

Home Group study: week beginning 30th August 2020

Acts from Acts

A slightly different sort of study this week, following Guy Miller's inspirational talk on Commission Together @ Home on Sunday. Guy set out 10 Acts for Commission churches, all based in the Book of Acts. There won't be time to look at all 10 in your meeting, but we will concentrate on the first five, as the other five really spring out of these five key points.

What we do need to remember is that we together are the church, and the church is not just a nice club of like-minded people but is the Body of Christ here on earth: the point at which heaven and earth meet. The Jewish people saw the Temple in Jerusalem as the meeting point of heaven and earth: that role is now taken, we believe, by the worldwide church.

And by 'we together' we mean every single individual: each of us individually needs to face up to the challenge to play our own part in the body of Christ.

Act One of Guy's 'acts' was:

The best is yet to come (Acts 1:8).

Do you agree that 'the best is yet to come'? We have already seen Jesus at work in our church and in churches throughout the world: but how can things get better still?

How can we play our part in seeing the promise of this verse fulfilled?

Read:

Acts 2: 4, 36-47

The main part of this passage comes at the end of a very powerful and forthright speech by Peter to the crowd that had gathered in Jerusalem for the Day of Pentecost. Verse 4 tells us that the disciples had been filled with the Holy Spirit and begun to speak in tongues (other languages), which perplexed some of the crowd and led some of the crowd to mock them. Peter pulls no punches. Even in the face of this mockery he tells the people that they, 'with the help of wicked men', have just murdered the promised Messiah: probably the most inflammatory accusation he could make to a crowd attending a Jewish festival. Yet only a few weeks before, Peter had been cowering in a corner, denying, three times, that he even knew Jesus. What has made the difference to him?

Act Two: Pray to be clothed in Holy Spirit power (Acts 2:4).

It hardly needs stating that we are living through very difficult times; COVID-19 has brought to the world sadness, death, poverty, fear and mental difficulties and has fed addictions.

As evidence of the rise in addiction many of us, at the lowest end of the scale (no pun intended) many of us have put on weight through comfort eating or find we are drinking more: but that's just the tip of a very nasty iceberg.

The world needs the help and comfort the church can bring: but on our own we are powerless. What are the effects of Peter being filled with the Spirit?

What can this mean for us as individuals and as a church?

Act Three: Turn up the contrast with the Gospel (Acts 2: 38)

What does 'repent' mean? Think of some ways in which today's world view is contrary to God's purposes. Can we really offer the world an alternative without confronting some of those issues? Guy said we need to be confident and unashamed of the Gospel: how can we achieve this? He told us: '90% of evangelicals have never shared their faith with anyone outside their own family'. Do you think that is true? How can we help each other to overcome our fear of sharing the gospel?

Verse 43 speaks of 'miraculous signs'. We sometime see miraculous signs taking place within the church. How can we see more miraculous signs taking place? How effective are they in creating contrast with the ways of the world if they take place within the church? How can we ensure miraculous signs can be effective in extending the Kingdom of God?

Act Four: We must do the basics well (Acts 2: 42)

What are the 'basics' of church life listed in this verse? The current situation challenges some of these things: but they are still important. Which can we easily improve on in the current circumstances? How can we improve on some of the more difficult ones?

How should you apply this verse to your own life (maybe summarising the verse could help answer this question)?

Act Five: We must give those in need the best (Acts 2: 44-45, 4: 34)

Jesus, Guy reminded us, was 'rich beyond measure' but became poor in order to save his people. What does that tell us about the way we need to give? As a church, helping those in need has been a priority during this season. As Government schemes to help people come

to an end (as they need to do in the absence of a bottomless pit of money), what are likely to be the challenges to us? How can we respond individually?

Conclusion

Do we agree that we need to take on the challenges of these various 'acts'?

What do we need to do as individuals to enable the church to move on in the right direction?