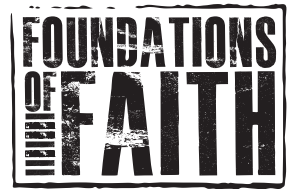


Lesson #4: Supplement



Story on acceptance and love in the church (optional)

[A few years ago Tony Campolo was speaking at a conference in Hawaii. One night his internal clock wakes him at 3:00 a.m. with his stomach is growling. He gets up and goes looking for a place to get an early breakfast. He goes into a grungy dive and as he sits there in walk eight or nine prostitutes. He gulps his coffee, planning to make a quick getaway. Then the woman next to him says to her friend, "You know what? Tomorrow's my birthday. I'm gonna be 39." To which her friend nastily replies, "So what d'ya want from me? A birthday party?" The first woman says, "I'm just sayin' it's my birthday. I don't want anything from you. I mean, why should I have a birthday party? I've never had a birthday party in my whole life. Why should I have one now?" Well, when Tony heard that, he said he made a decision. He sat and waited until the women left, and then he asked, Harry, the guy at the counter, "Do they come in here every night? Because the one next to me just said that tomorrow is her birthday. Do you think we could maybe throw a little birthday party for her right here in the diner?" "That's great," he says, "yeah, I like it." So they make their plans. At 2:30 the next morning, Tony is back. They decorate the place from one end to the other. At 3:30 on the dot, the door swings open and in walks Agnes. They all shout "Happy Birthday, Agnes!" Agnes was stunned, her mouth fell open, her knees started to buckle, and she almost fell over. After the cake, Tony asked to pray for Agnes, for her life, her health, and her salvation. When he's finished, Harry leans over, and with a trace of hostility in his voice, he says, "Hey, you never told me you was a preacher. What kind of church do you belong to anyway?" Tony answered him quietly, "I belong to a church that throws birthday parties for prostitutes at 3:30 in the morning." Harry thinks for a moment, and in a mocking way says, "No you don't. There ain't no church like that. If there was, I'd join it. Yep, I'd join a church like that.]"

What does this story tell us what the church should be like? _____

Acts 2 story

[Jesus taught his disciples the importance of meeting together as fellow believers. He said, "I will build my church and all the powers of hell will not be able to defeat it!" After Jesus ascended to heaven, his followers began to meet regularly with other believers as a church. They also spread the good news to many people. On one occasion three thousand people heard and accepted the gospel and were baptized. These believers devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching which Jesus had given to them and to the fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer. Everyone was filled with awe, and the apostles did many wonders and miraculous signs. All the believers were together and had everything in common. They gave sacrificially, even selling some of their possessions and goods, in order that they could help and give to those who were in need. They continued to meet together daily in the temple courts. They broke bread in their homes and ate together with glad and sincere hearts, praising God and enjoying the favor of all the people. Every day the Lord blessed the believers by bringing more and more people to them who became saved.]