

TAKING THE NEXT STEP IN OUR SPIRITUAL JOURNEY

Scripture used: Acts 2:42-47 (NLT)

OVERVIEW

Big Idea:

In light of the Las Vegas shooting, Pastor Hurmon reminded us of the phrase used by Thomas Payne during the Revolutionary War: "These are the times that try men's souls." The senseless, random, massive shooting left us all traumatized. The Church is our sanctuary, where it's okay to NOT be okay. What is going on in our world? Natural disasters, international tensions, and national divisions can leave us feeling adrift and rudderless. Yet we are reminded by today's scripture that God is our refuge, our strength - and thus we should not fear.

KEY POINTS

- 1) **Point #1** Stephen Paddock was educated, and a multi-millionaire. Yet he senselessly killed 58 people and grievously wounded hundreds. When we are confused and hurting, we withdraw in fear; we blame and attack; and we live in denial. Yet the ultimate cataclysmic event was the death of Jesus on the cross, followed by His being alive and appearing to his disciples. Selfishness, brokenness, and rebellion were redeemed. Our scripture from Acts shows that the first Christians belonged in community, and strengthened by the intense fellowship and solidarity, they faced persecution and violence and they shattered the power of fear and death.
- 2) **Point #2** What we need is a community of faith, and a plan to grow in our faith. Jobs, hobbies, education are important but are transitory - they do not have eternal value. We need the church. No church is perfect. The real church is one where members struggle, and are on a quest for redemption, for the atonement and cancellation of sin and debt.
- 3) **Point #3** For a healthy church, we need sound practical teachings; fellowship, including sharing meals and celebrating with music and worship; and prayer for, and with other members of the church. This is why our gatherings and Life Groups matter so much. We get reassurance that God will meet us in our most dire time. We share a commitment to giving, including giving our time by serving and working to make our church the place we want to see.

DISCUSSION

- 1) HEAR – Review the S.H.A.P.E. assessment or reflection from last week and work through pages 36-37 in the Starting Point booklet. What surprised you about your results? If you are not already serving at NBCC, what are 2-3 areas of interest? Share with the group. To get plugged in, fill out a Connection Card this Sunday!
- 2) UNDERSTAND – Now that we have learned about God's story and explored our roles in the world, create a Spiritual Growth Roadmap with personal commitments using the instructions and templates on pages 38-41. What will you do in the next 12 months to explore and grow spiritually?
- 3) DO – Share your completed Spiritual Growth Roadmap with someone in your group this week, along with your next steps. Have that person keep you accountable and schedule time 3 months from now to check in.