



I. INTRO

- A. Today we're beginning a 4-week series entitled **Cultivating Community**. Our series will use **Acts 2:42-47** (pgs. 759-60) as a base camp.
- B. To introduce the series I'd like to show a clip from a 2012 movie called, **Here Comes the Boom** (<https://app.box.com/s/2xnetib14bn5rv0wvgn7>) ... It stars Kevin James as a high school biology teacher (Mr. Voss) who uses an energetic approach to his biology lesson on the restoration of cells. Roll it..
- C. It's about "hitting a rhythm" so the "entire system" can be healed.
- D. I have a dream, a longing, for Sunridge Community Church: The theological language for "hitting a rhythm" and seeing the "entire system" healed or restored would be the words, "renewal," or "awakening," or even the word "revival." These words describe my dream for Sunridge.
- E. What does it take for renewal, or awakening, or revival to occur? Acts 2:42-47 provide us with **five marks**, or vitamins, that are ALWAYS present in renewed, vital, revived, restored, dynamic churches (described vs. prescribed theological views). I'll read, beginning in v. 37, through v. 47 then pray and we'll jump in...

³⁷ When the people heard this, they were cut to the heart and said to Peter and the other apostles, "Brothers, what shall we do?"

³⁸ Peter replied, "Repent and be baptized, every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins. And you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. ³⁹ The promise is for you and your children and for all who are far off—for all whom the Lord our God will call."

⁴⁰ With many other words he warned them; and he pleaded with them, "Save yourselves from this corrupt generation." ⁴¹ Those who accepted his message were baptized, and about three thousand were added to their number that day.

⁴² They devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and to fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer. ⁴³ Everyone was filled with awe at the many wonders and signs performed by the apostles. ⁴⁴ All the believers were together and had everything in common. ⁴⁵ They sold property and possessions to give to anyone who had need. ⁴⁶ Every day they continued to meet together in the temple courts. They broke bread in their homes and ate together with glad and sincere hearts, ⁴⁷ praising God and enjoying the favor of all the people. And the Lord added to their number daily those who were being saved.



II. BODY

A. What I would like to accomplish this morning is give you the five marks – or vitamins that we see in Acts 2:42-47, give a very short overview of each (they will be covered in greater depth in the coming weeks) and then come back and unpack the first one:

1. **Vibrant Worship** – We'll come back to this...
2. **Exciting, Loving Fellowship and Community** – There is a remarkable and visible, almost tangible love inside the church that people cannot account for.
3. **Teaching With Theological Depth** -- The unfolding gospel is at the center of all the church is and does. It takes two truths:
 - a. That God is holy and just and that we fall short
 - b. God is loving and we are completely and totally accepted.

These two truth intersect at the cross – and when these two truths are at the core are put together it's almost like it creates a heat and everything else burst out of them (think volcano). This explosion produces a holy tension of humility that makes us kind AND courage that makes us bold. Leading to...

4. **Effective Communication of the Gospel (compelling evangelism)** – A cruise ship in SB Harbor -- whatever we really see we talk about. There's Andrew evangelism (inviters and includers) and Phillip evangelism (explain the Bible to those who are seeking)
5. **Compassionate Social Concern** -- Eventually the church moves out into the surrounding community and serves the lost, sick, and marginalized people. Slavery, women's rights, etc...

B. What is vibrant worship?

1. The word worship comes from an Old English word meaning “**worth-ship.**” Here are several definitions, or descriptions of worship:
 - a. “**Both public and private acts that have two parts: seeing what God is worth (or, treasuring God) and giving God what He is worth.**” Every approach to worship must have those two elements.
 - b. **Worship is pulling our affections off our idols and place them on God.**
 - c. **Biblical worship occurs when we realize we've been trusting in our own abilities, not the sovereignty and goodness of God.**
 - d. **Worship is grasping a truth about God and then letting that truth change us in the center of our being.** It thrills us, it confronts us, it comforts us. That's when the truth has moved from our mind into our heart.



III. CONCLUSION

- A. We are 2,000 years into this phenomenon called CHURCH -- and the characteristics of revitalization, or renewal, or revival have been studied in depth. Scholars note that a definite pattern emerges:
1. Renewal or revival happens when THE church (or, a church) faces some major crisis or obstacle with humility (like Acts 1).
 2. There is then an extraordinary seeking after God in prayer. One 20th century revival scholar named J. Edwin Orr¹ called it “concerted, united, and sustained prayer.”
 3. Then there is a visitation from God. God’s royal presence comes down and is felt.
- B. The reality of God’s presence begins to shine in people’s hearts. George Whitefield, an English preacher who was a part of what is called the First Great Awakening in the US (1740’s), said this in his journal: “Tonight I was preaching and four half an hour I struggled, but then God came down on us.”

¹ See <http://www.revival-library.org/catalogues/miscellanies/prayer/orr.html>