

Devoted to Jesus

Acts 4:13

Let's go back to page 3 of the annual plan—to the Members' Covenant.

Our Members' Covenant is important because we are members of the body of Christ—we belong to God and to one another. So, the covenant gives shape, color, texture to how it is that we belong to one another.

Here is how it works: **1st para** (salvation / baptism / entrance into church)

2nd para (we are a bunch of rookies; like 1st disciples)

9 commitments—to God and each other...

Since this is our **new** Members' Covenant—coming out of Polity Renewal and we thought this is a good time for a hard reset for all of us.

We are going to unpack ea of **9 commitments**—one at a time—during our fall sermon series.

Today we start with Commitment # 1. **Devote ourselves to Jesus daily.**

Turn with me to **Acts 4:13** ... I chose this passage because John Aldridge pointed us to it last Sunday (in video).

Context: -Peter/John healed the lame man at the temple—in the name of Jesus Christ... and the news of the healing spread fast!

-Big crowds gather; Peter starts preaching the gospel and the

rulers of Israel are greatly troubled by all of it... they arrest P/J.

Let's pick up in **Acts 4:5**...

They had been with Jesus. **Devoted.**

Even a cursory reading of the NT—and you can see what makes someone a Christian is nothing less than their **devotion to Jesus Christ.**

A Christian is someone who is learning to follow Jesus—with increasing obedience to the Son of God. It was true of the first disciples; true of us...

If there is anything we want to be true of this church—who we are and what we stand for—it is this—**we want to follow Jesus Christ as Lord and Master.**

I was reading the Sermon on the Mount again this week; the beginning of it jumped off the page at me.

Matt 5:1— “When he sat down, **his disciples came to him.**”

Matthew, the Gospel writer, is not just saying that the disciples were present. He is making a statement about their devotion to Jesus.

He sat down to instruct them... and they came to him in posture of learning and humility and devotion... **his disciples came to the Master.**

We could multiply examples of this. The disciples follow Jesus everywhere / walking closely with him;

They learn how to love **God's Word** / how to **pray** / how to show **hospitality** and **serve** others / how to **give** sacrificially / how to practice **speaking the gospel** to others... all from Jesus directly.

So, they were devoted to Jesus by walking with him *personally*. We can't walk with Jesus in person like they did... *but we can devote ourselves to Jesus by following him into his way of life... as the Spirit empowers us.*

And that is what this first commitment is about:

Devote ourselves to Jesus daily—through Bible reading and meditation, prayer, gratitude, generosity, kindness, and serving others, as we follow the Lord Jesus in daily habits that characterized his earthly life. (John 15:1–11; 1 Tim 4:8; 2 Peter 1:3–11)

[leave on screen until end]

Again, the first paragraph of our Members' Covenant describes our new life in Christ—through repentance and faith in him! Saved by grace through faith!

But how do we grow in wisdom and grace? How do we follow Jesus with increasing obedience to the Father?

Answer: we live the same habits and spiritual disciplines that characterized his life!

Scripture / prayer / giving / serving / fasting / voicing the gospel...

Let me mention the three passages here... why we chose them:

John 15:1–11

1 Tim 4:8

2 Peter 1:3–11

Illus “If you are coming for me... be ready to give up your life. Because I gave up mine to get here.” Tom Brady

Before we turn to communion, let me ask you this: what are the things competing with your devotion to Jesus Christ?

Work / Entertainment / Sports / a relationship / Screen time

Take a moment and ask yourself if your devotion to God is what it ought to be?

Remember, when he sat down to teach them, his disciples came to him... they came hungry and open and in deep humility... submitting to Master.