

Discipleship Displays - God's Priorities

There is an old naval command that goes like this.

"All hands on deck!"

Those words are said in a moment of emergency.

The 21st Century began in a state of emergency.

This century has been a chain reaction of emergencies.

It began with Y2K, a crisis caused by computer dependency.

The year 1900 was transitioned with windup clocks and slide rules.

Entering the year 2000 was complicated by digital technology.

It had the potential to be a global disaster.

It required all hands on deck in every country.

January 2000 U.S. Pres. Clinton announced another global disaster.

He declared the HIV/AIDS virus a threat to U.S. national security.

The UN acknowledged HIV/AIDS as an international health issue.

That declaration stirred the medical world to "All Hands on Deck".

"9-11" blasted away in 2001 and issued a call to "All hands on deck."

Emergency crews dropped everything and responded.

The call came and the response was immediate.

Then earthquakes ravaged Indonesia.

The call came and even India, a rival, responded.

Katrina washed over New Orleans and much of Louisiana.

All hands on Deck and people prayed, provided food, relocation.

Even Texas responded.

Financial cost was US\$156 billion.

The Alberta flood of 2013 cost \$6 billion in comparison.

In 2004 a Tsunami ravaged Sri Lanka killing 230,000 people.

Tsunami is now a word that is etched into our vocabulary.

All hands on deck and the world responded.

Since 2000 we have averaged 341 climate disasters per year.

That is a 44% increase over the previous 16 years.

Drought has affected 1 billion people.

Each year 68,000 people die in natural disasters.

Typhoon Haiyan affected 11 million people in the Philippines.

The 2010 the Haiti earthquake killed 160,000 and affected 3 million people.

War has escalated to encompass the world in new atrocities.

It evokes a nation's call, all hands on deck.

Syria's civil war has produced 4 million refugees.

So far CDN\$15,867,919,776 in aid has been given to the refugee crisis.

All hands on deck as more than 20 countries have responded.

Drop what you are doing and report for duty.

This is a brief sampling of the past 15 years.

"All hands on deck" has been the call of God since creation.

Since the fall, sin has been devastating every dimension of life.

For the past 2,000 years Christ has been calling His church to all hands on deck.

Jesus was God's own response to all hands on deck.

Jesus gave His hands over to the nails of the crucifixion.

But not before His hands broke bread to feed thousands.

Not before His extended hands calmed the wind and waves.

Not before His hands made clay to heal a blind man.

Not before His hands wrote on the earth while sparing an adulterous woman.

Not before His hands picked up a child and put it on His knee.
Not before His hands picked up food with sinners and publicans.
Not before He stretched out His hand to touch and heal a leper.
Not before His hands lifted Peter's mother-in-law to heal her fever.
Not before His hands passed the bread and cup of the new covenant.

Jesus was God's own answer to God's call, on hands on deck.
He is calling us today as He has every generation of Christ followers.
All hands on deck!

What is the emergency?

And, what does the response to "All hands on deck" look like?

Our Scripture shows us (4:18-22, 29-35).

See if you can pick out the responses as we read the Scripture together.

1. I see two things we need to absorb from the 1st century into our century.

First, all hands on deck looks like PASSION.

The emergency, of course, is for all who are living in our sin soaked world.

That is what Acts 4 is all about.

It is all about the Church passionately reaching to the spiritually lost.

Looking back into Acts 3 we see how Peter let God use his hands.

He reached out his hand and pulled a lame beggar onto his feet.

We are also told that Peter and John looked intently at this beggar.

Most people looked away from the beggar so they would not engage him.

He gave this man what he most needed; not money, not health, but Jesus.

Peter then saw the crowds that marveled at the miracle.

He called them to repent that their sins be blotted out (3:19).

He told them if they want a refreshing life, believe Jesus (3:19).

Life is blessed when we turn from wickedness to Jesus (3:26).

People heard Peter passionately proclaim Jesus and they believed.

The Church grew to 5,000 men (4:4).

Because of the miracle, Peter and John were arrested and interrogated.

They made it clear to their interrogators that Jesus died and rose again (4:10).

It was Jesus who made this man well, the same Jesus they had rejected (4:11).

Jesus was the only Way, Truth, and Life for all.

By no other name can anyone be saved (vs. 12).

That's good news for us.

We don't have to heal anyone.

We don't have to save anyone.

Jesus does it all.

Let's not miss the big picture of this chapter.

Verse 23 - the Apostles were not alone in this work of evangelism.

They went to their friends.

Verse 24 - the friends prayed.

They lifted their voices together to God.

Verse 31 - they all were filled with the Holy Spirit.

The Holy Spirit is God's gift to the entire Body.

He is not limited to just the super spiritual.

The Holy Spirit is the Father's gift to you today.

Have you known the filling of the Holy Spirit?

And then in verse 31 again - **they all spoke the word of God with boldness.**

It was not just a few who spoke, everyone there reached.

They extended their hearts, minds, souls and strength (vs.32).

Verse 32 - they had one heart and soul.

They had one passion.

They were completely sold out to God.

They were motivated by God's power and passion.

They were a people after God's own heart.

Jesus is the Corner Stone (vs. 11).

He is the Corner Stone to the Church.

He has chosen to use each one who claims to be the Church.
Jesus' passion for the lost is the root of His call, "All Hands on Deck!"
This passion is part of our Mission Statement.

We are in the business of inviting all to experience God's compASSION.

It is not just a few who do this.

It wasn't just the Apostles.

It wasn't just Peter and John who were reaching.

Everyone who responded to Jesus knew they had a function in the body.

Everyone passionately lived out their salvation.

Who were these amazingly bold people?

Verse 13 gives us a hint, uneducated, common people.

But they were people who had been with Jesus (vs. 13).

Being in the presence of Jesus creates passion for the lost.

2. And this brings us to the second way "All hands on deck" is a living response.
The church had an outward focus in ministry.

All hands on deck means there is PROVISION for others.

They continued to spend time with Jesus by prayer (vs. 24).

They were people of prayer.

"Lord, ... grant to Your servants to speak Your word with boldness, while You stretch out Your hand to heal, and signs and wonders are performed through the name of Your holy servant Jesus."

That prayer resulted in the moving of the Holy Spirit.

The place they were praying was shaken (vs. 31).

And they spoke the word of God with boldness.

They were not afraid to look at the world that was around them.

They saw needs and refused to turn a blind eye.

They did not say it was someone else's responsibility to do something.

Because of their passion they provided.

No one laid claim to possessions.

Everything was God's.

Verse 33 - great grace was on them all.

Verse 34 - there was not a needy person among them.

It isn't because everyone was getting.

Everyone was giving.

That is the picture of "All Hands on Deck!"

"There is built into the Christian faith an inner impulse by the Holy Spirit through the gospel to make sacrifices so that others have their needs met. And there is no such impulse built into human nature or the human heart apart from God's grace." (John Piper blog - *How Should Christians Think About Socialism?*)

Jesus calls His Church today to all hands on deck.

In the Church, the body of Christ, there is a place for every hand.

In the Church, the vine of Christ, there is a place for fruitful branches.

His call is still going out even today.

Jesus is calling, "All hands on deck."

There is a world that needs to be reached.

And God reaches the world with people so let Him have you.

The lost world cries out for a passionate and providing church.

Don't withdraw your hands and resources!

Don't sleep through the call! Don't delay!

Passion is incomplete without provision.

Walking into the church does not result in passion or good deeds.

They are done when you walk out of the church to help others.

When we have all hands on deck, so does God (vs. 29-30).

C. S. Lewis, *Screwtape Letters*, page 42, **"As long as he does not convert repentance into action it does not matter how much he thinks about repentance. Let him do**

anything but act. No amount of piety in his imaginations and affections will harm us if we can keep it out of his will. The more often he feels without acting, the less he will be ever able to act, and in the long run, the less he will be able to feel."

Song Hope of the Nations