

EVERYDAY CHURCH: What is an Everyday Church?ⁱ Acts 1:8-15; 2:42-27

WELCOME:

Good morning, Trinity! It is good to see you this morning. And I want to say a special welcome to those of you that are guests with us this morning. We are thrilled you have joined us today.

We love to connect with our guest. You can help us know about your time with us today in a couple of different ways. You can text the keyword, TBCMP, which stands for Trinity Baptist Church Mt. Pleasant, to the number 94-000. When you send that keyword to that number, you will be sent a link back that is safe to click on. It will take you to a short form. When you fill out and submit that form, it notifies us and we look forward to the opportunity to connect with you.

Or you can stop by Guest Connect located in the main lobby just outside the worship center. We have a team of people that would love to meet you and give you a small gift as a token of thanks for you being here with us today. Even if you text in, stop by Guest Connect and pick up your gift. We are so glad you are here today.

SERIES INTRODUCTION:

Today we are beginning a new teaching series that we've called, "Everyday Church: Refocusing on the Vision of The Church." And today is going to be a fun day. I've asked Pastor Jeff Julian to join me this morning. How grateful are you for Pastor Jeff?! I know I am.

Our elders have been talking about and praying through where we believe The Lord may be taking us as a church. Much of that vision is coming into focus. But I wanted to invite you, our Church Family, into some of the discussion that we've been having behind the scenes. What does God have in store for us? What is He leading us to be about? So, we are going to pull back the curtain this morning and talk through God calling us to be an Everyday Church.

OPENING ILLUSTRATION: Everyday Tasks

You know, we all have tasks that we work through every day. We gotta get out of bed, even though that's hard sometimes. We have to brush our teeth. Some of you need to do that multiple times. [Jeff – Some of you brush your hair.

Things the Julian's do – Tonda washes clothes, I put them up.] I don't know what it is, but putting up clothes is annoying. Or you moms in the room, at home with little kids, having very little adult conversations, getting them ready.

But what if God wants to redeem our every day, mundane tasks? What if God could leverage the everyday of our lives for Kingdom advancement? I think the answer to those questions is, "That's always been God's plan for The Church."

MESSAGE:

I want to invite you to turn with us to the New Testament book of Acts. We are going to be in several places, but we are going to begin in chapter 2. Turn there with us as we see how the early church was and everyday church. I want to read verses 42 through 47. You follow along in your copy of God's Word.

*⁴²And they devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and the fellowship, to the breaking of bread and the prayers. ⁴³And awe came upon every soul, and many wonders and signs were being done through the apostles. ⁴⁴And all who believed were together and had all things in common. ⁴⁵And they were selling their possessions and belongings and distributing the proceeds to all, as any had need. ⁴⁶And **day by day**, attending the temple together and breaking bread in their homes, they received their food with glad and generous hearts, ⁴⁷praising God and having favor with all the people. And the Lord added to their number **day by day** those who were being saved.*

In verses 46 and 47, we have two everyday things happening. The phrase in my Bible translated "day by day," is every day in many translations. In fact, that is the literal translation.ⁱⁱ And in verse 46 the people are being the church every day. And then in verse 47, God is being God, every day.

You know that saying, "You don't see that every day." Well, imagine being those first believers say, "Well, we saw God things every single day." That's what happens when The Church becomes and Everyday Church.

[Jeff – Everyday. Talk about "awe" in verse 43. "I just can't believe that happened." What if we could be a part of something where we look back and say, "I just can't believe that happened." Trinity history.]

That's an awesome thought to me. And I think we all would echo that sentiment. We would all say, "Yes, Lord!" But how did the early church get

there? And is there anything we can learn from them that we might follow their example and experience a move of God like they did? I believe so.

Jump back to Acts chapter 1. We want to take a look at the launch of the first Church. Let's put ourselves in their position as we desire to be an Everyday Church. Read with me Acts 1:8-14.

⁸But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you, and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth. ***⁹And when he had said these things, as they were looking on, he was lifted up, and a cloud took him out of their sight.*** ***¹⁰And while they were gazing into heaven as he went, behold, two men stood by them in white robes,*** ***¹¹and said, "Men of Galilee, why do you stand looking into heaven? This Jesus, who was taken up from you into heaven, will come in the same way as you saw him go into heaven."*** ***¹²Then they returned to Jerusalem from the mount called Olivet, which is near Jerusalem, a Sabbath day's journey away.*** ***¹³And when they had entered, they went up to the upper room, where they were staying, Peter and John and James and Andrew, Philip and Thomas, Bartholomew and Matthew, James the son of Alphaeus and Simon the Zealot and Judas the son of James.*** ***¹⁴All these with one accord were devoting themselves to prayer, together with the women and Mary the mother of Jesus, and his brothers.*** ***¹⁵In those days Peter stood up among the brothers (the company of persons was in all about 120).***

The first thing we see is that an Everyday Church...

1) Is Fueled and Founded on Prayer.

Pastor Jeff, the keyword there in verse 12 is the word, "then." Jesus ascended into heaven, the guys are shocked, two angels say, "What are you guys doing?" That's where we encounter the word, "then." Talk about that.

[Jeff – "then." Jesus ascended then what? They needed guidance and direction. So they assembled and prayed.]

I think that's a really great point. What on earth do we do now? Well, let's first gather and pray. And when they did pray, it led to Peter preaching and Pentecost. Prayer was not only foundational, it fueled the launch of The Church. And I don't think that's changed.

But let's be honest for just a moment. Prayer is anemic at best. I think that's true of my personal, spiritual life. But, you know, we've talked about how that's true of our church life as well. Just being gut level honest, we have to lead better here. Right?

In the future, our pursuit to become a church modeled by the New Testament, and Everyday Church, we must return to the foundation and fuel of prayer. We don't fully know what that's going to look like in our church just yet, but we do know that we have to be more intentional in this arena. Our elders are talking through this. We've thrown out the idea of quarterly prayer meetings, or maybe even monthly. But here's the deal. **Prayer can't be an option, delegated to the "professional Christians." It must be viewed as essential for each of us.**

Pastor Jeff, we've talked through a couple things we can invite our entire church to do to increase our prayer life right now. Talk about those things for a minute.

[Jeff – Prayer spots around town, a time every day.]

That's really good stuff. So, we've talked about how an everyday church is fueled and founded on prayer. Secondly, an Everyday Church...

2) Views Corporate Worship as Halftime.

Real talk here. It is easy for us as church leaders to view Sunday mornings as "game day." You know, Easter is the Super Bowl. We have a tendency to see Sunday morning programming as the main event. And hear me, I think we have to prepare, and our corporate worship services must be excellent because that glorifies The Lord. But being The Church every day requires us to shift our view of Sundays a little.

ILLUSTRATION: Games yesterday

Yesterday we got to watch some college football. And there's all the hype leading up to the game. But all sporting events are broken into halves. Except for hockey. But that sport originated in Canada. You can't trust them. Just kidding to our Canada people.

But think about halftime for a minute. Both teams are out on the field battling it out. Sometimes there are injuries. They get worn out and tired. But halftime is so important. It's during halftime that teams go back to the locker room,

regroup, make adjustments, get bandaged up, get fueled up, rest, and then are sent back out into the battle. See, Everyday Churches view corporate worship gatherings as halftime. And what I mean by that is that corporate worship isn't the pinnacle, it's halftime.

Let me show you that in chapter 2 again of Acts. Look again at verses 42-47. *42And they devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and the fellowship, to the breaking of bread and the prayers.* [There's no corporate worship service yet. Verse 43.] *43And awe came upon every soul, and many wonders and signs were being done through the apostles.* [Still no worship service.] *44And all who believed were together and had all things in common.* *45And they were selling their possessions and belongings and distributing the proceeds to all, as any had need.* [Still no corporate worship service.] *46And day by day, attending the temple together* [There it is, but it's not the pinnacle. Attending the temple together] *and breaking bread in their homes, they received their food with glad and generous hearts, 47praising God and having favor with all the people. And the Lord added to their number day by day those who were being saved.*

In the future, in our pursuit to become an everyday church, we must own our personal mission. I'm not saying that we need sweeping changes in our worship services, but I think they're pretty awesome. The preaching is suspect, but everything else is awesome. Just kidding. But we need to start seeing our gathering times, not as the pinnacle, but as a place to be encouraged, challenged, bandaged, refueled, so that we can be sent back out into the mission field.

Listen, this is why we started saying our benediction at the end of our services. To remind us that Church isn't over when we dismiss our service, but being The Church has just started.

We have to change our perspective when it comes to Church. We have to see our jobs, our kids flag football team, volleyball, cheer, band, you name it, as our mission field. The people a part of an Everyday Church is on mission where they live, work, and play.

Pastor Jeff, you picked up on this idea in verse 47 where they were enjoying the, quote, "favor," of all the people. Talk on that.

[Jeff – "favor" talk]

That's good stuff. So, we've seen that for an Everyday Church, prayer fuels and serves as the foundation, and the people see corporate worship as halftime. Thirdly, finally, an Everyday Church...

3) Is Driven by a Clear Vision.

You know, one of the things that seems so striking to me about The Church in the book of Acts is the clarity of vision they held onto. The Church was becoming global, any different expressions of The Church, but it all held onto it's vision. I know that is Holy Spirit involvement, and they had to call a council together in Jerusalem, but it's pretty remarkable they didn't experience much vision drift.

In Acts chapter 4, we see a repeat of Acts 2. In Acts 2 the believers were together sharing things in common. Then in Acts 4, and we don't know how much time has passed between chapter 2 and chapter 4, but at the end of the chapter, verses 32 through 35, we read, *"32Now the full number of those who believed were of one heart and soul, and no one said that any of the things that belonged to him was his own, but they had everything in common. 33And with great power the apostles were giving their testimony to the resurrection of the Lord Jesus, and great grace was upon them all. 34There was not a needy person among them, for as many as were owners of lands or houses sold them and brought the proceeds of what was sold 35and laid it at the apostles' feet, and it was distributed to each as any had need."*

Then in Acts chapter 13, and we know about 18 to 20 years have passed. And in Acts 13, The Church in Antioch is gathering together, and they send our Paul and Barnabas. They are still on mission. That's amazing to me. Clarity of vision.

We have a tendency to experience vision drift. In fact, many organizational leadership experts would say that organizations and companies need to reinvent themselves every 5 years. That's because of the natural drift away from clarity of vision. Right? Everyone begins to adapt the vision to their own interpretation and then there can be confusion again.

We are about 5 and a half years into a clarity of vision in our church. And I don't think that we are at a place where we have to redo our vision statement or strategy, or anything like that. But I do think it is an opportunity for refocus. Our vision is to become a Gospel-centered community redeeming brokenness

through hope in Jesus Christ. And we do that by Trusting Jesus in Worship, Transforming lives in community, and Telling others by living on mission. And I think we've seen God do some amazing things in the past 5 and a half years. And I'm confident He will do amazing things in our future. But I do think now is the perfect time to refocus on our vision. Because I think we have, just being real, I think we've experienced some vision drift. And I think that's true on my part as a leader.

For example, what if we've been measuring the wrong things? I think attendance, budgets, communications, missions, and the like are important indicators of church health. But what is the main mission? Jesus gave it to us in the Great Commission. We are to make disciples. That's what we must do and so that should be what we are measuring.

But that's hard to quantify, right? Because how do you know if you are making disciples. Well, I think that baptisms are a good gauge of people coming to faith. I think giving trends show our obedience to fuel The Church. Attendance means people are sitting under teaching and Bible study. But in reality, we can do all those things and not be growing as a disciple. And to be honest, that scares me. As a church leader, we'll have to give account of how we led Jesus' Church to accomplish His mission.

So, Pastor Jeff, talk about some of the things we've discussed on this idea of measuring the clarity of our vision centered on making disciples. [Jeff – talks about Starting Point – How we define success].

I think missional engagement is huge in reading our success in making disciples. What about small group Bible studies? That has to be part of it. It's one thing to live in community with people, but another to challenge each other in the arena of spiritual growth. Right?

CONCLUSION:

[PRAY]

ENDNOTES:

ⁱ Works consulted in preparation for this message: John MacArthur, *The MacArthur New Testament Commentary: Acts 1-12*, Moody Publishers: Chicago, 1996.

ⁱⁱ Interlinear Bible, <https://biblehub.com/interlinear/acts/2-46.htm>.