

## The Start of the Continuation of the Movement

In the youth class, we just began a study on the book of Acts. Acts is a book that is filled with the beginning stages of the church. Luke penned this book as a part 2 of what he wrote in his personal gospel account. I love something that Luke says at the start of his gospel.

Luke 1:3-4

[3] it seemed good to me also, having followed all things closely for some time past, to write an orderly account for you, most excellent Theophilus, [4] that you may have certainty concerning the things you have been taught.

The phrase "that you may have certainty concerning the things you have been taught" stands out. This is a phrase that carries over into the books of Acts as well. Often we can find ourselves going through the motions of church, saying, "Why am I doing this?" Luke writes the books of Luke and Acts to give us certainty in what we are doing!

Acts is such a neat book because we are still writing chapters of Acts today. There are 28 chapters of the book of Acts that cover 35 years, so if you do the math, we are currently writing chapter 1619 (probably around verse 7 based on the average number of verses per chapter) of the book! This is a challenging thought! If I were a written chapter of Acts, would I be in awe of what I am reading, or would I think about myself as "wow. That Christian really lost their focus..."

With this in our minds, pause for a minute to fully read Acts 1:1-1. We aren't going to include it here, but grab a Bible and read it up! (okay... now that you've read it, let's move on!)

This is such a neat passage because it gives us the last few moments that Jesus was on this earth. In these moments, we see Him offer some intense challenges to his disciples. There are moments when the disciples are concerned about the present. Acts 1:5 displays that Jesus did not give them exact details about when major spiritual things were going to happen. In Acts 1:6-7, Jesus takes a question from the disciples that was a really well-studied question (Jeremiah 23:1-6 is a prophecy that the Messiah would restore the kingdom of Israel. Up to this point, Jesus had fulfilled every prophecy, and the disciples were wondering if He was going to fulfill that one), and Jesus essentially said, "Ehhh. Don't worry about it. It's not important right now."

This would crush us, but for the disciples, they just took it. They had decided that they were going to be in love with the Savior. They were past the need to question what He said. Their faith was solidified because of the relationship they chose to have with Him.

After this, Jesus gives them something they SHOULD care about. He challenges them to be a witness of Him to everyone in the world. He challenges them to go to the people in their city, the next city over (even though they didn't like those people), and to every country that existed. This was a challenge for them and for us. I have seen the greatness of Jesus! I have tasted His goodness by being baptized into Him. Am I a living witness of the greatness of Jesus in my life today?

After Jesus challenged them to do this, He ascended into Heaven. The disciples must've been standing there with their mouths open because angels show up and are like "fellas. He'll be back, get to work!"

The next verse sees the disciples returning to Jerusalem (the place where Jesus had been crucified) to do exactly what He said.

This week, how am I challenging myself with this? Am I going to be a part of the Acts story that hears the call of Jesus to be His witness and immediately does it, or am I going to be a person who hears the call but decides my own way is a little bit better?

#### Questions

1. How has the book of Acts given you confidence about who we are/should be as a church?
2. How can I be someone who is making sure that the best chapter of Acts YET is being written?
3. How can you as a family/individual choose to be a witness about the greatness of Jesus in our community, workplace, schools, ect TODAY?