

**2023 Theme - Focus On What Matters**

**Sermon Series - The Book of Acts/God's Plan for His Church**

**Sermon Title - The Foundation of The Church**

**Sermon Text - Acts 1:1-8**

**Sermon Presenter - Pastor Larry**

**Introduction:**

"I won't bow to idols, I'll stand strong and worship You, If it puts me in the fire, I'll rejoice 'cause You're there too"

We can stand strong and worship even in the fires of life, because we are standing on the strong foundation of Jesus Christ! His life, His teachings. Our message last week on the wise and foolish builders, set the stage for our new series that begins today and is based on the New Testament Church which was formed after Jesus ascended back to heaven. The stories that come from the Book of Acts, chronicle the work of The Holy Spirit through Peter and others in establishing the church. These stories also showcase the work of The Holy Spirit through Paul in the expansion of the Church to the Gentiles! There are principles taught in these stories which were mission critical to the survival of the new church and are every bit as critical to the survival of the Church in today's world! Let's ask God to teach us and inspire us as we discover God's plan for His Church! Let's pray.

Why was the New Testament Church so powerful, so effective, so dynamic, so influential? How did they reach so many and change their world so radically? Over the coming nine months we will study the New Testament Church and attempt to learn from its history the things that were Mission Critical to their success. As we learn these things, make no mistake about it, there will be much practical application to your own personal life. Why? Because the church is made up of individuals who have a common commitment and love for their Savior, so what is good for the church as a whole is good for the individuals who make up the church! Back in the fall of 2019, I preached nine sermons on the beginning of the New Testament Church. When we had our staff retreat back in July and I told them I felt led to share more messages on the Book of Acts I was going to pick up where I had left off in 2019. But they all felt like I needed to revisit those nine sermons because of their importance to the New Testament Church and because of the very important time we are in as a church. So this morning we will begin our study by reading the introduction to the book of Acts written by Luke, who also wrote the Gospel According to Luke.

Acts 1:1 In my former book, Theophilus, I wrote about all that Jesus began to do and to teach  
Acts 1:2 until the day he was taken up to heaven, after giving instructions through the Holy Spirit to the apostles he had chosen.

Acts 1:3 After his suffering, he showed himself to these men and gave many convincing proofs that he was alive. He appeared to them over a period of forty days and spoke about the kingdom of God.

Acts 1:4 On one occasion, while he was eating with them, he gave them this command:  
"Do not leave Jerusalem, but wait for the gift my Father promised, which you have heard me speak about.

Acts 1:5 For John baptized with water, but in a few days you will be baptized with the Holy Spirit."

Acts 1:6 So when they met together, they asked him, "Lord, are you at this time going to restore the kingdom to Israel?"

Acts 1:7 He said to them: "It is not for you to know the times or dates the Father has set by his own authority.

Acts 1:8 But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth."

These are powerful words that give us some really good insights into the beginnings of the New Testament Church! In these words we actually discover six truths that form the foundation of the church. The first foundational truth is that...

### **1. Foundational Truth - The Church is built upon the life of Jesus!**

Acts 1:1 In my former book, Theophilus, I wrote about all that Jesus began to do...

And when we think back on all that Jesus did, what a Life! And of course a huge part of what Jesus did was teach. He taught with words and deeds! And as you know we just finished our sermons series on His sermon on the mount just last week. We'll talk about that in a minute. Jesus lived what He preached so we need to understand the things that Jesus did in His life and seek to follow His example. We need to put into practice all that He taught through His words and deeds. And even if we were to study all four gospels verse by verse we would only scratch the surface of Jesus' life. In fact, John put it this way in The Gospel according to John...

John 21:25 Jesus did many other things as well. If every one of them were written down, I suppose that even the whole world would not have room for the books that would be written.

So let's look at the characteristics of Jesus' life that we need to build our church upon! First of all...

#### **Jesus' life was one of Passionate Purpose**

Jesus lived with great passion, and there was divine purpose for every action. John recounted this...

John 4:31 Meanwhile his disciples urged him, "Rabbi, eat something."

John 4:32 But he said to them, "I have food to eat that you know nothing about."

John 4:33 Then his disciples said to each other, "Could someone have brought him food?"

John 4:34 "My food," said Jesus, "is to do the will of him who sent me and to finish his work.

Jesus was determined to complete His purpose no matter the cost! In fact Jesus said this just before His Crucifixion in what has become known as the passion week...

Luke 22:42 "Father, if you are willing, take this cup from me; yet not my will, but yours be done."  
Luke 22:43 An angel from heaven appeared to him and strengthened him.

The New Testament church was birthed and founded upon the passionate purpose by which Jesus lived His life. The early leaders of the church had been so motivated by the passionate purpose of Jesus that it became the passion of their lives as well. When we first started Northshore Church we had a motivation statement, a passion statement, if you will. It says...

"We are motivated by the supreme example of Jesus in His life, and the extreme sacrifice of Jesus in His death!"

That motivation got us through the hardships of starting a church from scratch, and then through losing our building in Katrina, and meeting in over 14 different locations. We made it because the church is not a building, it's a people and its foundation is not concrete and rebar, but the real life and words of a real Savior! It's why we do what we do! Here's our purpose statement...

Northshore's Purpose: To see the One who gave His life exalted and the ones He gave His life for transformed!

At Northshore Church we value passionate purpose like Jesus did. And since Jesus' life is a part of our foundation, we must consider that...

### **Jesus' life was one of Compassion**

Mat 20:29 As Jesus and his disciples were leaving Jericho, a large crowd followed him.

Mat 20:30 Two blind men were sitting by the roadside, and when they heard that Jesus was going by, they shouted, "Lord, Son of David, have mercy on us!"

Mat 20:31 The crowd rebuked them and told them to be quiet, but they shouted all the louder, "Lord, Son of David, have mercy on us!"

Mat 20:32 Jesus stopped and called them. "What do you want me to do for you?" he asked.

Mat 20:33 "Lord," they answered, "we want our sight."

Mat 20:34 Jesus had compassion on them and touched their eyes. Immediately they received their sight and followed him.

If Jesus' life is going to be the foundation upon which we build our church, then compassion must be something we place a high value upon! Having compassion for people who are hurting, those who are confused, those who are broken, those who are skeptical, those who are blinded spiritually and living in the darkness and chains of sin, those who are sick, those who are lonely, those who are searching! Paul tells us this...

Col 3:12 Therefore, as God's chosen people, holy and dearly loved, clothe yourselves with compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience.

Col 3:13 Bear with each other and forgive whatever grievances you may have against one another. Forgive as the Lord forgave you.

Col 3:14 And over all these virtues put on love, which binds them all together in perfect unity.

This is exactly what Jesus did! And we see it because...

### **Jesus' life was one of Deep and Meaningful Friendships**

John 11:32 When Mary reached the place where Jesus was and saw him, she fell at his feet and said, "Lord, if you had been here, my brother would not have died."

John 11:33 When Jesus saw her weeping, and the Jews who had come along with her also weeping, he was deeply moved in spirit and troubled.

John 11:34 "Where have you laid him?" he asked. "Come and see, Lord," they replied.

John 11:35 Jesus wept.

John 11:36 Then the Jews said, "See how he loved him!"

Sometimes we think Jesus only had friendships with His 12 disciples. This story shows us that is simply not the case! Of course, Jesus loved His disciples and the reason they were called disciples is because Jesus had built deep relationships with them and spent the extra time it took to disciple them. The New Testament Church is chocked full of examples of people building relationships and discipling other people to grow in their relationship with Jesus! If Northshore Church is to base its foundation on the life of Jesus, we must value and build deep and meaningful relationships in order to disciple others in their walk with Jesus! One last thing on Jesus' life as a foundation...

### **Jesus' life was one of Service**

Mark 10:45 For even the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many."

You might remember that Jesus once washed the feet of His disciples! If Jesus' life is to serve as a foundational truth for Northshore Church we must each one of us be willing to serve in some capacity! Every member of the Body of Christ has some kind of gift and a calling to use that gift to serve others. We are not called to simply be spectators who only attend church, but participators, who are the church and live as such! Peter stated it beautifully...

1 Pet 4:10 Each one should use whatever gift he has received to serve others, faithfully administering God's grace in its various forms.

1 Pet 4:11 If anyone speaks, he should do it as one speaking the very words of God. If anyone serves, he should do it with the strength God provides, so that in all things God may be praised through Jesus Christ. To him be the glory and the power for ever and ever. Amen.

So Jesus' life is the first foundational truth the church is built upon. The second foundational truth for the church found in the intro to Acts is...

## **2. Foundational Truth - The Church is built upon the teachings of Jesus**

Acts 1:1 In my former book, Theophilus, I wrote about all that Jesus began to do and to teach  
Acts 1:2 until the day he was taken up to heaven, after giving instructions through the Holy Spirit to the apostles he had chosen.

We just had a long series on what Jesus taught in His sermon on the mount, but that's not all He taught. He also taught His disciples this...

John 15:4 Remain in me, and I will remain in you. No branch can bear fruit by itself; it must remain in the vine. Neither can you bear fruit unless you remain in me.

John 15:5 "I am the vine; you are the branches. If a man remains in me and I in him, he will bear much fruit; apart from me you can do nothing.

John 15:10 If you obey my commands, you will remain in my love, just as I have obeyed my Father's commands and remain in his love.

John 15:11 I have told you this so that my joy may be in you and that your joy may be complete.

John 15:12 My command is this: Love each other as I have loved you.

John 15:13 Greater love has no one than this, that he lay down his life for his friends.

One of the tragedies in our world today is that there are many who have decided to not remain in the teachings of Jesus and the Word of God because of the pressures of culture and the potential for persecution. It is becoming increasingly apparent that the world is no longer willing to tolerate those who hold to the teachings of Christ and God's Word the Bible. They will tolerate pretty much everything else, but not the teachings of God's Word. Therefore, many, especially in the U.S. water down and compromise the "inconvenient" truths of Scripture. However, if the church is to survive, the foundation must continue to be the teachings of Jesus Christ. And not just the easy parts, but the difficult parts. We can't cherry pick the easy parts and throw away the difficult parts. Truth is truth. Did you know that one of the places in the world where the church is growing the fastest is in the most hostile of all countries to the Christian message? You probably would never guess it, but it's Iran! People there are deciding to follow the teachings of Christ and are becoming, not just converts, but disciples of Jesus! One of those people made this observation:

"When persecution comes, converts run away, but disciples stand strong and face the persecution!"

It's amazing the difference between church attenders and even members and "fully devoted" Disciples of Jesus! And speaking of the church being built upon the teachings of Jesus, just before Jesus ascended back to heaven Luke tells us that Jesus had given instructions through the Holy Spirit to the apostles He had chosen. And what were those instructions?

Mat 28:16 Then the eleven disciples went to Galilee, to the mountain where Jesus had told them to go.

Mat 28:17 When they saw him, they worshiped him; but some doubted.

Mat 28:18 Then Jesus came to them and said, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me.

Mat 28:19 Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit,

Mat 28:20 and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age."

There you go, Jesus taught us to make disciples! That's not always easy or convenient, and may require us to make some personal sacrifices, which leads us to the third foundational truth for the church found in the intro to Acts...

### **3. Foundational Truth - The Church is built upon the sacrifice of Jesus**

Acts 1:3 After his suffering, he showed himself to these men and gave many convincing proofs that he was alive. He appeared to them over a period of forty days and spoke about the kingdom of God.

Hold on to your seats and get ready, because I'm about to throw some church words at ya that all have to do with the sacrifice of Jesus! The Church is made up of the redeemed ones, the blood bought ones, the born again ones, the forgiven ones!

#### **Redeemed Ones**

Gal 3:13 Christ redeemed us from the curse of the law by becoming a curse for us, for it is written: "Cursed is everyone who is hung on a tree."

Oxford Dictionary defines Redeemed in two major ways. The first is this...

re·deem/rə'dēm/verb - (to)compensate for the faults or bad aspects of (something).  
"save /compensate for the defects of/rescue/justify/vindicate/

compensating/compensatory/extenuating/offsetting/qualifying/redemptive...

And for this first definition listen to this passage of Scriptures...

Psalms 103:1 Praise the LORD, my soul; all my inmost being, praise his holy name.

Psalms 103:2 Praise the LORD, my soul, and forget not all his benefits—

Psalms 103:3 who forgives all your sins and heals all your diseases,

Psalms 103:4 who redeems your life from the pit and crowns you with love and compassion,

Psalms 103:5 who satisfies your desires with good things so that your youth is renewed like the eagle's.

Redeemed! So powerful. But listen to the second part of Oxford Dictionary's definition of the word redeem and remember it's a verb so it takes action to redeem something or someone!

re-deem/rə'dēm/verb

2. gain or regain possession of (something) in exchange for payment.

In exchange for a payment. Here's the action God took and the payment He paid to redeem you and me...

### **Blood Bought Ones**

1 Pet 1:18 For you know that it was not with perishable things such as silver or gold that you were redeemed from the empty way of life handed down to you from your forefathers,

1 Pet 1:19 but with the precious blood of Christ, a lamb without blemish or defect.

1 Pet 1:20 He was chosen before the creation of the world, but was revealed in these last times for your sake.

1 Pet 1:21 Through him you believe in God, who raised him from the dead and glorified him, and so your faith and hope are in God.

And what must we do in order to be redeemed by the precious blood of Jesus and become...

### **Born Again Ones**

John 3:5 Jesus answered, "Very truly I tell you, no one can enter the kingdom of God unless they are born of water and the Spirit.

John 3:6 Flesh gives birth to flesh, but the Spirit gives birth to spirit.

John 3:7 You should not be surprised at my saying, 'You must be born again.'

We are spiritually reborn because of the sacrifice of Jesus on the cross. And thank God we are brought into the family of God and made members of His body, the church through the Sacrifice of Jesus! And this happens because through the sacrifice of Jesus we are the...

### **Forgiven Ones**

Ephesians 1:7 In him we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, in accordance with the riches of God's grace

Ephesians 1:8 that he lavished on us. With all wisdom and understanding,

And this leads us to the fourth foundational truth the church is built upon which is found in the Intro to Acts...

## **4. Foundational Truth - The Church is built upon the resurrection of Jesus**

Acts 1:3 After his suffering, he showed himself to these men and gave many convincing proofs that he was alive. He appeared to them over a period of forty days and spoke about the kingdom of God.

Paul gives us some details in his first letter to the Corinthian Church...

1 Cor 15:3 For what I received I passed on to you as of first importance: that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures,

1 Cor 15:4 that he was buried, that he was raised on the third day according to the Scriptures,

1 Cor 15:5 and that he appeared to Peter, and then to the Twelve.

1 Cor 15:6 After that, he appeared to more than five hundred of the brothers at the same time, most of whom are still living, though some have fallen asleep.

1 Cor 15:7 Then he appeared to James, then to all the apostles,

1 Cor 15:8 and last of all he appeared to me also, as to one abnormally born.

Paul said this because he was not one of the original disciples. In fact, he was one of the Jewish leaders who persecuted the followers of Christ until Jesus appeared to him in a vision on the road to Damascus. Paul would later tell his story to King Agrippa. Listen to how Paul ended his testimony and the importance he placed on the resurrection ...

Acts 26:19 "So then, King Agrippa, I was not disobedient to the vision from heaven.

Acts 26:20 First to those in Damascus, then to those in Jerusalem and in all Judea, and to the Gentiles also, I preached that they should repent and turn to God and prove their repentance by their deeds.

Acts 26:21 That is why the Jews seized me in the temple courts and tried to kill me.

Acts 26:22 But I have had God's help to this very day, and so I stand here and testify to small and great alike. I am saying nothing beyond what the prophets and Moses said would happen--

Acts 26:23 that the Christ would suffer and, as the first to rise from the dead, would proclaim light to his own people and to the Gentiles."

It's because of the resurrection of Jesus and the testimony of the eyewitnesses that the church had its explosive beginning! And the power that fueled their message is the fifth foundational truth found in the intro to Acts...

## **5. Foundational Truth - The Church is built upon the Spirit of Jesus**

Acts 1:4 On one occasion, while he was eating with them, he gave them this command: "Do not leave Jerusalem, but wait for the gift my Father promised, which you have heard me speak about.

Acts 1:5 For John baptized with water, but in a few days you will be baptized with the Holy Spirit."

Folks, let me say this: Jesus is the head of the church and the way He leads His church is through the power and anointing of His Holy Spirit, who dwells in each individual believer. The inspiration and the power to live out God's principles found in His Word, comes through His Holy Spirit. When Jesus said...



Matt 28:20b "...And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age."

He was indicating His presence would continue to be in our lives as individuals and as the Church through His Holy Spirit! Paul gave a beautiful explanation in Romans 15...

Rom 15:13 May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace as you trust in him, so that you may overflow with hope by the power of the Holy Spirit.

Rom 15:14 I myself am convinced, my brothers, that you yourselves are full of goodness, complete in knowledge and competent to instruct one another.

Rom 15:15 I have written you quite boldly on some points, as if to remind you of them again, because of the grace God gave me

Rom 15:16 to be a minister of Christ Jesus to the Gentiles with the priestly duty of proclaiming the gospel of God, so that the Gentiles might become an offering acceptable to God, sanctified by the Holy Spirit.

And this leads us directly to our sixth and final foundational truth for the church found in the Intro to Acts...

## **6. Foundational Truth - The Church is built upon the mission of Jesus**

Acts 1:8 But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth."

Jesus basically gave the church its mission right there! We are to be His witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth! We have been given the same mission Jesus had, which we find in Luke's Gospel...

Luke 19:10 For the Son of Man came to seek and to save what was lost."

Jesus made the accomplishment of His mission possible through His life, His teaching, His sacrifice, His resurrection, and the giving of His Holy Spirit! He then continued His mission by commissioning the Church to keep the mission alive! What is the mission of Northshore Church?

### **Mission: Transforming worship, people and the world!**

Why is this our mission? Because it fulfills our purpose. Purpose is why you do what you do, mission is what you do, and vision is what you hope to accomplish. Remember...

**Northshore's Purpose: To see the One who gave His life exalted and the ones He gave His life for transformed.**

Thus our mission... Transforming worship, people and the world!

**Northshore's Vision: To impact the Northshore and ultimately the world with the life changing message of Jesus Christ!**

So you might ask how fulfilling our purpose and accomplishing our mission leads to the fulfillment of our vision. It's really quite simple. Paul gives us the answer in his second letter to the church at Corinth...

2 Cor 5:17 Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; the old has gone, the new has come!

2 Cor 5:18 All this is from God, who reconciled us to himself through Christ and gave us the ministry of reconciliation:

2 Cor 5:19 that God was reconciling the world to himself in Christ, not counting men's sins against them. And he has committed to us the message of reconciliation.

And what is the message of reconciliation we have for the world? Here it is...Your life is out of balance. Sin has left you deep in spiritual debt. Jesus is the only One who can reconcile your spiritual bank account! Unless you let Jesus Christ make a deposit into your spiritual account you will end up in spiritual bankruptcy. And just what is spiritual bankruptcy?

Spiritual Bankruptcy - Bankrupt of morals, bankrupt of purpose, bankrupt of joy, bankrupt of peace and bankrupt of eternal hope!

The message of Northshore Church to our world today is the same message Jesus Christ shared with the world while He was here! Everything is built on His life and His message. Jesus is the foundation of our church, our purpose, mission, vision, and message! John, one of Jesus' closest disciples put it this way...

1 John 4:9 This is how God showed his love among us: He sent his one and only Son into the world that we might live through him.

1 John 4:10 This is love: not that we loved God, but that he loved us and sent his Son as an atoning sacrifice for our sins.

Now to wrap all of this up, I'll quote Paul and then end with something from Matthew's Gospel that leaves no doubt as to who is the foundation of the Church. Paul said...

1 Cor 3:11 For no one can lay any foundation other than the one already laid, which is Jesus Christ.

And here's where and when the foundation was laid...

Mat 16:13 When Jesus came to the region of Caesarea Philippi, he asked his disciples, "Who do people say the Son of Man is?"

Mat 16:14 They replied, "Some say John the Baptist; others say Elijah; and still others, Jeremiah or one of the prophets."

Mat 16:15 "But what about you?" he asked. "Who do you say I am?"

Mat 16:16 Simon Peter answered, "You are the Christ, the Son of the living God."

Mat 16:17 Jesus replied, "Blessed are you, Simon son of Jonah, for this was not revealed to you by man, but by my Father in heaven.

Mat 16:18 And I tell you that you are Peter, and on this rock I will build my church, and the gates of Hades will not overcome it.

What rock was Jesus talking about? Not Peter, but Peter's confession! Peter's name meant rock, and God was going to use him to help establish the New Testament Church, but it was the One whom Peter knew to be the Rock of Ages, and the Chief Cornerstone, and the Rock the builders rejected, Jesus Christ, who would be the foundation of the church! Jesus went on to indicate this when He said...

Mat 16:19 I will give you the keys of the kingdom of heaven; whatever you bind on earth will be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth will be loosed in heaven."

Mat 16:20 Then he warned his disciples not to tell anyone that he was the Christ.

Why did Jesus tell His disciples not to tell anyone that He was the Christ? It wasn't time just yet for His crucifixion and He knew when it was revealed that He was the Christ, the Messiah, it would bring the wrath of the wicked religious establishment. And it did! Matthew tells us...

Mat 16:21 From that time on Jesus began to explain to his disciples that he must go to Jerusalem and suffer many things at the hands of the elders, chief priests and teachers of the law, and that he must be killed and on the third day be raised to life.

And thank God we know the rest of the story! Jesus didn't stay in that grave, He rose on the third day and we now have not only the permission but the commission to tell the world that Jesus is the Christ, the Messiah, the Savior of the world! I pray that until Jesus comes again, that His life, His teaching, His sacrifice, His resurrection, His Spirit and His mission will be the foundation of Northshore Church and every one of its members! Can you think of a better foundation for your life and for our church? I can't! Let's pray!!