



## **Awakened to Community**

**Message Notes, August 27, 2017**

Acts 2:41-47

The CHURCH is born! Not a building, but a community. Not a place, but a people. Acts 2:41-47 gives us a glimpse into the rich, transforming life they shared as a community of Christ-followers. They were not perfect, but God's Spirit stirred among them in powerful ways, and the Kingdom of God grew and spread.

Pastor Derrick reminded us of the context of this fresh move of God to birth His church in the world: Yahweh had been silent for a long time, not moving or speaking in any significant way among the Hebrew people for nearly 400 years. They had long-awaited the coming of the Messiah who would restore the greatness of Israel.

Jesus came and sparked hope – “Could this be the Messiah?” But then He was crucified and buried. But then He arose and appeared to his followers. But then He ascended to heaven and left them. This uncertain group of 120 or so followers waited and prayed (as Jesus had commanded), and sure enough, God poured out His Spirit, thousands believed and the church was born.

Their community life was characterized by three foci:

- 1. An Inward Focus that Unified.** “They devoted themselves to the apostles’ teaching, to the fellowship, to the breaking of bread, and to prayer” and to *all* the expressions of community that follow in this passage – caring, generosity, sharing meals and possessions, having “all things in common,” for “all the people were together.”
  - They were unified, devoted, sincerely committed to sharing deep, authentic life together around Jesus.
  - They were living out Jesus’ passionate prayer the night He was arrested – “Father, I pray that they might be one, even as you and I are one, that the world might know you have sent me” (John 17:20-21).
- 2. An Upward Focus that Magnified.** “A deep sense of awe came over them. ... They worshipped together [daily] in the temple courts ... all the while praising God ...”
  - From our message last week – “They were a Jesus-centric people.” Jesus was the focus of their life together. Worship was the fuel for their life together. Worship, awe and surrender characterized their posture toward God.
  - May we emulate their posture of worship and abandon our bent to “me-ism” that so easily consumes us.
  - 1 Peter 2:1-3 calls us to yearn for spiritual nourishment, like a baby craves milk, so we can mature in our salvation and grow to “taste and see that the Lord is good.”
- 3. An Outward Focus that Multiplied.** They did not keep this vibrant life of community hidden behind walls, they lived it outwardly. Their generosity, sharing and joy were turned outward to those around them, so that “they found favor with all the people and the Lord added to their number daily those who were being saved.”



- They understood Jesus' call to be His witnesses and share His life "in Jerusalem, Judea, Samaria and the uttermost parts of the earth" (Acts 1:8). This community life in His Spirit was not for them alone.

Derrick shared a word that came to one of our members at prayer this past Thursday:

*"I am preparing you to bring in huge nets of fish (people who need Jesus), but such net-loads are difficult; they can rock the boat, fish are slippery and some can even hurt you. You cannot do this alone. You will need to yield to my Spirit, and also to each other. You need to learn to work together. To trust each other. To be real and share your weaknesses. This is the 'preparing' I am doing in you NOW."*

May we be such a focused community – inward, upward and outward. Growing in love and faith, and hauling in fish!