

▼ **The Spirit Jump-Starts The Church - Part 14**

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- **Read the Passage: Acts 4:32-37**
- **Read the Passage: Acts 5:1-11**
- **Read the Passage: Acts 5:12-16**
- **Read the Passage: Acts 5:17-42**
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- **Read the Passage: Acts 5:17-42**

▼ **Sermon's Purpose (what listeners should do)**

- Understand the continuing flow of events in Acts 2-5.
- Understand the role of divine judgment in the early days of the church.
- Understand the elements of the Good News.
- Recognize and imitate the way the apostles and the rest of the believers spoke about Jesus and handled persecution.
- Understand how to start applying the Gospel to injustice.

▶ **Understand the continuing flow of events in Acts 2 - 5.**

▶ **Understand the role of divine judgment in the early days of the church.**

▼ **Understand the elements of the Good News.**

- Peter and the apostles testify to the resurrection of Jesus.
- Peter and the apostles reiterate that the leaders and people had caused Jesus' crucifixion.
- God has exalted Jesus to his right hand as Prince and Savior to give repentance and forgiveness of sins to Israel.
- The apostles continue teaching and proclaiming that the Christ is Jesus. - See Psalm 2.
Why do the nations conspire and the peoples plot in vain? The kings of the earth take their stand and the rulers gather together against the LORD and against his Anointed One. "Let us break their

chains,” they say, “and throw off their fetters.” The One enthroned in heaven laughs; the Lord scoffs at them. Then he rebukes them in his anger and terrifies them in his wrath, saying, “I have installed my King on Zion, my holy hill.”

I will proclaim the decree of the LORD: He said to me, “You are my Son; today I have become your Father. Ask of me, and I will make the nations your inheritance, the ends of the earth your possession. You will rule them with an iron scepter; you will dash them to pieces like pottery.” Therefore, you kings, be wise; be warned, you rulers of the earth. Serve the LORD with fear and rejoice with trembling. Kiss the Son, lest he be angry and you be destroyed in your way, for his wrath can flare up in a moment. Blessed are all who take refuge in him.

▼ Lifestyle

- The lifestyle of the believers was an important component of the good news!
- ▼ Passover was a template. It was a common meal, often shared by multiple families that drew a picture of what God had done by freeing the Israelites from slavery in Egypt. It’s significance was a topic for reflection:
 - ▼ Passover questions:
 - Why is this night different from all other nights?
 - On all other nights, we eat either unleavened or leavened bread, but tonight we eat only unleavened bread?
 - On all other nights, we eat all kinds of vegetables, but tonight, we eat only bitter herbs?
 - On all other nights, we do not dip [our food] even once, but tonight we dip twice?
 - On all other nights, we eat either sitting or reclining, but tonight we only recline?
 - ▼ Passover answers:
 - We eat only matzah because our ancestors could not wait for their breads to rise when they were fleeing slavery in Egypt, and so they were flat when they came out of the oven.
 - We eat only Maror, a bitter herb, to remind us of the bitterness of slavery that our ancestors endured while in Egypt.
 - The first dip, green vegetables in salt water, symbolizes the replacing of our tears with gratitude, and the second dip, Maror in Charoses, symbolizes the sweetening of our burden of bitterness and suffering.
 - We recline at the Seder table because in ancient times, a person who reclined at a meal was a free person, while slaves and servants stood.
 - We eat only roasted meat because that is how the Pesach/Passover lamb is prepared during sacrifice in the Temple at Jerusalem.
- ▼ Jesus took this symbol of Passover and transformed it for his disciples into a common meal that symbolized what he had done for them: Communion
 - ▼ Communion

- Bread - Jesus' body.
- ▼ Blood - Jesus' blood
 - ▼ Drinking blood was forbidden to the Israelites:
 - Genesis 9:4-6
 - Leviticus 3:17
 - ▼ David identifies water given to him with the life blood of the men who risked their lives to get it for him.
 - 2 Samuel 23:13-17 - David refused to benefit from the unexpected risk they took.
 - By drinking Jesus' blood we are accepting benefit from the sacrifice of his life.
 - This daily practice helped form the culture of the early church.
 - Meeting together as family across biological boundaries to proclaim the Lord's death and to picture for the world around them his resurrection.
 - ▼ This meal took place in homes that were not as private as ours:
 - Luke 7:36-50
 - 1 Corinthians 14:22-25
 - This creates something that outsiders can ask about: Why do you people do this?
- ▶ **Recognize and imitate the way the apostles and the rest of the believers spoke about Jesus and handled persecution.**
- ▼ **Understand how to start applying the Gospel to injustice.**
 - Start from Scratch!
 - Make Disciples!
 - Milestones
 - Questions For Activists
 - Questions For Disciples
- ▼ **Start from Scratch!**
 - In the Bible God reveals his plan for reclaiming this broken world. Many, many churches either ignore this or get it wrong. Starting from scratch gives you your best chance of getting God's agenda right!
 - ▼ Do not get hung up on what hypocrites have said or done in the past. Deal with them the way Jesus did:
 - When they confronted him, he called them on their hypocrisy to their face.
 - He warned his disciples not to imitate them.
 - ▼ He never removed any of them or struck any of them dead.

- His plan did not require his followers to search for and remove hypocrites and faithless teachers.
- His plan did require his followers to be faithful disciples.
- He never allowed hypocrites to derail his plan to make disciples.
- If you find yourself dwelling on the history of hypocrisy and failure in the church, you are probably not making disciples.
- You need a curriculum - a plan. You can't start from scratch if you don't have a plan with specific content. We've given you a plan. What's is it based on?

▼ **Make Disciples! - Matthew 28:18-20**

- Train people fully! Disciples are people who are in the process of being fully trained. A person is not your disciple just because you spent time with them and gave them good advice.
- Discipleship is only possible if you start with believers who are hungry and you have a specific plan.
- If you don't start with hungry people, they won't stick with your training. If you don't have a specific plan, you won't know when you're finished. How long should it take you?

▼ **Eat Jesus' flesh and drink his blood - John 1:1-14; John 6:22-71**

- Jesus gave his disciples a powerful metaphor for how they were to follow him.
- Meditate on it in order to fully incorporate it into your life.

▼ **Milestones on the way to full training - You can't deal with injustice God's way if you don't understand the biblical narrative:**

▼ **Matthew 1**

- God's ancient plan to reclaim this broken world through his chosen people has been reactivated through Jesus.

▼ **Matthew 2**

- Escape to Egypt - Jesus was a refugee. You and your disciples might need to be refugees and/or care for refugees.
- Murder of the innocents - Sometimes horrible injustices take place even as God is moving his plan forward. Your disciples need to understand this biblically. They must be prepared to encounter injustice early in their training.

▼ **Matthew 3**

- John the Baptist - John's baptism essentially called the Jews who responded to him to act as if they were starting from scratch by doing what Jewish converts did. If your disciple has a church background, this is good time to remind him/her of the importance of starting from scratch and letting go of his/her church upbringing.

▼ Matthew 4

- Jesus in the wilderness - Jesus symbolically re-enacts Israel's experience but, where Israel got it wrong, Jesus gets it right. He resists the temptation to misuse his power, do miracles for show, take a shortcut to reclaiming the world's kingdoms. This is a good time to remind your disciple how important it is to do things Jesus' way.

▼ Matthew 5 - 7

- Sermon on the Mount - This is basic (not advanced) Christianity. If your disciple gets this wrong, you can't really move forward.

▼ Matthew 8 - 28

- Keep going!

▼ Acts

- Now that you know what Jesus taught, watch how his disciples put it into practice.

▼ **Questions For Activists:**

- What do you want? Can you express it in concrete actionable steps?
- Is the action you are advocating primarily about expressing how you feel or getting someone in authority to make a change.
- Who has the ability to give you what you want? Do they understand what you want? Do they actually know how to do it?
- How precisely do the actions you are advocating get you what you want? Are you engaging in magical thinking?
- Who is in charge of this event? What is their track record for events like this?
- What outcome do we want? How will we know when we've achieved it?
- How might this event go wrong? What steps have been taken to avoid undesirable outcomes?

▼ **Questions For Disciples:**

- Have you encountered a place "where the pain is"?
- Do you have any believers partnering with you?
- Have you spent enough time listening and serving to understand the problem?
- Do you love the people in pain?
- What is God showing you about their needs?
- Are you able to "dream big" and trust God to bring about the solutions through you?

▼ **Conclusion**

- ▼ Why is this important? God's plan is to make disciples:
 - Making disciples requires "all hands on deck"!

- Disciples know, understand, and live by the “full message of this new life”.
- The evil in the world is pervasive cannot be overcome simply by identifying “bad people” and removing them.
- ▼ Disciples learn how to overcome evil without making it worse. This cannot be said for mere converts and certainly cannot be said for people who are merely religious.
 - Look around you. What happens when religious people try to fix things?
 - Disciples have allowed God to make them sensitive (to his Spirit and to others) and humble. Because they truly love God and their neighbor, they care about the impact that their solutions have on others.
 - Disciples want to be like Jesus.
- ▼ Make disciples!
 - Collaborate with your brothers and sisters in Christ and develop new relationships with unchurched people.
 - Ask the Father to guide you in leading people through the five thresholds.
 - Share the gospel. The best preparation is to practice, make mistakes, learn from them, and try again.
- ▶ Don't let anything distract you from your mission to make disciples.
 - I want to see people who are hurting and in need discover that God has a plan to transform their world.
 - I want to see ordinary believers discover how God wants to use them to draw others into his Kingdom and transform the world through them. That excites me!
 - What about you?

▼ Followup

▼ Discussion Questions

- Help each other avoid straw man arguments (look it up)!
- What did Jesus mean when he told his disciples to eat his flesh and drink his blood (John 6:22-71)? How might you respond to this teaching in your own life? Note - These two questions give you an opportunity to illustrate this teaching in the way you go about answering them.
- Share about a time in the past when you had to deal with injustice. What examples of Jesus' teaching apply. How did your response line up with Jesus's teaching?
- What examples of injustice are uppermost in your thinking right now?
- How are you tempted to deal with them? How will you actually deal with them?