



# LIFEGROUPS

**Series: Upside Down**  
**Message: *The Effortless Present***

**Scripture: Acts 2:42-47**

**Date: May 2-3, 2020**

—[ LET'S START ]—

In this week's message, Pastor Dale spoke about being in the zone. What are you doing when you most feel like you are in the zone?

—[ LET'S TALK ]—

1. **GRATITUDE AND PRAYER:** What happened this past week that you are grateful for? What do you need prayer for?
2. Read Acts 2:42-77.
  - What do you notice about the early church in this passage?
  - Why do you think the early church gained such favor with the world around them?
  - The early church was full of relatively new followers of Jesus. How do you think that the early church went about making disciples?
  - If God could use a church full of new believers to bring about a revival, could He do that with us? What would it take?
  - Dale talked about the effortless present of God's eternal presence. What does that phrase mean to you?
3. Pastor Dale talked a lot about the importance of prayer in this week's message. He quoted N.T. Wright, who said, "Whenever people...neglect prayer, they are quite simply forgetting that Christians are supposed to be heaven and earth people. Prayer makes no sense whatever unless heaven and earth are designed to be joined together, and we can share in that already." What does Wright mean?
4. Read Ephesians 1:3, 2:6, Colossians 3:1-4, and Galatians 4:6. What do these passages teach us about the effortless present of God's eternal presence?

—[ LET'S ACT ]—

The early church was amazing picture of what it looks like when people live for that which is eternal. This week, we have a chance to make an investment in eternity. What is one way that we can encourage each other as a group to make an investment in eternity? Let's come back next time prepared to share what God did. This week is also the National Day of Prayer. Take some extended time to pray as a group for the church around the world, for our leaders, for our nation, for the next generation, and for the pandemic that we are all facing.

—[ SERMON REVIEW ]—

- When the Holy Spirit came in like a hurricane and settled on and into their lives, the first followers of Jesus experienced the equivalent of the zone, the effortless Present.
- Is it possible to live in the effortless present of God's eternal presence?
- Pastor Dale is praying and fasting and asking God that when we return we won't be the same church we were before because this pandemic has woken us up to realize that what the church needs, what our communities need, what our countries need is a church that's living and moving and ministering in the Effortless Present of God's Eternal Presence!
- What visualization is to an athlete, prayer is to the serious follower of Jesus!
- Don't underestimate the power of prayer to put you in the God zone.
- Eminent theologian N.T. Wright says, "Whenever people...neglect prayer, they are quite simply forgetting that Christians are supposed to be heaven and earth people. Prayer makes no sense whatever unless heaven and earth are designed to be joined together, and we can share in that already."
- Jesus taught us that our prayers are to orient themselves in heaven before they get applied to our earthly circumstances!
- Prayer is bringing the will of heaven to bear on my earthly life and circumstances. It's seeing it, smelling it, feeling it and then going and doing it!
- Instead of focusing on my earthly riches, I need to live from my riches in Christ Jesus. That liberates me to use the riches that God has given me here on this earth for his glory in the future.
- Did you notice in the reading of our passage that the early believers in the early church saw nothing as their own? Did you see that they shared all things in common, that they were family to each other and that they sacrificed willingly and joyfully to make sure no one went without?
- How did relatively poor people live like that? They were in the Zone of God's presence they were living from the riches that had been given to them and which they would fully inherit when God said their mission on earth was over!
- What separates a believer who is living in the Effortless Present of the Eternal Presence of God from the ones who don't? Every morning, before meetings, events and situations in their life and every night before they slip between the sheets they use prayer and faith to visualize themselves seated with God in the heavenly realm. They are seeing, feeling and experiencing living their life on this earth in his presence and power, and then they do it!

