**Unstoppable - wk 1 - What Now?**

**The baskets are up - eggs are eaten - and the chocolate is gone...**

**The Easter service is done, Jesus rose from the grave... now what?**

**Acts picks up the story right after the resurrection**

**Imagine there was no Acts – how did we get here?**

**Acts is the unleashing of all that Jesus taught - it's the - what now?**

**The next couple months we're going on an adventure!**

**You'll see baby Christians grow up – and the church explode.**

**\*\*How the Church (Livingway) started**

**The Backdrop - Acts is...**

* **A continuation of Luke's gospel - condensed narrative - 30 yrs**
* **Descriptive, not prescriptive (we are not to do everything they did)**
* **Acts has an innocence and child like wonder - No manual supplied**
* **Acts is - How it happened and how it can happen**
* **Not the Acts of the Holy Spirit – but – Acts of the Apostles**

**How did a group of Christ followers in a hostile pagan culture - turn the world upside down within one generation?**

**The “what now” - Acts 1:1 - In my former book, (gospel of Luke) Theophilus, (“God lover” Roman convert to Christ – Luke was addressed to him also) I wrote about all that Jesus began to do and to teach 2 (3yrs of ministry - hundreds of followers – 12 disciples) until the day he was taken up to heaven, after giving instructions through the Holy Spirit to the apostles he had chosen.**

**1. Jesus was clear on His mission - Luke affirms Jesus’ purpose.**

**Jesus, God is the flesh, died to take away our sins. He is the Messiah.**

**"But the story does not end with an empty tomb Theo"**

**Jesus’ mission continues through these pages.**

**Vol 1 (Luke) Acts of Christ / Vol 2 - Acts of the Body of Christ**

**3 After his suffering, (the cross) he presented himself to them 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.**

**40-days - fixed breakfast on the beach, met on the road and in homes – 500+ saw him alive. No doubt about Jesus was alive!**

**Spent this time to answer questions, share instructions, correct misunderstandings, ease fears, forgive sin and give guidance.**

**4 On one occasion, while he was eating with them, (lot or stories have this) he gave them this command: “Do not leave Jerusalem, but wait (wait? we are not good at waiting – and don’t like being told to stay out) for the gift my Father promised, (in OT) which you have heard me speak about. 5 For John baptized withwater, but in a few days you will be baptized (emersed) withthe Holy Spirit.”**

* **You may have knowledge of God, but now you need power of God**

**Christianity is more than information – it is transformation. Like water immersion, we are to be immersed in the Holy Spirit.**

**The Holy Spirit is God and spoken in context as a person.**

**HS is a who not a what. Jesus refers to the HS as gift / comforter/ Helper / Advocate / Teacher / Guide / power of God in us.**

**6 Then they gathered around him and asked him, “Lord, are you at this time going to restore the kingdom to Israel?” (still unclear - political kingdom was not his mission) 7 He said to them: “It is not for you to know the times or dates the Father has set by his own authority.**

* **Don't worry about the transition, focus on the mission**

**Don't focus on the end time, focus on the now time (the current)**

**Many are often obsessed with the end - books - movies - date setting - prophecy books - we crave the fear & anxiety of the end times. Jesus says - don't worry about it - just do what I tell you.**

**2. Jesus gave us a clear mission**

**The entire book in one verse - Acts 1:8 But you will receive power (dunamis) 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.” (given the power, purpose and the plan)**

* **The Purpose - saved (rescued / born again) for a unique purpose**

**Jesus is echoing His clear mission for his followers – your mission**

**Matt 28:19-20 - "Go and make disciples of all nations...**

**Mark 16:15 - Go into all the world and tell everyone the good news**

**Luke 24:47 - that the forgiveness of sins will be told to every nation**

**John 20:21- I’m sending you into the world to tell them of my forgiveness**

**Jesus began w/ "come and I'll make you fishers of men." (Mt 4:19)**

**We are not merely saved for heavens sake and hells avoidance**

**We are commissioned - unleashed with purpose to tell the world.**

* **The Plan - of mission - "Jerusalem - Judea - Samaria"**

**Jerusalem (Acts 2-7) Judea / Samaria (Acts 8-12) Earth (Acts 13-28)**

**Start at your home, then work your way out - start now - today (Dallas – Texas – US – the border... to the ends of the earth.”**

**"…you will be my witnesses" BTW - Are you a witness? Really?**

**Mar-toos / martyrs- proven genuine testimony thru death**

**Mission is clear, but it will be difficult. There will be opposition.**

**You may not have a seminary degree – but you can be a Witness – tell what we know and have seen – wherever we go.**

**3. Jesus gave us power for this mission – the Power**

**Acts 1:8 But you will receive (dunamis) when the Holy Spirit comes on you;**

**Power for what? To live a life unto God and tell the good news of Jesus with boldness. The reason we are here today is because the early church empowered by the HS obeyed.**

**The Holy Spirit - is the power of God in us to do God’s will.**

**The HS is not an experience – He is the power of God in us! He is alive and working in the world and church – we are invited to be a apart of it.**

**You might think - I can't do that... Guess what?**

* **God uses unexpected people to accomplish his mission**

**We can't forget who this rag tag team of people were - Jesus called farmers, fishermen, regular Joes, society rejects, immoral tax collectors, zealous fighters, and sinners caught in the act - to follow.**

**Acts 1:9 After he said this, he was taken up before their very eyes, and a cloud hid him from their sight. (Like letting go a balloon. He did not die again - he sits on the throne of God) 10 They were looking intently up into the sky as he was going, (3yrs walking w/ him - blind eyes open, sick healed, conquered death its - finally back, now it's goodbye? But Jesus, I want you to stay!) when suddenly two men (angels) dressed in white stood beside them. 11 “Men of Galilee,” they said, “why do you stand here looking into the sky? (waiting…) This same Jesus, who has been taken from you into heaven, will come back in the same way you have seen him go into heaven.” (Go on get - now get started)**

**\*\* Jesus next mission - His return. He's coming back. He is not neglectful or forgotten. You should have an expectation of His return. The resurrection is proof of his return.**

**Parable: Jesus shared story of a boss leaving his wealth (the gospel) in the hands of his servants. Some did great things w/ it - others hid it. The master will come back to see what we have done with what he has given. What will he find?**

**Are we too scared to tell to a friend, help a neighbor, reach out to a stranger? Paralyzed by people – and married to materialism & self obsessed. Jesus is will be back, what will he find?**

**Acts 1:12 Then the apostles returned to Jerusalem from the hill called the Mount of Olives, a Sabbath day’s walk from the city. (Just across the valley) 13 When they arrived, they went upstairs to the room where they were staying. (John Mark’s house) Those present were Peter, John, James and Andrew; Philip and Thomas, Bartholomew and Matthew; James son of Alphaeus and Simon the Zealot, and Judas son of James. (eleven) 14 They all joined together constantly in prayer, along with the women and Mary the mother of Jesus, and with his brothers. (There's tremendous power in unity and prayer)**

**And then there were... 11 - What follows is one of the many weird events that take place in the book of Acts…**

**1:15 In those days Peter stood up among the believers (a group numbering about a hundred and twenty) 16 and said, “Brothers and sisters, the Scripture had to be fulfilled in which the Holy Spirit spoke long ago through David concerning Judas, who (the HS) served as guide for those who arrested Jesus. (God's design was Judas. God is faithful and always in control) 17 He was one of our number and shared in our ministry.”**

**Imagine a friend for three years - a traitor - a murderer - the anger - resentment - But guess what? God is in control.**

**18 (With the payment he received for his wickedness, Judas bought a field; there he fell headlong, his body burst open and all his intestines spilled out. 19 Everyone in Jerusalem heard about this, so they called that field in their language Akeldama, that is, Field of Blood.) (Pretty gruesome)**

**Luke tells us like it is - Judas was not a hero - not a victim - he was the villain. Luke's gospel calls him a tool of Satan & a traitor John 6 - Jesus says Judas was not a believer even though he followed)**

**Matthew (Judas hung himself) focus on sin of suicide - not a contradiction. If you told someone, you went to church and sang songs and prayed, and person next to you said you heard a sermon, who would be wrong? 2 pieces of complementary info. Judas hung himself - at some point he fell to the ground and burst open. Luke the physician writing to Greeks (neutral about suicide) focused on medical gore.**

**20 “For,” said Peter, “it is written in the Book of Psalms: “‘May his place be deserted; let there be no one to dwell in it,’ and, “‘May another take his place of leadership.’ (Quoting Psalm 69 & 109 - Peter is making an argument for the replacement of Judas - Jesus wanted 12 - we need to have 12) 21 Therefore it is necessary to choose one of the men who have been with us the whole time the Lord Jesus was living among us, 22 beginning from John’s baptism to the time when Jesus was taken up from us. For one of these must become a witness with us of his resurrection.”**

**2 Requirements - 1. They had known and walked w/ Jesus (3 yrs from John's baptism to now - to continue Christ mission, they better know what He taught) 2. They had to have witnessed Jesus’ resurrection (no hearsay - they were to be a witness of it)**

**What stands out to me - we never heard of them before this day – but there all along. They were setting up chairs, tearing down gear, passing buckets, cleaning up after events, never missed a moment to be a part and help and now a chance to be an apostle. WHY them?**

**They were faithful- God is looking for the next leader. Are you faithful? God uses unexpected people to accomplish his mission**

**(came up w/ 2 names) 23 So they nominated two men: Joseph called Barsabbas (also known as Justus) and Matthias. 24 Then they prayed, “Lord, you know everyone’s heart. Show us which of these two you have chosen 25 to take over this apostolic ministry, which Judas left to go where he belongs.”**

**And so they had a board meeting and voted - they brought him before the church, let him preach and then voted. No - throw dice**

**26 Then they cast lots, and the lot fell to Matthias; so he was added to the eleven apostles. (no bylaws, no denominational guidelines, no elder vote, or church ballot - just casting lots - dice/ cubes/ bones/ ceremonial stones)**

**Pro 16:33– “The lot is cast, but its every decision is from the Lord.”**

**They believe Jesus himself caused the lot to fall to him.**

**Two major themes of Acts (that will come up again and again)**

**The sovereignty of God and total dependence on God**

**Rather then pick the wrong person - God you do it. You are sovereign and in charge. We might mess it up. Toss the dice!**

**You got to love the purity of the early church - the innocent faith**

**This is a great example of the description not prescription**

**In fact, they did not do this practice after the H.S. came (Acts 2)**

**When making decisions today, we have: the Word of God, the Holy Spirit, Fellow Christians and Pastoral counsel**

* + **But their heart in this matter is still to be applied**

**It was complete abandon to God's will - Do you want to truly experience God's will? Humble dependence on God is freedom.**

**And so this nobody Matthias, became a somebody, because he was faithful. (Revelation - the 12 are before the throne of God)**

**BTW - The other guy shows up later in Acts as a power player**

**Maybe you are starting off new w/ Jesus - Acts 1 tells us what they did**

**The What Now? \***

* **They Obeyed (the words of Jesus) - v4. Do not leave Jerusalem...**

**1:15-16 - studied & searched the scriptures. They whole heartedly submitted to God's instruction and words. You need to read God's Word**

* **They Connected - v14. They all joined together constantly...**

**They met together / relied on each other / grew together / listened for God together - You need to plug into a Church**

* **They Prayed - v.14 They all joined together constantly in prayer…**

**They began to talk to God - and seek his will for their life -**

**You need to start talking to God - prayer**

* **They Trusted - v. 26 Then they cast lots, and the lot fell to Matthias...**

**It was complete abandoned - to God's will - God your will be done**

**You need to start trusting God with your life and future – childlike faith**

* **They Waited - v.** **4 “Do not leave Jerusalem, but wait...**

**For power to tell the world... They expected great things to come**

**You need to have an expectation that God is working in you.**

**Do you expect God to work in your life?**

**Humbly waiting for God’s direction.**

**We got the “what now?” Next week we get - the but how?**

**I'll be preaching on one of the most controversial chapters ever.**

**Dice at the door - to remind you to tryst God this week and always. (don't use it to make decisions :)**

**Blue tooth devices – you are connected. Holy Spirit enables us in the same way to produce something as ones “connected” and empowered.**

**I have it – but am I connected – tuned in and listening.**

**Next week - the Holy Spirit**

**Filled / baptism – same or different?**

**Prayer for renewed filling – baptism**

**Like a child walking with dad – and being swept up in his arms and loved on (Chandler wk 1 – 30 min)**

**The purpose of the power – is to be his witnesses – not for experiences! If bold witness does not follow – than it was not the spirit.**