

STUDY GUIDE:
Foundations - Acts 2
We Need Each Other

We continue 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.

Starter Discussion

Share about a time that you felt unprepared for something that you had to do. Maybe this was at work last week or perhaps you have felt unprepared to do something God was calling you to do. What did that feel like and how did you pull it off (or...maybe you didn't).

dis·ci·ple də'sīpəl/

noun

noun: **disciple**; plural noun: **disciples**

1 a follower or student of a teacher, leader or philosopher

A Little About Discipleship:

Let's take a second to wrestle together with the word disciple. It's a super-Christianity word and everyone of us probably has a slightly different understanding of what it means. But in order for us to understand what it means to us today, we really have to understand what it meant in ancient Jewish culture.

Now pause for a second because in order to understand what it meant to be a disciple...we have to understand a little bit about their religious structure back then. See in those days Jewish followers of God had become supremely concerned with religion. Now, let's be clear....religion is different than following God. Religion is a long list of to-do's and to-don'ts against which we measure performance. And the Jewish people were trying so hard to get it right...to do what God said and follow the ten commandments that they had created rules for their rules. They had made quite a list. And if you were a righteous person you followed all the rules to a T!

- In what ways are we tempted to be concerned with religion?
- What are some of the indicators that perhaps we have become pre-occupied with this skewed understanding of "righteousness"?

In order to become a disciple in those days Rabbis would select the best of the best from the young Jewish scholars. Only those young men who were considered worthy of this high calling would make the cut. But for Jesus, there were no minimum criteria. He wasn't concerned with producing disciples who were good at religion. He wanted disciples who would be who would follow Him into a transformational relationship.

- What are some of the primary difference between religion and relationship?
- How did Jesus turn the system on its head? What does that mean for his followers?

“The only criteria for experiencing that transformation; the only pre-requisite of being a disciple of Jesus is that you are following him. Are you following Jesus? Then it doesn’t matter what mistakes you have made or in what ways you continue to fall short. You can stop measuring yourself against some set of religious to-do’s and to-don’ts. If you are following Jesus in even the messiest of ways then you are a disciple. And the promise of Jesus is that if you continue to follow you will begin to live a life that mirrors your rabbi.”

Hebrews 10:14

By [Jesus’] one sacrifice he has made perfect those who are being made holy.

- What does this verse have to tell us about the life of discipleship?
- How is this understanding of discipleship different from the other rabbis and pharisees of Jesus’ day?

“Because of the sacrifice of Jesus we are at once perfect and simultaneously somewhere in the messy process of being made holy! This is what it means to be a disciple. It’s the life long process of fumbling towards holiness by following Jesus. It’s exactly what we see happen in the lives of the disciples as we read through the Gospels and Acts. And can I just say, if there is hope for them...there’s hope for us all!”

Read Acts 2: 1-13

- What transformation do we already see in the disciples in these first verses?
- What things jump out at you from this passage?
- What is exciting about the first miracle of the church? How did God use this miracle to draw people together and spread the Good News?

Now, let’s turn to a segment of our vision statement: “We gather as disciples”

- Why would we want to be a church that “gathers as disciples”?
- What evidence do we have that this is important to the movement of the Holy Spirit as well as our own personal life of discipleship?
- What experience do you have in gathering as disciples and what difference (if any) has it made in your ability to follow Jesus?

Closure

The life of discipleship was NEVER meant to be lived alone because there is power when disciples gather together. As we move forward into the future that God has laid out may we choose to gather as disciples. May we would come to see that we need each other because when followers of Jesus come together to surrender to the will of their rabbi...God shows up. And amazing things happen!

CLOSE IN PRAYER