

STUDY GUIDE:

Foundations - Acts 1

Gather together as Disciples of Jesus.

We begin this Foundations of the Church series with an introduction to the book of Acts. We will be journeying through Acts for next 8 weeks and revealing the core foundations of the church. First we see a church that *gathers together as disciples of Jesus*.

Let's Start with an Introduction to the Book of Acts:

The book of Acts provides a very detailed eyewitness account of the birth and growth of the early church. It's a great book to study as we ask what our church is about, who are we, and what are we for. Acts follows the spread of the gospel immediately after the resurrection of Jesus Christ, from Jerusalem all the way to Rome.

Written by Luke, Acts is the sequel to Luke's Gospel, continuing his story of Jesus and how he built his church. In Acts, as Luke describes the spread of the gospel and the ministry of the apostles, he focuses primarily on two, Peter and Paul: Peter establishes the church, and Paul expands the church.

A Bit about Luke:

He was a Greek and the only Gentile Christian writer of the New Testament. Pause... what would that matter? To whom would his race be relevant and/or an obstacle for? Luke was an educated man (scholars know this by the high level of his Greek, and we learn in Colossians 4:14 that he was a physician. Luke was not one of the 12 disciples, but was with them.

Date Written:

Between 62 and 70 A.D., with the earlier date being more likely.

Written To:

Acts is written to Theophilus, meaning "the one who loves God." Historians are not sure who this Theophilus (mentioned in Luke 1:3 and Acts 1:1) was, although most likely, he was a Roman with an intense interest in the newly forming Christian faith. It could also be that Luke may have been writing in general to all those who loved God.

Read Acts 1:1-5

What was the command Jesus gave them, and what did he say would happen?

Do you think they knew what verse 5 meant?

Do you think God still gives us somewhat cryptic words that only make sense until a later experience? Have you experienced this? Can the Bible be like this for us still?

Read Acts 1:6-11

Acts 1:8 has been called the theme verse of the whole book of Acts, it reveals the how, what, and where of the church.

What is the how? What is the what? What is the where?

Is this mission statement different today?

Acts 1:10 and 11

They were staring intently up into the sky. Two men in white (either a local band or probably angels) appear and ask, "Why are you just looking into the sky?" What were they supposed to do? (see Acts 1:4 again)

For those who don't have faith in God or Jesus, and for those that did not grow up with any church experience, do you think church could be seen as Christians just staring into the sky today?

Acts 1:12 They remembered Jesus command (Acts 1:4 again) and went.

Acts 1:13-15 What did "the church" (this new group of Jesus followers) do first?

They gathered together, they prayed...

What has prayer been like for you at this church? In your core? How can we grow as a church that prays?

What else do you think they talked about?

Do you think they could've guessed what God would do next with this Holy Spirit thing in Acts 2 (pentecost)? More on that next week :)

"1-100"

Ken shared this explanation of God's grace that prompted him to surrender his life to Jesus: His friend told him to "imagine that God is at 100 (perfection). Axe murderers were like a 5. Mother Theresa (she's a good gal :), she's maybe a 90... where are you on a scale of 1 to 100? God sent Jesus down to make up the difference between you and 100."

"Religion is spelled DO. Grace is spelled DONE."

How does that message of grace impact you? Would this be a good way to share with others?

"Our Future"

Ken said "we're gonna move forward together...this is our church and boy am I excited!" What are you excited about for our church? What would you be excited to share with the community/ your family and friends?

What would it look like for the church to be "the most loving place in town." Can a church be as simple as that, or is there more?

CLOSE in prayer for RBCPC, our community, and for one another.

Read Acts 1 and 2 for next week.