

The Parish of Wellow

'Be Daring and Dynamic' 24 Studies in Acts Acts 2:38-47 - Six Signs of Spirit Filled Living 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 2:38-47

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.

42 They devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and to the fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer.

43 Everyone was filled with awe, and many wonders and miraculous signs were done by the apostles.

44 All the believers were together and had everything in common.

45 Selling their possessions and goods, they gave to anyone as he had need.

46 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,

47 praising God and enjoying the favour of all the people. And the Lord added to their number daily those who were being saved.

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 - 3,000 saved in a day!

- 'About three thousand were added to their number that day' (Acts 2:41)
- Can You Imagine 3,000 people being saved in one day, in one place, in one service? That's roughly four times the population of Wellow!
- That's what Revival can do to a people. That's what a small group of Spirit Filled, Spirit led, Spirit Powered people can do.
- Do we want to experience something like that? Do our hearts ache to see such an outpouring of God's Spirit that People are saved and their lives changed?
- For this to happen in a big way, we the church, need to be living spirit filled lives. In Acts chapter 2 verses 42 to 47 we get a fantastic insight into what a Spirit filled, Spirit led, and Spirit powered early church was like. In these verses there are six signs or six hallmarks of what spirit filled living is all about. What a challenge they pose to us today!

2.2 Sign 1: Sanctified Hunger

- These early Christians were devoting themselves to the things of God. There was a hunger in them that fed on Spiritual things.
- Jesus said "Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness for they shall be filled." (Matthew 5:6)
- They were continually devoting themselves to spiritual things - Teaching, Fellowship, breaking of bread

(communion), and prayer.

- In Colossians 3 verse 2 Paul encourages us to 'Set our minds on things above, not on earthly things.'
- When our minds are not filled with the Spirit our appetite is not for spiritual things - our hunger is for the twisted things of the world. The more our lives are controlled by the indwelling Spirit of God the hungrier we become for the things of God.

2.3 Sign 2 - Powerful Presence

- Everyone was filled with awe, and many wonders and miraculous signs were done by the apostles., verse 43.
- Signs and wonders are wonderful things and I believe when we are immersed in the Spirit those things will flow out from our lives but the reality of the power in this early church is the awe they felt for God.
- There seems to have been a continual amazement at the power of God to transform the world around them. I think many of us have lost that sense of awe.

2.4 Sign 3 - Intimate Fellowship

- 'All the believers were together and had everything in common,' verse 44.
- The fellowship of this early Church is quite frankly extraordinary.
- They didn't just worship together they cared about each other.
- They truly came to love each other even in the midst of their differences.
- They weren't content to just share space with each other on a Sunday - they shared in each others lives.

2.5 Sign 4 - Real Worship

- '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,' verse 46.
- These folks loved to worship. They loved to spend time in the presence of God through worship. They were hungry for the fellowship of the word, and worship.
- When our lives are filled with the Spirit - worship is not work it's what we live for.
- Worship in the Spirit is about a hunger to draw close and be intimate with God - it's exciting because we never know what God's going to do next.
- Again and again in the Bible God warns against empty worship in Isaiah chapter 29 verse 13 Gods says "These people come near to me with their mouth and honour me with their lips, but their hearts are far from me. Their worship of me is made up only of rules taught by men."

2.6 Sign 5 - Impacting Testimony

- 'Enjoying the favour of all the people,' verse 47a.
- The testimony of this church was making an impact on their community.
- We should be a people that touch our world in a positive way.
- God is not interested in taking us out of the world. He is interested in protecting the integrity of our witness within the world we live.
- Nothing has done so much harm to the cause of Christ as casual Christianity. Lives in which mouths proclaim a belief that is never transferred into living.
- Countless people still live in darkness because they have no idea what the light really looks like. Jesus said to us "Let your light shine before men in such a way that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father who is in heaven."

2.7 Sign 6 - True expansion

- 'And the Lord added to their number daily those who were being saved ,' verse 47b.
- This is the true focus of the Christian life. That we should bear fruit. This should be the desire of every church, of every group of Christians to produce fruit.
- We must resist the temptation to think that church is all about us and remember that we are here for those who are not yet members.

3. Questions to consider back at home

3.1 What are the primary characteristics of the first church? How does St Julian's compare?

3.2 What do we need to differently at St Julian's to become more like the first church?

3.3 A friend of yours says to you one day that her vicar keeps on trying to encourage her to join a home group. Surely going to church on Sunday is good enough she argues. How would you respond?

3.4 'The Christian church is the only institution on this planet that exists for its non members.' Do you agree?

3.5 'Many wonders and miraculous signs were done by the apostles,' Verse 43. Should we expect these today? If so what might they look like?

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

Matthew Street 21st May 2006