

Acts 29: The Holy Spirit Still Sends Us

Pictures of Sabbatical

Acts 29 Series.

- What was started in the book of Acts is being completed through us.
- The resources in the first church are still available to this church.

2 Corinthians 9:8

And God is able to bless you abundantly, so that in all things at all times, having all that you need, you will abound in every good work.

Background on Acts

- Acts is a theological history book that depicts how the gospel spread from one place to all nations
- Acts 8:1 “On that day a great persecution broke out against the church at Jerusalem, and all except the apostles were scattered throughout Judea and Samaria.”

Slide: God uses upheaval and turmoil to open people to Jesus.

- Islamic State has created opportunities in Middle East for muslim background to open to Jesus. The church needs to be prepared for the opportunity. Send missionaries. To reach out to refugees and foreigners locally.
- Something about personal tragedy that awakens in us our sense of mortality and finiteness, our need for God.
- The loss of a job. Death of a family member. A disaster can drive back to church. Those are often moments we can speak into people’s lives.
- Wherever there’s chaos there’s opportunity. That’s dangerous. That’s messy. That takes sacrifice.
- 15 years pass by from chapters 8-12 & 2,000 people had been martyred for their faith including 3 of the 7 deacons we read about in Acts 6:5.
- Yet it’s growing stronger. The church is increasing.

Slide: Genuine faith grows stronger in adversity. Genuine faith grows stronger with a mission. So if you want to grow in your faith, then step out and start serving

Slide: When cheap faith stops serving you, you stop chasing it. When cheap faith stops benefiting our frantic and self-centered lifestyle we don’t have time for it anymore.

Peter

Acts 12:1-11 (volatile moment for the church, their faith is being tested)

- James –
- **Peter’s flashback** – Jesus speaking his purpose and destiny...
- If Peter dies in this prison cell we don’t have the gospel of Mark; Council of Acts 15; Irenaeus
- You’re job isn’t done Peter. God still has a purpose for you in this life.
- Struck Peter
- Supernatural intervention began with a suddenly, and stopped with a suddenly
- Vs 18 “no small commotion among the guards.”

We don't necessarily know why God would allow James to be taken, and why He chose to rescue Peter. My hunch is that Peter's mission wasn't complete.

We're going to make our jump over to a different part of God's story. Happening simultaneously. Paul is wrapping up his 1st missionary journey of taking the gospel to gentiles. He traveled to about 6-7 cities.

Paul

Acts 14:19

Then some Jews came from Antioch and Iconium and won the crowd over. They stoned Paul and dragged him outside the city, thinking he was dead.

Here is a Paul going through the same fate. If Paul dies at this moment we don't have a 1/3 of the new testament. If Paul dies now we have countless thousands of people that don't come to faith.

Flashback:

Acts 9:15

Ananias relaying God's message to him, "This man is my chosen instrument to carry my name before the Gentiles and their kings and before the people of Israel. I will show him how much he must suffer for my name."

Wake up Paul. Your mission isn't over. Your life purpose is only getting started. God still has a plan for your life.

Acts 14:20

But after the disciples had gathered around him, he got up and went back into the city. The next day he and Barnabas left for Derbe.

He is inexhaustible. Indomitable. Indefatigable. I imagine God must have cut the Apostle Paul and Pastor Ken Reinford out of the same cloth. Men like me grow tired just watching men like them.

Acts 14:21-22

They preached the good news in that city and won a large number of disciples. Then they returned to Lystra, Iconium and Antioch, strengthening the disciples and encouraging them to remain true to the faith. "We must go through many hardships to enter the kingdom of God," they said.

If your version of Christianity doesn't involve a script preparing you to face harassment and anger for Jesus then it's incomplete. We don't need to fear it. But we do need to be prepared for it.

2 Timothy 3:12 "Everyone who wants to live a godly life in Christ Jesus will be persecuted."

Luke 21 Jesus "All men will hate you because of me...they will put some of you to death...But not a hair on your head will be lost."

- I imagine disciples saying to one another "is this making sense to you?"

The Church is God's trumpet to wake up the Dead.

The Church is God's alarm clock. But you know what people do with their alarm clock – they throw it across the room because they don't like what it's telling them.

God is calling us Church.

Wake up Peter. Wake up Paul. God isn't finished with you. You're mission isn't complete. Every disciple of Jesus is called to help "make disciples of all nations."

Slide: "We somehow think that the Church is here for us; we forget that we are the Church, and we're here for the world." ~Erwin McManus

Wake up Church the Holy Spirit is still sending us out in a thousand directions to have a thousand conversations under a thousand rooftops. Every believer in this room is a fulltime missionary. Every Mom is a fulltime mentor. Every conversation is a kingdom opportunity. Everyone is a disciple maker. The question is:

Slide: How has God best designed you to do that? (We're all disciple makers, but what is your calling?)

- What unique passions do you have
- What people do you have a compassion for
- What unique skill set do you possess
- What location is God planting you in and calling you?

Slide: How are you honing your skills as a disciple maker? (How are you practicing?)

- Where are you practicing?
- How have you been learning and improving?
- Who is discipling you and who are you currently discipling?

What is your calling?

At Paul's conversion Ananias speaks those words of purpose in his ear, "you are God's chosen instrument to carry His name before the Gentiles..."

13 years later Paul emerges back on the scene, not in Jerusalem where the other Apostles are.

Acts 11:25

Then Barnabas went to Tarsus to look for Saul, and when he found him, he brought him to Antioch. So for the whole year Barnabas and Saul met with the church and taught great numbers of people.

Paul isn't with the other Apostles. Paul is different. Unique. He's hanging out on the fringes. He's doing something nobody's seen before.

Some of you are saying, "I have a passion to do this, but I've never seen it done before." Perfect. Just because you don't fit in Jerusalem doesn't mean you don't fit in Antioch.

le. Nate Saint, an ingenious bush pilot for Jesus. Nobody had seen some of the things he'd done, done.

le. Twenty years ago I never heard of inner healing. Twenty years ago I never heard of music and art therapy. Now we've got inner healing through music and art therapy.

How are you practicing/preparing?

Every calling is unique and requires a different preparation process.

- Called to Academia
- Called disciple your three children and reach out to the stay at home Moms
- Called to mentor young men

Acts 13:1

In the church at Antioch there were prophets and teachers: Barnabas, Simeon called Niger, Lucius of Cyrene, Manaen (who had been brought up with Herod the tetrarch) and Saul. While they were worshiping the Lord and fasting, the Holy Spirit said, "Set apart for me Barnabas and Saul for the work to which I have called them." So after they had fasted and prayed, they placed their hands on them and sent them off.

Paul's calling began with a prophetic word from the Lord. 14 years later...He's not just sitting on his hands. He's been diligently growing. Practicing. Fermenting. He is putting in the rigorous preparation essential for his calling. He's already been ministering, but he knows there's launch date.

You're habits today are the seeds for tomorrow's success. There are seasons of preparation in your life. Don't squander them! Opportunity drives by at 15 mph and you have to be ready to catch it.

When Joseph came out of prison he was ready. He wasn't fumbling around still trying to prepare himself. He had already mastered his mind. Mastered his administrative skills. His relational skills.

This is the preparation I see happening in Paul's life:

- We need to have robust preparation processes.
- God is building your character
- They were saturating themselves in worship, fasting, and prayer
- Increase in your knowledge, your life experiences
- Being sent out...

What is your calling and how are you practicing?

Closing:

The Holy Spirit is still sending out. What is your calling and how are you practicing.

Unused Notes:

- Wake up Mindy I want you to infiltrate the stay-at-home Moms and tell them one by one how much I love them.
- Wake up Steven you're going to rescue orphans and addicts
- Maria you're calling is to be a thinker and write books and influence minds
- Wake up Kate you're an artist and you need to express the glory of God through your creations
- Wake up David I know you think you're retired, or just tired, but I've got five young men for you to mentor
- Joseph, I'm putting a hammer in your hand and you're going to crash through strongholds, and build the house of God
- Wake up Brad and Lori you're going to Thailand and you're going to dismantle injustice brick by brick
- Wake up Javier you're going to be a friend to your Jewish neighbors. And they'll trust you and listen to you.
- Wake up Linda you're called to be an encourager and to speak life to everyone you touch
- Wake up Janet your calling is to plant churches in the darkest corners of the earth
- Wake up James you're called to be a financier of my kingdom so that I can send out missionaries
- Wake up Miriam you're a healer, you're going to know when to give people medicine, and when to give people Jesus.



Discussion Questions:

September 10th 2017

Acts 29: The Holy Spirit Still Sends

Message by Pastor Brian Flewelling

ICE BREAKERS:

- What is one memory you made this summer that you cherish?
- Other than the beach, do you have a special place you like to go during the warm months of the year? (ie. an ice cream shop; walking trail; fishing hole; shopping)

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

1. On Sunday Pastor Brian said every believer in Jesus is called to be a disciple-maker. Every believer is called to help “make disciples of all nations.”
 - First of all, how would you define what a disciple of Jesus is?
 - Do you think there are certain skills that every disciple needs to possess in order to help make other disciples?
 - How has God best designed you to do that?
 - How are you honing your skills as a disciple maker?
 - What do you feel like you need to get better at in making disciples?
2. Is there a people group that you have a particular compassion for and may feel a particular calling towards? Ie. addicts, orphans, foreigners, men, artists
3. **Read Acts 13:1-3; Acts 14:1-28**
 - At what times in the story do we see people fasting and praying in these passages, and why do you think that is important?
 - Make a list of all of the opponents, opposition, and conspiracy against the gospel you see in chapter 14. Can you tell what their motivation was?
 - Make a list of all of the ways you see the community of believers working together to reach the lost and support the new believers.
 - Are there any examples of disciple making from this chapter that we should use for our modern faith community?
4. **Prayer Time [15 min]**
 Break into smaller groups of 3-4. Have each person share one person they are praying for, or ministering to, or discipling, or sharing Jesus with. As a group take some time to pray into the lives of each person you are ministering too. Then take time to pray over each person in your group so that they could be an effective minister to that person.