

*Introduction: Pg. \_\_\_\_\_*

Prayer for Medford... Magazine clip... not reported... finally got back to the Mayor, Principal on an administrative leave, School committee

PRAY.

We live in a great city, but our city, like every city, is a broken city. We are an imperfect city. We are full of people with limitations, who often take foolish action and often make unwise choices. No one is exempt.

But it is intriguing that Jesus talks about building a new city, full of new citizens. He promises, in fact, to bring the heavenly city, the new Jerusalem, from heaven to earth at the end of the age when he returns.

Today, everyone who follows Jesus lives as a city within a city, living as the city of God in the city of man. The question is: what kind of community should we be?

Ideal spiritual community... (Maybe adjust to make the focus on the ideal community. Shalom...) Tie the two together.

Acts 2:42-47 provides a summary statement of the ideal spiritual community. It highlights the dominant characteristics of these earliest followers of Jesus. Thus, it serves as a paradigm for churches in every age and a mirror by which we should evaluate the health and vibrancy of our church. You want to know what life consistently looked like in the early church.

Read Acts 2:42-47

\*Take note: these aren't super Christians. Most of them are *new* Christians. We don't wait to pursue this. We pursue it NOW.

And let me say at the outset... I see so much of this, but there is no doubt we have room to grow. There is a deeper experience of what God invites us to...

**“Day by Day”  
Acts 2:42-47**

**The Point: Day by day wonders come through day by day devotion.**

**I. Exercise day by day devotion.**

- When someone is devoted to something, they display steadfast and single-minded focus to a course of action. They come back again and again and again. Devotion is not some days. It's every day.
- Look at verse 42: And THEY (singular or plural? - Alright.) devoted THEMSELVES (singular or plural? - Alright.)
  - These actions of devotion were acts of plurality. They were moving in harmony on this.
  - Everyone was in on this. And I'm just going to keep saying this because I know our default is isolation and independence rather than community and interdependence.
  - You may say: “yes, this is for me.” But if you aren't working to see God move powerfully in the lives around you, you're don't really get it in the way that Jesus is calling us to get it.

T: What were they devoted to? you *two/three* encouragements from their example of devotion. #1 . . .

## Truth in Christ

- The apostles teaching consisted of the truths Jesus taught them about God, ourselves, and our world.
- But this teaching was *not* just information. God's intent for truth is that it travels from the head to the heart, so that the truth of God, this information would lead to God's transformation.
  - Your vast knowledge doesn't impress God, but your obedience thrills his heart.
  - Parable of two sons in Matthew (21:28)
- That's the aim of good teaching.
  - Preaching and teaching is the explanation and application of the Word.
  - What does it mean, and how is it relevant to my life?
- Today, the apostle's teaching is right here, not only here in the book of Acts, but in the next 22 books of the NT, which is consistent with the previous 43 books!
  
- Jesus taught the apostles. The apostles taught other people. Those people taught more who taught more who taught more . . . Until they taught YOU!
  - 2 Timothy 2:2.
  - Though we are very social, the church is not a social club! We are a community of Christ.
  - So in all of our relating, we have to ask: how often is the Word of Christ entering our relationships?
  - [[Is the Word stopping with you or spreading through you?]]
  - Copy. Paste. Send.
  
- A church full of God will be a church full of God's words!

## Together in Christ

- The basic meaning of "fellowship" is association or close relationship. It's why we see the statement at the beginning of v. 44: "*And all who believed were together.*"
  - We have to prioritize time together. Not just Sundays. This is why Groups are so important...
  - That's why it is so important to communicate with one another through the week.
    - How long does it take to send a text?
    - How about hopping on FaceTime/Skype for 10 minutes? Better than no minutes.
  - {P} Vision for Groups. Vision for expanding Groups... We're preparing for big-time growth.
- BUT the word "fellowship" is sometimes translated with the word "partnership," which in the first century, had "commercial overtones." Partnership is a joint venture of self-sacrifice based on a common vision and purpose.

This fellowship was expressed in a variety of ways...

### **1. Together over Meals**

- Though this could be an allusion to the Lord's Supper, it seems to be a broad reference to sharing meals together anywhere any time.
- To share a meal in the first century was a sign of acceptance, of intimacy. It was *and still* is a way of saying: I want to know you.
- That's why it was such a scandal when Jesus sat down to eat with prostitutes, tax collectors and sinners. The religious leaders were outraged when they should have been rejoicing!
- Here's the obvious encouragement

- Go grab a meal together. Have someone over.
- If you can't cook... Pick something up. Make a PB&J.
- OR if you can cook, teach someone who can't cook to cook.
- And when all else fails, grab a coffee.
- And when money is super tight, grab a water!
- Share a meal with someone and see if you don't grow closer.
- [Love how this happens in our Groups...]

T: They were DEVOTED to breaking bread this *and* they were DEVOTED to prayer.

## **2. Together in Prayer**

- Remember Acts 1:14: "All these with one accord (fellowship - partnership - togetherness under a gospel vision) were devoting themselves to prayer..."
- Here it is again. Prayer characterized their lives. (It made the top 5!)
- App: Praying Church
  - Groups nights of prayer - THIS WEEK. (Great night to miss? NOOOOO! I have to be there. I would love to see people check out a group for the first time this week, because they want to be devoted to prayer!)
  - Night of prayer - March 8<sup>th</sup> @ our Redemption Hill Community Center (which will be a place of prayer!), and we'll be praying for the fullness of God to overflow through us this Easter season, and we're going to pray for Breakthrough in our church and city.
    - Overflow crowd..
    - Out the door...

The best way to learn to pray to grow in prayer, to build a culture of prayer is actually praying together.

## **3. Together meeting Needs**

- *Verse 44.* Does this sounds like a utopian dream? Does it sound like communism to your capitalistic ears?
  - It's not: join the church and then start depositing your paycheck into one bank account that belongs to all of us. But we shouldn't think we're off the hook.
- *Verse 45.* We see needs, then do whatever we can - even selling our own possessions - to meet those needs around us.
- Western culture touts the individual. Its me over we.
  - I get it. We are products of our culture, but now, even more, we are products of Christ!
  - Now, in CHRIST, it's: we OVER Me.
- Their love IN CHRIST was so deep that it naturally said: Mi casa, su casa (Spanish: my house is your house). Pen mwen se pen ou (Haitian: my bread is your bread), nae don-eun neoui don-iy-a. (Korean: my money is your money)
- We throw up emojis of all colors!

T: Now, as we are about to see, they were also Together in praising God through worship and making Christ know through witness, but I want to focus on those as dynamics of how they were...

## **II. Experience day by day wonders!**

Acts 2 is a picture of revival: ordinary gifts of God (truth, partnership, worship) experienced in extraordinary measures to carries an effect, inside and outside the church.

I hope you are hearing how this works. Revival begins with devotion, people seeking more and more and more of God. People seeking the Spirit's fullness.

Then it *overflows* to others in clear, and at times, remarkable ways. First we see God accomplishing...

### **Miraculous Works**

- Verse 43.
  - Tells us that "many wonders and signs were being done through the apostles" (though they are not limited to the apostles).
  - This is the way the author, Luke, often speaks of miraculous works.
- The ministry of Jesus was characterized by his teaching and his good works (words and deeds), many of which were miraculous, the marks of the coming Messiah.
- Miraculous works both...
  - Validate the message of Jesus (hey, there is something supernatural at work here, I better listen up)..
  - and help explain the message of Jesus (the signs point to the greater reality. God wants to heal your soul as much as your sight. God wants to satisfy your spiritual hunger as much as give you bread. This is what the kingdom is like.)
  - And of course, these miracles stand on their own two feet. In other words, there is goodness in a good deed.

T: The miracles created a sense of...

### **Awe & Favor**

Awe from everyone in the community.

- Including those not yet believing in Jesus.
- We can only imagine how people were amazed, shocked, perhaps even nervous by what was happening in Jerusalem.
- People viewed this work with respect and even it seems a measure of reverence or fear (which is how the word "awe" is often translated).
- This is what happens in revival (when God is working in powerful ways in a group of people)
  - People take notice. God is up to something undeniable. I don't understand it. I may not ready to be a part of it, but I can't deny, something is happening there. It smells like God has shown up in a way that we haven't seen before.
  - When God moves powerfully, people will take notice!

Related to this response of awe is what we see in verse 46: "*having favor with all the people.*"

Favor with Outsiders

- People looked favorably upon them.
- People moved from skepticism to seeing their sincerity and positive difference they were making
- They were gaining a good reputation and credibility with their neighbors.

T: As they gathered together, they were also overflowing with...

### **Gladness & Praise**

- They met in two locations.

- Temple. (Think Sundays: place of corp worship, though they were going day by day)
- Homes. (Think Sunday through Saturday)
- They got together to praise God, and pray, and witness to their faith in the resurrected Christ.
  - Corporate worship (like Sundays) uplifts our spirits as we remember and celebrate the truths of Christ's victory on our behalf.
  - Praise is about hearts being captivated by God. It's all about him!
  - Get in the habit of turning on worship music and praising God (in your car, in your kitchen, with your family - believe me - your kids will want to sing these songs we sing on Sundays!)
- They also met from house to house...
  - They were happy. They rejoiced in God and in one another.
  - Satan wants to rob us of joy and keep us from this kind of gathering in fullness and overflow.
  - Can you hear his lies? "You shouldn't like them. They aren't like you. They won't accept you. They won't understand you. They see things different than you. They haven't been through what you've been through." I call "Bold faced liar." :)
  - Don't let him keep you from overflowing with gladness and praise!
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### **Gospel Growth**

- Do you know why they gathered in the temple?
- Not only was it the customary place of worship...
- Not only was it a space big enough to host a huge crowd (remember... 3000+)...
- That's where the PEOPLE WERE!
- So they were there and they were not quiet! They were talking about Jesus. {Equip... Talking Jesus, next Sunday: 3/4.}
- And as they talked about him, one by one by one said: they story adds up. Jesus meets my deepest needs. He did rise from the dead. He is the one who brings eternal life to us.
- They experienced the greatest miracle, the greatest wonder! Resurrection from the dead!
- Perhaps the clearest sign of revival is awakening. Awakening follows revival.
  - Revival happens when God wakes up people inside the church and brings them life.
  - Awakening happens when God wakes up people outside the church and brings them life.
  - When God fills a people, saturates them with his presence, people will find out. The overflow will happen.
- Robertson: we have the picture of a "continuous revival, day by day." Why not us? Why not now? It won't happen if we're satisfied with the surface.
- Do you believe God can do it again? *Verse 47*: "And day by day the Lord added to their number those who were being saved."
- Do you believe God can do it through ordinary people like me and you?
- If you don't like the idea of a growing church, you won't like the book of Acts, and more importantly, you heart is not aligned with the heart of God. He leaves the 99 to go after the 1.

I got an email a few weeks ago... The subject: "Is this you, Tanner?"

- Read relevant sections. This stuff makes my stomach hurt for so many reasons.
- "Grow your church for \$7 a month."
- What a joke! Forget the gimmicks. Live in the power of the Spirit.

But let me say this: if the Book of Acts grabs ahold of us, more importantly, if the Holy Spirit fills us with himself, and “we live in his power.” doubling our church size this year, is most certainly NOT IMPOSSIBLE. I believe it is probable!

Why not us? Why not, now? The mission is in our hands. Jesus is ready to overflow again!

\*INVITE MUSIC TEAM

*Conclusion:*

- Billy Graham... Died this past Monday, at the age of 99.
- He was a picture of integrity and utter faithfulness to Christ, to his wife and family, and the the mission of Jesus.
- He preached the gospel (the good news about Jesus) for over six decades, in 185 countries and territories, and as late as 2005, attracted crowds of 242,000!
- Thousands upon thousands not only heard of Jesus but believed in Jesus through his preaching.
- But here’s the beautiful thing: it was not the eloquence of his oratory, but the power of the simple gospel message that led thousands upon thousands to hear of and believe in Jesus.
- How many times did people hear him quote **John 3:16** and invite them to receive the gift of eternal life.

Have you received that message? Receive it today!  
Are you sharing that message? Start today.