

2021

Life Group Lessons



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Sunday January 10th – Acts 1:1-5

Opening Prayer: Father, as we begin this study in Acts give us insight and wisdom to understand the meaning of each passage. As our understanding increases give us the courage and boldness to live out the gospel message to the world around us.

Read Acts 1:1-5

1) The number forty occurs many times in scripture – forty days of the flood, the Israelites wandered for forty years in the desert, Jesus was forty days in the wilderness and here in Acts 1 we see that Jesus was forty days with the disciples following His resurrection.

A period of forty years or days in the bible represents a time of transition. The period preceding the 'forty' has ended and the period that is to come is pending.

What are the preceding and pending periods in:

- 1) The exodus (slavery – freedom)
- 2) The flood (sinfulness and corruption – a new start)
- 3) The post resurrection period (The announcement of the good news – the coming of the Holy Spirit and the spread of the gospel)

2) Reflect upon the teaching of this past Sunday. Recall what points were made. What is their significance? How are we to apply these truths in our everyday lives?

3) Read: Matthew 3:11; Mark 1:8; Luke 3:16; John 1:33

What is the 'baptism of the Holy Spirit? Why is it mentioned in all four gospels and in Acts 1:5?

4) What then is the pending period in Acts?

Check in with each other. Pray for each other.



Sunday January 17th – Acts 1:6-11 (part 1)

Opening Prayer: Lord, while we await your glorious return we need your Holy Spirit to empower and guide us to the Kingdom work to which you have called each of us. For when we have been slack in our work we ask for forgiveness. For the work ahead we ask for courage, patience and wisdom.

Read Luke 24:50-51; Acts 1: 6-11

- 1) Read Exodus 24. Moses ascends the mountain, the elders were told to wait until Moses returned (Exod. 24:14). How is this a foreshadowing of Acts 6:1-11?
- 2) Compare Acts 1 vs.3 and vs.6. The disciples had witnessed the life, ministry, teaching, death and resurrection of Jesus and had spent the past forty days with Him and listening to Him. What is uppermost in Jesus mind? (vs.3) What is uppermost in the disciples' minds right now? (vs.6) Why are they different?
- 3) The disciples were challenged to refocus their thinking. How might we, with all of life's challenges, revise our thinking about God's divine program and perfect timing?
- 4) What, then, is the significance for us of the ascension of Christ as High Priest and sacrifice into the presence of God?
- 5) When the power of the Holy Spirit was promised it was for a purpose. What is that purpose in your life? (vss.7,8) Be specific, what ministry have *you* been called to?
- 6) There has been a gap of two thousand years between the beginning of vs.11 and the closing phrase...Jesus is coming back...are we '*standing around staring at the sky*'? Or are we each fully engaged in our Holy Spirit empowered calling?
- 7) There is much Kingdom work yet to do...let us pray for a fresh understanding of our calling as witnesses and kingdom workers and pray that we will be diligent in it.

Read the following passages from Hebrews. Discuss their interpretation of the Ascension of Christ:

Hebrews 4:14-16; 7:23-26; 8:1-2; 9:11; 9:24; 12:18-21.

Check in with each other. Pray for each other.



Sunday January 24th – Acts 1:6-11 (part 2)

Note: We are in the same text of Acts as last week, Acts 1:6-11. The focus this week is on Christ as ascended King.

Opening Prayer: Lord, we are reminded during difficult times that you are sovereign King over all your creation. Let us be encouraged and be an encouragement to others that you are King of Kings and Lord of Lords. There is nothing in all creation that can separate us from your love.

Read Luke 24:50-51; Acts 1:6-11

Read the following passages. Discuss their contexts and how they interpret the Ascension of Jesus:

Acts 2:36; Acts 5:31; Ephesians 1:19-21; Philippians 2:9-11; Colossians 3:1-4; Hebrews 1:3

Discuss the significance for us of the Ascension of Christ as King into the presence of God.

What is the practical importance of this for the life and mission of the church?

What encouragement should the believer draw from these teachings?

Check in with each other. Pray for each other.

Pray that our political leaders will lead with Godly wisdom. Pray specifically for our Prime Minister and our Premier – that they would come to know Christ as saviour and lead our country and province accordingly.



Sunday January 31st – Acts 2:1-13

Opening Prayer: Come Holy Spirit! Fill our hearts and lives with your power. Give us the power and the courage to spread the Good News of hope and salvation through Jesus Christ alone.

Read Acts 2:1-13, Genesis 11:1-11, Luke 11:11-13

Acts 2:1-13.

What was the meaning of the day of Pentecost? Why was this an appropriate day for the outpouring of the Spirit?

Discuss the significance of wind and the tongues of fire in the context of the crowd which had gathered.

Genesis 11:1-9. Discuss the context and how it sheds light on the story of the outpouring of the Spirit on the day of Pentecost. What is the significance of the miracle of languages?

How do the events of the day of Pentecost relate to the Kingdom of God and the mission of the gospel?

Luke 11:11-13. What does this teach regarding God's desire to give the Holy Spirit? Our attitude to the Spirit?

Going Deeper:

What has been your personal experience of the Holy Spirit? How have you and the Holy Spirit's empowerment advanced the commission of the church?

God desires to give you His Holy Spirit. What does that mean for you?

If the Holy Spirit is given to empower our witness, what difference should that make in your life?

How can we encourage each other to allow the Holy Spirit more control of our lives and ministry?



Check in with each other. Pray for each other.

Prayer focus: That the Holy Spirit will renew our call to be witnesses to the Truth found only in Jesus Christ. In a world that has no compass we are the “*salt of the earth and the light of the world*” Matthew 5:13-14. What is your answer to, “Whom shall I send?” Isaiah 6:8.

Sunday February 7th – Acts 2:14-41

Opening Prayer: Lord, renew our hearts. Fill us again with your Holy Spirit. Make us bold witnesses to this darkened and hostile world. Give us opportunity and courage to declare the gospel truth even in the face of ridicule and hostility.

Read Acts 2:14-41

The First Sermon

What does it mean to be a Christian?

1. A New Understanding

“Then Peter stood up with the Eleven, raised his voice and addressed the crowd: “Fellow Jews and all of you who live in Jerusalem, let me explain this to you; listen carefully to what I say.”
Acts 2:14 (NIV)

Peter, filled with the Holy Spirit (Acts 2:4) stood in the midst of a hostile, mocking crowd and gave a bold testimony. Read 1 Peter 3:15. We are called to be witnesses, to give our testimony. Discuss the opportunities you have had to be a bold witness. When have you experienced ridicule or hostility for your faith?

2. A New Vision of Jesus

*“Therefore let all Israel be assured of this: God has made this Jesus, whom you crucified, both Lord and **Messiah**.”* Acts 2:36 (NIV)

Jesus asked His disciples, “Who do people say that I am?” (Matthew 16:13-20). What does Peter say in Acts 2:36 – what does this mean? What are people (in our culture) saying today about Jesus? What do you say?



3. A New Heart

"When the people heard this, they were cut to the heart and said to Peter and the other apostles, 'Brothers, what shall we do?'" Acts 2:37 (NIV)

Read Ezekiel 11:19 & 36:26. What has been God's intention since the Fall of Adam & Eve? How is God accomplishing this? What has been your experience of this 'new heart'?

4. A New Allegiance

³⁷ *When the people heard this, they were cut to the heart and said to Peter and the other apostles, "Brothers, what shall we do?"*

³⁸ *Peter replied, "Repent and be baptized, every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins. And you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. ³⁹ The promise is for you and your children and for all who are far off—for all whom the Lord our God will call."*

⁴⁰ *With many other words he warned them; and he pleaded with them, "Save yourselves from this corrupt generation." ⁴¹ Those who accepted his message were baptized, and about three thousand were added to their number that day. Acts 2:37-41 (NIV)*

The day you received Him (John 1:12) you became a new creation (2 Corinthians 5:17). Your old ways and beliefs are changed once you have the new heart. What 'old beliefs' did you let go of when you were saved? Where is your trust and hope today?

Read Ephesians 4:16-17. Now that your thinking has changed, no longer 'futile', what is your part in "the Body" – the church – where are you advancing the Kingdom?



Sunday February 21st – Acts 2:42-47

Opening Prayer: Lord, draw us into close fellowship with you and with each other. Sustain our fellowship by the Holy Spirit, Guide our study and our life together.

Read: Acts 2:42-47, 4:32–35; 5:12–16.

The New Community

Acts 2:42-47

The Devotion of the First Church

As the early church came to life in Acts 2, there were four ‘pillars’ that gave it life and structure. These pillars remain to this day. The heart of the church, that body of people worldwide and in every tribe and tongue who confess Jesus as Lord, has always been – the reading, studying and sharing of scriptures, gathering together in fellowship, sharing the Lord’s supper and praying together. Wherever followers of Jesus are found, these four essentials will be found among them. These pillars are given to us in Acts 2:42.

*They devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching
and to the fellowship,
to the breaking of bread
and to prayer. (Acts 2:42 NIV)*

They Devoted Themselves....

...to the apostles' teaching...

“Everyone was filled with awe at the many wonders and signs performed by the apostles.” (v. 43)

*“The actual call of Jesus and the response of single-minded obedience have an irrevocable significance. [Jesus] knows that it is only through actual obedience that a man can become liberated to believe. The elimination of single-minded obedience on principle is but another instance of the perversion of the costly grace of the call of Jesus into the cheap grace of self-justification.” (Dietrich Bonhoeffer, *The Cost of Discipleship*)*

This first pillar is central to our continued understanding of what God has called us to. Without our regular reading and studying of scripture – “*the apostles teaching*”, and sharing life with our fellow believers, we cannot grow in the understanding and practice of our faith.



Describe your practice and habits of scripture study? How do you compare with the "noble Bereans" (Acts 17:11)?

...to the Fellowship...

To be in fellowship is to share life together. The abandon meeting together or to stay away is to separate oneself from the family of God (Hebrews 10:25). It is in fellowship that we "bear one another's burdens (Galatians 6:2).

While there may be times when meeting together is difficult, our regular practice should be to be together in prayer and worship.

What is your 'habit' regarding sharing life together in the fellowship?

...to the Breaking of Bread...

"Every day they continued to meet together in the temple courts. They broke bread in their homes and ate together with glad and sincere hearts" (vv. 46-47)

When Jesus met with His disciples before His crucifixion, He broke bread with them. He gave them the instruction to, "*do this in remembrance of me.*" (Luke 22:19). While this is a command of our Lord and saviour, it is also an invitation to share in close fellowship with your brothers and sisters in Christ.

What is your sense of belonging when we gather at the Lord's table?

When we share the Lord's supper it is both a memorial of the Last Supper as commanded by Jesus, and it is a foretaste of the banquet that awaits. Rev 19:7-9

How are you looking forward and preparing for that great and glorious day?

...to the Prayers...

Our prayers come in many forms. It is through prayer that we connect with God, converse with Him and enter into His fellowship. Our private prayer life is essential to our growth in Christlikeness. Our times of fellowship prayer together give us opportunity to lift up each other to our God for healing, comfort and restoration.

Paul urged us to, "pray without ceasing" (1 Thessalonians 5:17 KJV). How do you accomplish this? How would you describe your prayer life?



Jesus' practice was to rise early to go to prayer (Mark 1:35). Why do you think rising early for prayer might be beneficial for us?

What was the result of this close fellowship within the early church?

Read Acts 4:32-35. Discuss how our church fellowship is modelled after this?

Read Acts 5:12-16 Discuss how our church fellowship is like this...or not?

Check in with each other – ask for prayer – pray for one another.

Sunday February 28th – Acts 3:1-10

Opening Prayer: Lord of heaven and earth, all authority is in your hands. We pray for healing in our lives and in the lives of all our community.

Read: Acts 3:1-10

The First Miracle

Acts 3:1-10

¹ One day Peter and John were going up to the temple at the time of prayer—at three in the afternoon. ² Now a man who was lame from birth was being carried to the temple gate called Beautiful, where he was put every day to beg from those going into the temple courts. ³ When he saw Peter and John about to enter, he asked them for money. ⁴ Peter looked straight at him, as did John. Then Peter said, "Look at us!" ⁵ So the man gave them his attention, expecting to get something from them.

⁶ Then Peter said, "Silver or gold I do not have, but what I do have I give you. In the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, walk." ⁷ Taking him by the right hand, he helped him up, and instantly the man's feet and ankles became strong. ⁸ He jumped to his feet and began to walk. Then he went with them into the temple courts, walking and jumping, and praising God. ⁹ When all the people saw him walking and praising God, ¹⁰ they recognized him as the same man who used to sit begging at the temple gate called Beautiful, and they were filled with wonder



and amazement at what had happened to him.

Read Luke 5:17-36. What does this passage teach about miracles? healing? authority?

How does this assist our understanding of what is happening in Acts 3:1-10?

The man in Acts 3 was not looking for healing. He was looking for financial support to help him in his present 'unalterable' condition. What was it that Peter was offering that mere money could not possibly provide?

Read Isaiah 35:5-6. What four conditions are listed here? (blind, deaf, lame, mute)

Read Matthew 9:33; 12:22; 15:30-31, Mark 7:37

What should the Jewish leaders and followers have understood from Isaiah about Jesus' healing miracles? (Isaiah is called "the Great prophet" in Judaism)

Matthew 11:1-5 – What is Jesus saying here? Who is He talking about?

Mark 7:32,37; 9:25,26; Matthew 15:31 – How did all these incapacitated people get to Jesus to be healed? What do we learn from that?

What is the nature and purpose of miracles?

How do miracles operate in our lives today?

How should John 15:16 shape our life, ministry and witness?

Read John 9. The two men, born blind (John 9) and born lame (Acts 3) were 'born that way.' There was no remedy available to their condition. They were destined to spend their lives without hope or healing.

In these two passages the presence of Jesus – even the Name of Jesus - brought healing, restoration, and joy into their lives. What does this say about any human condition today?

Take time to check in and pray for each other



Sunday March 7th – Acts 4:1-22

Opening Prayer: Lord, forgive us for those times we have avoided speaking boldly in Your Name. Give us courage to be proclaimers of the truth that is found in no other Name.

Read: Acts 4:1-22

Read Acts 4:1-22.

What is the main message of the Apostles?

Why are the Sadducees threatened by this?

What is Peter's response?

Compare Luke 20:9-19 with today's passage.

What parallels do you see?

What is the consequence of rejecting the Son?

Read Psalm 118.

How does the whole Psalm speak to the significance of this event in Acts 4?

Compare Daniel 3:6-18 with today's passage.

What parallels do you see?

What can we learn from Acts 4:1-22 about how we should respond in the face of opposition?

What has been your experience when witnessing to your faith in Jesus? What has been the response when you introduce the name of Jesus in a conversation?

How would you rate your "boldness" in faith discussions with people who are not believers in Jesus?

How do you respond to other worldviews, to people who believe in "another name?"



Take time to check in with each other and – pray for one another.

Sunday March 14th – Acts 4:21-31

Opening Prayer: Give us boldness to proclaim Your Truth in every situation. Give us courage to confront errors and falsehoods – Let the Name of Jesus be on our lips as we advance Your Kingdom purposes.

Read: Acts 4:23-31

Read Acts 4:21-22

Why could the religious leaders not punish Peter and John?

Where else have we read of a person born with a permanent disability being healed?

Why were Peter and John threatened?

Analyze and discuss the prayer:

Verse 24b

Verse 25b – 26

What is the connection between v27 and 24b-26?

Did God know that His followers would be arrested and persecuted? V 28.

Why does God not stop this?

If you or a friend were arrested for being a follower of Jesus, how would you pray?

How did the disciples pray? What did they pray for?



How did God respond to their prayer?

How does God respond to your prayers?

Take time to check in with each other and – pray for one another.

Sunday March 21st – Acts 4:32-5:16

Opening Prayer: Lord, may we too be 'one in heart and mind' as were these first disciples. May you Holy Spirit guide and teach us and may we again see signs and wonders as we boldly speak the truth of the gospel of Jesus Christ.

Read: Acts 4:32 - 5:16

Three Lessons:

1. Life Together – 4:32-37

First century life for the common person would have been quite different than life today in the 21st century. Our society is affluent – indeed from a global perspective we are the wealthiest of all people. So how then can we model the level of 'community' sharing that prevailed on these early disciples? How do we make sure there are 'no needy persons among us?'

Do we still see this kind of generosity in our time – selling of lands and homes to make sure others are well looked after?

Read Ephesians 4:1-3. Are we living 'a life worthy of the calling?'

Are we continuing on the 'boldness' that we have from the Holy Spirit – to proclaim the Truth of Jesus Christ in our society?

2. Sinning Against the Holy Spirit – 5:1-11

Chapter 5:1-11 is a very fearsome story. Following on from 4:36-37 where Joseph (Barnabas) sold property and gave the proceeds to the Apostles, what are the common elements and where are the differences in the Ananias and Sapphira story?

How does Peter know they were being deceptive? See 1 Corinthians 12:8.



The instant death of two deceivers in front of their friends and community would be terrifying for the witnesses. Why did God cause their deaths? What does this teach us about honesty and integrity in the church?

Compare this event with Joshua 7:1-26. What is the price of deception before God?

3. Signs & Wonders – 5:12-16

If miraculous signs were being performed (5:12) why, then, were people afraid to join them? (5:13)

If we look ahead to 5:17 we see the Sadducees 'filled with jealousy.' Why would this be?

Do you see how Luke is showing the momentum growing as this new movement takes hold?

Take time to check in with each other and – pray for one another.

Sunday April 4th – Acts 5:17-42

Opening Prayer: Lord, we praise you for this day – Resurrection Day. Your hope and joy are increased as we contemplate your resurrection from the dead, inviting us to new life in You.

Read: Acts 5:17-42

In His Steps

This passage from Acts 5 has some remarkable parallels from the gospels. The way in which Jesus was arrested and mistreated and the empty tomb is mirrored here as the disciples are mistreated by the same people.



Acts 5:17-25	Compare these verses
17 Then the high priest and all his associates, who were members of the party of the Sadducees, were filled with jealousy	Matthew 27:18
18 They arrested the apostles and put them in the public jail.	Mark 14:46 John 18:12
19 But during the night an angel of the Lord opened the doors of the jail and brought them out.	Matthew 28:2
20 "Go, stand in the temple courts," he said, "and tell the people the full message of this new life."	Matthew 28:18-20 Mark 16:15
22 But on arriving at the jail, the officers did not find them there. So they went back and reported,	Matt 28:6-10
23 "We found the jail securely locked, with the guards standing at the doors; but when we opened them, we found no one inside."	Matthew 27:65-66
24 On hearing this report, the captain of the temple guard and the chief priests were puzzled, wondering what would come of this.	Matthew 28:11
25 Then someone came and said, "Look! The men you put in jail are standing in the temple courts teaching the people."	John 20:18

In 1 Peter 2:21 we read, *"To this you were called, because Christ suffered for you, leaving you an example, that you should follow in his steps."*

The scripture in Acts 5 shows that the disciples did in fact follow in Jesus' steps. How willing are we to speak God's truth boldly to the point of arrest and imprisonment?

Inverted Trial

Again, there is a gospel parallel here in Acts 5:27-32. Compare that with John 21:24-27. Who is putting whom on trial?

Unstoppable Kingdom

Read Acts 5:33-42

The disciples had turned their trial into a trial of the Sanhedrin.

What was the Sanhedrin's response? v.33



What was the disciples' response? v.41

What happened to the Good News? v.42

Take time to check in with each other and – pray for one another.

Sunday April 11th – Acts 6:1-7

Opening Prayer: Lord, as you have called us to 'good works' that you have prepared for us, give us the sense of call and a willing response to fully enter into Kingdom service.

Read: Acts 6:1-7

Check back with Acts 2:41; 4:4; 5:14, now reread 6:1 and 6:7. What message is Luke wanting to affirm?

What is the main focus of Acts 6:1-7? Why is this important?

What can we learn about church governance from this text?

Leadership: _____

Decision Making: _____

Ministry Focus: _____

Serving: _____

What qualifications are needed for service? See also 1 Timothy 3:8-13

What is the result when a church is governed well and service is a key part of that church's ministry?

Since we are (Eph. 2:10) ...God's workmanship, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do...what is your ministry of service?

Take time to check in with each other and – pray for one another.



Sunday April 18th – Acts 6:8-8:1

Opening Prayer: Lord give each of us the courage to stand up for Jesus and the Truth. Give us opportunity to be bold and fearless as Stephen was.

Read: Acts 6:8 – 8:1

1. From the following references what do we learn about Stephen?

Acts 6:5 _____

6:8 _____

6:10 _____

6:15 _____

7:55-56 _____

7:59-60 _____

2. Stephen gave a long 'speech' to the Sanhedrin. Was it rehearsed?

How would you handle yourself if arrested for being a follower of Jesus?

Read Matthew 10:19-20 and Luke 12:11-12

How would you prepare to be put on trial for your faith?

3. What were the charges against Stephen?
 4. What gave Stephen such courage to face the Sanhedrin?
 5. How do you handle false accusations?
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Take time to check in with each other and – pray for one another.

