

Isolation is Not an Option - Acts 2:42-47 **Notes, Family Worship, Bible Reading**

Notes from the Sermon

Every September we set aside a Sunday to focus on Community Groups. It is a reminder to our church of the importance of being in community and to explain how we structure our church to make disciples. Multiple passages in the New Testament remind us that the authenticating mark of the Spirit's work in us is our love for one another. The type of community and fellowship that happens among disciples cannot be structured or planned. This is a Holy Spirit work. Yet, as a church our responsibility is to form a structure where this can happen organically. This is why we have Community Groups. It is our experience here at Genesis that, for the most part, the people who are involved in these groups are the ones we can see measurable growth in their discipleship. So if you are in a group and love your peeps, stay there. If you are not in a group, or you are in a group but would like to try something new, this is the time to check one of our groups out.

Our text this week is a descriptive text, part of the story sharing the birth of the church. These events took place less than two months after Jesus died and rose again. Jesus spent 40 days after his resurrection on earth with His disciples giving them proof that He was alive. Then He ascended with the promise that the Holy Spirit would come and spark something revolutionary, and they were to return to Jerusalem and wait for it. They went back to a residence and embarked on a 10-day prayer meeting, 120 people crying out to God to send the Spirit and transform their city. Then it happened, on the Day of Pentecost (a Hebrew pilgrimage feast where Jews from all over the world would come to Jerusalem) the Holy Spirit was poured out on this group of people. The room shook, fire fell, the wind of the Spirit blew into and filled each of them, and they spoke in tongues. Next thing you know they are in the street sharing the Gospel of Christ with the massive crowds in the city, and Jesus' followers are miraculously speaking the languages of all the people in the city. Of course, the religious leaders call this into question, thinking Jesus' people have been hitting the bottle early in the morning. It is Peter, the fearful, Jesus denying disciple who stands in front of a crowd that numbers in the multiple thousands and preaches the first Christian sermon. And it happened, the Spirit's work was phenomenal as over 3000 people believed in Jesus and were baptized. What a moment.

Our text this week then shares the story of the activity of this mega-church in the period after Pentecost. What we discover is that they were gathering at times on a public space (the Temple) to hear the Apostles preach and teach the Gospel through the Scriptures. But they are also gathering in homes together, where they break bread, which is a reference to enjoying meals together, but also pictures the celebration of Communion. So the church was both big and small, in public and in homes, gathered and scattered. This is how the early church fulfilled its mission and made disciples. But of course it is, this is also how Jesus did it, preaching to large crowds while gathering 12 men close to himself as His disciples. And we see that they were coming together to devote themselves to four things, the Apostles' teaching, fellowship, breaking of bread, and prayer. We get the Apostles' teaching in the Scriptures. Fellowship is the mingling of souls that comes from transparency, love, and authenticity. Breaking of bread here probably refers to taking communion, which leads them back to the Gospel. And prayer is, well, them devoting themselves to pray.

What we find is that the work of the Holy Spirit through them is both powerful and contagious. It produces a kind of Christianity that we rarely see, where people are literally willing to sell their possessions to care for those in the church who are poor and needy. God sends miracles, signs and wonders done by the Apostles, as the Spirit does things that just can't be humanly explained. There is a joy among the church in the midst of persecution

that was amazing. Yet, God gave them favor among their still unbelieving neighbors, meanwhile, many began to have their eyes and ears opened believing the Gospel and being saved.

This Fall we as a church are crying out to God to do this kind of work in and through us. This is our vision, PRAYER IS THE MISSION. We can't make it happen, but we have to structure for discipleship. We will continue to gather in a public space (somewhere) each week, but we are also scattering to homes, smaller groups who are still everything that we are as Genesis Church. And we are crying out to God to send His Spirit to us in power so that there will be things that happen in and through us that we cannot explain. Mostly, though, we want to see our friends and neighbors come to faith in Jesus. So our groups are just that, smaller groups where we do faith and life together, communities on mission. Jump in!

Bible Reading for the Week

Daily Bible Readings

Sun	Mon	Tues	Weds	Thurs	Fri	Sat
Mark 15	Mark 16	1 Chronicles 1	1 Chron 2	1 Chron 3	1 Chron 4	1 Chron 5

Reading from this past week: Acts 2:42-47

Reading in preparation for this coming Sunday: Matthew 5:13-16

Family Worship

Song - *All Creatures of our God and King*

<https://youtu.be/MUZD0hgtSgE>

Gospel Project

Story: Three Parables

Story Point: Jesus came to seek and save the lost.

Big Picture Question: How does God care for His creation?

Answer: God loves and rules over His creation according to His perfect plan.

Scripture: Luke 15

New City Catechism

Question #38: What is prayer?

Answer: Prayer is pouring out our hearts to God.

Verse: Psalm 62:8

Scripture

Acts 2:42-47

*What are the things these early disciples devoted themselves to? What does this mean for our groups?

*Where did they meet (v. 46)? Which things in this text probably happened at the larger gathering, and which probably happened in their smaller groups?

*What are some of the things God did through them for their city?

Prayer

*Pray for our Community Group leaders and for the launch of our groups this week.

*If you are in a group, pray for your group and seek God's goodness and purpose for your group. If you aren't in a group, pray that God would lead you to the right group for your discipleship.