

TAKEAWAY:

The risen and ascended Christ continues His saving work through His Spirit-empowered church.

INTRODUCTION QUESTIONS:

- What are some ways that people react to the idea of studying history? How should we study Acts? What is your general idea of Acts and what are you hoping to get out of this time in the Word?
- When you think about Jesus today, do you picture Him as actively working or passively waiting in heaven? Why?
- What are some misconceptions that our world has of Jesus?

UNDERSTANDING:

Have a group member read Acts 1:1-11

- How did this sermon help you better understand this passage of scripture? Is there anything that was mentioned during the sermon that stuck out to you?
- Who is Theophilus? Of what significance is Theophilus?
- What does it mean that we are witnesses "by the power of the Spirit" rather than by our own strength?
- How does the ascension of Jesus, encourage believers?
- How does Acts 1:8 dictate who the church is (ethnic and racial diversity) and the value of where the church should go (nations, state, city, neighborhood)?

APPLICATION:

- How does understanding that Acts is about Jesus's ongoing work (not just the apostles' work) change how you view your own role in the church? (What is your role in the church?)
- What would change in your life if you truly lived with the urgency that Christ will return?

GO DEEPER:

The Go Deeper section has two potential functions. It can supplement your small group discussion by providing extra discussion material.

You can also use these sections as short devotionals to carry you through the week until your next group meeting and to deepen your study of our text from this week. Here are two "Going Deeper" discussion prompts that build upon the above provided questions without repeating them:

The Continuity of Doing and Teaching: Luke begins Acts by referring to his Gospel as a record of all that Jesus "began to do and teach" (Acts 1:1). Think of the book of Acts as the continuation of that work with no closing chapter.

- What would "Chapter 29" of Acts look like if it were written about your life or our local church this past year? What specific "doing" or "teaching" of Jesus have people seen through you lately? How does viewing your daily life as a "new chapter" of Jesus' work change your perspective on your job, your parenting, or your interactions with your neighbors?
- In theological terms orthodoxy (correct beliefs) and orthopraxy (correct practices) are never to be separated. In your own witness, which do you find easier: "doing" for others or "teaching" the gospel? What happens to the Church's credibility when we do one without the other?
- Non-believers often cite hypocrisy as a reason for rejecting the faith. How does the tight coupling of what we teach and what we do serve as the Church's most powerful apologetic tool?
- Proclaiming the gospel in word and deed is very important (Col 3:17; James 1:22; 1 John 3:18). Read and discuss these verses in light of the above prompt. If we proclaim that "Jesus saves" (orthodoxy) but do not act to bring His healing and justice to our community (orthopraxy), are we actually preaching a "partial gospel"?

Quotes:

- "But ye shall receive power - and shall be witnesses to me - That is, ye shall be empowered to witness my Gospel, both by your preaching and suffering." John Wesley
- "Acts 1:8 is the thematic statement for all of Acts... The Spirit is not a silent influence but an experienced power... [Power is] the ability to speak the Gospel boldly." Gordon Fee
- "This is a play in which we are invited to become actors ourselves... The stage opens up and we discover we're in the middle of the action... What we are reading, from this moment on, is the opening scene, or set of scenes, in a play whose action we ourselves are called to continue." N. T. Wright
- "The resurrection is not merely a consolation prize for those who have suffered; it is the conquest of death itself. It means everything sad is going to come untrue... In a certain sense, the people of God are getting rebooted, relaunched." Tim Keller
- "The Spirit is the 'Lord the life giver' and the 'second Paraclete' who serves as a 'Comforter, Counselor, Helper, Advocate, Strengthener, Supporter'. Jesus continues his ministry to mankind through the work of the Spirit in men's minds and hearts." J. I. Packer
- "Jesus came the first time, and he is coming again, as the king over all kings. King of Israel, king of all the nations, king of nature and the universe. Until he comes again, there is a day of amnesty and forgiveness and patience. He still rides a donkey ... He is ready to save all who receive him as Savior and Treasure and King." John Piper

PRAYER:

Pray for confidence in Christ's reign, boldness in mission, and awareness of the Spirit's empowerment in daily life.