
Sermon Text Discussion 4/22/18

Acts: The Multiplying Church to the Ends of the Earth

Acts 29 (Acts 1:8)

By Drew Hunter

Overview

As Luke tells the story of the early church, he regularly steps back to make short summary statements about what was happening. When Luke stops, he's not just giving historical detail, he's: drawing attention to God, drawing attention to the church, and drawing attention to the mission. In these summary statements and progress reports, we get a glimpse of the first church:

1. Spiritual Power (1:8)
2. Constant Prayer (1:14)
3. True Community (2:42-47)
4. Radical Multiplication (6:7)
5. Deep Peace (9:31)
6. Global Advancement (12:24, 13:49, 16:5, 19:20)

Quotations

This is what the book of Acts should lead us to do. To become increasingly devoted to the empowerment of the Spirit, and then to walk in the fear of the Lord and the comfort of the Holy Spirit, and to speak boldly and joyfully. (Drew Hunter)

It's helpful to remember that the radical, empowered work that we see in Acts...most often happened through ordinary people in the ordinary rhythms of life. Simply praying, and admitting to your need. Eating a meal together with Christian brothers and sisters. Hearing about a need and stepping in to meet it. That's what was happening in Acts. (Drew Hunter)

The gospel is the message that even though we are worse than we ever knew, we are also more loved and accepted than we ever hoped. (Drew Hunter)

Understanding & Application

1. What is the plan and promise that are laid out in Acts 1:8? What does it mean that we're not limited by our own abilities or limited by our weaknesses? Give an example of when God used your weakness or limitations to accomplish his plan.
2. Why is it that Drew said that God often prefers to use our weaknesses to accomplish his plans? Can you share any stories from your life or from scripture that support this point?
3. Do we embrace the mission of Christ as passionately as these first Christians? Do we feel thoroughly desperate for God to empower us to do more than we can in our own capacities?
4. Prayer reveals the functional values of our hearts: we pray for what we value and what we need God to do. Think about what you spend most of your time praying for. These first Christians weren't just praying, they were devoted to prayer. Do you need to adjust your prayer life?
5. What does it mean that the new Spirit filled community of the church was a radically ordinary community? How are you doing, how is your small group doing, striking the balance of mixing seriousness and joy?

6. Luke in Acts 9:31 states that the church “had peace and was being built up”. However, the church up to this point had been suffering nearly the entire time. Therefore, peace must mean something different than peaceful circumstances. Describe this type of peace and where it came from.
7. Michael Green, a scholar of the early church states that “most conversions seem to come about through the testimony of new believers. Christians who have reached some maturity seem to retire from the front line into the structures of the church and its life, and no longer reach out beyond their comfort zone to people who are ignorant of the gospel”. Interact with this quote, do you tend to agree with it or not, do you see any evidence of this in your life?