

ACTS

HANDOUT

KEY POINTS

- Could be called the “Acts of the Holy Spirit”
 - Reversal of the Tower of Babel (Gen. 11) where language was confused & nations separated
 - Pentecost gathered persons from every nation into one united fellowship
- Persecution served a purpose in solidifying the early church’s faith, practice, and spread
 - The church grows despite Paul’s imprisonment
 - The church is proven not to be politically subversive (Acts 16:39; 17:6; 18:12; 19:37; 23:29; 25:25; 26:31)
 - Ordinary people empowered to perform extraordinary feats by the Spirit
- Shift in how leaders are chosen & decisions made – from casting lots to asking the Spirit
- Provides a template for obeying the Great Commission (using the numerous speeches contained in the book). Gospel proclamation can be outlined as:
 - Promises of God in the Old Testament are fulfilled
 - Messiah has come in Jesus of Nazareth
 - Jesus did good & mighty works by the power of God
 - Jesus was crucified according to the purpose of God
 - Jesus was raised from the dead by the power of God
 - Jesus now reigns by the power of God
 - Jesus will come again to judge & restore all things for the purposes of God
 - All who hear should repent & be baptized
- The early church truly believed Jesus was coming back...and SOON!
 - Nothing has changed. In fact, it’s getting closer every day.
 - What is your level of urgency toward holy living, gospel proclamation, and church expansion?

DIFFERENCE BETWEEN FALSE & TRUE REPENTANCE

- False Repentance
 - No change of attitude toward the sin, only grief over the consequences of its exposure
 - Feelings of regret that are centered in self-pity & founded in selfishness – “Look how horrible my life is....why is God allowing this?”
 - Feelings of fear without a hatred of the hypocrisy of their double life (one way in church, another way outside)
 - Comes down to compartmentalizing life, wearing different “hats”
 - Not recognizing that all the various roles in life actually interconnect
 - Fear of hell that never really goes away because of refusing to acknowledge they & their sins deserve it

- Feelings about sin & the desire to do it remain unchanged – no desperate action to do anything about it
- Wants no public knowledge of repentance or the fact they sinned
 - Leads to sweeping things under the carpet
 - When sin exposed, they are drawn to the altar, but the sin is talked about in favorable terms & smoothing over the enormity of the sin
- Only partial reformation of conduct (which is generally forced & half-hearted) – Generally go back to previous behaviors but in less visible ways
- Tends to be extremely self-righteous & often legalistic
 - Becomes judgmental of others caught in similar sin
 - May even attempt to expose others doing what they themselves have not confessed
- Hardens the heart, closes out conviction, sears the conscience & gives a false sense of security
- True Repentance
 - Conscious change of mind, views, & feelings in regard to sin
 - See sin as God sees it & their heart hates the sin
 - Don't see God as harsh in judgment, but just, righteous, & merciful
 - Recognize they & their sin deserve hell
 - Want to see others saved from similar sin
 - Desire to keep sinning is gone
 - Sin is not desirable but revolting
 - Astonished they could have ever sinned in the way they did or craved evil things
 - Reformation & permanent change of conduct & character
 - Honest confession and desire for restitution wherever possible
- Examine yourself!!
 - Put your heart on the witness stand and examine it
 - Examine = "to pierce through" – go to the deepest parts of private life and thought life, not just the surface
 - Examine your public life – cheating, stealing, lying, lusting, swearing, etc.
 - Examine private life – lacking fear of the Lord, prayerless, going through motions of devotions & church, Jesus isn't really the One your mind drifts to, etc.
 - Examine passion for the lost – don't really care about the spiritual condition of others (that they are going to hell without Christ), prayers for the lost lack energy, passion, & emotion, lack of love trumps reaching out to others with the gospel message