

Acts Review - One Foot in front of the Other

Acts has revealed to us the growth and development of early Christianity.

- The triune God is fueling the spread of the gospel.
- Jesus is the central character.
- The Holy Spirit is actively guiding and directing the growth of the church.

Why Acts? Why now?

Renewal -> Gospel -> Practice

How do I daily practice incarnate love? In a culture and society that actively rejects truth, how do I relate?

- Learning the art of being an apprentice of Jesus.
- Embracing and actively loving one another (brothers and sisters) in Christ. Is our love toward one another visible and tangible to those who are observing our lives?

God's heart is displayed more fully when the diversity of his people are communing together. (To the ends of the earth).

Chapters 1-2, The ascension and enthronement of Jesus.

- Jesus leads his people by the Spirit.

Chapters 3-5, The new temple of Jesus community is now where people encounter God's generosity and healing presence.

Chapters 8-12, Judea & Samaria (Multi-ethnic international movement)

- Philip in Samaria, Conversion of Saul, Peter & Cornelius, The church in Antioch

Acts 9

vs. 7-9, The embodied Jesus had made his presence known.

"The Greek term *metanoia* - traditionally translated as 'repentance' - means something more like 'a radical change of mind,' or 'a fundamental intellectual re-orientation,' through which we turn away from older habits of thought and action and embrace a new way of thinking and living. Repentance means not primarily a sense of regret, but a renunciation of narrow and sectarian human views which are not large enough for God's mystery. It is about a transformed metaphysical vision of reality." (*Metanoia* by Alan Hirsch)

Metanoia is a paradigm shift or the experience of having your mind blown.

Question: What part of your life and activities is the Holy Spirit confronting and rebuking? Is Jesus trying to get your attention?

Chapters 13-20, Missionary Journey's

Synagogue First -> continued mission to Israel

- Not based on ethnicity or the observance of Torah, but simply on trusting and obeying Jesus!
- The early church - contrasting and clashing with local culture.
- This was a Jewish Messianic movement, but ethnically diverse.
- Men & Women, Rich & Poor, Slave & Free, all treated as equals.
- Loyalty to Jesus alone.

Question: Are you "all in" concerning truth revealed through Jesus? What are the things that you are holding back either consciously or sub-consciously that you are hesitant to be exposed to truth?

"Correctly understood, repentance is not negative, but positive. It means, not self-pity or even remorse, but conversion, the re-centering of our whole life on the Trinity. It is to look not backwards with regret, but forward with hope; not downwards at our own shortcomings, but upward at God's love. It is to see, not merely what we have failed too be, but what by divine grace we can now become; and it is to act upon what we see. To repent is to open our eyes to the light,"
~Allan Hirsch

Chapters 21-28, Clinging to purpose beyond self

- Faithful to King Jesus.
- Sharing life through word and action.
- Continuing to highlight and participate in the diversity of Jesus communities.
- Trusting in the power and guidance of the Holy Spirit.

Question: Is the Holy Spirit the wind in your sails? Through practicing spiritual formation have you prepared and hoisted the sail? Is your boat even in the water?

A key to the effectiveness of the early church in its mission was the ordinary believer “chattering the good news” in their everyday life. (*Evangelism in the Early Church* by Michael Green)

Acts provides a roadmap / trail guide for the highways of our heart (Psalm 84). It provides the image of faithful followers of Jesus living their lives with hope. Walking the narrow path of Kingdom living.

Acts 2 The devoted themselves...

Acts 3:19-20 Therefore repent and turn back, so that your sins may be wiped out, **20** that seasons of refreshing may come from the presence of the Lord, and that he may send Jesus, who has been appointed for you as the Messiah.

Acts 4:12 There is salvation in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given to people by which we must be saved.”

Acts 10:34 Peter began to speak: “Now I truly understand that God doesn’t show favoritism,

Acts 17:31 because he has set a day when he is going to judge the world in righteousness by the man he has appointed. He has provided proof of this to everyone by raising him from the dead.”

Acts 20:24 But I consider my life of no value to myself; my purpose is to finish my course and the ministry I received from the Lord Jesus, to testify to the gospel of God’s grace.

Acts 20:35 In every way I’ve shown you that it is necessary to help the weak by laboring like this and to remember the words of the Lord Jesus, because he said, ‘It is more blessed to give than to receive.’”

Acts 26:20 Instead, I preached to those in Damascus first, and to those in Jerusalem and in all the region of Judea, and to the Gentiles, that they should repent and turn to God, and do works worthy of repentance.

Second Mile can continue the story of Acts.

- We can be a community where diversity is treasured, and those from every ethnic identity find welcome, belonging, value, and a voice.
- We can continue to value and grow in partnership with our brothers and sister in Christ. Women and men worshipping the triune God, equal in their capacity to honor him.
- We can reach into the future by investing in the next generation. We can actively learn and input across generations (Boomer, Gen X, Millennials, Gen Z, and Gen Alpha). We can continue to grow in love and respect for one another.
- Second Mile can be a family where singles and married couples, and married couples with children and single parents are all affirmed in their worth before God and his people.
- It is possible to embrace the poor and the rich, the strong and the weak, those in need and those with excess. We can learn to walk together, linking arms in love, and appreciating the mosaic of our backgrounds and life circumstances.
- We too can be a faith community that lives and teaches the gospel with boldness and without hinderance. Our lives can demonstrate that Jesus is everything. The word of God is illuminating. The Holy Spirit is active through our unity, communion, and worship of a steadfast and loving God.
- Jesus is alive and this is good news. May we be people who can’t help but open our mouths to every unique individual that is present in Tucson.

This is what we mean by renewal. This is what we as pastors are praying for you and for Second Mile. This is journey Jesus is asking us to take on the narrow path of kingdom living.