



Message: **Simple Addition** | April 26, 2026 | Speaker: **Pastor Eddie Eddy**

Acts 2:42-47 **New International Version (NIV)** The Fellowship of the Believers

⁴² They devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and to fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer. ⁴³ Everyone was filled with awe at the many wonders and signs performed by the apostles. ⁴⁴ All the believers were together and had everything in common. ⁴⁵ They sold property and possessions to give to anyone who had need. ⁴⁶ Every day they continued to meet together in the temple courts. They broke bread in their homes and ate together with glad and sincere hearts, ⁴⁷ praising God and enjoying the favor of all the people. And the Lord added to their number daily those who were being saved.

"Simple Addition"

No one can make the case that our Christian faith is simply a theory. Of all the world religions out there... Christianity is the one that has the most historical evidence available to back up the facts. We can trace the life of Jesus through other ancient writings that verify his ministry and his existence.

So our faith is more than just thought process, or a philosophy, or a bunch of words, or ideas. Ultimately, our Christian faith is about living within relationships and a community started by Jesus Christ. The legacy of what happened on Easter Morning is the church of Jesus Christ. And that church, whether it be 2000 years ago or today, has continually been adapting to the culture of the time.

Let's be honest...we are having some challenges in the church today. Not Back Roads specifically, but in the institution of church. There is a struggle going on... and I can't say what for sure what the outcome will be. But this I do know, no matter what happens as we try to live this life of Christianity, this faith of ours... always brings us back to...and will always be rooted in the same place...the church.

A few years ago, a baseball fan told his buddy that he wasn't going to go to any more ball games. They had been going to games together for years so his friend asked him "why would you give up on these games?" "Well" he said...

Whenever I go to a game,

- It cost me money and the guys we go to watch are way overpaid.
- The other fans don't care about me at all.
- The seats are uncomfortable.
- Coach never visits me and honestly, I think I know more than the coaches do.
- The referee makes calls I don't agree with.
- Some of the games go into overtime and make me late for dinner.
- I don't know half the music they play.
- I have better things to do at game time.
- I got dragged to too many games when I was young and I'm tired of it.
- I get more out of a day at the lake than I do at the game.
- And 1 more thing...I won't take my kids to a game anymore either. They have to choose for themselves which teams they want to follow.

Have you ever heard excuses like that? Do they sound like some of the same excuses we hear as reasons not to be here with us this morning? Maybe we've heard these excuses...maybe we've even used these excuses ourselves.

So why do people use them? I wonder this...do we have the same expectations for a ball game as we do for church? Do we come to church expecting to be entertained or to be fed? What if we changed that mindset and showed up with the attitude that we are actually the players instead of the audience. What if we came together as the church ...because we are active participants? What

would church look like if we had the attitude that we are the team and not the fans. How would that change our expectations of church is?

I think it's important to remind ourselves that "The Church" is what Jesus left on this earth to do his work? The "church" is not this building, not the organ, not the parking lot or the pews or even the past. The church is not in the checking account. The church is not in the religious title "Methodist", or "Catholic" or "Non-Denominational". Right now...The church... is sitting in God's building, in God's pews.

I think people can understand the idea of religion, but they don't want the church. Some folks enjoy the warm, fuzzy feelings that come from spiritual thinking, but they don't want the church. Some are excited by the idea of love, but they don't want the church. Most people definitely want heaven for eternity, but they don't want the church for today.

That is a problem, because like it or not, if we are going to pick up our cross and follow Jesus...we are going to be involved in "the church". I'm sure you've heard the church called the "bride of Christ." I heard someone say one time, "I love Jesus. I just wish he wouldn't bring his leprous bride everywhere he goes." But church and Jesus go together like "love and marriage" and the "horse and carriage."

Let's just stop for a minute and reflect a little. Easter has come. The tomb has been emptied. The Lord has appeared to his disciples, and the word is out... "He is alive!" Jesus lives!

So where do we find him? Where do we seek him for ourselves? Where do we experience his presence in personal ways? We find him in the community of is believers. That may be here in this building, but it also may be out on the streets, at work, at a concert, in line at the grocery store. We find him in the fellowship of the redeemed, those who have witnessed the graces and gifts of a risen Christ. We can find him in the hands and feet of Jesus...his Church.

In Acts 2, we get a glimpse of "the church" in its earliest moments, and it is a beautiful thing to see. The people are united, everyone is focused on the teaching of the apostles, no one misses a service or a Bible study, every line on the sign-up sheet going through the pews... is full, there are more than enough volunteers for every event and every committee, folks are giving way beyond that minimum 10% mark...so everyone has enough, and people are lining up to join. This is going to be the first megachurch model.

But...if you know your Bible and the story of "the church", you know this way of life doesn't last very long. Soon the church will be dealing with all sorts of unpleasant issues. Our text today is from the second chapter of Acts. By the fifth chapter, a husband and wife drop dead in the church for lying about their financial support. They fell over dead... because they lied about their pledge.

Is this the church, is this the hands and feet of Christ? Yes...yes it is...this is the church. This is the "holy, catholic church" we affirm and believe in. The saints of the past and the saints today. And until Jesus comes back...it will be the saints of tomorrow.

Where do we find the living Jesus again? In his church. In these faces, in these dirty hands, in these broken hearts. In this community of battered believers standing at the foot of the cross. We find Jesus in you.

I know there will be frustration. "The church" likes to "major in the minors," quarreling over the most foolish things. It seems sometimes to enjoy poor health and complaining, hurting others for a knobble cause. I know all this. But I also know that if you want to find Jesus, it will be in his "church", this community.

This community is so important. People lose sight of that fact sometimes until they need it.

We had a lady who was leading a yoga class at the last church I served. She was a former member of the Methodist church in the next town over. Someone had upset her and she left that church. During a conversation, I asked her if she was going to an Ash Wednesday service anywhere. She told me that her spirituality was beyond the church.

She was also a survivor of a ruptured brain aneurism. She openly admitted that she had beaten death, she was told that it was a miracle that she was even alive.

I asked her if during her recovery, did she receive any cards or calls letting her know that people were praying for her? She got excited when she told me that the nurses had never seen so many cards and letters.

I asked her if anyone from her former church had sent a note or visited. She said yes. I then asked her if she thought she would have survived without those prayers? She said, “no way”.

I then asked her, “do you see how powerful and important the community of “Church” is? It wasn’t the building, it wasn’t the organ, it wasn’t the pews, the parking lot or the past that she felt pulled her through that situation. It was “the church” that carried her. The hands and feet of Jesus, the people connected to Christ. It was people she knew, people she didn’t know, people she liked and some she didn’t, some who liked her and probably some that didn’t her. But that is “the church”.

Ultimately, our Christian faith is about living within relationships and a community started by Jesus Christ. In the midst of the comings and goings of our lives, the risen Christ appears, community happens, and the church takes shape. Easter has come, and Easter continues. Easter continues in the imperfect, grace-filled community we call church.

We are all concerned with the growth of the church worldwide. Especially with all the things going on around us: the wars and rumors of wars, the changing weather patterns. It’s easy to get caught up in all that and get distracted.

I want us to look at our passage and see what happened to that first church so long ago so we can focus on what the head of the church...Jesus...wants to accomplish in today’s church.

Acts 2:47 And the Lord added to their number day by day those who were being saved.

There’s a story of a small town where two city workers were found doing something rather strange. Along one side of Main Street, one worker was digging a hole in the ground and the other was filling it up.

The mayor drove by, and after watching them dig and fill several holes, stopped, confronted the men, and demanding an explanation.

“Well, sir,” said the first man, “we work for the city planting trees, and usually there are three of us – one to dig the hole, one to plant the tree, and one to cover it up. The guy who plants the tree called in sick today, but we’re here and we’re doing our jobs anyway.”

They, like us sometimes, had lost sight of the objective and were just going through the motions. Sometimes, I think that happens not only to church members, but even pastors. It’s easy to fall into the habit of going to a worship service, putting a little money in the offering, hitting coffee hour and *maybe* attending a Bible Study.

We can go through the motions of “church” all the while losing sight of the objective, the reason why God planted His church in the first place, and it’s not for our own comfort and benefit. No! God planted the church so **He** could “add to their number day by day those who are being saved”. It’s God’s simple addition. He has the formula, we have to follow the steps. God put us...the church...here to rescue a lost and dying world with the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

So let’s make sure we are not just going through the motions and re-devote ourselves to the mission He has given us, let’s use his simple addition. Let’s devote ourselves to living out the truth of God’s Word, to sharing our lives together in genuine fellowship, communion, and to joyful worship, all for the ultimate purpose of saving people from their sins and adding new followers of Christ to the church.

Don’t be content just to be here Sunday after Sunday. Instead, let God use you to make a real difference in a dying world.

Remember this the next time you are tempted to give up on church. If you want to experience Jesus, this is the place and these are the people, in spite of their imperfections and idiosyncrasies, You are “the church” where the living Christ will be found.

To God be the Glory, Amen.

Invitation to the Offering

Church, what we heard today is a reminder that we are not here to go through the motions...we are here because God has called us to be part of something bigger than ourselves.

In Acts, we saw that the early believers gave generously so that no one was in need, and through that faithful obedience, *the Lord added to their number daily*.

Giving is not just about sustaining the church...it is about participating in God's mission. It is an act of trust. It is an act of discipleship. It is an act of being the church.

So today, as we give, we do so not out of obligation, but as active participants in what God is doing in this world.

Closing Prayer & Prayer of Dedication

Lord God, We thank You for the opportunity to gather as Your church...
not just to hear Your Word, but to be shaped by it.

As we leave this place, help us not to fall back into routine or distraction, but to stay focused and to remain devoted to the mission You have given us.

Take what has been offered today...these gifts, these tithes, these offerings and use them for Your purpose.

Multiply them, Lord, so that lives may be changed, hope may be restored, and Your kingdom may grow.

But more than that, take our lives...our time, our talents, our hearts
and use us as Your church in the world.

Send us out not as spectators, but as participants in Your work. Not just hearers of the Word, but doers of Your will.

We pray all of this in the name of Jesus Christ, who is alive and at work in His church today. Amen.