

The Parish of Wellow

'Be Daring and Dynamic' 24 Studies in Acts

Acts 1:1-11 - The Mission of the Church

Passage, Talk Notes and Questions

Please feel free to take these talk notes home with you and you may wish to find some time during this week to consider the questions below.

1. Talk Passage

Acts 1:1-11

1 In my former book, Theophilus, I wrote about all that Jesus began to do and to teach

2 until the day he was taken up to heaven, after giving instructions through the Holy Spirit to the apostles he had chosen.

3 After his suffering, he showed himself to these men and gave many convincing proofs that he was alive. He appeared to them over a period of forty days and spoke about the kingdom of God.

4 On one occasion, while he was eating with them, he gave them this command: "Do not leave Jerusalem, but wait for the gift my Father promised, which you have heard me speak about.

5 For John baptized with water, but in a few days you will be baptized with the Holy Spirit."

6 So when they met together, they asked him, "Lord, are you at this time going to restore the kingdom to Israel?"

7 He said to them: "It is not for you to know the times or dates the Father has set by his own authority.

8 But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth."

9 After he said this, he was taken up before their very eyes, and a cloud hid him from their sight.

10 They were looking intently up into the sky as he was going, when suddenly two men dressed in white stood beside them.

11 "Men of Galilee," they said, "why do you stand here looking into the sky? This same Jesus, who has been taken from you into heaven, will come back in the same way you have seen him go into heaven."

2. Talk Notes

The Book of Acts - Vital Statistics

Purpose:

To give an accurate account of the birth and growth of the early Christian Church

Author:

Luke (A gentile physician)

To whom written:

Theophilus and the early Christian Church

Date written:

Between AD 63 and 70

Setting:

Acts is the connecting link between Christ's life and the life of the Church, between the Gospels and the letters

Key Verse

But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth." 1:8

Key People

Peter, John, James, Stephen, Philip, Paul, Barnabas, Cornelius, James (Jesus' brother), Timothy, Lydia, Silas, Titus, Agabus, Ananias, Felix, Festus, Agrippa, Luke.

Key Places

Jerusalem, Samaria, Lydda, Joppa, Antioch, Cyprus, Pisidian Antioch, Iconium, Lystra, Derbe, Philippi, Thessalonica, Berea, Athens, Corinth, Ephesus, Caesarea, Malta, Rome

Special Features

Acts is a sequel to the Gospel of Luke. Because Acts ends so abruptly, Luke may have planned to write a third book, continuing the story.

2.1 Introduction - What is the Mission of St Julian's?

- The mission of every church, every group of Christians, should be very simple. It is to:
 - i. WIN.
 - ii. BUILD.
 - iii. SEND.
- Firstly we must reach a lost world with the saving message of Jesus Christ.
- Secondly build those that we win through teaching so that they will become mature in their faith.
- Thirdly send them out again to win more people.
- Jesus summarises this perfectly for his disciples and us in verse 8 you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth.
- But it's so easy to get sidetracked, to start thinking that our mission or purpose is something other than what it really is. And instead, spend all our energy focussing on buildings, raising money to look after those buildings, speaking out on social issues, or championing certain causes.
- Verse 4 tells us that Jesus had commanded the disciples to "not leave Jerusalem, but wait for the gift my Father promised.
- I am sure as they waited and prayed they considered as we should:
 - i. The REASON for going out to win, build and send.
 - ii. The RESOURCES needed to win, build and send.
 - iii. The RESPONSIBILITY of who should go out to win, build and send.

2.2 The REASON for Mission

- Acts 1:1 begins with these words: 'In my former book, Theophilus, I wrote about all that Jesus began to do and to teach until the day He was taken up into heaven, after giving instructions through the Holy Spirit to the apostles He had chosen.'
- Luke says, "In my former book, the gospel of Luke, I was telling you about Jesus Christ. Now, I'm continuing the story."
- The book of Acts is the continuing story of the ministry of Jesus Christ as He ministers through His church, which is His body - and through those of us who are members of His church.
- The reason that we go out to WIN, BUILD and to SEND is to continue the work that Jesus started says Luke.
- Many people today say that it really doesn't matter what you believe. I disagree because belief determines behaviour. What we believe will be acted out in our lives.
- What do we believe about Jesus?
 - Do we believe that Jesus was God with human flesh on?
 - Do we believe that He was born of a virgin?
 - Do we believe that He performed real miracles, that He fed the multitudes, healed the lame and blind, and even raised the dead back to life again?
 - Do we believe that He taught the truth?
 - Do we believe that when He died, He paid the debt for our sins?
 - Do we believe that He arose from the dead? Vs. 3 says, "After his suffering, He showed himself to these men and gave many convincing proofs that He was alive. He appeared to them over a period of 40 days and spoke about the kingdom of God."
 - Do we believe that He ascended to the right hand of God? Vs. 9 says, "After He said this, He was taken up before their very eyes, and a cloud hid him from their sight."
 - Do we believe that He's coming back soon? Verses 10-11 say, "They were looking intently up into the sky as He was going, when suddenly two men dressed in white stood beside them. 'Men of Galilee,' they said, 'why do you stand here looking into the sky? This same Jesus, who has been taken from you into heaven, will come back in the same way you have seen him go into heaven.'"
- The reason for the mission is Jesus.

2.3 The RESOURCES for Mission

- 'Do not leave Jerusalem, but wait for the gift my Father promised, which you have heard me speak about. For John baptized with water, but in a few days you will be baptized with the Holy Spirit.'" Acts 1:4-5.
- There is a principle in Scripture that I think sometimes we forget or overlook. The principle is, every time God commissions someone to do something, He always gives the means to do it. Always! He never asks us to do something without enabling us to do it.
- God's commission to us the church is to go into the world and spread the good news about Jesus.
- Now this may seem an impossible task but nothing is impossible with God who specialises in impossible things.
- The resource he gives us to do this task is none other than the Holy Spirit. Jesus said, "I'll never leave you alone. I will always be with you."
- So the Holy Spirit comes as our prompter to help us say the things that we need to say. The Holy Spirit comes as our comforter to encourage us. The Holy Spirit comes to give us power to do the job that is before us.

2.4 The RESPONSIBILITY for Mission

- 'You will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes to you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth.'" Acts 1:8.
- As Christians we are to be God's witnesses. We are to have relevant testimony, testimony that this world desperately needs to hear.
- Do we have words and actions for a world that seems to be so far away from God?
- Do we have a personal testimony of what Jesus has done for us to share with those around us?
- The responsibility for Mission is down to each one of us as individuals.

3. Questions to consider back at home

3.1 What do you think the mission of St Julian's is? How well do you think we as a church family are doing at fulfilling Jesus' command to be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth?

3.2 You are in a discussion one day with a good friend who tells you that as long as we live a good life it does not matter what we believe. How would you respond?

3.3 What did Jesus teach about the relationship between receiving the Holy Spirit and his resurrection?

3.4 What is the relationship between being witnesses and Christ's resurrection?

3.5 What is the difference between an intellectual understanding of Christ's resurrection and faith in the resurrected Christ?

3.6 How do we tap into the resources that God has given us for mission?

3.7 How would you evaluate your faith in Christ at the moment?

3.8 If someone asked you this week what knowing Jesus is like how would you respond?

If you would like to discuss these questions further please feel free to call me on 01761 432293