



## DAY ACTS 2:38-47

### 1

If you were to travel back in time to the first church it would look much different than the church in 21 century America. Community was not something put on their calendar once a week if something else does not come up, it was a way of life. They would give the shirt off their back to help their neighbor. They lived in community so much so that people were turning to Jesus every day as a result of their love for each other. While our culture may be worlds apart from theirs, there is still much to learn from those early days. As you read this passage think about your neighbors, your community group, the people you rub shoulders with at your kids' games and recitals. What can you do for those people that resembles the church from this passage?

## DAY 1 PETER 2:1-10

### 2

One of the natural wonders of NEPA is the fieldstone wall. Endless amounts of stones wherever a shovel breaks ground. What was once a nuisance is now a redeemed and steadfast barrier serving a distinct purpose. Building these walls is not for the faint of heart. It takes massive amounts of patience and time. You start with the large and sturdy stones that will bolster the weight of the entire wall. Then, 20, 30, even upwards of 50 stones try out one spot. The builder does not stop until the perfect stone fits like a puzzle piece. Almost as if that was the rock's purpose from the beginning. Jesus is the sturdy and steadfast stone on which the entire church sits. Those of us who put our faith in Jesus are the stones that fit like a puzzle piece in its distinct spot. Where do you fit in on the sturdy wall of the church?

## DAY EPHESIANS 4:1-4

### 3

As far as inspirational movie speeches go, nothing will ever top Bill Pullman's rallying words in the 1996 film Independence Day. If you have never seen it, go watch the video or read the script for the scene. Faced with human annihilation from hostile aliens, the President gathers those about to defend the world. He inspires them to set aside their differences and unite as one group- the human race. In that moment, survival was the glue that bound them together for one cause. In Ephesians 4 Paul gives a rallying cry to the church in Ephesus. He inspires them to set aside differences and unite as group with one common bond- the Holy Spirit. Those who are followers of Jesus in the church have a divine purpose that far outshines the plot of any movie. The church will change the world when we put aside our differences and unite around our common mission.

## DAY EPHESIANS 4:11-16

4

Do you remember that movie where the coach decides to compete and let the players sit on the sideline? I don't either because that movie doesn't exist. The very idea is foolishness. A coach by very definition empowers and equips the players to achieve their work. What is a comical hypothetical in one case is a tragic reality in another. Ephesians 4 could not be any clearer: the pastors and teachers empower and equip God's people to do the work of the ministry. Somewhere along the way it became the job of the pastors and teachers to do the work of the ministry instead of God's people. That idea is foolishness. The only way the world will awaken to the cause of Christ will be when God's people get onto the field and the pastors and teachers take their place empowering and equipping. If you are still on the sideline, how are you going to get onto the field?

## DAY 1 CORINTHIANS 12:12-27

5

Have you ever seen drawings of people from very young children? Often they are heads from which two legs ascend with arms sticking out of each leg. The torso is completely missing. While those make for cute refrigerator decorations, it is a horrible portrayal of the church. "If the whole body were an eye, how would it hear?" It is so simple and easy it is almost ridiculous, right? Every person in the church is a unique contribution to one body. "In fact, some parts of the body that seem weakest and least important are actually most necessary." Take time to evaluate yourself in relation to your contribution of the church. Are you depriving the body a part that is crucial? Do you need to realize that your role might be obscure yet most necessary? Are you placing too much confidence in your part that your view of the church looks like a child's drawing of a human? "All of you together are Christ's body, and each of you is a part of it."

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