

Acts, characterized as the Authentic Church, or the Spirit Driven church

Book of Acts about the events that took place after Jesus death, burial, and resurrection. Easter just past, we just celebrated His rez. Been in what is known as the church age ever since, age of grace...

Acts, the Spirit of God was breathed on the disciples....and it was on from there...the authentic church was born...Spirit driven church, not people driven. **Authentic church is a Spirit driven**

Back in Jerusalem...Paul and Barnabas had heard word that some unknown believers had birthed a church in **Antioch Syria**... Barnabas sought out Paul to help this new church grow, be healthy, and have an authentic relationship with the Lord, disciplined the family of God by ACTS 2.42 studying the word, prayer, fellowship, and breaking of bread together.

Antioch was the launching pad for world missions...supported Paul and Barnabas in planting churches...much like CCCC has a heart to reach the lost on CC, so the whole family got together, planted a church, and here we are today. CCY

Always reassuring when doing something that stirs your flesh, fears, anxieties to know you are doing what the early saints did. TO know you are in the will of God, comfort, peace, which allows love and grace to abound inside us, which brings power, strength boldness and a willingness to charge with Jesus and see the spiritual temp on Cape RISE!

The confirmation that this CY birth is the will of God has been overwhelming!
 "It feels like home", "Nicest church I've been to", "It feels like family" One boy was told he was going to church, hurry up, come on, didn't know he was coming here not Sandwich. Arrival..."Hey, I helped build this church!" Strutted in with a smile & a swagger to his step, because he knew, this was his church, he belonged.

IF you're new, first time, I hope you feel the way many have already expressed.

Building a church is more than walls, paint and floors, we build on God's word, we build one another up in life...

Acts 20

Bust in on Paul's 3rd missionary journey, we pick up mid journey

3 years in Ephesus, ministering amid a tumultuous crowd, but unmoved Paul preaches... Many come to faith. Evangelism (bringing people to faith in Jesus) Discipleship, (helping people grow in that faith) Cool things happening on this 3rd journey. Special Stuff Happening here...

Side note In **Philippi**... Paul writes the book **2nd Corinthians** a letter to them.

While he's in **Corinth** he writes the letter to the **Romans**.

Last left off in Acts 19, ends...

Temple of Diana is shaken so to speak, Demetrius silversmith and their pockets were hit hard by all this preaching of faith, Jesus, believing on God and not tiny statues.... Paul was being run out of Ephesus, but not without God's permission!

Acts 20

Paul says Good bye... Ephesian believers

1 After the uproar had ceased, Paul called the disciples to himself, embraced them, and departed to go to Macedonia. 2 Now when he had gone over that region and encouraged them with many words, he came to Greece 3 and stayed three months. And when the Jews plotted against him as he was about to sail to Syria, he decided to return through Macedonia. 4 And Sopater of Berea accompanied him to Asia—also Aristarchus and Secundus of the Thessalonians, and Gaius of Derbe, and Timothy, and Tychicus and Trophimus of Asia. 5 These men, going ahead, waited for us at Troas. 6 But we sailed away from Philippi after the Days of Unleavened Bread, and in five days joined them at Troas, where we stayed seven days.

You get no impression Paul is fearfully departing, or that he is run out of town as a coward. Following the HS. He takes the time to embrace his fellow believers & say goodbye. Paul was such a relational pastor and preacher. That's why he connected along with the fact that he shared the most powerful message on the planet...the gospel. He wasn't actually an eloquent speaker, that was Apollos. But his message and his manner were essentials. Encouraging!

Paul leaves Ephesus, heads to Greece for 3 months until moved on again by HS, using the leading of another angry mob and evil plots to take his life possibly at sea on the ship he was supposed to sail on.

Paul was also carrying the contributions, money, that the believers had given to support the Jewish believers in Jerusalem. So Paul heads back to Macedonia with a company of brothers, strong believers... many if not all of them were from churches Paul had planted. They were **mission minded** men, traveling with Paul bringing this offering to Jerusalem, sharing the gospel, making more disciples, & making the disciples more discipled (growing in faith, relationship with Jesus).

Some of the men with him...

Sopater of Berea, known for their intellect and study of the Bible, be like the Bereans, study your Bible

Timothy the faithful, Lystra (church plant)

Aristarchus and **Secundus** both from Thessalonica Greece. Aristarchus...aristocrat of wealthy decent, serving alongside Secundus, usually a slave name, primus 1, secundus 2 (even as a slave this guy was after another). Gaius from Derbe (Plant),

That's the way the family of God works, class separates no one. Shouldn't. Social class, financial class, nationality, color of skin, dialect, like and dislike hobbies... there are no classes in the family of God. Equality at its best on earth is found in the family of God! It should be anyway, if not, are we really living like an authentic church?

5 These men, going ahead, waited for **us** at Troas. 6 But **we** sailed away from Philippi after the Days of Unleavened Bread, and in five days joined them at Troas, where we stayed seven days. Dr Luke uses the word, "us", 5 they waited for us in Troas. Luke had joined up with Paul again as they headed to Troas

7 Now on the **first day** of the week, when the disciples came together to **break bread**, Paul, ready to depart the next day, spoke to them and continued his **message until midnight**. 8 There were many lamps in the upper room where they were gathered together. 9 And in a window sat a certain young man named Eutychus, who was sinking into a deep sleep. He was overcome by sleep; and as Paul continued speaking, he fell down from the third story and was taken up dead. 10 But Paul went down, fell on him, and embracing him said, "Do not trouble yourselves, for his life is in him." 11 Now when he had come up, had broken bread and eaten, and talked a long while, even till daybreak, he departed. 12 And they brought the young man in alive, and they were not a little comforted.

7 Now on the **first day of the week**, when the disciples came together to **break bread** Jewish culture had the 1st as Sunday. Here is some of the earliest evidence that the early disciples worshipped together on Sunday rather than the Jewish worship day of Saturday. The breaking of bread here is in the context of communion, a corporate act of worship. More than a meal.
 1 Corinthians 16:1-2 – "Now, concerning the collection for the saints, as I have given orders to the churches of Galatia, so you must do also: 2 On the **first day of the week** let each one of you lay something aside, storing up as he may prosper, that there be no collections when I come.

While here in **Troas**, Turkish west coast, Paul preaches a sermon of sermons to the group gathered on the 3rd floor of this upper room...

Such an encouraging section of scripture for pastors and preachers across the world... Paul preached from sundown to sun up. Encouraging that even the great apostle Paul, preached some of his ppl to sleep, even to death! Eutychus actually falls asleep after Paul preaches for hours.

Cmon, man, really, you ask? That's Paul the greatest preacher next to Jesus Himself. I give some of you no more than 3 hours, and out like a light. That's okay...Paul brings him back from the dead, break some bread (have a meal) then he went on and preached until day break! See what is possible here right?

A little grace and context if the preacher goes 5 or 10 min over!

13 Then we went ahead to the ship and sailed to Assos, there intending to take Paul on board; for so he had given orders, intending himself to go on foot. 14 And when he met us at **Assos**, we took him on board and came to **Mitylene**. 15 We sailed from there, and the next day came opposite **Chios**. The following day we arrived at **Samos** and stayed at **Trogyllium**. The next day we came to **Miletus**. 16 For Paul had decided to sail past Ephesus, so that he would not have to spend time in Asia; for he was hurrying to be at Jerusalem, if possible, on the Day of Pentecost.

Paul and his pals finally set sail in Assos and island hop the Aegean Sea off the coast of modern day Turkey and Greece. Imagine....? Santorini, Crete, Rhoades by boat, beautiful.

Finally land in Miletus, notice Paul purposely sails past Ephesus, where one his closest church family was...Why? 16 For Paul had decided to sail past Ephesus, so that he would not have to spend time in Asia; for **he was hurrying to be at Jerusalem**, if possible, on the Day of Pentecost.

Paul was a man on a mission, even the love of his friends couldn't slow him down, but that doesn't mean he neglected his relationships at all! Paul will actually send for the elders, leaders, mature believers to come to him in Miletus.

17 From Miletus he sent to Ephesus and called for the elders of the church. Up until now, every one of Paul's talks or teachings have been entirely evangelistic, geared to the unchurched, non believer (he taught and shared with people who were not yet believers in a way that gave them opportunity to know Jesus on a personal level, repentance, faith, new believer)

Here comes the first and only message Paul gives to Christian believers recorded in the book of Acts.... It is also his very last message face to face with these men. We have seen Paul the evangelist throughout the book of Acts, now we get to see **Paul the pastor** ,, (caregiver, tender of sheep, feeder of the flock, tender hearted and loving his people)

Jump ahead to give some context on what he will be saying...

25 "And indeed, now I know that you all, among whom I have gone preaching the kingdom of God, will see my face no more.

These are Paul's Last Words, therefore I will see you no longer there for these are my closing words this is what I'm leaving you with.

If my kids came to me on my deathbed, & I had some last words you can be sure they would listen they would hang on every word and you can be sure that I as dad with my faculties would make sure the things I said were lasting more meaningful would be most important things I wanted to pass on. Here is what Paul had to say...

18 And when they had come to him, he said to them: "You know, from the first day that I came to Asia, in what manner I always lived among you, 19 serving the Lord with all humility, with many tears and trials which happened to me by the plotting of the Jews; 20 how I kept back nothing that was helpful, but proclaimed it to you, and taught you publicly and from house to house, 21 testifying to Jews, and also to Greeks, repentance toward God and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ.

You could at first think maybe there was a little bravado in Paul's tone, a little braggadocious speak going on, not so.

I **Lived among you**, Paul was on the same level as the rest of the family, he did life with them, lived life with them, (how else can you be a godly influence with one another. There is a paradigm, a model to follow here, don't miss it. Church, it's not a Sunday thing, not a building, but it's a body of believers, it's a family. Paul modeled it so well, but not as well as Jesus did. Church is a family living life and doing life together daily. Simply showing up on Sunday isn't enough)

We/ he, Paul, serve the Lord in all **humility**, if any could boast it might be Paul, but he served and spent himself, poured out with humility, not boasting in anything except his Savior!

Enduring **tears and trials**, Paul was shipwrecked, stoned, beaten, tried, imprisoned, dropped off a cliff..

But he endured it all keeping nothing back!, he was told to shut up!, and all he could do was speak up! He was beaten that he might give up, and all he could do was be offered up continuing on in the race that was set before him. We've all been given a race to run....!!

Paul kept back nothing, he proclaimed the **entire counsel of God (Bible)** and taught in public (church) and at homes (CGs!).

What was it he proclaimed? Proclaimed the **gospel**. The turning away from sin and returning to God through faith in Jesus Christ!

The Gospel...

The gospel message shares two things repentance and faith, they are joined together. There is no gospel without repentance, 'metanoia', to change direction, people came to Christ to repent. No gospel with out repentance....also There is no gospel without faith. Faith in the fact that JEsus died, and rose as God our substitute.

When someone has come to Christ, been reborn...their spiritual temperature has risen inside their soul. It changes them automatically, naturally, organically from the inside out. It really isn't even a forced change...

Their direction changes because they become a new creation in Christ. As the spiritual temperature of ice changes **ice doesn't will itself to become water, a liquid** it happened so naturally, & organically simply because the temperature rises. I just spiritual temperature rises in our souls and...what was once hard and cold, becomes warm and liquid, refreshing and life giving! We can't help but warm up, and a glow comes off of us, that warms certain people around us...

22 And see, now **I go bound in the spirit to Jerusalem**, not knowing the things that will happen to me there, 23 except that the Holy Spirit testifies in every city, saying that **chains and tribulations** await me. 24 **But none of these things move me**; nor do I count **my life dear** to myself, so that I may **finish my race** with joy, and the ministry which I received from the Lord Jesus, **to testify** to the **gospel** of the grace of God.

Paul was preaching and teaching through the known world Roman Empire. He had traversed over 5000 mi by land, 6000 miles by sea, nearly 12k mi total possibly covering an area over 80,000 sq miles, before modern transport!

. He faced many road blocks, difficulties, and down right hardships along the way. But suddenly he now has a desire to head to Jerusalem. He is bound in the spirit, it's heavy on his heart to go, go by the will of God, to Jerusalem.

So God is giving him instruction to "go to Jerusalem, that's where I want you" Well, where God guides God provides... but there is one problem. Every town he goes to it seems somehow, maybe through people he meets he is being told there will be suffering, difficulty, hardship, & chains waiting for him.

So, God telling him to go, Paul is willing to go where God guides...but at the same time Paul is being told there will be trouble and chains waiting for him? All the other times there was trouble it seems God used it to move him along, to go to the next city and preach. Here, it seems God is calling Paul right into the fire?

? How would you react to that news or instruction? What would your response to the Lord be if HE called you into a difficult place or situation?

Paul's reaction... 24 "But none of these things move me, nor do I count my life dear to me"

So set on the things of God was Paul, he didn't look at the unknown future and the peril ahead with fear and trembling, he knew who he served... **Never be afraid to trust an unknown future to a known God. Corrie Ten Boom**

he didn't curse God, "this is my reward, this is how you treat me after years of service?" Instead Paul pressed in with a firm resolute that would never waiver, for he once said

Philip 3.7 But whatever gain I had, I counted as loss for the sake of Christ. 8 Indeed, I count everything as loss **because** of the **surpassing worth of knowing Christ Jesus** my Lord. **For his sake** I have suffered the **loss** of all things and count them as rubbish, in order that I may **gain Christ** 9 and be **found in him**

not having a righteousness of my own that comes from the law, but that which comes through faith in Christ, the righteousness from God that depends on faith— 10 **that I may know him** and the power of his **resurrection**, and may share his sufferings, becoming like him in his death, 11 that by any means possible I may attain the resurrection from the dead.

Psalms 16.8 I have set the Lord always before me; because He is at my right hand I shall not be moved.

None of these things move me I don't count my life dear to myself so that I may finish my course with joy. If NOT clinging to your life dearly, letting go of my selfishness results in joy....Counting your life dear to you, where does that get you?. Loving you more, acting entitled, living in expectation of getting what you think you deserve...has to result in something quite different than joy. Discontentment, frustration, emptiness, hopelessness, depression anxiety.

But none of these things move me; nor do I count **my life dear** to myself, so that I may **finish my race** with joy, and the ministry which I received from the Lord Jesus, **to testify to the gospel** of the grace of God.

Pauls knew the place of peace, he knew the path of peace wasn't found in the footsteps of pleasure and ease and comfort or in a struggle free environment. Those things were of no consequence or value to Paul.

Paul was engaged in a race, a course was set, his life was no longer his own, his ship had set sail long ago on the Damascus road when He met Jesus and was changed forever. Paul's allegiance was no longer to the world or it's systems. Paul knew first hand, what so many are looking for. He knew that in the **Person of Peace**, in Jesus, was where he would find his ultimate JOY. He had it, laid hold of it, and wasn't letting go for nothing. For Paul knew he was in Jesus grip that never gave out!

The world says, search for happiness within, but we found a bunch of baggage and dry bones within. The world promises completeness and contentment in success and career, in marriage and kids, but those things as good as some may seem never completely deliver. Find happiness in happy thoughts, but thoughts don't seem to change a thing!

Paul had found that thing that all men and women and children have been looking for from the beginning of time. JOY, joy only found in the gospel of Jesus, Christ resurrected. That is why it was nothing for Paul to head to Jerusalem, to face certain peril undaunted, for **the cause was so much greater than his comfort!** He would finish his race with joy. The joy of knowing he served his Savior well, the joy of knowing he brought many from the threshold of hell to the beautiful feet of Jesus! That gave Paul joy here and now, and in the life to come....oh what a sweet reward THAT will be!

Point out the parallel running here, between **Paul and Jesus Himself.**

- Like Jesus, Paul traveled to Jerusalem with a group of his disciples.
- Like Jesus, Paul was opposed by hostile Jews who plotted against his life.
- Like Jesus, Paul made or received three successive predictions of his coming sufferings in Jerusalem, including being handed over to the Gentiles.
- Like Jesus, Paul declared his readiness to lay down his life.
- Like Jesus, he was determined to complete his ministry and not be deflected from it.
- Like Jesus, he expressed his abandonment to the will of God.

Jesus was a Man, God man, on a mission, like Paul, a mission to see souls saved, won, and made whole again! Jesus was on a mission He knew would end in His own death. Like Paul also. Jesus had his eyes set like flint to go to Jerusalem... Luke 9.51 says. 51 Now it came to pass, when the time had come for Him to be received up, that He steadfastly set His face to go to Jerusalem & 53 His face was set for the journey to Jerusalem. Prophecy Isaiah 51...

Jesus would not be moved, he would not be shaken, though the devil himself tempted him with riches and power to not go to the cross, He wasn't moved, the cause was greater than his comfort! The Jews tried to make Him their earthly king, He rather slept in the fields His head resting on rocks, He could not be moved, the cause was greater than His comfort! The pharisees and sadducees tried to have him executed before his time... but Jesus, none of these things moved Him, hear Him saying! The cause is greater than the comfort.

But unlike Paul, who was surrounded by friends, Jesus would go to the cross in Jerusalem...alone. He would go through the payment and penalty of sin, the wrath of the Father...alone. Jesus would go to the grave...alone. He would not be moved, the cause was still greater, the cause was still worth more than His own life and companionship.

He would go to the cross alone so we would never have to face life, death, trial or tragedy alone! Jesus would face the wrath of God, and be separated from God, so we would never have to. He would endure a weight so unbearable it could crush and entire universe, so we would never have to carry such a burden. He would not be moved, HE would not be shaken, the cause was greater than His comfort...

Jesus would face death itself right in the face, and deal death the death blow of a lifetime, once and for all! All so that we would not have to... With an immovable, unshakeable, unmistakable, never stopping, always flowing love JEsus endured it all because the cause was greater than His own comfort.

What was this cause, you ask? The comfort was His own life. The cause...the reason for all this suffering, the reason and cause for this weight, shame and separation...dear friend, you didn't know, it was you. You were the cause that caused Him to suffer so. We were the reason He set His eyes like flint to go to the cross....all because of LOVE!

Paul was set like flint on Jerusalem, he knew his Lord had called him there. God had set a course for Paul, like He set a course for Jesus that would change the course of history forever! God has set a course for all of mankind.

The question arises, do I have a course? The answer is, of course!

Paul thought of himself as a runner who had a race to finish, and nothing would keep Paul from finishing the race with joy. Additionally, Paul speaks of my race – he had his race to run, we have our own – but God calls us to finish it with joy.

It may be a course with trials and trails with tears that travels across rugged terrain....but it will be for your ultimate and immediate and everlasting JOY!

Paul knew what we hope to learn through the study of the word of God...that by counting his life in the flesh and nothing, he would find his joy....where? In Jesus. WE can't be moved, shaken or derailed ever. How can anything separate us from the love of Christ? It can't, nothing can expect for a heart that turns away or a heart that has never turned towards him.

28 Therefore take heed to yourselves and to all the flock, among which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers, to shepherd the church of God which He purchased with His own blood. Notice the order, You Take heed yourselves, you elders & only then pay attention to the family of God, take heed... turn your whole attention to, what? The whole counsel of God! The council of God, His word, the bible... protects us from sneaky, hidden, ravenous, grievous wolves, and selfish popular players in church...

29 For I know this, that after my departure savage wolves will come in among you, not sparing the flock. 30 Also from among yourselves men will rise up, speaking perverse things, to draw away the disciples after themselves. 31 Therefore watch, and remember that for three years I did not cease to warn everyone night and day with tears.

After all this retelling of his example, of how he lived as a follower of Jesus, after Paul gives careful instruction on how to take care of the family of God...you might think he gives a stern warning to leadership and elders to really govern and rule over the church...but not so. He does what Jesus did in a way....

32 "So now, brethren, I commend you to God and to the word of His grace, which is able to build you up and give you an inheritance among all those who are sanctified.

Paul is getting ready to depart, seeing this crew for last time. Instead of laying a bunch of guilt trips on them...

In the OT it was law, commands, do's don'ts, as way to keep a little right with God, but also to show the HEbrews and us that we just can not get close to God by following all the rules. 465 OT commands? Woe is me I am undone, a man of unclean lips!

Jeremiah 33.11 For this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, declares the Lord: I will put my law within them, and I will write it on their hearts. And I will be their God, and they shall be my people.

... after the resurrection, Jesus breathed His HS into them, the HS came upon them and gave the disciples power, abilities beyond humanly possible, but more so...they had a never stopping, always present, in the midst of God, closeness with the Lord, all because teh HS dwelt inside each believer!

Paul, he tells the elders of Ephesus, I am leaving, but I am leaving you in the hands of God, you don't need to worry about a thing. YEs be aware, yes be harmless dove, wise serpent. Yes look after the family by teaching them the word, showing them Jesus, live humbly with one another, do life together, don't be derailed by life and circumstance, you must set your eyes to the heavens in a way that makes you so earthly good...ppl just fall in love with Jesus because you exist!

But ultimately, I am not concerned in the least, because I commend you to God, put you in His trust and care... I know that the HS will be with you....

36 And when he had said these things, he **knelt down and prayed with them all**. 37 Then they all wept freely, and fell on Paul's neck and kissed him, 38 sorrowing most of all for the words which he spoke, that they would see his face no more. And **they accompanied him to the ship**.