



Foundations: PT I The Book of Acts | The Acts of the Holy Spirit

Mark Allen | 08.02.26

Opening Prayer

Begin your group time by inviting the Holy Spirit to guide your discussion.

Sermon Overview

This week's sermon launched a four-week series called Foundations, examining the books of Acts, Romans, 1 Corinthians, and 2 Corinthians as cornerstones of the Christian faith. The central theme of the book of Acts is the person and work of the Holy Spirit in and through the early church. The key question for every believer is this: How are you allowing the Holy Spirit to work in your life?

Key Verse

Acts 1:8 -- Jesus tells his followers that they will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes upon them, and that they will be his witnesses in Jerusalem, Judea, Samaria, and to the ends of the earth.

Key Takeaways

- The book of Acts is best understood not simply as the acts of the apostles, but as the acts of the Holy Spirit working through ordinary people who were willing to listen and obey.
- The essential thing about Pentecost was not the wind, the fire, or the tongues -- it was the person of the Holy Spirit showing up. We must not get so focused on the incidentals that we miss what is essential.

- Peter's message in Acts 2 calls every person to three things: repent, be baptized, and receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. These are not just steps -- they are a new way of living.
 - Throughout Acts, the Holy Spirit speaks, directs, sends, and empowers. The people who changed the world were the ones who listened and obeyed, even when it did not make sense.
 - The book of Acts has no formal ending. That is intentional. The story of what the Holy Spirit is doing through the church is still being written -- and your life is part of that story.
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Discussion Questions

Opening

1. Before this sermon, how did you think about the book of Acts? Did you think of it primarily as church history, or as something more personally relevant to your life today?
 2. Pastor Mark described the book of Acts as volume two of Luke's writings, with no formal ending. What does it mean to you that the story is still being written?
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Going Deeper

3. Pastor Mark drew a distinction between the incidentals of the Holy Spirit's arrival at Pentecost -- the wind, fire, and tongues -- and the essential, which was the Holy Spirit himself showing up. In your own spiritual life, have you ever found yourself more focused on the incidentals than on the essential? What did that look like?
4. Philip obeyed the Holy Spirit's instruction to leave a fruitful ministry and head south on a road with no clear destination. Have you ever felt the Holy Spirit prompt you to do something that did not make immediate sense? What happened when you obeyed -- or when you did not?
5. In the story of Ananias and Sapphira in Acts 5, the issue was not simply dishonesty about money -- it was lying to the Holy Spirit. The pastor pointed out that we can

sometimes deceive ourselves into thinking we can hide things from God. What areas of life are believers most tempted to be dishonest with the Holy Spirit about?

6. Pastor Mark said, "You want to see God show up? Stop looking for the stuff and just start doing what he tells you to do." How does that challenge or encourage you personally?
7. Peter's vision in Acts 10 prepared him to cross a cultural boundary he never would have crossed on his own. The Holy Spirit used that vision to bring the gospel to the household of Cornelius. Are there people in your life or community that you might be avoiding -- consciously or unconsciously -- that the Holy Spirit may be calling you toward?
8. Ananias was asked by God to go to Saul, a man known for killing Christians. He questioned it, but he went. The pastor noted that God told him, "I will go with you." What fears or hesitations do you have about sharing your faith, and how does the promise of the Holy Spirit's presence address those fears?

Reflection

9. Pastor Mark closed with this challenge: at the end of your life, what will the volume of your story say? Will it record that you listened to the Holy Spirit and that people came to know Jesus as a result? How does that question sit with you right now?
10. The key verse of Acts says that the evidence of the Holy Spirit in a believer's life is that they become a witness. On a practical level, what does being a witness look like in your everyday life -- at work, at school, in your neighborhood, or in your family?

Practical Applications

Choose one or more of the following to put into practice before your group meets again.

- Set aside ten to fifteen minutes this week to sit quietly and ask the Holy Spirit, "What are you saying to me right now?" Write down what comes to mind and bring it to share with the group next week.
 - Read Acts chapters 1 through 13 this week. As you read, make a note every time the Holy Spirit speaks, directs, or empowers someone. Pay attention to how those people respond.
 - Identify one person in your life who does not know Jesus. Pray specifically for them every day this week and ask the Holy Spirit to open a door for a conversation about faith.
 - If you have never been baptized as a believer, consider taking that step. Talk to your group leader or pastor about what that process looks like.
 - Ask someone you trust -- a spouse, a close friend, or a mentor -- whether they see evidence of the Holy Spirit's leading in your daily decisions. Be open to their honest answer.
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Closing Prayer Points

- Ask the Holy Spirit to move from being a concept you believe in to a voice you actively listen to and follow.
 - Pray for boldness to be a witness in your Jerusalem -- the people and places closest to you.
 - Thank God that the promise of the Holy Spirit is for you, for your children, and for all who are far off.
 - Pray for the people in your group who are still writing the volumes of their lives, that those volumes would be full of obedience, faith, and the fruit of leading others to Christ.
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Looking Ahead

Next week the series continues with the book of Romans, a foundational doctrinal book that builds on the story launched in Acts. Consider reading Romans chapters 1 through 5 in preparation.