

East Cooper Baptist Church
October 23, 2016

Lifestyle Patterns Which Feed a Life of Awe
Acts 2:40-47

⁴⁰ And with many other words he bore witness and continued to exhort them, saying, "Save yourselves from this crooked generation." ⁴¹ So those who received his word were baptized, and there were added that day about three thousand souls. ⁴² And they devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and the fellowship, to the breaking of bread and the prayers. ⁴³ And awe came upon every soul, and many wonders and signs were being done through the apostles. ⁴⁴ And all who believed were together and had all things in common. ⁴⁵ And they were selling their possessions and belongings and distributing the proceeds to all, as any had need. ⁴⁶ And day by day, attending the temple together and breaking bread in their homes, they received their food with glad and generous hearts, ⁴⁷ praising God and having favor with all the people. And the Lord added to their number day by day those who were being saved.

AWE: to be gloriously overwhelmed at the goodness, greatness, and mercy of the triune God ultimately expressed in the cross of Christ.

How were the believers to escape the corrosive effect of their culture and live in awe? By adopting a lifestyle which was DEVOTED to four pursuits:

They devoted themselves to:

1. APOSTLES' TEACHING
2. THE FELLOWSHIP
3. WORSHIP
4. THE PRAYERS

*The understanding of the glory and wonder of the One who is both Lord and Christ must be central.

"The highest of all God's commands is this: that we hold up before our eyes the image of his dear son, our Lord Jesus Christ. Every day he should be the excellent mirror wherein we behold how much God loves us and how well, in his infinite goodness, he has cared for us in that he gave his dear Son for us. ... Contemplate Christ given for us. Then, God willing, you will feel better."

Timothy George, "Contemplate Christ", Christian History, Issue 115, 2015

*The gospel and the promise of eternal favor.

“³¹ What then shall we say to these things? If God is for us, who can be^[a] against us? ³² He who did not spare his own Son but gave him up for us all, how will he not also with him graciously give us all things?”

Romans 8:31-32

“I will bless the Lord at all times; his praise shall continually be in my mouth. ² My soul makes its boast in the Lord; let the humble hear and be glad. ³ Oh, magnify the Lord with me, and let us exalt his name together! ⁴ I sought the Lord, and he answered me and delivered me from all my fears. ⁵ Those who look to him are radiant, and their faces shall never be ashamed. ⁶ This poor man cried, and the Lord heard him and saved him out of all his troubles. ⁷ The angel of the Lord encamps around those who fear him, and delivers them. ⁸ Oh, taste and see that the Lord is good! Blessed is the man who takes refuge in him! ⁹ Oh, fear the Lord, you his saints, for those who fear him have no lack! ¹⁰ The young lions suffer want and hunger; but those who seek the Lord lack no good thing.”

Psalm 34:1-10

“This psalm represents an outward seeking of the Lord which makes a man's life sublime.”

C. H. Spurgeon

*Lifestyle patterns which feed AWE empower an “almost balanced” Christ-honoring existence.

“If there lurks in most modern minds the notion that to desire our own good and earnestly to hope for the enjoyment of it is a bad thing, I submit that this notion...is no part of the Christian faith. Indeed, if we consider the unblushing promises of reward and the staggering nature of the rewards promised in the Gospels, it would seem that Our Lord finds our desires not too strong, but too weak. We are half-hearted creatures, fooling about with drink and sex and ambition when infinite joy is offered us, like an ignorant child who wants to go on making mud pies in a slum because he cannot imagine what is meant by an offer of a holiday at the sea. We are far too easily pleased.”

C.S. Lewis, *The Weight of Glory*, p. 26

Questions for Discussion:

1. How do we make the reality of Christ a growing presence in our lives?
2. Read the statement by Lewis from *The Weight of Glory*. Why does “Our Lord finds our desires not too strong, but too weak”?
3. What are some of the ways seeking after God is richly rewarded according to Psalm 34:1-10?
4. Why do the four pursuits of Acts 2:42 make us “almost balanced”?
5. How do these lifestyle choices feed awe?