

## Sundav School Lesson

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position by the Crucifixion, in the very city where Christ had died, the disciples boldly declared their faith in his mission. Equally remarkable is the fact that on that day three thousand persons were prepared to accept the reinterpretation of national hopes that a crucified Messiah required. Obviously, the Holy Spirit was working not only in the words of the speakers but also in the hearts of the hearers. Without fear, the early

church shared its faith with others.

### The Nature of the Church

1. The church is a continuation of the life of Christ in the world. Just as the physical body of Jesus was the vehicle for the incarnation of God, so the church is the medium of his continuing activity.

2. The church is a witnessing community. A witness cannot speak of things he has heard at second hand. He can testify only to what he himself has seen and known. Peter, once filled with Jewish racial pride, was a witness: "God has shown me that

I should not call any man common or unclean."

At an old-fashioned class meeting, one of the saints was testifying how God had saved him forty years before. Finally the leader interrupted. "Brother, we know you were saved forty years ago, but what has God done for you today?"

3. The church is an obedient community. Jesus told the disciples to wait, and they waited. The Holy Spirit directed the disciples to go into the street and witness to the Messiah, and they obeyed. Peter told his hearers to repent and be baptized,

and they did so. The church, the Body of Christ, is always obedient to the Lord, its head. If we are to be faithful members of the church, we too must bear our witness in obedience.

The problem is that we often confuse our thoughts with God's thoughts. We do not find it easy to know what God wills the church to do. We live in a secular world that really does not expect any word from God. Modern man expects to solve his problems by the exercise of his own reason.

Each should recognize that the other is bearing his witness in

sincerity and that together they may come to a clearer understanding of God's will than either of them could find alone. Therefore, they will continue to walk together, confident in the promise that the Holy Spirit will guide them into all truth.

God, our Father, who sent thy Son into the world to redeem it and who raised up the church to continue his work, make us trustworthy and obedient servants of thy love; through Jesus Christ, our Lord. Amen.

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