

Acts—Series Overview

The Expansion of the Gospel Witness with Power

The book of *Acts* gives the account of God's faithful accomplishment of all that He promised in taking the gospel to the nations. It lays the groundwork for all that will take place as His Church awaits His return. Just as Jesus lived and spoke as the Father commanded, we now are called to do in the power of His Holy Spirit. While Jesus did this perfectly, we will strive imperfectly, constantly in need of the Holy Spirit's direction, power, and correction. Nevertheless, our faithful God will work even through our failing efforts and His gospel witness through us will prevail and penetrate every nation, tribe, & territory. For the praise of our King!

APPLYING GOD'S WORD

Please ask the Holy Spirit to guide you:

Declare Your Loyalty to the King! Acknowledge Jesus as the King of Heaven. If you've not done that before publically, come meet with the elders to do plan how to do so.

Sign Up for the Intro Class! See the sign up sheet in the Billings Room. There are two options for the same material (Friday-Saturday intensive or Five Wednesday nights).

Praise the Lord! Step out in faith to declare His rule and reign.

Daniel—Series Overview

Holy Living in a Hostile World

The book of *Daniel* was written to console and motivate God's people during desperate times. It shows us how to live faithfully in the midst of a faithless world. It is a book-long treatment of Christ's command to be in the world but not of it (John 15:17). But the book of Daniel is far more than a "how-to" manual. It sets in context the whole flow of history. It shows that all of history is *His story*—the story of God's redeeming work for His people. From the horrific discipline of the exile to the horrors of the cross, God is sovereignly directing all human history for the redemption of His saints.

Sermon Notes and Daily Devotional
First Congregational Church of Woodstock

Pastor Doug Warren
February 23rd, 2020

Morning Service:

Acts 2: 40 – 47

The Way Life Should Be

1. All Heaven Broke Out.
2. What Is the Church Supposed to Look Like?
3. Let Us Praise the King Who Reigns!

We see a beautiful picture of our enthroned King deploying His people through the guidance and power of the Holy Spirit to live out Kingdom Fidelity. Their life together as the Church was re-ordered to reflect Christ's priorities that overflowed in a vibrant, healthy body—the people of God as we are supposed to be. Let us look at this snapshot with great hope! This will be us one day and by God's grace we may even experience moments of it here through the Holy Spirit's renewal. Pray that we would walk in His ways with this hope.

Evening Service:

Daniel 2: 1 – 16

A Troubled King

1. The Suprising God of the Gospel—He is Knowable.
2. The Hard Truth of God's Unflinching Faithfulness.
3. Daniel's Faith in This God Enabled Him to Act Boldly.

In life-or-death situations our real beliefs and priorities are revealed. On the heels of receiving great blessings from the pagan king because of God granting him favor, Daniel is now facing death. His response demonstrates his trust in His all-powerful God.

Taking Gathered Worship Home

When Jesus poured out His Spirit on His disciples at Pentecost it ushered in an entirely new age of restoration. His people together experienced a renewal and quickening. The results give us a picture of what the Church is supposed to look like under His glorious rule and reign as King. It's a piece of paradise that pokes through into the present reality and strengthens our hope in what it will be like with Christ forever.

Please use the devotional material below each day this week to meet with Jesus. Ask Christ to teach us His ways that we may walk in them to accomplish His purposes.

Sunday AM

READ **Acts 2:40-47; John 3:1-8**. DISCUSS, How does our new birth re-orient our relationships on earth? How is this a picture of heaven? What did Jesus' resurrection, ascension, and pouring out the Spirit accomplish? PRAY for God to bring us renewal as individuals, as families, as a congregation. Ask the Lord to renew us.

Sunday PM

READ **Daniel 2:1-16; Ephesians 3:1-6**. How is God active in history? PRAISE God for His loving care even through hard things.

Monday

READ **Acts 2:40-47; Ephesians 5:18-20**. DISCUSS, What is the role of the Holy Spirit? How does He lead Christ's people? What are you doing to listen to His leading? How are you following His commands? PRAY for your neighbors, peers, friends, & family asking God to show them His power in Christ.

Tuesday

READ **Acts 2:40-47; Colossians 3:16-17**. DISCUSS, How important is the Word? How are you welcoming it? What do you do when God's Word contradicts what you think, say, or do? PRAY, "God, make me (us) receptive to Your Word. Make us welcome it gladly."

Wednesday

READ **Acts 2:40-47; First Corinthians 10:14-22**. DISCUSS, How is the table fellowship we enjoy at communion linked to Christ? MEDITATE on Christ's goodness in feeding us. REJOICE if you enjoy the table fellowship with Christ. PRAY, "Lord, thank You for the gift of Your table."

Thursday

READ **Acts 2:40-47; Colossians 4:2-4**. DISCUSS, What does it mean to devote ourselves to prayer? What is our attitude supposed to be? How can we control that? REJOICE in the salvation that Jesus provided us. PRAY, "Lord, enable us to trust You and follow Your Holy Spirit's leading as we await Your return. Amen."

Friday

READ **Acts 2:40-47**. How has God been teaching you from this passage this week? REJOICE for Christ has not left us alone, but given us His promised Holy Spirit! PRAY for our neighbors to see God and themselves as they truly are and so run to Christ.

Saturday

PREPARE today for the gathered worship service tomorrow.

READ **Acts 3:1-11**. Invite others to come with you to worship tomorrow. Pray for God's glory to be shown through us as we extend His grace and celebrate it together.

John 3: 5 – 8

Jesus answered, "Truly, truly, I say to you, unless one is born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God. That which is born of the flesh is flesh, and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit. Do not marvel that I said to you, 'You must be born again.' The wind blows where it wishes, and you hear its sound, but you do not know where it comes from or where it goes. So it is with everyone who is born of the Spirit."