

Honoring Our Past ... Elevating the Future

A 40-Day Devotional
On Re-Missioning the Church

November 1, 2013 – December 12, 2013



Capital Campaign Team

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November 1, 2013

To My Zion Church Family:

The Book of Acts is a book about new beginnings in the life of the Church. Many say the church started on the day of Pentecost, others hold the start day when Jesus said “upon this rock I will build my church and the gates of hell will not prevail against it (Matthews 16:18).” But for this writer, which ever date is selected represent the re-start, or the new beginning of the church.

Before Jesus came on the scene, there was some form or facsimile of a church lead by the priest, high priest, Pharisee and Sadducees. However when Jesus came forth He re-established or re-missioned the church.

The devastating fire of December 20, 2007 forced Zion Baptist Church to relocate to our present location. With that move came the need to re-mission Zion Baptist Church. As we begin with the renovation of our worship and ministry center, we must also focus on the communal and missional renovations necessary to reach the next generation for Christ.

To guide us in this process, we will spend the next forty days in prayerful and meditative thought regarding our mission and purpose. Additionally, we will read through the books of Acts and Nehemiah devotionally, as we seek to “Honor our Past, and Elevate our Future.”

Join us!

Here to Make a Difference,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Kelvin E. Turner'.

Pastor Kelvin E. Turner
Senior Pastor

The Acts of the Holy Spirit

(Introduction)

Day 1

Scripture Reading

Introduction to the Book of Acts

Power Quote

We must be ever thankful for small miracles, and ever hopeful for receiving greater ones.

Elmer A Shultz

Glossary

Ascension

Jesus' return to heaven that took place on the 40 day after Jesus' resurrection

Luke

One of the four gospel writers, Paul's travelling companion, and the writer of the book of Acts.

Gospel

The gospel most specifically refers to the life, death, burial and resurrection of Jesus.

Prayer

Lord, I thank you for the lives of the apostles and members of the earlier church. As I have been blessed by their teachings and testimonies, help me to lead my life so that those coming behind will be equally blessed.

Scripture Concentration

“...I wrote about all that Jesus began to do and to teach until the day he was taken up to heaven, after giving instructions through the Holy Spirit to the apostles he had chosen.”

Acts 1:1-2

Back Ground of the Book

Jesus prophesied to his disciples that the works He did, they would do greater¹. This prophecy is fulfilled in the book of Acts commonly referred to as the Acts of the Apostles. A more correct title for the book is “the Acts of the Holy Spirit in the life of the Apostles.”

The book of Acts is the second part of a two part series, written by Luke; a Gentile, physician and Paul's traveling partner. Luke's first writing is the gospel that bears his name. He writes to inform the church of “all that Jesus began to do and teach.” The book of acts begins with the ascension of Jesus and shares the rapid spread of the gospel beyond the Jewish community to the entire world. Luke does not provide a complete history of the New Testament Church, but of the significant events and encounters that he experienced while traveling with the Apostle Paul.

The book of Acts serves as a bridge between the works of Christ and the wonders of the apostles. Acts completes the story of the gospel. He shows how a new community arose from the life, teachings and death of Jesus, and thus provides the backdrop for the latter writings in the book.

The book of Acts is the 44th book of the Bible. It has 28 chapters 1,007 versus 24,250 words. Over next five weeks we will read one chapter a day, and spend approximately 15 minutes in devotion, as we seek to “Honor Our Past, and Elevate Our Future.”

Questions to Ponder

1. In the book of Acts, Luke wrote about the power, people and the practices of the New Testament Church. If he was to write about today's church, what would he say? What would he say about Zion Baptist Church? What would he say about you?
2. If you were one of the original disciples, and God said, “ye shall be my witnesses in Portsmouth, Chesapeake, Norfolk, Hampton, Virginia Beach, Virginia, the United States, and unto the uttermost parts of the earth, How and where would you begin?”
3. How well are you equipped for the task?

¹ Acts 17:6 King James Version

Empowered

Day 2

Power Quote

We must be ever thankful for small miracles, and ever hopeful for receiving greater ones.

Elmer A Shultz

Scripture for the Day

Read Acts Chapter 1

Glossary

Trinity

The Trinity defines God as three divine and distinct persons in one; the Father, the Son (Jesus), and the Holy Spirit.

The Father

God the Father is regarded as the first person of the Trinity, and also the creator of all humankind.

The Son

The second person of the trinity who came to earth to redeem humanity back to God.

The Holy Spirit

The Holy Spirit is the third part of the trinity, and provides comfort to the believer, along with leadership and guidance in all ways of truth.

Prayer

God, we thank you for giving us a light. Help us to let our light shine brightly in the world. In Your Name we pray. Amen.

Scripture Concentration

“When they therefore were come together, they asked of him, saying, Lord, wilt thou at this time restore again the kingdom to Israel? And he said unto them, It is not for you to know the times or the seasons, which the Father hath put in his own power. But ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you: and ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judaea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth.”

Acts 1:6-8

Observation

The words of Jesus throughout Scripture were of great value, but for the disciples, those words were priceless. After conquering death, hell and the grave, Jesus gave his disciples their final instructions. Jesus told them that they would be His witnesses in Jerusalem and throughout the neighboring community until they reached the entire world for Him. But this could only take place if they were empowered by the Holy Spirit.

What the disciples accomplished in the New Testament was nothing less than phenomenal. But this was accomplished because of the indwelling of the Holy Spirit in their lives individually and collectively.

The calling and commission on today’s disciples and church is as significant today, as it was in New Testament times. And like the New Testament Church, we must be empowered by the Holy Spirit in our personal lives as we are in our spiritual lives.

Questions to Ponder?

1. The work of Christ requires the entire church to possess the power of the Holy Spirit. As a church are we walking in that power? If yes, what are the evidences, if not, what must be done for us to walk in that power?

2. The work of Christ requires each member of the church to possess the power of the Holy Spirit. Are you waking in that power personally? If yes, what evidence do you have? If not, what do you need to do to walk in that power?

House Parties

Day 3

Scripture Reading

Acts Chapter 2

Power Quote

You can come to understand your purpose in life by slowing down and feeling your heart's desires.

Marcia Wieder

Glossary

All things in common

All things in common conveys that the early Christians did not live in a commune, or pool and redistribute everything equally, but that they held their own possessions lightly, ready to be used for someone else, as the needs arose.

Sold their Possessions

The selling of their possessions indicates that they sold their own possessions to provide money for those of the church who were in need.

The Apostles Doctrine

The Scripture is what was meant by the Apostles Doctrine. It was the foundational content and knowledge essential for the spiritual growth and development of the believer in Christ.

Prayer

Lord, thank you for supplying all of our needs according to your riches in glory. Use us to help meet the needs of others. In Jesus Name we pray. Amen.

Scripture Concentration

“And they, continuing daily with one accord in the temple, and breaking bread from house to house, did eat their meat with gladness, and singleness of heart, Praising God, and having favor with all the people. And the Lord added to the church daily such as should be saved.”

Acts 2:46-47

Scripture Observation

The unparalleled and unprecedented growth experienced in the book of Acts didn't come without challenges. One such challenge was developing the next generation of believers. The ultimate responsibility of the church is to provide opportunity for spiritual growth and leadership opportunities for the new believer in Christ.

In the New Testament, this task was accomplished by leaders of the new movement, not by the priest, Levites, or religious officials of that day. They went from house to house, eating, fellowshiping, and instructing the new believer in the ways of God.

The model used by the New Testament church, is a good model to use now. Instead of expecting pastors and preachers to do all the preaching, teaching, and ministering, the church must develop learning circles and covenant communities to foster growth and development in the life of the new believer. The church needs you to fulfill its mission.

Questions to Ponder?

1. What was the most meaningful Christian gathering that you had the pleasure to attend? What made it so meaningful? If you could have changed something about it, what would you change?

2. If you had the responsibility to plan a fun and life changing activities for new Christians, what kind of activity would it be? What would it take to get it from the planning stages to the implementation stage? Pray earnestly to make it happen.

They Gave Value

Day 4

Scripture Reading

Acts Chapter 3

Power Quote

Power is the word that best describes the Christians in the book of Acts. They were a dynamic people, in a dynamic church and what they said and did changed the world.

Paul Harvey

Glossary

Galileans

Galileans were inhabitants of the mostly rural area of northern Israel around the Sea of Galilee.

Devout Men

Devout Men, or God fearing Jews refer to the Hebrew males who made the pilgrimage to Jerusalem. They were expected to celebrate Pentecost in Jerusalem, as part of observing the Jewish religious calendar.

Filled with the Spirit

Being filled with the Spirit, contrasts the baptism with the Spirit, which is the one-time act by which God places believers into His body, the filling is a repeated reality of Spirit-controlled behavior that God commands believers to maintain.

Prayer

Lord, fill me with your Spirit! In Jesus Name I pray. Amen.

Scripture Concentration

“One day Peter and John were going up to the temple at the time of prayer—at three in the afternoon. Now a man who was lame from birth was being carried to the temple gate called Beautiful, where he was put every day to beg from those going into the temple courts. When he saw Peter and John about to enter, he asked them for money. Peter looked straight at him, as did John. Then Peter said, “Look at us!” So the man gave them his attention, expecting to get something from them. Then Peter said, “Silver or gold I do not have, but what I do have I give you. In the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, walk.” Taking him by the right hand, he helped him up, and instantly the man’s feet and ankles became strong. He jumped to his feet and began to walk. Then he went with them into the temple courts, walking and jumping, and praising God. When all the people saw him walking and praising God,”

Acts 3:1-9

Observation

It was an ugly site at a beautiful gate. A man lame from birth was brought to the temple to beg on a daily basis. They didn’t have disability benefits, social security, or any government assistance. He came daily because of the generosity of the people of God.

On the occasion of our Scripture Concentration, the lame man requested of Peter and John to give him alms, or money. The disciples responded, “silver and gold, we do not have, but what we do have we will give you. In the name of Jesus of Nazareth, rise up and walk.” The disciples gave the lame man something more than dollars and cents. The disciples gave the lame man value. They gave him a will to walk again. And once he received the will to walk, it was easy for him to receive the power to walk.

Our ministry and call is one of value. We fulfill our ministry responsibility not by focusing on the disability or comforting the disabled in their disability. We fulfill our responsibility to minister when we share God’s message of hope and value. We fulfill our responsibility when the people regain their will and power to walk. Our responsibility is fulfilled when they regain their will to live, and to live life more abundantly.

Questions to Ponder?

1. Survey your life, what are the things that are working? What’s missing? How do you add the spiritual ingredients necessary to make your life complete?

2. The work of Christ requires each member of the church to possess the power of the Holy Spirit. Are you walking in that power personally? If yes, what evidence do you have? If not, what do you need to do to walk in that power?

They Created A New Community

Day 5

Scripture Reading

Acts Chapter 4

Power Quote

Power is the word that best describes the Christians in the book of Acts. They were a dynamic people, in a dynamic church and what they said and did changed the world.

Warren W. Wiersbe

Glossary

Uneducated and untrained

The people were amazed at Peter and John, because despite the fact they were not educated in the rabbinical schools and had no formal training in Old Testament Theology, they were able to preach and teach with power and authority.

Council

The council refers to the Sanhedrin. It served as the Jews' national ruling body and their supreme court. It was made up of 71 members and the High Priest.

Prayer

Lord, thank you for the resources that you have blessed me with. Help me to know and understand how I am to use those blessings personally, and communally. In Jesus Name I pray. Amen.

Scripture Concentration

"And the multitude of them that believed were of one heart and of one soul: neither said any of them that ought of the things which he possessed was his own; but they had all things common. And with great power gave the apostles witness of the resurrection of the Lord Jesus: and great grace was upon them all. Neither was there any among them that lacked: for as many as were possessors of lands or houses sold them, and brought the prices of the things that were sold, And laid them down at the apostles' feet: and distribution was made unto every man according as he had need. And Joses, who by the apostles was surnamed Barnabas, (which is, being interpreted, The son of consolation,) a Levite, and of the country of Cyprus, Having land, sold it, and brought the money, and laid it at the apostles' feet."

Acts 4:32-37

Observation

One of the challenges caused by the creation of new and upstart ministries is that they often become a magnet or seedbed for a multiplicity of needs. Such was also the case with the New Testament Church.

But Peter and the rest of the group used this opportunity to create a caring and sharing community that advanced God's kingdom agenda. Through the use of resources, (material and immaterial), people were drawn to the love that became the trademark of that new community.

This new community established a noble precedent by selling their possessions, and using the proceeds to meet the needs of the members in their fellowship. They reached in, to reach out so that ultimately everyone was able to reach up. This act of unprecedented generosity and stewardship left an indelible mark and positive impact on the believers and nonbelievers of that day. We need that same kind of love and community today. That's the kind of love Jesus was talking about when he said, "by this shall all men know that you are my disciples" (John 13:35).

Questions to Ponder

1. In what areas of your life do you feel an overabundance of God's blessings? How are you able to share those blessings?

2. What are some of the needs experienced in your family, community, and church? How has God called you to fulfill some of those needs?

They Changed

Day 6

Scripture Reading

Read Acts Chapter 5

Power Quote

We must be ever thankful for small miracles, and ever hopeful for receiving greater ones.

Glossary

Apostle

The disciples who were commissioned after Jesus' resurrection to spread His teachings to all nations.

Church

The body of believers called to represent Christ in the world

Possession

The physical and material things that God has given to us to manage on His behalf

Prayer

Lord, help me to live a life that others will want to follow in my footsteps.

Scripture Concentration

“But a certain man named Ananias, with Sapphira his wife, sold a possession, And kept back part of the price, his wife also being privy to it, and brought a certain part, and laid it at the apostles' feet. But Peter said, Ananias, why hath Satan filled thine heart to lie to the Holy Ghost, and to keep back part of the price of the land? Whiles it remained, was it not thine own? and after it was sold, was it not in thine own power? why hast thou conceived this thing in thine heart? thou hast not lied unto men, but unto God. And Ananias hearing these words fell down, and gave up the ghost: and great fear came on all them that heard these things. And the young men arose, wound him up, and carried him out, and buried him. And it was about the space of three hours after, when his wife, not knowing what was done, came in. And Peter answered unto her, Tell me whether ye sold the land for so much? And she said, Yea, for so much. Then Peter said unto her, How is it that ye have agreed together to tempt the Spirit of the Lord? behold, the feet of them which have buried thy husband are at the door, and shall carry thee out. Then fell she down straightway at his feet, and yielded up the ghost: and the young men came in, and found her dead and, carrying her forth, buried her by her husband. And great fear came upon all the church, and upon as many as heard these things.”

Acts 5:1-11

The death of Ananias and Sapphira brought fear and trembling to the New Testament Church. The supernatural move of God secured truth, honesty and integrity within this rapidly growing church community. Ananias and Sapphira failed in the financial commitment, not because of their inability to pay, but rather they defaulted on their commitment and promise to God.

The failed financial commitment elevated the simple sale of a family home, and a financial pledge to the church's capital campaign into a murder investigation. The cause of death proves more telling than how they died. The cause of death was lying to the Holy Spirit. Ananias and Sapphira pledge was voluntary, but their grandstanding was deadly. They thought they were lying to Peter, but the untruth that they told was to God.

As we stumble through life trying to find our purpose, we are called, not to follow the pressure placed on us by our peers, but to have an authentic commitment and relationship with God. We don't have to lie to men; we only have to trust and be true to God.

Questions to Ponder

1. Name a time when someone made a commitment to you, but reneged. How did it make you feel? How did you respond to the individual? What happened the next time they made a commitment? If they were to make a commitment today, how would you respond?

2. Name a time when you made a commitment to someone and you had to renege. How did you feel? How did you make it up to them? Name a time when you promised God something, but did not deliver. How did you feel? How do you think God felt?

Growing Pains

Day 7

Power Quote

The day will come when the risk to remain tight in a bud will be more painful than the risk it takes to blossom.

Anais Nin

Scripture Reading

Read Acts Chapter 6

Glossary

Hellenist Jews

The Hellenistic Jews formerly lived outside of Judea and Galilee and came to settle in their homeland of Jerusalem. They spoke Greek.

Hebraic Jews

The Hebraic Jews and were born in Jerusalem or Judea, and spoke mainly Aramaic.

Proselytes

Full converts that was instructed in Judaism, baptized and circumcised.

God-fearers

Converts who worshipped and studied in the synagogues, but were not circumcised.

Freedmen

Freedmen were former slaves (or their children) who had been emancipated by their owners.

Prayer

Lord, Thank you for making each of us unique and wonderfully. Help us to accept the differences of others. In Your Name we pray. Amen.

Scripture Concentration

And in those days, when the number of the disciples was multiplied, there arose a murmuring of the Grecians against the Hebrews, because their widows were neglected in the daily ministrations. Then the twelve called the multitude of the disciples unto them, and said, It is not reason that we should leave the word of God, and serve tables. Wherefore, brethren, look ye out among you seven men of honest report, full of the Holy Ghost and wisdom, whom we may appoint over this business. But we will give ourselves continually to prayer, and to the ministry of the word. And the saying pleased the whole multitude: and they chose Stephen, a man full of faith and of the Holy Ghost, and Philip, and Prochorus, and Nicanor, and Timon, and Parmenas, and Nicolas a proselyte of Antioch: Whom they set before the apostles: and when they had prayed, they laid their hands on them. And the word of God increased; and the number of the disciples multiplied in Jerusalem greatly; and a great company of the priests were obedient to the faith.

Acts 6:1-7

Observation

Growing pains has been described as the physical, emotional, or organizational pain, discomfort, or distress experienced as a result of the growing process. Such growing pains are not limited to the physical body, emotional psyche, or a secular organization. The sixth chapter of the book of Acts proves that the church can also be afflicted with growing pains.

Along with phenomenal growth, came individual desires, preferences, prejudices, and favoritism. This led to the neglect of the Grecian widows, a problem that threatened to future of the New Testament Church. Churches aren't immune to differences. What makes them distinct is how they handle their differences.

In an unprecedented move, the disciples chose not to handle the problems themselves, but rather to empower the others to select leaders who met the minimal qualifications of possessing the Holy Spirit, wisdom, and a godly reputation. Because the problem was handled correctly, the Bible says that "the Word of God increased and the number of disciples multiplied greatly."

Questions to Ponder?

1. What "growing pains" have you encountered in the last two years as a result of membership growth in the church? Have these issues been resolved? What took place (or need to take place) for its resolution?

2. The leadership chosen to rectify the problem was chosen in part because of the leadership qualifications they possessed. Do you possess the same qualifications? Are those same qualifications needed today? Are there other qualifications need? If so, which ones??
