

# Participating in the Life of Jesus

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## Intro

- 14 words: A Biblical, Local Church is one that actively participates in the ongoing life of Jesus
  - Why do you say that? Read the Book of Acts.
    - Visions, Spiritual gifts, radical obedience, spiritual unity, prophecy, tongues, deliverance, instruction, powerful prayer, death leading to glory
- **Raise a Need**
  - Do you see your life in this way? As an extension and present experience of the Living Jesus in the world?
  - This is really hard to see and understand in our lives. For many reasons, we are conditioned to stop our christianity at the level of remembrance and agreement with truth. We are tempted to stop short in letting Christianity define, change, and transform our lives. What is easiest for us is to think about our faith through the lens of passive observance: watching with interest, reading about it, and pondering ever so slightly some changes that are possible for life, BUT THEN ULTIMATELY, just returning to normal life.
    - We may do this from fear. It may be from lack of true understanding of who Jesus is. It may be from pressures of society. It may be because we are in love with the world.
    - Maybe there are some ways that you have been coasting in regards to your spirituality. There is no encouragement. No passion and energy toward the things of God and your calling in this world.

## Transition to Text

- **Acts calls us out of that life into the life of Jesus**
- The Bible - through the story of Acts - is calling us to live lives that are full of life. The life of Jesus Himself. Acts is the story of what it means for us now that Jesus is alive.

## MPS: Reject the lie of passive observance & embrace the truth of active participation in the life of Jesus

### RoadMap

- Today, I want to introduce Acts and look at a couple observations in this passage.
- Then I want to introduce what is going to be the 3-fold application of this entire series: The Spirit, the Church, And the Mission.

## Introduction to Acts

- Luke is the first volume. Acts is second volume
  - Audience: Theophilus: "Lover/Friend of God"
  - This in a sense summarizes much of what we should understand about the message of Luke:
    - God's Kingdom has come into the world through the person of Jesus where lost sinners get to experience reconciliation and relationship with God forever.
- Luke reveals that God's Kingdom is **NOW & NEAR** in Jesus
  - **Now**: [Luke 17:21](#) "Behold, the kingdom of God is in the midst of you.""
  - **Near**: [Luke 10:9](#) "Heal the sick in it and say to them, 'The kingdom of God has come near to you.'"
- Acts tells us that Luke is about "Word and Deed"
  - Acts 1:1 "In the first book, O Theophilus, ***I have dealt with all that Jesus began to do and teach,***"
  - **Word**: Jesus taught the Kingdom. The Gospel of Jesus is the Word of God. It is a message with power
    - Most chapters in Luke include instruction and teaching from Jesus about the Kingdom of God and what He is doing in the world. Christianity is about the Word. It is never less than that.
  - **Deed**: Jesus' Kingdom near was felt and experienced
    - It is not just what Jesus said. It is what He did. He delivered demons. He performed miracles. He rose from the grave. He died on the Cross.
  - Luke shows us that the Kingdom is not just a message that is heralded but an experience that is felt of the Kingdom of God breaking in to the world through the power of the Life of Christ.
- Acts is a continuation of what began in Luke

- [Acts 1:1](#) "In the first book, O Theophilus, I have dealt with all that Jesus ***began*** to do and teach,"
- Luke is saying that his first volume was the beginning, but what was started there continues because Jesus is still alive. He will go to the Father's right hand, and then His life will continue in the world through the church.
- And this is exactly how the book of Acts goes:
  - Jesus ascends to the Father
  - There is a spreading of the life of Jesus all throughout the World
    - Jerusalem, Judea and Samaria, The ends of the earth
  - We are going to follow this structure for how we study this book.
    - Tentatively, we will go pretty much straight through [Acts 1-9](#) up until the beginning of Lent where we will take a break until after Easter

## The Holy Spirit is a Continuation of the Life and Ministry of Jesus

### Explanation

- One way that you are going to see the life of Jesus on display throughout the book of Acts is through the ministry of the Holy Spirit.
- [Romans 8:2](#) "For the law of the Spirit of life has set you free in Christ Jesus from the law of sin and death."

### Argumentation

- In Acts, the power and presence of the Holy Spirit is very closely linked at many times to the presence and power of Jesus Himself.
- Ultimately, what Acts is demonstrating is Jesus is alive with us through the Holy Spirit. The living God is moving in our midst.
- The Lie of Passive Observance: That you can be a christian and not be radically changed and transformed by Jesus through the presence and power of the Holy Spirit.
  - If you know Jesus truly, your life will be increasingly changed and transformed by God Himself.
  - There will be times where it doesnt feel like it. But you will be able to look at your life over periods of time and see the present ministry of Jesus.
    - [Acts 1:4](#) "And while staying with them he ordered them not to depart from Jerusalem, but to wait for the promise of the Father, which, he said, "you heard from me;"

### Illustration

- As I have grown as a christian, I have observed that it has become harder and harder for me not to be prayerful at all times in my life.
  - My growth in Christianity has actually been me understanding more deeply how dependent I really am at EVERY moment in my life for his power and presence.

### Application

- I hope that starting now - and in the weeks ahead - that you will begin to understand more deeply the Holy Spirit's presence and ministry in your life.
- Are you praying for more of the Holy Spirit in your life?
- Acts Hopes:
  - More dependent upon Him than ever before
  - Seeking to walk in his fullness. Keeping in step with Him

## The Church is the Environment and Relationships of the Life of Jesus

### Explanation

- Acts is going to show us that the church is the environment of intimate relationships where the Living, Reigning Jesus makes His Home
- Acts is going to show us that in the church we should be experiencing the realities of the Kingdom of God. This is an outpost

### Argumentation

- The church is not a performance, Show, organization, club. The church is where the reality of the living God is felt more and more amidst all of His family.

### Illustration

- **[STORY OF THE BENEFITS OF THE LOCAL CHURCH]**

- It is only in the local church that I have ever felt known and loved. And this is so because in Christ, we are known and loved for exactly who we are.

### **Application**

## **Jesus' Mission continues in the world through a Spirit-empowered Church experiencing the Life of Jesus**

### **Explanation**

- Ultimately, I think you can sum up the book of Acts as a book of the Gospel Mission advancing all throughout the world
  - Paul's missionary journeys, [Acts 8](#) Church scatters and takes Gospel to Asia, Paul Goes to Rome the epicenter of the ancient world
  - The book ends in Rome because it is representative of the entire world. And we know how the story continues past [Acts 28](#). It has spread to the farthest reaches of the world

### **Argumentation**

- We should increasingly be experiencing this in our lives. That the living Jesus is using our church for the advancement of His Kingdom and His purposes as we, empowered by the Spirit to experience the Life of Jesus become a healthy vibrant church that is consumed with the glory of Christ.

### **Illustration**

- Here is what I mean: I do not want you to share the Gospel because the bible says. I want you to make disciples because you know Jesus and are experiencing life in Him

[2 Corinthians 4:10](#) "always carrying in the body the death of Jesus, so that the life of Jesus may also be manifested in our bodies."

### **Application**

- Experiencing the life of Jesus through the Holy Spirit and in the church leads you to others
- Imagine the impact on our city if we embodied the life of Jesus?

## **Conclusion**

**I think this quote from Frederick Beuchner is a really great summary of what Acts is going to demonstrate for us as a church:**

*"The grace of God means something like: Here is your life. You might not have been, but you are because the party wouldn't be complete without you. Here is the world. Beautiful & terrible things will happen. Don't be afraid. I am with you. Nothing can ever separate us." —Buechner*

**Reject the life of passive observance. Participate in the Life of Jesus.**