

Title: The True Gospel
~~Is There Power In Your Life?~~

Text: Acts 1:1-3

Will you open your Bibles, please, to the book of Acts. The book of Acts chapter 1. Acts chapter 1.

We began our series in Acts a couple of weeks ago. And we got through the first couple of verses. Acts chapter 1.

Again, I remind you that the book of Acts is the acts or practices of the Apostles. The experiences of the Apostles.

We learned last time about the Apostles, who they are. There were four gifted men given to the church according to Ephesians chapter 4 verse 11. The Apostles, the prophets, the evangelist, and the Pastor/teacher.

The Apostles and prophets, according to Ephesians 2:20, were given for the foundation of the church. And according to the Bible, the Apostles were supernaturally empowered by God and commanded and commissioned by Christ to have the same powers that Jesus himself had to confirm the spoken Word in the eyes of all who heard. According to Mark 16 and Hebrews chapter 2, we have learned that the Apostles were able to do miracles and signs and wonders. Jesus Christ performed miracles, and signs, and wonders. And to the ^{group} group of men called Apostles he gave the ability to perform direct supernatural things. WHY?....They did not have the written revelation, as we have it today. And the spoken Word which the Apostles gave was confirmed through miracles. And this resulted in the Jews being convinced, because the Jews required a sign, therefore, they were convinced that the spoken message was truly from God. The Apostles had the ability to perform the miracles.

So, this book is going to contain some miraculous things. And I challenge you to read it with me. To sit down and read it straight through, several times in the series.

It is a difficult book, but it is the history of how the church, the body of Christ began. How it was started and what happened in those early days. And what the principles are for continued life and church growth today.

So, we began last week with this introduction to Acts. Now, lets come to Acts chapter 1 verse 1....

(READ Vs 1-3)

Prayer

Vs 1...."THE FIRST ACCOUNT I COMPOSED, THELPHILUS."

Would you turn back to the book of Luke, please. Luke chapter 1. Acts 1:1 says, "THE FIRST ACCOUNT"....You see, Luke wrote the book of LUKE, and he also wrote the book of Acts. And he is saying that in that "first account"...in that "first book" I wrote about so and so...Now, I am going to give you the second Account. The "first account" was the book of Luke. The "second Account" was the book of Acts.

O.K. what was the "first Account?" Luke chapter 1 Verse 1....

(Read Luke 1:1-4)

Now, obviously in comparing Luke 1 with Acts 1, you see that Luke wrote Acts. And the "FIRST ACCOUNT" that he sent to this man, THEOPHILUS, whose name means "beloved of God", this first account was THE GOSPEL OF LUKE. The second account was Acts.

(1) Let me just share with you how he wrote this first account. Because it is important in understanding the book of Acts.

Vs 3 says, "IT SEEMED FITTING FOR ME AS WELL, HAVING INVESTIGATED EVERY THING CAREFULLY."

Luke is saying that this is the truth. He has investigated it all very carefully. There were many reports about the life and death of Jesus that were circulating among the people. Many people saw and heard the teachings of Jesus. It was common knowledge. And so, Luke is saying that he has the correct understanding.....

The word "understanding" means "to follow close." The point ~~is~~ of this is pretty terrific. Luke was a physican. And he had correct understanding. Because, (1) Number one, he followed close. This means very close^{to} the whole situation. ~~Many believe he was the physican~~ He knew many things about Jesus. And we know from Acts 16:10 Luke was a part of the missionary party of the Apostle Paul. So, what he is telling this man, Theophilus, he has experienced first hand. He has a first hand understanding.

(1) Now, notice what he says in Vs 3.."to write it out for you in consecutive order." You know what that means. It means to write ~~the~~ facts down one right after another. To write them down in consecutive order.

And this is why it is important to read the Gospel of Luke before you study Acts. Because all these things follow right in order.

(3) Now, the third thing that I want to point out is that he says in Vs 4 "so that you might know the exact truth about the things you have been taught."

The word "exact" means "Undoubted truth".. This message is the absolute truth. There is no doubt about it.

Now, come back to Acts chapter 1. Acts 1:1.."The first account I composed Theophilus, about all that Jesus began to do and~~h~~teach, until the day when He was taken up."

Now, you ask me: WHAT IS THE BOOK OF ACTS ABOUT? The book of Acts is about the contenuation of a former writting. All Acts is is a continuation of the Gospel of Luke. That is very clear from these opening words.

In the Gospel, it was about what Jesus began to do and to teach. That is not a bad principle for all of us to follow. We ought to practice what we preach..... And it was until the day that he was taken up.

(2) Now, secondly, ~~the~~ Book of Acts is not only a continuation of a former writting, but it is also the story of the great commission in action.

Now, how do I know that? Vs 2..."Until the day when He was taken up, after He had by the Holy Spirit given orders to the apostles whom He had chosen. To these He also presented himself alive, after His suffering, by many convincing proofs."

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Now, follow this carefully. Did you notice in your text in Vs 2 that he had given orders...(Plural)...

In the Greek text it is only "order"..(singular)....

It is not plural orders.....

What is Luke talking about when he says that Jesus ordered his Apostles? What did he order them?

He ordered them what is commonly known as the Great Commission. The book of Acts is about this command. This commission that Jesus gave to the Apostles which Hebrews 2 says that the Apostles have given to others. And that we should not neglect this great salvation as Christians. But we should tell it. WHY? Because one day we will have to give an account to God. We will be rewarded with what we have done with this Gospel.

So, Acts deals with that first command. The Great commission. And Luke repeats it down in Vs 8. And we will see that at a later time.

Now, I would like you to notice two wonderful things in Vs 2 and Vs 3.

In Vs 2 it says that he had "given orders to the apostles whom He had chosen."

The word "chosen" means ^{to} pick out and select for one's self."

And I learn a tremendous truth which I want to leave with you.

The book of Acts is about people, named Apostles, whom Christ personally selected for himself. Not even for the world...Not even for their task.. But for himself.

The same word is used in Ephesians 1:4 where we learn that "we have been chosen by God."

We have been picked out and selected by God for himself.

I think it is wonderful to know as a christian, as we begin the study of what we should be doing day after day, to realize that Jesus is picking us out and chosen us for himself.

You say, "Well, I am not important. I am just John Doe Christian. After all that is for the Ministers and missionaries and all those people."

Oh..No...How shall we escape, Believers, so great salvation that was given unto us. First spoken by the Lord. Confirmed by the Apostles. And then given to Us. How shall we escape.....

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We are going to be rewarded. If means loss of reward if we neglect this. God has us ~~near~~ here to share the message of salvation. And the thrilling thing jto me is that God has chosen us. Picked us out for himself.

Each one of these men were hand selected by Jesus Christ. And that to me is re-assuring to known that Jesus is chosening us for himself.

You may be here today. And you say, Pastor, I am not on your wave length. I have never really come to have this experience with Jesus.

And I say to you that Jesus is doing the same thing to you. He is picking you out, he is chosening you, he is drawing you unto himself. Because he loves you and He loves me. Because of His love, he choses us.

And if you are a christian I want you to know that God has chosen you for a tremendous task. And you say, "Well, I don't see it. I am not doing anything. I am just not fruitful."

But, listen, dear friends, God has chosen everyone of us/ for himself. And do you know why we don't have the vision of the World that we should have? It is because we don't see that Jesus chose us for HIMSELF.

So, we are looking around and we get a little discouraged and say, "Well, all these people don't serve Jesus, and I can't witness to them!"

When the truth of the matter is..instead of looking out..we should be looking up. Looking up to the one who chose me for himself. To

To realize.."Lord! do you mean you chose me?...."

And the more we understand what Jesus has done in selecting us, the more we will understand His jpurpose for us now in the world. He chose us.

(2) And the second thing that I want to share with you is Vs 3.."He presented Himself alive, ["]~~after His suffering, by many convincing proofs.~~"

~~What~~ What is the importance of that phrase? The phrase "presented himself" means "to place beside" or "near to something" or "some one" to show them the quality of the thing being ~~put~~ put on display.

What does that mean? It means that Jesus loved these Apostles so much that even after his resurrection, he came right along side of them all the time. And showed himself to them.

Do you remember when He told Thomas to reach forth his hand and touch the wounds in His hands and side? Do you remember that little story?

It is my firm conviction, on the bases of this verby used here in Vs 3.. "PRESENTED HIMSELF"...that Jesus was always inviting them to do that. That after his resurrection he was inviting these Apostles to do this. They were still afraid.

Do you remember in Luke 24, whend Jesus appear to them in theupper room they though he was a ghost. But then he eat fish and honey and told them that a spirit doesn't have flesh and bones. "Handle me and see".

Now, why do I point this out to you? Because when John wrote I John he ~~said~~ says "what our eyes have seen and our hands have handled, we declare unto you."

Dear friends, do you know what Acts is all about? It is about men that handled the resurrected Lord. Do you not know why there is wonder and excitment in this book? It is because these men handled Jesus Christ who was alive after ~~the/resurrection~~ his death. He rose again. They handled Him. They were with him. And Jesus, because of love for these men, to ~~not~~ convince them, to teach them, he let them handle him. He showed himself.

And I can just see Jesus coming up along side of one of those Apostles and placing his arm around them and say, "John, Peter, Andrew, I am alive. I am not dead. Handle me and see."

Cna you imigine what this did to this hand full of men? Can you imigine the electricity that poured through them when they realized that here is the SON OF GOD. AND HE IS ALIVE.

And I say to you today..and I say it kindly..if you are here and you have never received Jesus, you want to believe but you cannot except the resurrectioⁿ of Jesus, I say to you that you can never be saved. Because the saving Gospel is that Jesus is alive. He arose from the dead.

I^{am} not preaching jto you a little system of "do's and don'ts". I am preaching to you today jsome ethical ~~stax~~ standard you can apply in your business relationships. I am preaching to you the fact that Christ Jesus ;is ~~is~~ Alive.....

/Ø If you donot believe that, Paul said that we of all men are most miserable. And if Jesus be not raised from the dead, we are still in our sins. Our faith is vain. Let's go home and stop playing around.

Oh, dear friends, I plead with you. If you have never come to place your faith and confidence upon a resurrected Lord who is coming ~~back~~ back, the God of the univery who came into the world as a man, died, rose again, if you have never come to see him like that, THEN BELIEVE HIM NOW. Just turn to Him in faith and say, "Lord I recognize today as I have never recognized before, that you are alive. That Jesus is alive. This isn't something that we are making up. It is not a little creed that we believe. It is not simply a church that we attend. It is a resurrected Jesus. That is the message of Acts.

And every sermon in Acts deals with the resurrected Jesus. That is our hope. May God help you to recieve Jesus today....

Prayer