



BELIEVERS CHAPEL

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The Sermons of Dan Duncan

Acts 1: 1-5

Acts

“The Sequel”

TRANSCRIPT

[Message] This morning we’re going to begin a series of studies in the Book of Acts. And so if you have your bibles open, turn to Acts 1, we’re going to look at the first five verses that we consider the introduction to the book. Luke writes, “The first account I composed, Theophilus, about all that Jesus began to do and teach,” might underline that word began, I’ll come back to it because I think it has great significance for what we will say about the Book of Acts, but he’s speaking in verse 1 of the gospel that he wrote, third gospel, the Gospel of Luke. It is, “About all that Jesus began to do and teach, until the day when He was taken up to heaven, after He had by the Holy Spirit given orders to the apostles whom He had chosen. To these He also Presented Himself alive after His suffering, by many convincing proofs, appearing to them over a period of forty days and speaking of the things concerning the kingdom of God. Gathering them together, He commanded them not to leave Jerusalem, but to wait for what the Father had promised, ‘Which,’ He said, ‘you heard of from me; John baptized with water, but will be baptized with the Holy Spirit not many days from now.’” May the Lord bless this reading of His word and our time of study together. Let’s bow in prayer.

[Prayer] Father, it is a privilege and a joy to be here this morning, to be gathered with your people. Those young and old alike who have put their faith in Jesus Christ, by your grace we have been saved, we have been brought together and we are here this morning, Father, to be built up in the faith and so we pray that as we study together that you would teach us and do just that, build us up in the faith.

We approach a new book and we begin studies in a book that places great emphasis upon the person in the ministry of the third person of the Trinity, God the Holy Spirit. And so we pray that His ministry would be felt among us this morning, this morning, throughout the week, throughout the weeks and months to come, we pray that He would teach us things that you would have us to learn from this magnificent book, this great history of the early church.

And we look to you to do that, Father. We're reminded, even from the Book of Acts as well as the rest of the New Testament, in fact all of the bible that we can have nothing, we could grow in knowledge and grace in no way apart from His ministry within us. And so we begin this morning with thanksgiving to you and praise to you for all that you've done, all that you're doing, all that you will do through the person and the work of the Holy Spirit in our lives. May He teach us this morning, and in so doing, prepare us for the day and the week ahead, that we would go forth from this place joyful Christians, Christians that shine as lights in the midst of a dark world in an evil age.

May that be the result of our time of study together. Build us up in the faith. Father, we are a needy people not only in the spiritual things of life, but in the material things as well. We know that every good and perfect gift comes from above and it comes from your hand so that the material things of life are just as much a gift to us as are the spiritual things. And you have instructed us, your Son has instructed us to ask for our daily bread, to pray for that and we do, Father, we pray that you would bless us with the things of this world that we need. We pray for those who are in particular need at this time. We pray for the sick and there are many of our number who are struggling with ailments at this time. We pray that you'd give them comfort in the midst of that, that you would give them healing.

Lord, we are reminded by our illnesses that health is not something to take for granted; it comes from you. We do that, we take so much for granted. We have so much. We live in such a prosperous place and prosperous age that we take for granted the luxuries of life. And day comes when they're removed and Lord, we know that ultimately when that happens it's from you to remind us life is not made up of the things of this world, that life, when it's really lived well and lived correctly, live rightly, is lived in a right relationship with you.

You give all that we have and you can take it. And you do so, Father, according to your will. Teach us. Teach us daily, but teach us through our time in the Book of Acts to realize that all that we have is a gift from you and that we might live grateful lives and lives in which we live by looking to you and walking by the spirit. Father, we pray that you would bless our time this evening when we re-gather here to remember our Lord’s first coming and His death for us and all that we have in Him. Prepare us for that, prepare those who will speak tonight and those who will minister in various ways tonight, prepare all of us, that it would be edifying time, an enjoyable time, a time of praise and celebration and learning.

We are to do that, Father, until He comes and that reminds us that the day is coming when He will return and establish His kingdom. And He promises that when He comes, He will bring His reward with Him. May we be living for that, for that reward, for that day and not for this world. So to that end, we pray that you would teach us and build us up in the faith this morning, prepare us for our time of study through our final hymn. May it prepare our hearts well. Pray these things in Christ’s name. Amen.

[Message] As we stand at the beginning of the 21st Century, it might be good for us to ask how the church stands, what is its condition. Some would say that things look very hopeful. Christians are broadcasting on television, they have a voice in politics, there are mega churches popping up around the country, lots of Christian bookstores and Christian music. But for all of that, others have reached a very different opinion about things.

One of the nicer things that are being said about the church, as one writer puts it today is that the church is irrelevant. Modern evangelicalism has been described as a mile wide and an inch deep. In fact, evangelical has become a term that is rather ill-defined. A number of books have come out in the past decade which call attention to all of this and call attention to the weak condition of the church today. One of those books is by David Wells who’s actually written a number of books on this subject, but his first was entitled *No Place for Truth: or Whatever Happened to Evangelical Theology?* in which he describes the evangelical church as either dead or dying because it has forgotten its theology. It has become very worldly, as he points out.

And that is not just the opinion of conservative Christians. In a recent article by the Jewish writer Norman Podhoretz, he comments on the statistic that in the

United States approximately 95 percent of the population professes to believe in God. He writes, “No doubt this is impressive, but its impact is somewhat lessened by the highly secularized way of life that so comfortably co-exist with it.” Now admittedly that statistic, 95 percent of the population believing in God is a very broad statistic and it would include all kinds of people and all kinds of beliefs in God, but the fact is it includes a lot of the church today.

It is highly secularized or to put it another way, it is worldly. And that’s the opinion of many and I think it is a correct opinion and we here in this place are not exempt from it. So what’s the remedy for a church that has become worldly? What is the remedy for a church that has become largely irrelevant? The remedy is always the same, back to the bible, recover our theology. And a good place to begin is with a study of the early church as presented in the Book of Acts. There we read of the origin and growth of the infant church, how it began in the capital of Judaism and advanced throughout a pagan culture.

We learn what made it strong and courageous and very relevant in an unbelieving world. It wasn’t successful marketing strategies that produced the amazing spread of the faith in such a short time, a mere 10 to 20 years that so alarmed the pagans that they said, “They’ve turned the world upside down.” Wasn’t techniques that did that, it was the spirit of God and the preaching of the word of God. Learn a great deal about that and other things as we study through the Book of Acts. We learn about the mission of the church and the way it is to be carried out. We learn about the structure of a local church and how it is to be governed, how it is to function and your involvement in it.

Book of Acts has been called an inspired textbook for Christian workers. In it, we are given a blueprint for ministry as well as deep theology and an exciting look at the life of faith in men and women who walk by the spirit. Learn how God is sovereign and sufficient, how He always provides for His people. And so this morning we begin a study in the Book of Acts for the purpose of learning those truth, learning other truths and for the purpose of living a more earnest Christian life.

And what we learned in the introduction, in the first verses of this book is, one, the reliability of the record, that is the integrity of the message of Acts, that it is true. And secondly, we learn of the adequate equipping of the apostles for their mission and how that also has application to us. Book of Acts was written by Luke, the

physician. It is actually the sequel to his gospel. So both books are really one history given in two volumes. First volume is about the life of Jesus, the second volume is about the expansion of His church.

And one of the threads that knits the two books together is a man named Theophilus. It was to him that both books were dedicated. His name means dear to God and he was evidently a man of education, a man of rank because Luke calls him most excellent Theophilus in his gospel which was a title given to Roman officials. In fact, later on in the Book of Acts, Paul addresses the Roman governors, Felix and Festus by that title.

So perhaps he was a man of that position and may have been a new convert or an inquirer or maybe Luke's patron who supported him in the writings of these books. We're not sure. There's much speculation about his identity, but Luke states at the beginning of his gospel that his purpose for writing was to give Theophilus more accurate information about the faith than he already possessed. And he began his gospel stating that he had done that, that he had given an exact record of what had occurred.

He had examined the accounts and events that others had written down so by the time Luke begins to write his books, there were already extant versions, writings of events that had taken place about the Lord's life and ministry and Luke had read them all. He had examined them, he had interviewed eyewitnesses and he wrote all of that out in he says consecutive order in its chronological sequence. He'd ordered all of it properly and as a result, he produced an exact record of events. That, at least, is Luke's testimony, but it's also supported by modern scholarship.

The New Testament scholar F.F. Bruce considered Luke highly accurate in all of the details that he records from the names and the titles that he uses to the color and atmosphere of the cities he described. F.F. Bruce put Luke in what he calls the high tradition of Greek historical writings. Others have done the same. Sir William Ramsay who spent many years doing archeology in Asia Minor called Luke a historian of the first rank and wrote that he should be placed along with the greatest of historians.

So from an historian's point of view, Luke's writings show the highest integrity and the Book of Acts is an excellent history. And we believe it to be an inspired history. Luke engaged in the historical method. He interviewed witnesses,

he read documents, he chronicled all of it, he put it in its proper order. But he was guided in all of that in that whole process by the Holy Spirit which guaranteed the accuracy of his writing.

Now he begins the Book of Acts in Jerusalem during the 40 days between the Lord's resurrection and His ascension. Then he carefully records the growth of the church throughout the Roman world. The first half of the book, if we can give a very general basic outline, deals mainly with the ministry of Peter in Jerusalem and the neighboring regions. In the second half, Luke follows the ministry of Paul, accompanying him on some of his journeys to show how Christianity spread from the eastern end of the Mediterranean west as far as Rome, the capital of the gentiles.

It's an amazing story and a true one and Luke emphasizes that in the first verses of the book by showing that Christianity is an historical faith. It is grounded in fact, not legend. Tells Theophilus that he was continuing the story that he started in the gospel. There he said he investigated everything carefully and he wrote it down consecutively and he would continue to do that in his second volume. His first book, his gospel he says was about all that Jesus began to do and teach until His ascension. And what that implies is that Luke's purpose in his second volume was to tell the story of what Jesus continued to do after his ascension.

So the Book of Acts is the continuing story of Christ that began with His earthly ministry and continued and continues afterwards in heaven. It is traditionally known as the Acts of the Apostles. In fact, your bible is probably like mine, it has at the top of the page The Acts of the Apostles. That is a title that was not written by Luke, that is not an inspired title, that title was placed on the documents about the second century. But it is probably more proper to title this book The Acts of Jesus Christ. It's not even accurate to call it The Acts of the Apostles since the book deals with only four apostles and mainly with Peter and Paul.

Other titles have been suggested, the Acts of the Holy Spirit is one or even more accurately but more clumsily, the Acts of the Risen Christ Through the Holy Spirit working in the Church Here on Earth. I think that was H.A. Ironside who suggested that. Says a lot, but says it well. And it says it accurately. But I think you get the point and that is that the Book of Acts is the continuing story of Christ's ministry and it has credible evidence to support it as a story well-grounded in the facts of history.

Luke indicates that by telling Theophilus that following Jesus’s resurrection before ascending into heaven, He gave instruction to His apostles. He appeared to them. Verse 3, “He also Presented Himself alive after His suffering, by many convincing proofs, appearing to them over a period of forty days.” What that means is that Jesus Christ who prophesied that He would suffer and die and He would rise on the third day did. It happened as He said and there were witnesses to it. The body that was laid in the tomb was resurrected and in that same body He appeared before the disciples and others and gave many proofs that He was indeed alive from the dead.

They handled Him, they talked with Him, they ate with Him. We read that at the end of the Gospel of Luke, we read it at the end of the Gospel of John. In fact, 1 John talks in those very terms, how they saw Him, they spoke with Him, they handled Him, they touched Him, all of which proved that Christ was physically bodily alive before them. He demonstrated in that way in a very tangible way with very clear proofs that He was a real man alive from the dead. And far more than that, demonstrated by the resurrection that He is the Son of God. It’s what the resurrection proves, that His claims to deity were in fact true. Then after the 40 days He was literally bodily taken up into heaven where He now sits enthroned at the Father’s right hand.

This is the teaching of the word of God. It’s the teaching of the Book of Acts, teaching of these first verses of the Book of Acts and it’s supported by witnesses. That’s what Luke says. Luke the historian gives that as evidence, but Luke is not the only one to make that statement. Paul states in 1 Corinthians 15:6 that there were over 500 witnesses to these post-resurrection appearances and Luke no doubt interviewed many of those witnesses.

The point is the story of Jesus is no legend. The Jesus of the New Testament is the Jesus of history and that is essential because Christ is Christianity. He is the message of the gospel. We see that in the preaching of the apostles early in the book in chapter 4. Peter makes that very clear when he declares in 4:12, “And there is salvation in no one else for there is no other name under heaven that has been given among men by which we must be saved.”

Doesn’t say there’s salvation in no other teaching than that which He gave. There is salvation in no one other than in Him. He is the message. He is the gospel.

It is all about Him and what He did on the cross because that is where He accomplished salvation by making an atonement for sin. That is where He paid the penalty for our sin and satisfied the justice of God so that God could righteously, justly justify the believer. Now if that did not happen, if the resurrection did not occur, if these events are not historical, then Christianity is empty of truth. There is no gospel, there is no salvation.

As Paul told the Corinthians, “Your faith is worthless if there’s no resurrection and we are to be pitied.” And so from the outset, Luke makes it clear to Theophilus and to us that Christianity is an historical faith. And really, nothing short of the resurrection can account for the mission of the apostles and the expansion of the church. On the night of our Lord’s betrayal and arrest, the disciples all became cowards and they fled in terror. In fact, only one, John, returned to the cross. All others were in hiding.

The reason that they came back together, the reason that their cowardice became courage is because Christ was alive. Nothing else can adequately explain the change in these men. Nothing else can adequately explain their reunion, their faith in Christ and their lifelong service and sacrifice for Him which in almost every case with the possible exception of the apostle John, was a sacrifice unto death. Men don’t do that, men don’t serve. They don’t give their entire lives and even sacrifice their lives for something that’s not true, for something that’s not real, for a kind of happy idea of an ideal Jesus.

No, that happened and the church expanded throughout the Roman Empire at a rapid pace because Christ conquered death through the resurrection. So these first verses indicate the integrity of the gospel and the integrity and the truthfulness of the Book of Acts. And as John Stott points out, these first verses of the Book of Acts set Christianity apart from all other religions. All of the founders of other religions completed their work in their lives, but Jesus only began His ministry.

Now in a sense, and in a very important sense, He did complete His ministry, His work of atonement is a finished work. Nothing can be added to it. Salvation was accomplished at the cross. All one must do, all one can do is receive as a free gift the salvation that Christ accomplished at Calvary. But in another sense, His work is continuing as the Holy Spirit applies the merits of the cross to God’s elect throughout

the world and down through the ages. And He does that as God’s people go out preaching the gospel of salvation by grace alone, through faith alone in Christ alone.

This then, writes Stott, is the kind of Jesus Christ we believe in. He is both the historical Jesus who lived and the contemporary Jesus who live. The Jesus of history began His ministry on earth, the Christ of glory has been active through His spirit ever since according to His promise to be with His people always, the very end of the age. So today there is a real man in glory at God’s right hand, the God-Man who has opened up heaven for us. And He cares about us and is presently ministering to us. He is the only mediator between God and man. He is our great high priest who sympathizes with us and always gives help in time of need. And that’s good news.

Now before this happened, before He was taken up into glory, He gave orders to His chosen apostles. He did not leave them without instruction on how to carry on His work and He spoke to them of the things concerning the kingdom of God. This is one of the great themes of the Book of Acts, the kingdom of God. It ends with Paul imprisoned in Rome preaching the kingdom of God. But this was a subject on which the apostles needed to be taught because they had been rather confused about the whole subject. They looked forward to a Messiah who would come to conquer and reign and they looked forward to that with good reason because as you read through the Old Testament, a promise prophecy is given throughout the Old Testament to Israel of its future kingdom and its king.

We see that in a number of places. See it throughout the Book of Isaiah, but one of the places where this is most clearly stated is in the Book of Daniel. In Daniel 2 there’s the vision that Nebuchadnezzar had, the vision of the great image and how that image stood in this magnificent state and then this stone, which represents Christ, comes out of heaven, strikes the image which represented the gentile kingdoms of the world, the stone crushed it to dust and then Daniel writes became a great mountain and filled the whole earth and he said will be a kingdom which will never be destroyed but endure forever.

Well, the Messiah came. All that Jesus did and taught proved that He is the Messiah. And so the disciples expected Him to crush the gentile powers and establish His kingdom. What they didn’t expect was for Him to suffer humiliation, to die and then be resurrected on the third day. And so the Lord had to explain the kingdom as it involved His ministry in the past with His crucifixion and how the kingdom involves

His ministry in the present as our mediator and His ministry in the future when the kingdom comes on earth. So He spoke to them, it would seem, during these 40 days about the relationship of the cross to the kingdom and why it was necessary for Christ to die for the kingdom to come.

Now if you go back to the Gospel of Luke, to the last chapter, you'll remember that scene when the Lord in disguise evidently is walking along with those two disciples along the Emmaus Road and they expressed their disappointment about what had happened in Jerusalem with the crucifixion and He calls them foolish men and slow of heart to believe all that the prophets told about Christ and how it was necessary that He suffered these things.

It was necessary for Him to suffer these things in order for Christ to establish His kingdom. And so very likely the talk that He gave then is elaborated in the 40 days that Luke refers to here. A kingdom of righteousness must be established in righteousness which could only happen through the death of Christ for our sins. In order for us to enter the kingdom of righteousness, we must be made righteousness. We must become righteousness people. We must be justified and we must be purified, and that's why Christ died.

And that's the message that they would take throughout the world. The gospel of Christ who died to save sinners so that they could be citizens of His kingdom which they enter through faith alone. And so He equips them to do that, He equips them to take this message throughout the world by giving them instruction. That was characteristic of His ministry. Luke speaks of that at the very beginning where he describes the gospel that he wrote as being about all that Jesus began to do and teach. He was a great teacher. And here, He continues that ministry of teaching which shows the importance of instruction.

All of us need training in the word of God in order to be effective servants of the Lord. And all through the bible we are told to get knowledge. Psalmist tells us that it is a lamp to our feet and a light to our path. Paul's ceaseless prayer for the Colossians from the beginning was that you may be filled with the knowledge of His will and all spiritual wisdom and understanding. There's no wisdom without knowledge, without understanding.

The Book of Acts illustrates that. It's not a very long book, it's 28 chapters in length, but in those 28 chapters Luke included 19 sermons and addresses. What that

shows is the way the gospel is spread and the church grows and we develop as Christians is through the preaching and the teaching of God’s word. It is through instruction. If the church is powerless today, if it is irrelevant today, then it is largely because it is ignorant of biblical truth and it doesn’t value it highly.

Instruction is essential. A knowledge of the truth is essential, but having said that, instruction alone is not enough. There must be obedience. The two go together. They go hand-in-hand. If the word of God has no power over our lives, our lives are powerless. God uses obedient people. Nineteenth Century Scottish preacher, Robert Murray M’Cheyne put it well when he said, “It is not great talent God blesses so much as great likeness to Jesus. The holy minister is an awful weapon in the hand of God, a mighty weapon in the hand of God.”

That’s true. And yet for that to happen, for our training, for our instruction, for our experience to be effective, there must be something more. There must be the Holy Spirit present and active in our lives. And so in verse 4, “Jesus commanded the apostles not to leave Jerusalem but to wait for what the Father had promised, ‘Which,’ He said, ‘you heard of from me.’” Well, they heard that from Him, they heard that promise of the Holy Spirit when they were in the Upper Room with Him just a few evenings before when He celebrated the Passover meal which was the Last Passover and we could call it the First Lord Supper.

And there He spoke of the Holy Spirit. He spoke of Him as the helper and the spirit of truth, the one who would be their advocate, the one who would be their counselor, and the one who would teach them, who would call to remembrance things they had learned and would guide them into new truth. And they would not be ready to begin their ministry until He had been given to them. He makes the proclamation of the word of God effective. The Holy Spirit opens hearts to receive that. We see that throughout the Book of Acts. And so Jesus instructs them to wait for what the Father had promised, wait upon God which shows that God’s work is to be done in God’s power and it’s to be done in God’s way.

The work of God is not done by human schemes and devices or by a common consensus. It’s done through the Holy Spirit, through His power, through His leading. He directs and to be precise, Christ directs through Him. The men whom the Lord instructed are described in verse 2 as the apostles whom He had chosen. And that emphasizes that they weren’t self-appointed men or appointed by other person or a

committee or church senate or democratic process. They were directly chosen and appointed by Christ and it is that way with the ministry in the church. He gifts men to serve. He gives them their gifts, their abilities and He raises them up to do that service. He appoints elders and deacons. We will see all of that in our study of the Book of Acts.

And so we are to rely upon the Lord and the leading of the Holy Spirit. And to equip them to do that, the Lord instructs them to wait and they would receive the Holy Spirit. Promise is stated clearly in verse 5 where Jesus says, “For John baptized with water, but you will be baptized with the Holy Spirit not many days from now.” John the Baptist has prophesied that some years before, three or years before when he said, “I baptize you with water, but one is coming who is mightier than I, He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and fire.” Earlier still in the Old Testament, the prophet Joel had prophesied the outpouring of the Holy Spirit.

That time was now drawing near and the Lord instructs the apostles to wait for it in Jerusalem. It would be one of the great turning points of history. It’s a beginning of a new age, of a new dispensation. One of the great contrasts between the Old Testament and the New is seen in the revelation of the Holy Spirit. In the Old Testament there are few references to the spirit, very few to the expression Holy Spirit, but on the day of Pentecost that would change. It would begin what has been called the dispensation of the spirit.

It was already in the world of course. The second verse of the bible describes His creative activity and the disciples had experienced Him in their lives and ministry, like all Old Testament believers they had entered salvation by the power of the Holy Spirit. And before Pentecost there was a genuine spiritual life, but it was nothing in comparison with the Christian life, with what the Christian life became after the gift of the Holy Spirit because then the Spirit began to permanently indwell believers.

The Lord indicated that in John 14:7 when He speaks to speaks to the disciples there in the Upper Rooms and he indicates the great difference between that previous age and this present age when He told them that the Holy Spirit abides with you and will be in you. It wasn’t at that moment permanently indwelling them. He was with them and His influence was felt by them and was affecting them, but in the future, the near future the Lord was saying He would actually be in them. And that would

happen on the day of Pentecost when the Spirit was sent to indwell them and empower them in a new way and so they were to wait for it.

That is not the pattern for believers today. The Spirit has been sent and so we are not commanded to wait for Him or to pray for the baptism of the spirit or seek some second blessing of the Holy Spirit. Nowhere do we find that in the scriptures, nowhere is that command given to us. The believer in Jesus Christ is indwelled with the spirit, sealed with the Holy Spirit the moment of faith. All of that occurs at conversion. That’s what Paul teaches in Ephesians 1:13 where he writes, “Having also believed, you were sealed in Him with the Holy Spirit of promise.” That sealing occurred at the moment of faith. But the apostles were living at a different time and they were to wait for the coming of the spirit because the prophecy had not yet been fulfilled.

The turning point of history had not yet occurred. When it did, they would all be united in the one body of Christ and be equipped with divine power to do an amazing work. And that is what Luke set out to record for Theophilus, birth and the expansion of the church over a period of 30 years. The story opens at a specific time in a specific place, it’s Jerusalem on Pentecost. But as one of the older commentators has said, “The Book of Acts has no proper close.” It ends rather abruptly with Paul in Rome preaching. We might have expected more. What happens to Paul? What happens after that?

And yet all of that is by design. All of that is intended to show us that the end of the Book of Acts is not the end of the Lord’s ministry. It has continued down through the centuries to the present day. In a sense each generation of the church writes a new chapter of the work of Jesus Christ as we are led by the Holy Spirit in the Lord’s service. But this second volume of Luke’s history, this Book of Acts gives us many of the great principles which will guide us in our Christian effort to serve Him, principles that should govern our personal walk with the Lord and help us to see how temptations and trials come and how they are overcome by God’s grace and sound principles of church growth and government.

Study in the Book of Acts is a rich study and one that the Lord will surely bless as we apply ourselves to it, as we read it and study it and think on it and seek to live according to it and live by faith. So may God help us to do that in the week to come, the weeks to come, the months to come. But it may be that we have someone

here who has not believed in Jesus Christ as savior, maybe you've never considered the claims that the New Testament makes for Him, that He is God's son who became a man who died in our place, died for sinners and was raised from the dead as the proof that God has accepted His sacrifice for us.

According to Luke, the historian, these claims are well-founded, well-supported from history with many witnesses to His resurrection appearances. So consider who Christ is. Never believed in Him, consider what the historian Luke says about our Lord. And then consider what the New Testament says about you, says about all of us, that we've all sinned, that we are all in need of savior and realize that Jesus Christ is that savior.

He's the savior of the world who has made the final sacrifice in His own blood and His salvation is for everyone who believes. If you're here without Christ, look to Him and trust in Him and through faith in Him receive the forgiveness of sins, receive eternal life and citizenship in the kingdom of God. May God help you to do that and may He help all of us to be men and women who live in the power of the Holy Spirit, who walk by the spirit daily. Let's pray.

[Prayer] Father, we do thank you for this history of the infant church that you produced through Luke and that you have and that gives us a blueprint for our walk with you in many ways, gives us a blueprint, a textbook, so to speak, of how the church is to be established and function and what the model is for ministry and we pray, Lord, that as we study this together, we consider these things, consider your work through the Holy Spirit, Christ's work as it went on then, as it goes on today that we might truly be filled with the desire to be men and women who live as these early Christians did, live lives of faithful service to you, live empowered by the Holy Spirit, faithful to His leading. And in so doing, may we become very relevant in the age in which we live. Only you can make us that and so, Father, we look to you to do that, we pray for your blessing, we thank you for the gift of the Holy Spirit which we have. In your son the Lord Jesus Christ, we thank you for the faith that we have in Him, the life that we have in Him and all that we do be lived to His honor and glory. We pray in Christ's name. Amen.