

Acts 1-12: The Church Begins

By Bev Kilts

Written by Luke, the Book of Acts is a sequel to Luke's Gospel. It begins with a recap: the apostles had been told by Jesus (Luke 24:49) to wait in Jerusalem. They were given the promise of power through the God-given Holy Spirit who would be with them and within them. After which they were to go out in an ever-widening circle – first in Jerusalem (home) then finally “to the ends of the earth”. In Acts 2 they receive the power (the Holy Spirit), the process (preach repentance, baptize, make disciples) and the promise (God would be with them). And so starts the exciting story Luke writes of in The Acts of the Apostles. It is the birth of the church, the Body of Christ.



They were to cross all barriers be they ethnic, social, political, cultural – the message of salvation was to be shared to all people everywhere. And through the new power given by God, they did just that. Everywhere the early Christians went they told of Jesus and His power to save sinners. The mandate had been given; the message was clear. One thing had changed: the messengers. Could it be these men speak-

ing openly, boldly of the Christ are the same men we have just read about in the Gospels - full of doubt, weak, self-centered? No, they're not exactly the same men – they've been with Jesus, they were with the resurrected King, they've been forgiven – no they're not the same. Nor are we, once we've truly met Jesus.

In chapters 1-12 we read of Peter – the one who actually denied knowing Jesus, now boldly preaching the Good News of “Jesus Christ and Him crucified” and performing miracles. Read Peter's message in Acts 2. Do you feel the strength, the power, the utter honesty – the urgent need that all should hear the precious, life-saving and life-changing message? But remember, it wasn't the apostles' words, nor the miracles they performed that brought thousands into a saving faith. The power of the Holy Spirit was at work in the people's hearts. In reading Acts we must

bring our thoughts back to our own world today. That mandate has not changed; the message has not changed. In Jesus' name repentance and forgiveness of sins are still preached and the Holy Spirit continues to work in the hearts of sinners changing lives. Acts 2:39 tells us that “the promise is for you and your children and for all who are far off – for all whom the Lord, our God will call.”



Now, I realize we probably won't be asked to do great and bold things for Him, but, I do believe we need to be ready and willing to serve Him. It may be just a few moments in a day when we are faced with the need to act or to speak out for Him. Or He may actually ask us to go way outside of our comfort zone. I'm sure there were evenings when the apostles were thinking over the events of the day, that they were in awe of what they had said or did. I'm also sure at that point, they were fully aware that “they” had not done the great works that day and were probably on their knees in adoration. (It's a perspective we need to keep if we desire to serve Him.) I think one key to keeping our focus on Jesus is found in Acts 2:42. They became part of a community of people who “devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and to fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer.” I don't think

LOVE
like JESUS
“By this they will know”

that means the four areas mentioned simply need to be added to our already busy schedules. I think these four areas are actually the base around which we arrange our lives. That's devotion. That's preparing for service.

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