?

All we know about them

Is based on the kind of people that Jesus attracted

Versus the kind of people that Jesus upset

Who were the 3,000?

That was the church

If that's true

The church would have been a place that made seminary professors feel uncomfortable

But welcomed prostitutes with open arms

There were probably a few prostitutes baptized that day

The church would have been a place that made scribes feel uncomfortable

Describe scribes

Describe Leviticus

The church would have been a place that made scribes feel uncomfortable

But welcomed those who got rich, lining their pockets with money from poor people that they extracted to give to the wealthy, powerful, foreign oppressors

The church would have been a place that made scribes feel uncomfortable

But welcomed tax collectors with open arms

There were probably a few of Matthew's friends baptized that day

The church would have been a place that made powerful politicians feel optionless

But celebrated poor widow as being rich & powerful & generous

They probably baptized a few widows that day

Who hadn't felt that safe in years

You see, the church was a place

That broke all the stereotypes

That superseded all other allegiances

That held strong & united & faithful in spite of fierce opposition

There's just nothing like the church when she's getting it right

The power didn't come from the organization

It came from the Gospel

The power didn't come from a handful of key leaders

It came from the multitudes – the 3,000 diverse people – who God began to work through

Our staff went away for a couple days this past week

And we were talking about the last couple years here at WellSpring

And the months and years ahead

And we were talking about some of the secret sauce for WellSpring

WellSpring's power – like the early church – is not in the organization

But in the Gospel

Her secret sauce is not in a handful of leaders

But from the diverse family that God has drawn together to make up WellSpring

On our staff retreat, Keith said it well

The church is designed to be “fun-sized”

Even though there’s a large group of people assembled as the church

They’re broken up into “fun-sized” packages

Look at the next verses

And notice all of the plural words

**Read Acts 2:42-45**

And then look how they were packaged:

**Read Acts 2:46-47**

The secret wasn’t just the thousands gathered together in the temple courts

The secret was found in the hundreds of “fun-sized” households

The power of the church is not in all of us

But in each of us

When each of us love

When each of us pray

When each of us give and serve and care

Each of us make the church

What all of us hope and pray and long for it to be

There’s just nothing like the church

Listen to me a second

I’m not a prophet

I don’t know what’s going to happen

God doesn't tell me this thing

But moments are coming

Moments that are powerful

And life-giving

And super-natural

Moments when the church gets it right

Moments when God's power is on full display

Because of what Jesus has done

And because of what He is going to do

Through each of us

If you're not tangibly a part of the family here

I want you to be

Not because God can't do His thing without you

He can and will

But because you'll miss what's coming

When each of us love

When each of us pray

When each of us give and serve and care

I don't want you to miss

When each of us make the church

What all of us hope and pray and long for it to be