

ACTS OF THE HOLY SPIRIT

April 5/7, 2010

The first days of the apostles: Pentecost, common fellowship, the story of Ananias and Sapphira. The leaders of the early Jerusalem church were Peter and John; filled with the Holy Spirit, they organized the new Christian Jewish community and welcomed new converts.

The key is **Guidance**. The young church depended on the Holy Spirit for direction, and called the disciples to be alert and aware that their actions were to be guided by the Spirit and not by their own personal agendas.

Read: Acts 1 - 5

THE CHRISTIAN JEWISH COMMUNITY AND THE CONVERSION OF SAUL

April 12/14, 2010

Stephen is martyred, with Saul/Paul a willing participant. Peter, Philip and John bring the Gospel to the Samaritans; Philip baptizes the Ethiopian under the guidance of the Holy Spirit. Saul is blinded on the road to Damascus.

The key is **Service**. It was not enough to profess Jesus Christ: it is necessary to give of oneself. The service may be large, or it may be small. But service is always a requirement of Christ.

Read: Acts 6 - 9:31, Galatians 1

MISSIONARY ACTS AND DOCTRINE ISSUES

April 26/28, 2010

The Gospel appealed to the non-Jews of the world, and that was both a blessing and a problem. It was a blessing because the Gentile converts swelled the ranks of the Christians. It was a problem because it caused a schism between the Christian Jews and non-Christian Jews. What were the appropriate disciplines for the Christian life?

The key is **Discipline**. Sometimes the effort of prayer and fasting and self-sacrifice is beneficial simply because it "keeps us in shape" for the tests that will come. Other times it is a means of bringing us closer to God.

Read: Acts 9:32 - 15:35, Galatians 2

PAUL IN PHILIPPI

May 3/5, 2010

Paul's visits to Philippi, Thessalonica and Athens represent efforts to witness and celebrate the redeeming power of Jesus. Not everybody got the message. Paul writes his letter of joy, to the Philippian church, and rejoices in his travail.

The key is **Celebration**. When we move from a self-centered existence to a Christ-centered existence, we move from anxiety to joy.

Read: Acts 15:36 - 16:40, Acts 17. Philippians 1 - 4

PAUL IN CORINTH

May 10/12, 2010

The church in Corinth was a mess: lust, quarreling, drunkenness. There were factions and some held themselves out as better than others. Fortunately, all of that is ancient history in the church. Or is it? And perhaps Paul himself falls victim to human pride.

The key is **Humble teamwork**. There is no limit to what you can accomplish if you don't care who gets the credit. There is no greater handicap than saying "It's not my job." There is nothing more precious than accepting the vast variety of human abilities and capacities, and working together for the Kingdom.

Read: Acts 18, 2 Corinthians 1 - 13

PAUL IN EPHESUS

May 17/19, 2010

It should be clear by now that Luke reports none of the conflicts in the outland churches that Paul refers to in his letters. Note also that by now, the language of the Church has become quite symbolic and conceptual.

The key is **Unity**. It is more than a slogan: it is a way of life. "Putting on the whole armor of Christ" is not an individual act: it is an act of mutual preparation.

Read: Acts 19 - 21:14, Ephesians 1 - 6

PAUL IN ROME

May 24/26, 2010

Paul knew that as a Roman citizen, he had a right to be heard at trial, and that he could appeal as far as his desires would move him. Consequently, he used his trials as occasions to make speeches. He could have ended the entire process by pointing to the absence of disobedience to Roman law; what he did instead was use his imprisonment to go "on the record" for his faith.

The key is **Focus**. If we are truly in Christ, we see every barrier, every setback as an opportunity to glorify God and to show forth Christ to the world. Which of us has the focus necessary to do this?

Read: Acts 21:16 - 40, Acts 22 - 28, Romans 1:1-17

EXAMINATION OF OUR APOSTOLATE

May 31/June 1, 2010

As we review our studies in Acts, we ask ourselves whether we measure up to the role of the apostle. Are we bold in our speech, like Peter? Do we sometimes fail in our job, like Mark? Do we condemn others for those failures that we are afraid apply to us, like Paul? Do we encourage and under-write, like Lydia and Barnabas? Are we prepared to suffer, like Stephen? Are we prepared to change our minds when we see God, like Paul?

Read and reflect on the big picture: who are you, and what is your call to service? Think on these things ...

God: **Exodus 20: 1-6, Luke 12:22-34; Acts 4**

Time: **Psalm 92; Ecclesiastes 12:1-7; Exodus 20:8-11; Exodus 25:1-8; Deuteronomy 5:12-15**

Money: **Exodus 35:4-5, 21-22; Exodus 36: 5-7; 2 Corinthians 9; Deuteronomy 6:1-9**

Family: **Ephesians 6:1-4; 5:21-33; Deuteronomy 6:1-9; I Corinthians 7**

Openness to others: **Luke 8:40-48; Acts 3:1-10; Luke 10:25-37**

Beyond the Resurrection ...

8 Weeks in the Acts of the Apostles Study Guide and Reading List

Monday Night Bible Study

begins April 5, 7:00 p.m.

Wednesday Morning Bible Study

begins April 7, 10:00 a.m.

