



Name:

Acts 1: 1-11

The Mission of Jesus

1. Luke wrote both the gospel of Luke and Acts. Compare Luke 1:1-4 and Acts 1:1-2. What are the similarities? What does this tell us about Acts?

2. Why were the apostles to wait for the 'gift my Father promised' (v 4) before telling people about Jesus? What is so important about this gift?

3. How are the disciples misguided about what going to happen next? (v 6) What does this betray about their priorities? How does Jesus respond? (v 7)

4. What are the two promises from Jesus in v. 8? What do they tell us about Jesus' mission and the part the apostles will play in His mission?

5. What do you notice about the geographic location of Jesus' mission for the apostles? (v 8)

6. Compare Luke 24:45-49 with this passage. What does this tell you about the plan of God?

7. Why is the ascension of Jesus important for:
 - a. Jesus
 - b. The disciples
 - c. Us

8. Make up a mission statement for the apostles that reflects Jesus' words.

9. How is the mission of Jesus similar/different today? What part do we play in this mission; if any?

10. Do you have a sense of power from the Holy Spirit as you bear witness to your friends and family? Why/Why not?

11. How can we fall into the trap of thinking WE save people rather than God the Holy Spirit?

12. How can you/we as a youth group be more dependant on the Holy Spirit to *'transform lives through Jesus Christ to the glory of God'*?

13. If this is Jesus mission for earth between his going and return, out of 10 how on board with Jesus mission are you?

0-----1-----2-----3-----4-----5-----6-----7-----8-----9-----10

(0 = couldn't care less about Jesus mission for the world, 10 = I am burdened 24/7 for the mission of Jesus)

Acts 3:1-26

With God's stamp of approval

1. Place someone's drivers' licence on the table. Pass it round the group and have each member look carefully at the surface. What do you notice? What is this a sign of?
2. Compare this man's condition before and after he was healed. What does this tell you about this miracle?
3. What is the man's reaction? (v 8). Compare that to the reaction of the crowd (v 9-11). What is the best response to all the people saw & heard that day?
4. How does Peter make the most of the opportunity he's been given? (v 12) When was the last time you were presented with an opportunity to bear witness to Jesus? How did you go? How can you be more like Peter in the future (*in what you do and say*)?
5. How does Peter confront the people with their sin? (v 14-15) Why is this important? How should it impact the way we talk to people about Jesus?
6. Why does Peter quote so many Old Testament passage about Moses and all the other OT guys? What is his purpose in doing this?

Acts 4:1-31

In the face of opposition

1. Share a story with the group about a time when you have experienced opposition when talking about Jesus? How did you react? Given the opportunity again would you do anything different?
2. What seems to be the central feature of the apostles preaching (4:2)? How do you think this ought to shape our attempts to share the gospel?
3. How does opposition towards the gospel affect the mission of Jesus (remember Acts 1:8 – gospel to the ends of the earth)? (4:1-4)
4. What do we learn about the uniqueness of Jesus from verses 9-12? How does this grate our world as much as it did theirs?
5. How do the Jewish rulers try and halt the progress of Jesus mission (the gospel to the ends of the earth)? How do the apostles respond (v 19-20) and what is the effect (v 31)
6. What is the nature of their prayer (4:24-30)?

Acts 5:17-41

Proclamation despite persecution

1. Share any stories of how Jesus helped you to be **bold** for him in the last week. How did people respond?
2. How have the Jewish rulers tried to halt the mission of Jesus this time (5:18, 40) and what is the result (5:19-20, 42). What does this tell us about the mission of Jesus? How should this encourage us to complete the mission?
3. How do we see 5:38-39 already at work in these verses? Is there anything that can stop God from achieving his purpose for the mission?
4. How might you (and other Christians) be presented with the same situation as the apostles were in 5:27-29? Who out ranks who? (v 29)

Acts 9:1-31

With unlikely Ally's

1. Think of the person you know who is most unlikely to become a Christian. Why is it unlikely?
2. What do we already know about Saul from the story so far (Acts 7:58-8:3)?
3. Draw a picture of the scene in verse 3. (or draw a comic strip of v 3-6)
4. What is the question Jesus asks Saul? What do you find interesting about this question? (v 4)
5. How is Saul to play his part in the mission of Jesus? (9:15)
6. What is Saul's immediate response to being saved (9:18-20)? Were you more passionate about telling others when you were a new Christian? How can you regain that passion if it has dwindled? (Did Paul ever seem to lose that passion?)

7. What is the result of Saul's conversion? (v 9:21-22, 28-31)

8. What role does Ananias play (9:10-19)? Why do you think he's included in the story?

9. How does Saul's conversion provide hope for us and others we wish to be saved? (1 Timothy 1:15-16)

10. How did Saul attempt to put the brakes on the mission of Jesus? Jesus had other plans (9:15); what does this tell us about His mission, the part we play, and the part others might play?

11. Do you ever think people are beyond God's reach? What is wrong with this thinking? Who do you need to reconsider sharing Jesus with?

THINKING DEEPER

Compare the 3 different accounts of Saul's conversion (9:1-18, 22:1-21, 26:1-18). Why do you think Luke re-writes the story each time? What added info do we get from Paul's retelling of his conversion that we didn't get in chapter 9?

Acts 12:1-25

Without Hindrance

1. What is something that you just can't stop?
2. How does Herod try and immobilize the progress of the mission of Jesus? What motivates him? (12:1-4)
3. How impossible was Peter's situation (12:6)? Describe the guard conditions around Peter – why was he so well guarded?
4. What was the church doing while Peter was in jail (12:5)? Why is this key?
5. What does this chapter teach us about God and prayer? (Ephesians 3:20) Are there ever things you don't pray for because you think they're too big for God to answer?
6. What shows Peter's confidence and trust in the Lord? (12:7)

Tricky questions from Acts

Why is there a delay in some Christians receiving the Holy Spirit in Acts?

There are a number of occasions in Acts where people who are *already* Christians receive the Holy Spirit. The first is found in Acts chapter 2. The 120 disciples are all together in Jerusalem and 2:4 says they were all “filled with the Holy Spirit”. But the disciples were already Christians before Pentecost. In Luke 10:20 Jesus tells the disciples to “rejoice that your names are written in heaven”. But historically it couldn’t happen any other way – the disciples just happened to live in a unique period of salvation history; after Jesus death and resurrection yet before Jesus ascension and the coming of the Holy Spirit.

The second occasion that this occurs in Acts 8:14-17. Philip took the gospel outside Jerusalem to Samaria (remember the hostility between Jew & Samaritans). After Philip preached there people believed and were baptised. But they didn’t receive the Holy Spirit until Peter and John came from Jerusalem and laid hands on them. Why? There was great hostility between the Jews & Samaritans; the Samaritans were considered by the Jews to be half-breeds who’d inter married with neighbouring nations, the Samaritans thought the Jews were religious, snobby, know it all’s. They avoided each other at all costs. When the 1st Samaritans believed the gospel, there is a delay in their reception of the Holy Spirit to allow Peter and John (the church leaders) to verify that God had indeed opened the doors of the kingdom to the Samaritans.

The next occurrence is even more shocking, because it is the gentiles who God invites into his Kingdom. When Peter first met the gentile man Cornelius he told him, “You are well aware that it is against our law for a Jew to associate with a gentile or visit him”. Peter does his reputation of being a snobby religious Jew no favours! As Peter explains the gospel to them the Holy Spirit descends upon the gentiles believers and the Jews “were astonished that the gift of the Holy Spirit had been poured out *even* on the gentiles! For they heard them speaking in tongues and praising God.”

The delay is God’s way of saying there is no longer any “us and them”.

The final occasion is found in Acts 19:1-7, where Paul bumps into some ‘disciples’ who had not received the Holy Spirit – they had been baptised by John the baptiser but missed that John was pointing them forward to Jesus. Paul tells them about Jesus, baptises them in His name and they receive the Holy Spirit. These men are in a transition period from Old Covenant to New; they’d never heard of the Holy Spirit until they met Paul.

Does this mean that when we become Christians we don’t receive the Holy Spirit until we have hands laid on us by someone who does (2nd blessing)? No, the rest of the New Testament shows us that the normal experience for a Christian is to receive the Holy Spirit when we become Christians? Check out these verses Acts 2:38, 1 Corinthians 12:13, Ephesians 1:13-14, 4:3-4, 1 John 2:27, 3:24.

Why did the early church grow so quickly?

There are a number of reasons as we look in Acts, some we can replicate – others we cannot.

- Holy Spirit empowered witness (Acts 2)
- Holy Spirit directed believers to the place where they could preach the gospel (Acts 8:26-40, 10)
- The many signs and wonders (Acts 2:43, 3, 5:12)
- Consistent preaching of the gospel
- The way the apostles preached when given the opportunity
- The determination to preach despite opposition (Acts 4)
- Violence against the church caused the gospel to go out (8:1)
- God's intention to reach the gentiles with the gospel (1:8)
- The way God used Paul
- The fellowship, love & generosity of the believers
- The historic nature of the resurrection
- God is sovereign and over-riding in all of history (Acts 12)
- The willingness of individuals to share the gospel (Act 8)
- The clarity and content of the gospel (Acts 15)
- Prayerful dependence on God (Acts 4, 12)