

Authentic Community

Acts 2:41-47

One hot August afternoon in 1806 these five students hid themselves to pray under the camouflage of a maple grove. As they met, the sky began to darken, and the accompanying thunderstorm and lightning persuaded them to run for cover. Before they could reach the campus, however, the clouds began to disperse and they were able to continue their meeting under the privacy of a haystack. The group's leader, freshman Samuel Mills, began to guide the discussion toward the topic of foreign missions. He contended that it would be impossible for the masses of Asia and Africa to hear the gospel unless the students from Christian nations were willing to dedicate their lives to the cause of the Great Commission.

As he shared his vision for world evangelization, he said, "We can do it if we will," revealing a determination lacking in the expected, "We will do it if we can." Drawn by the challenge of their commitment, this group attracted the "cream" of the student leadership, including the valedictorian of 1809. Four years later they asked their denomination to send them out as missionaries. Prior to this, there was not a single American engaged in preaching the Gospel overseas. While awakenings in Britain had already led to the formation of missionary societies, American agencies for sending workers into the harvest had not yet been established. The leadership of the Massachusetts Congregational Churches agreed to help them and formed the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions--the first American organization of its kind. Shortly after this pioneering venture, many similar agencies were begun by other denominations. All owed their origin to a group of students from Williams College who had caught God's vision for the world during a prayer meeting.

Then, suddenly, at the turn of the century, the nation made a spiritual about-face that affected every level of society--from the frontiers to the college campuses. Something so radically changed the campuses of America that the same schools which a generation before had mocked the gospel began sending out workers into the harvest!

- The beginning of this dramatic change can be traced to Hampden Sydney College in Virginia. In 1787, with the moral climate there deteriorating rapidly, five non-Christian students decided to hold a prayer meeting to ask for God's help. They locked themselves in a room, for fear of the other students, and kept their voices down so they would not be caught. However, the other students discovered them and tried to break down the door. The president of the college heard the disturbance and came to find out who had started the latest riot. One of the students outside said, "Oh, sir, it's nothing important; there are just some fanatics holding a prayer meeting! Can you imagine? So we thought we'd teach them a lesson. We won't hurt them. We'll rough them up a little bit, but we won't hurt them."

The president rebuked them saying, "You don't mind cheating, you, don't mind stealing from rooms, you don't mind the lying and the profanity you get on this campus, but you object to a prayer meeting. Well, I do not!" He then knocked on the door and said authoritatively, "This is the president of the college speaking. Will you please come out?" The students unlocked the door and came out not knowing what to expect. President

Smith said, "Gentlemen, come to my study, we'll pray there together." This prayer meeting marked the beginning of American campus revivals during the Second Great Awakening of the 1790s and early 1800s. Not only did half the students at Hampden Sydney College turn to Christ as a result, but the revival also spread to local churches and to other schools, having similar effects.

**WHAT IF...
SAME SPIRIT IN US
THE QUESTION TONIGHT IS HOW?**

ACTS 2:41-47

DEVOTED – *proskartereō*

- To be steadfastly attentive unto, continue all the time in a place, persevere and not to faint, wait on constantly

OUR GENERATION MUST GRASP THIS ONE VERB

-FULL OF EXCUSES...study, time, work, schedule, busyness of life

LIFE ONLY GETS BUSIER

HOW CAN WE WAIT ANY LONGER? WE ARE NOT PROMISED TOMORROW...DO YOU WANT TO COME TO THE END OF YOUR LIFE AND CHRIST SAY WELL DONE GOOD AND FAITHFUL SERVANT...OR WILL YOU STAND IN SHAME BECAUSE YOU WERE TOO BUSY?

4 THINGS SANDWICHED between v.41 and v.47

VERSE 42 ACTS AS A SUMMARY VERSE

"And they devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and the fellowship, to the breaking of bread and the prayers."

1. DEVOTION TO THE APOSTLES TEACHING

- SEE THIS IN VERSE 43 & VERSE 37
- LISTEN = CONTENT & DEMONSTRATION OF POWER
 - REVIVAL—3000 ADDED THAT DAY
- PERFECT UNITY...DOESN'T LAST LONG, ANANIAS AND SAPPHIRA
- PRACTICAL – Teach on Monday nights, going through the book of Colossians this fall, and then following each week up in Missional Communities
 - Less study, more church, less hearing of the Word and more doing of the Word!

2. DEVOTION TO THE FELLOWSHIP (V.44-45)

- BAPTISTS = FOOD
- PERSONAL POSSESSION AND PERSONAL IDENTITY ARE A BIG DEAL IN AMERICA
- DESCRIPTIVE NOT PRESCRIPTIVE

- WE WILL KILL OURSELVES IF WE KEEP ACCUMULATING MORE AND MORE AND CONTINUE TO BUILD BIGGER BARNES TO STORE UP FOR OURSELVES
- ANTIDOTE = V.44-45 – SACRIFICE AND SO LOVING AND VIEWING YOUR POSSESSIONS AS NOT YOUR OWN.
- ALSO, THINK HOW STARVING CHILDREN IN SWAZILAND PLAY INTO THIS...

3. BREAKING OF BREAD (v.46)

- The Lord's Supper formal, but then informal eating meals
- DAY BY DAY...EVERDAY..They loved to be together.. NOT ONCE EVERY 2 WEEKS FOR MISSIONAL COMMUNITY
- **EXAMPLE:** NORDEEN FROM NORTH AFRICA - Isolated in homes, jobs, and our lives rarely merge...
- COMPARTMENTALIZED LIVES...WHOLENESS OF THIS COMMUNITY
- IDENTITY FOUND IN THE BODY
 - i. 1 Peter 2:9-10**
 - LUKE GIVES US A WONDERFUL DEPICTION OF THE SPIRIT OF JESUS AT WORK IN THESE PEOPLE.
 - I DO NOT HAVE ALL THE ANSWERS, BUT WE MUST BE CREATIVE IN SEEKING WAYS THAT OUR LIVES WILL INTESECT IN A BIG WAY!

4. PRAYERS (V.47)

- PRAISED GOD IN TEMPLE AND IN SMALL GROUPS
- HEBREWS 10:25, DIDN'T NEGLECT MEETING TOGETHER
- PRAYER INCESSANTLY – without ceasing...
- EVERY GATHERING DOES NOT HAVE TO BE RELIGIOUS
 - i. FRISBEE OR INTIMATE PRAYER**
 - SO SATURATED WITH GOD, THAT WHETHER WE ARE PLAYING GAMES OR PRAYING, WE PRAISE GOD!

APPLICATION / TAKEAWAY

1. PLUG INTO A MISSIONAL COMMUNITY
2. DEVOTION TO YOUR MC
3. GIVE IT TIME...RELATIONSHIPS TAKE TIME
4. Sacrifice for one another
5. Pray for one another
6. Love one another
7. SERVE ONE ANOTHER - PHILIPPIANS 2

JUST AS FIVE STUDENTS UNDER A HAYSTACK PRAYED AND TRUSTED GOD TO MOVE FOR THE GREAT COMMISSION, I WANT US TO BE A PEOPLE MARKED BY COMMUNION WITH GOD AND THE MANIFESTATION OF HIS SPIRIT LIVED OUT IN COMMUNITY WITH ONE ANOTHER...

...AND I DON'T KNOW WHAT GOD WILL DO IF WE GIVE OURSELVES TO THIS!