

Introduction:

Good Morning!

- New series: Book of Acts! Events after the resurrection that changed the world!
- Written by LUKE: We know because: Vocabulary (Theophilus, medical terminology, Writing Style, use of “We”)
- Reading along – Too much to read: Read along! We will try to recap each week.

ACTS Chapter 1:1-14

¹ In the first book, O Theophilus, I have dealt with all that Jesus began to do and teach, ² until the day when he was taken up, after he had given commands through the Holy Spirit to the apostles whom he had chosen. ³ He presented himself alive to them after his suffering by many proofs, appearing to them during forty days and speaking about the kingdom of God.

⁴ And while staying^[a] with them he ordered them not to depart from Jerusalem, but to wait for the promise of the Father, which, he said, “you heard from me; ⁵ for John baptized with water, but you will be baptized with^[b] the Holy Spirit not many days from now.”

⁶ So when they had come together, they asked him, “Lord, will you at this time restore the kingdom to Israel?” ⁷ He said to them, “It is not for you to know times or seasons that the Father has fixed by his own authority. ⁸ But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you, and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth.” ⁹ And when he had said these things, as they were looking on, he was lifted up, and a cloud took him out of their sight. ¹⁰ And while they were gazing into heaven as he went, behold, two men stood by them in white

robes, ¹¹ and said, “Men of Galilee, why do you stand looking into heaven? This Jesus, who was taken up from you into heaven, will come in the same way as you saw him go into heaven.”

¹² Then they returned to Jerusalem from the mount called Olivet, which is near Jerusalem, a Sabbath day's journey away. ¹³ And when they had entered, they went up to the upper room, where they were staying, Peter and John and James and Andrew, Philip and Thomas, Bartholomew and Matthew, James the son of Alphaeus and Simon the Zealot and Judas the son of James. ¹⁴ All these with one accord were devoting themselves to prayer, together with the women and Mary the mother of Jesus, and his brothers. [\[a\]](#)

ME:

- Joke: Did you know that we know what car the disciples drove? A Honda. (Because they were all in one Accord!)
- Student email: Parents getting a divorce: “Why do we pray if God already knows what I want, and he’s going to do His own thing anyway? What’s the point?”
- I could relate! I had asked the same thing

WE:

- *We all ask questions like: Why bother praying? Will God answer? Will it change anything? If God already knows everything, why pray? Just coincidence?*
- Experientially we pray desperately for things – healing, relationships, relief from difficulties. And sometimes, God brings deliverance, and sometimes he doesn’t seem to answer in the way we want.
- However, as disciples of Jesus, we are told to pray: Jesus himself gave us examples of prayer, not only the Lord’s prayer, but also he himself would spend time with the Father in quiet places in prayer.

- If Jesus felt it was a priority for him to be devoted to prayer, then why do we feel like it's an optional add-on sometimes? Are we more in touch with the father than He was? (no!)
- **So we must strive to be devoted to prayer, both alone, and together.**

GOD:

- So Jesus was with them after the resurrection, doing cool miracles and teaching.
- Then he leaves – taken away into the clouds. I imagine they were stunned – the angels had to come! (1 of 7 times)
- They obeyed and then chose to pray together:
 “¹⁴All these with one accord were devoting themselves to prayer, together with the women and Mary the mother of Jesus, and his brothers.”
- This wasn't just the leaders, this was with a bunch of people. Just ahead in verse 15, it indicates there were 120 people who might have been spending the days praying. At the end of the Gospel of Luke, he says they were “*continually in the temple blessing God*”.
- And what happens? God has a plan, and it comes to fruition. They cast lots to decide on a new apostle to replace Judas in the rest of chapter 1, and then in chapter 2, The Holy spirit comes just like Jesus said.
- At this point now they have direction and they are empowered.
- Acts 1:8 says: “But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you, and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth.”
- This was possibly part of the great commission discourse: Matthew 28: “All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. ¹⁹Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in^[b] the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, ²⁰teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age.”

- So they have the plan:
Be witnesses :: Go to the world :: Empowered by the Holy Spirit
- As disciples today, the mission hasn't changed.
- In that time of waiting they prayed rather than feeling lost.
- As disciples of Christ – we also must be praying!
- 1 Thessalonians 5 says we are to pray continually!
- But why pray? What does it do?

YOU:

- **2 Things we learn about prayer here: 1) God answers prayers. 2 Prayer aligns our heart & desires with God's heart & desires.**
- We see the answer to two prayers here. One directly, and one indirectly.
- The indirect one, is when the disciples ask about if now was the time God would restore the kingdom:
- Verse 6 [“⁶ So when they had come together, they asked him, “Lord, will you at this time restore the kingdom to Israel?””](#)
- They had questions and their own desires too! Important to them!
- (Still) Expected Jesus to be that military leader!
- They have been without a kingdom since Maccabean revolt (420 years without a kingdom, then 70 years)
- Their desires, didn't align with what Jesus had told them.
- This was such an important idea that they would have been probably praying for this continually.
- They got an answer – the answer was just no. You don't get to know that. But stay on task – (the mission)

- The second (more direct) answer to prayer is when we see them seek God's direction for who should replace Judas as the 12th apostle.

So they cast lots, and God answered.

- CASTING LOTS: Used to: Make decisions and determine God's will and direction.
 1. Division of land to the 12 tribes; choosing a scape goat; Joshua used lots to determine who was guilty; assign priestly duties; and choose the king (Saul)
 2. Acts is the LAST time lots are used – because now the Holy Spirit guides. (Super cool!)
- It is part of the reality of the Christian experience that God answers our prayers
- It's okay and actually expected that we bring all our requests to God.
- It's not selfish, and it's okay if you don't ask for the right stuff!
- You can't really mess prayer up, unless you don't listen and hear God's answers back. (It's a dialogue!)

Not just about asking for stuff like God is a vending machine. It's about relationship too.

- **2 Prayer aligns our heart & desires with God's heart & desires.**
- When we pray, God either says yes, no, or wait.
- We learn from his answers to us what his will is – what HE desires.
- And yes, God has sovereign plans that he is accomplishing, and we will discover our role in those plans as he leads us.
- Also, there is a lot of freedom that the Lord gives to us, where he will change the situation and outcomes because we have asked and prayed.
- In the Old Testament we have seen God change his plans a number of times:
Golden Calf, Amos- fire and locusts, Jonah & Ninevah
- God can bring healing and meet our needs when we ask. Matthew 7:11 says "If you then, who are evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your father who is in

heaven give good things to those who ask him!” Even in the Lord’s prayer, Jesus taught to pray
-give us this day our daily bread...

- These two things are just two of MANY reasons to pray! Throughout scripture, we see people pray to glorify God, to seek guidance, for healing, for thanksgiving, for forgiveness, protection, for others, and to overcome temptation
- All of this helps us to understand more about God, as we talk out what’s on our heart, and we listen to what God puts on our heart in return.
- Don’t be worried about getting it wrong – God has built that into the process!
- Don’t fear when you don’t get an answer, or the response is different than you hoped for – we can trust that God has all things in his ultimate control.

Challenge: To pray well, you have to be vulnerable to God. Really let him know your heart – and then listen. Listen for what he is putting on your heart in return.

- **What is it for you that you need to be praying for? And how might you change how you are praying?**
- **We also see that they were praying together – so are you in your Christian walk, spending time praying with other people in any capacity?**
- **This is not a question to bring judgement, rather awareness. Serge and I were talking this week and he said as we look at the early church being devoted to prayer, so we likewise should be looking to make prayer a bigger priority.**

WE:

- When we pray – it changes the way God acts.
We are equipped. We have the power of the Gospel and the Holy Spirit.
- We have our mission: to be witnesses of Jesus to the world!

- **So therefore, lets start there together.**
- Here is the challenge – **we are going to completely cover the month of November in prayer.**
- Calander at the back. Pick a day and sign up. The goal is to have 5-10 people praying every day for the entire month. Pick one day, more than one, doesn't matter. The only rule is that you remember to spend the day praying on the day you sign up for.
- set a reminder, get a reminder
- **What are we praying for?**
- In Acts 1:8 he says to be witnesses - that means that we can testify about the resurrection of Jesus – the Gospel.
- In Jerusalem, Judea, Samaria, and to the ends of the earth. *Start at home and work your way out.*
- Therefore, we are going to be praying that the gospel message would go out to others.
- On the day/days you sign up to pray on:
 - We will start by praying for our families. Those who don't know Jesus
 - Then we will pray for our City and those who need to hear the Good news,
 - Then we will pray for the world. That the gospel will come to all who still need the peace and strength and salvation and joy that the gospel brings.
- We want everyone to hear the good news and the message of Love that Jesus commanded.

Gospel Call:

- Gospel –
- And notice that the first place Jesus said to start was in Jerusalem.
For us, that means - your own heart.
- Make sure you pray for yourself too.

- If you don't understand the Gospel, or you have yet to believe and put your trust in Jesus, then start right there.
- Get your self right with God first. When you ask God for forgiveness for your lack of trust and belief, he will forgive you!
- Doing that, is the first key step in being a witness of what Jesus has done!

Let's pray. – Boldness to share

Benediction

May the Lord