

The book of Acts opens with the promise and the fulfillment of the church's receiving of the Holy Spirit. The book is known as the Acts of the Apostles, but it is in fact, the "acts" of the Holy Spirit through the apostles or through the church continuing everything which Jesus began to do and to teach. God would use those whom He had saved to save others.

Paul's Commission: Acts 26:18

¹⁸to open their eyes so that they may turn from darkness to light and from the dominion of Satan to God, that they may receive forgiveness of sins and an inheritance among those who have been sanctified by faith in Me.

The theme of Acts is found in the words, "The Lord added to the church." Everyone whom Jesus saves is baptized into the church. This baptism is not that of water, it is the action of the Holy Spirit in making one a part of the body of Christ and gifting them for a specific function.

1 Corinthians 12:13,18 For by one Spirit we were all baptized into one body (and) God has placed the members, each one of them, in the body, just as He desired.

Works and Grace

This image of the church as being a body lends itself to the aid of our understanding the doctrine of works alongside the doctrine of grace.

Ephesians 2:8–10 (We are saved) by grace through faith; and that not of ourselves, it is the gift of God; not as a result of works, so that no one may boast. **For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works**, which God prepared beforehand so that we would walk in them.

We are His workmanship, in that, we have been born from above, washed and cleansed by the blood of Jesus Christ; consecrated unto the Lord by the ongoing work of sanctification by the washing of the water through the inward work of the Holy Spirit. God works in us so that He may work through us the good works which He has prepared in advance for us to do.

Conclusion.

God has saved each of us for a purpose, His purpose, and His will. He takes us out of the world and places us into His Church. We are ministered to by the church, and we minister unto the Lord through the church. The church is the body of Christ on this earth to carry out all that Jesus began to do and to teach. This truth can be found in Paul's famous statement, "For me to live is Christ."

Called, Chosen, and Commissioned

John 15:16 & 21 "You did not choose Me, but I chose you, and appointed you that you would go and bear fruit, and that your fruit would remain," (and) "As the Father has sent Me, I also send you."

Good works are the fruit of living faith. James 2:17,18,24

Even so faith if it has no works, is dead, being by itself. (and) someone may well say, "You have faith and I have works;" show me your faith without the works, and I will show you my faith by my works. (Conclusion) You see that a man is justified by works and not by faith alone.

There is a direct connection between good works and a healthy, vibrant faith. **A church not working is a church not living. Good works serve as the heart to our faith pumping life-sustaining blood to our souls.** We are never more alive in Christ than when we are serving the body in the body of Christ.

John 15:11 "These things I have spoken to you so that My joy may be in you, and that your joy may be made full.

Spiritual ICU

To wander away from that which God has called us to do, results in the deterioration of our spiritual health.

Matthew 7:21–23 (NIV)

²¹Not everyone who says to me, “Lord, Lord,” will enter the kingdom of heaven, but only the one who does the will of my Father who is in heaven.

²²Many will say to me on that day, “Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in your name and in your name drive out demons and, in your name, perform many miracles?”

²³Then I will tell them plainly, “I never knew you. Away from me, you evildoers!”

As a church, are we seeking God’s will or our own. What is going on in our churches today? Are we Christ’s humble servants? Are we following the guidance of the Holy Spirit or our own agenda? Doing our own thing and attaching our Lord’s name to it does not in itself produce that which is acceptable unto God.

Fruit born by the church does not bring glory to itself, nor to any one or more personalities. God has not set in the church celebrities. God has set in the church ministers (servants) to equip His people for works of service, so that the body of Christ may be built up until we all reach unity in the faith and in the knowledge of the Son of God and become mature, attaining to the whole measure of the fullness of Christ. **Ephesians 4:12–13**

Personal Accountability

Where you go to church may be one if not the most important decision that you make. Is it a church founded upon Christ and in compliance to the ordination of God? Are you being equipped in your relationship and calling with the Lord? Because we all will stand alone before the Lord to give an account.

The Kingdom of Heaven

Matthew 25:14, 19, 26-30 “For it is just like a man about to go on a journey, who called His own slaves and entrusted His possessions to them. (Then) after a long time the master of those slaves came and settled accounts with them.

Revelation 22:12 “Behold, I am coming quickly, and My reward is with Me, to render to every man according to what he has done.

To those who used what the Lord had equipped them with to accomplish His work, it was said, “Well done you good and faithful servant.”

To the one who did nothing “his master answered and said to him, “You wicked, lazy slave.” Then it was commanded, “Throw out the worthless slave into the outer darkness; in that place there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.”

John 15:16 “You did not choose Me but I chose you, and appointed you that you would go and bear fruit, and that your fruit would remain, so that whatever you ask of the Father in My name He may give to you.