

Amesbury Baptist Church

*A Series for
Sunday Teaching
Group Study
Personal Study*

THE CHURCH IN ACTION

Luke wrote two books –Luke and Acts. In Luke we read and experience the Good News about Jesus Christ through his ministry on earth. In Acts we read and experience the birth of the Church and how it moved into action with the Good News into the wider world.

The first Christians had very little organisation, but they accepted and belonged to each other, and were open to welcome those who were attracted to what they had to offer – a new life, forever in the care of God, made possible through repentance, and faith in Jesus Christ, who had shown himself to be God in human form.

What drove them in their mission was the inspiration and strength of God himself which came through the work of the Holy Spirit. The agenda was God's, not theirs. Where the Holy Spirit showed them to go, they went; what the Holy Spirit told them to say, they said; what the Holy Spirit guided them to do, they did. They did nothing without prayer and fasting. They knew nothing of committees and formal structures. They belonged to God and to each other and lived their lives in prayer, praise and mission. The Holy Spirit was the starting point for all that they did.

As we let God speak to us, may we be strengthened in our faith and enabled to share Jesus Christ with those around us so that the Church and the Kingdom of God may grow.

Bill Smith 28.04.2008

11 May 2008 OFF TO A GOOD START Acts 2:1-21, 36-41

Read first Acts 1:4-14, then 2:1-4

Why were “All together in one place”?

How did this make the conditions right for the experience of the Holy Spirit?

Which symbols of the Holy Spirit’s presence are used here? Why? Cf. John 3:8; Exodus 3:1-4

What is the connection between being filled with the Holy Spirit and speaking in tongues?

Read 2:5-13

What effect can being filled with the Holy Spirit have on the wider community?

What made the people gather?

How can we attract a crowd today?

What needs to be in place for this to happen?

How is it that ridicule takes place when believers witness to Christ?

Read Peter’s sermon vv 14-21 and then continue with vv 36-41

What provoked a reaction from those who heard?

What is necessary for salvation to be received?

And what is offered in return?

How are we continuing this work of proclaiming the gospel of Christ today?

- **People respond to Christ when we have the courage to act in the power of the Holy Spirit**

18 May 2008 POINT OF NEED Acts 3:1-16

Read vv 1-8

How might there be a link in that this episode happened when Peter and John were on their way to prayer?

Why IS prayer so important?

How do we normally react to those who ask us for money?

What made Peter speak as he did?

How did Christ meet the man at his point of need? (WHAT was his point of need?)

Why did Peter take the man by the hand? Cf. Mark 1:29-31

What place does praise have in the ministry of healing?

Read vv 9-16

What is Peter trying to get across to those who witness the healing?

What is the place of healing within evangelism?

- **Jesus heals. Always at the point of need.**

25 May 2008 SUPPORT UNIT Acts 6:1-7

Read vv 1-4

If the church was growing, how did complaints arise?

In what way might certain ministries have been seen as having priority over others?

How can this be avoided in the life of the church?

What solution was offered here?

What sort of men were needed?

Read vv 5-7

Who proposed the 7 men?

What was the role of the leaders in this?

How can leadership, people and support ministries all function well in the church?

- **All support needs the best people for the job**

01 June 2008 ONE TO ONE Acts 8:1-8, 26-40

Read vv 1-8

What can we learn from the ministry Phillip had in 6:1-5 and from this account?

What initiated Phillip's ministry in Samaria?

What principle may be emerging here?

Read vv 26-29

How is Phillip actually planning and organising his ministry?

What sort of person is he being led to? (i.e. what status?)

Read vv 30-40

Why does Phillip initiate the encounter?

What should we be sure of if we initiate encounter with people?

How should we respond to invitations to share our faith? Cf. vv 31-35

Phillip tells the man about Jesus. How can we reveal Jesus when we are in conversation with those who enquire about faith?

Why was the man baptised so quickly? What does this say to us?

What is necessary for some-one to be baptised?

- **The Holy Spirit will show us who to share Jesus with if we let him**

08 June 2008 DIVINE INTERVENTION Acts 9:1-19

Read vv 1-9

What was the purpose of the persecution of Christians?

What was the significance of the early Christians being called those who belonged to THE WAY?

Why does Jesus tell Saul that the persecution is against him(Jesus)?

What was the purpose of the blindness? Cf. also Paul (Saul) 's own account of his experience in Acts 26:9-18.

So why did God intervene at this point in Saul's mission of persecution?

Read vv 10-19

Why is Ananias needed by the Lord?

How do we feel when we have to meet some-one whom we know to be opposed to our faith?

What was normal, and also courageous about Ananias' conduct?

What were the effects of laying on of hands and baptism?

- **When God steps in to any situation, he will need his people to be ready to act**

15 June 2008 REGIMENTAL AID Acts 10:1-48

Read vv 1-8

What does it mean to be "devout and God-fearing"?

What actually IS a vision?

In what way was Cornelius ready to hear the gospel?

What do we learn from this about people who are seeking a further encounter with God?

Read vv 9-23

Why did Peter have this experience on the roof?

What was Peter's difficulty and how was it resolved? Are there parallels for us today?

Read vv 24-48

What had Peter learnt from the previous day and how was he able to use the experience in witnessing?

In what way were conditions right for the Holy Spirit to come in power on these people?

Why was baptism the next step? What can we learn from this episode?

- **God comes to the aid of those who trust in and listen to him**

22 June 2008 MISSION CONTROL Acts 13:1-12

Read vv 1-3

Why were Barnabas and Saul chosen for missionary work?

What spiritual conditions were in place for God's choice to be discerned?

What IS fasting? What is its purpose? Refer to Matthew 4:1-17 –Why did Jesus fast? What was the result?

Read vv 4-12

How did Barnabas and Saul know where to do the work of mission?

Why did opposition happen at the moment when they found some-one eager to hear the gospel?

How is opposition dealt with? And what is the outcome?

In this episode Saul is renamed Paul. What might be the significance?

- ***Time spent waiting on God results in divine action and purpose***

29 June 2008 FROM PRISON TO PRAISE Acts 16:16-36

Read vv 16-18

Why did this incident happen just as Paul and Silas were going to a place of prayer?

What interruptions can upset our prayer times and how can we deal with them?

Read vv 19-25

In what way was the charge in v 21 not the real reason for objection?

How can we deal with false accusations against us as Christians?

What was different about Paul and Silas' reaction to imprisonment?

What can we learn from this?

Read vv 26-36

What might the jailer have meant by v 30?

How do you think all the things mentioned in vv 31-34 took place- the practical details?

In what way was God glorified through the mission work of Paul and Silas?

- ***God is with us when we do his work***