

Acts 2:42-47e

Multiplication

Devoted: Week 6

Introduction

Image Fam, I have some incredible news...

- This is our last week in East Cobb Middle School!!

Ok, let me take a few minutes and lay out the game plan for the weeks ahead:

- **THIS Saturday April 9th Workday from 9:00am – 1:00pm**
 - o This is move-in day... Bringing in stage, chairs, other furniture...
 - o Unpacking our things from the carts getting kids set up...
 - o Will get an email from Brook to sign up for the area you would like to serve in.
- **April 10th – first Sunday in the new space- soft launch weekend**
 - o This weekend is for us to get familiar with the space and to make sure we have everything sorted out and situated...
- **April 17th EASTER**
 - o **THIS IS THE WEEKEND TO INVITE!!! Leverage it on all fronts!!!**
 - o Going to have a Donut wall, photo booth and some other fun things that weekend!
- **April 24th Grand opening Celebration!**
 - o Big party
 - o Bounce houses
 - o Food

WE HAVE INVITER CARDS FOR YOU ON THE WAY OUT this week and next week!!

Be present and be praying!! You're not going to want to miss these exciting and monumental days on the life of our church!

Pray: Can we just pray and thank God for this and ask Him to go before us!

Grab your bibles and turn to Acts 2...

This week marks our last week in this series called **Devoted** where we've been looking at **Act's 2:42-47** as a template for the practical implications of what it looks like to be devoted to Jesus...

And there's **4 things** that we've seen the church was devoted to: **The Word, Fellowship, Breaking bread and prayer...** We've broken each of those down...

But this morning I want to zoom out and show you're the impact of the church's devotion... Because if we miss this then

Acts 2:41-47

41 So those who accepted his message were baptized, and that day about three thousand people were added to them. **42** They devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching, to the fellowship, to the breaking of bread, and to prayer. **43** Everyone was filled with awe, and many wonders and signs were being performed through the apostles. **44** Now all the believers were together and held all things in common. **45** They sold their possessions and property and distributed the proceeds to all, as any had need. **46** Every day they devoted themselves to meeting together in the temple, and broke bread from house to house. They ate their food with joyful and sincere hearts, **47** praising God and enjoying the favor of all the people. Every day the Lord added to their number those who were being saved.

I want you to see the scope of how all of this plays out... Starting with Jesus... He comes and gathers a group of 12 men that leads to a group of followers that was *about a hundred twenty* we see this from Acts 1:15...

This group is together praying and then the Holy Spirit, comes down on this group of about 120...

This is a big moment- Jesus had said that the Spirit would come when He left... Here's why the coming of the Holy Spirit was so significant...

1: Because for the first-time since before the fall God was coming to permanently dwell with his people- this was made possible by the finished work of Jesus...

2: It is the Spirit of God in those who have believed that that brings about new life, and it is the Spirit of God that empowers followers of Jesus to continue the ministry of Jesus and take the message of Jesus to the ends of the earth...

So, *the Spirit comes down* on these **120 people** and they begin speaking in tongues- specifically the native language of Jews that were present in Jerusalem for a festival called Pentecost...

These Jews hear these people praising God in the native language and they are drawn in asking what's going on... They think these people are drunk...

But Peter stands up and says that these people are not drunk and then he reaches back into the OT and shares the message of Jesus...

The people are cut to the heart, and they ask Peter what do we do?!? And Peter says repent and believe in the work of Jesus...

And that day 3000 people get saved...

What we see in this is incredible evidence of the power of the Holy Spirit as the ministry of Jesus ***continues*** through Peter...

And the result is this new community that forms around the good news of the finished work of Jesus as they participate in the things of Jesus together...

What you need to see the Spirit at work in those who've believed bringing about new life and a new perspective... There's a reorientation that happens in all those who've believed that leads to a new community and a new way of life...

But here's the thing that's so important to see, it doesn't stop here... It doesn't stop with a new community that's closed off to the rest of the world...

Verse 47: they had **the favor of all the people.**

- They were a compelling community that had favor in their city with EVERYONE...

And watch this here's the part I don't want you to miss in **verse 47** is: **Every day the Lord added to their number those who were being saved.**

This was a contagious community that had the attention of the city-drawing people in, and drawing the city around them peering in...

Example: Hubert Davis... created a culture and community of people... One by one the players bought in... Gradually they've drawn in the surrounding community, now they have the attention of the nation...

What I want you to understand is that these weren't magical conversions that happened randomly out of thin air...

Watch this: the way that all of this starts in **Acts 2** is with the faithful proclamation of the gospel that leads to incredible multiplication... And the way that this section ends in **verse 47** is with multiplication that comes through a faithful gospel **witness** that gave way to faithful gospel **sharing**...

It is the infectious community that captivated the city and drew people in... And as they came close, they were told the **why** behind what was happening...

- We know this because God always advances His gospel message through the mouth of His people...

It started with Peter's proclamation of the gospel and continued through the proclamation of this new community of people who believed in the person and work of Jesus and who had been transformed by the power of the Holy Spirit!

What we see is a tangible expression of multiplication happening in and through the church!!!

God is the one doing the saving, **but He's doing it through the hands, feet, and mouth of the church!**

Y'all listen, what we're seeing is the unveiling of God's plan for reaching the world!

- Jesus came to make a way for us to be with God, but as a part of that He came to establish a new community that would **embody** and **advance** the message and ministry of Jesus!
- This is what's we're witnessing right here in **Acts 2!**

The church is made up blood bought redeemed people who have become of citizens of God's Kingdom who've been called to be **ambassadors** of the very Kingdom they've been saved to **through Word and deed!** And it happens through the infectious community of the church!

I need you to hear this... The multiplication we see happening at the end of **Acts 2** wasn't just a neat outcome back then, it's God's plan for today!

Here's what this means... If we're not multiplying as a church, then there's a big miss on our end...

- Either we're not actually devoted to the things of Jesus that we see that the church was devoted to...
- Or our devotion is distorted...

True biblical devotion that we see here to ***the word, fellowship, breaking bread and prayer*** fuels multiplication that reaches outsiders, it doesn't create a country club for insiders!

*I need you to hear that... God's call was never to create a comfortable community of complacent people but to establish an infectious community that multiplies around the message and ministry of Jesus...

I love how scholar **John Stott**¹ frames out the church to give us a helpful picture of what's happening here...

He says this of the characteristics of the church in light of **Acts 2:42-47**, the church should be:

- a learning church...
- a loving church...
- a worshiping church...
- an evangelistic church...

This is what we want to be!

Like the church in **Acts**, we want these things to characterize us... We want to be a compelling community that's centered on Jesus and that multiplies...

¹ John Stott, *The Message of Acts*. Page 82-87.

But for this to ever happen through us, something first has to happen in us...

There is a key tucked in this text that we cannot miss, because if we do we'll never be like the church in Acts...

And Luke wants us to see this... *Chiastic structure*... After the Greek letter Chi "X"...

v. 41—evangelization

v. 42—common life

v. 43—filled with awe

vv. 44–47a—common life

v. 47b—evangelization

43 Everyone was filled with awe,

This is not just an oh wow!

This is really better translated: ***every soul was filled with fear***...

Here's the thing about this kind of fear, it doesn't drive you from God, it drives you to God... It's not being scared; it's profound respect, there is a reverence for who God is and what He's done...

GOSPEL...

If we are not a community in awe of God then we will never look like or orient ourselves like this community...

Example: Black out of November 1965 in NYC... Statue of Liberty stayed lit... tethered to a different power source...

For some of you, you're in **awe** of other things...

- It's pulling you away from the main thing...

Being in awe of God together is what cultivated and generated the vibrant life of this community that was interactive and contagious to the surrounding city... We want the same thing to be true of us...

We want to be a river not a retention pond...

- Retention pond- stagnant, still and nasty... bacteria loves places like this... Retention ponds don't
- Rivers run from a spring that bubbles over and it moves, and it brings life wherever it goes...

Listen, we're ***small, cute, and cuddly*** right now as a church- and that's great- but I don't want us to stay that way... We can keep the cute and cuddly, but *I want us to multiply and grow!* That's what healthy things do!

I don't want us to be content or complacent with where we are...

Coming out of the pandemic there's been a massive change that's swept the nation- a lack of motivation and commitment...

- There's a complacency and a laziness that's set in...

This cannot be true of us- there's too much at stake!!

So, what does it look like for us to multiply based on the model that we see here???

There is a togetherness and an intersection that happens...

Some of you are trying to multiply all on your own right now instead of inviting people into something, you're running iso!

Yall, listen, we have a good thing here... We really do... But we cannot be selfish with it- we need to allow it to be compelling- but for that to happen we have to bring people into our community so they can EXPERIENCE it!

There are people that won't come into what's happening here, but they will come to a cookout... etc.

For MANY others though- and statistics show this- they are willing and will say yes, if only they would receive an invitation...

This is not about bringing them into a program, this about bringing them into experience the power of God at work through a Community!

- Which **BTW: is why serving is so important...**

Bring them in and then walk with them, talk with them... Bringing them is not the finish line- but it's such an easy starting line one that I believe that God can us...

- Does not abdicate you from sharing, it opens up an easier way to share- you're not alone- the church gives tangible evidence of the gospel you're going to share

***Example:** Glass full of water...

- When you bump into someone it can't help but spill over on them...

But for this to happen we have to have people around us to spill on!

- **Gospel appeal to the non-Christian...** You have never received the gift of grace and mercy that's been extended through the finished work of Jesus...

Conclusion [VAMP]

Gospel appeal to the Christian... For some of you, you're not full, you're on empty...

- You've gotten complacent- you've forgotten the call of the church- that it's less about you and a call to you...
- Reset your eyes on Jesus allow Him to fill you and reorient you...

When you came in you got an index card...

- I want you to make a One More list... Write the names of the people that God has put around you that you want to see come to know Him...
- These are the people that you're going to be inviting on Easter...
- These are the people we're asking God to add to our number those that are being saved!

I want you to take that card in just a little bit and I want you to bring it up here and lay it on the stage we our staff/elders are going to pray through them with you...

And when you bring it up here and lay it on the stage-

I want to ask you to just take a min. and I want you to pray and ask God to work in the lives of the names that you wrote down that He would reveal Himself to them...

No music, just ambient sound... I don't want any distractions- I want you to come and pray...

- Nothing magical about coming forward: it's an outward physical action and posture in light of an internal reality...

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Pray [VAMP]

I want us to worship big, I want us to expect big things from Him because He is a big God...