



Sermon Text: Acts 1:1-5

Sermon Date: July 23, 2017

On Sunday we began a new sermon series through the book of Acts. Acts tells the story of Christianity's growth from Jerusalem, to Judea and Samaria, and to all nations. It is a history of Christ's church empowered, unleashed, opposed but unstoppable. On Sunday, we focused our attention on the prologue, seeing three main points.

ACTS IS PART TWO OF A SINGLE STORY

In the first verse, the author (Luke) mentions his "first book." In that book, Luke focused upon "all that Jesus began to do and teach" until his resurrection. That first book is our *Gospel of Luke*. Acts is volume 2 of the story—the sequel, telling what Jesus continued to do and teach by the Holy Spirit through His apostles. Our passage is like the one-minute summary that precedes a two-part television episode ("Previously on...").

ACTS IS RELIABLE, RESEARCHED HISTORY

It is also important to remember that Acts is a history book. The prologue to the *Gospel of Luke* (Luke 1:1-4), which is meant to introduce all of Luke-Acts, makes it clear that Luke writes not only as a theologian, but also a trustworthy historian.

- He speaks of these events as real, verifiable **historical events**. "*The things that have been accomplished among us...*" In Acts, Luke speaks of how Jesus "*presented himself alive to them after his suffering by many proofs...*"
- Luke also mentions that his writing is not based on hearsay, but **contemporary eyewitnesses**. "*... just as those who from the beginning were witnesses and ministers of the word have delivered them to us...*" In fact, Luke himself was an eyewitness to some of the events in Acts, which is why he switches to the first-person plural pronoun (we) in sections of the story.
- Beyond this, Luke conducted **personal research** into things he wrote about, drawing upon eyewitness and written testimony. "*In as much as many have undertaken to compile a narrative of the things that have been accomplished among us... it seemed good to me also, having followed all things closely for some time past...*"
- After his personal research, Luke gathered all the evidence to present an **orderly account** of all that had transpired. "*... to write an orderly account for you, most excellent Theophilus...*"
- The reason Luke wrote such a reliable and researched history was so that Theophilus could have a **confident faith**, certain that all he was taught was true and trustworthy. "*that you may have certainty concerning the things you have been taught.*"

As Christians, we too must know that our faith is grounded in fact. Jesus really did live. He really did die. He really was raised and really is reigning. Only a confident faith will drive us out of our comfort zones and into our communities as witnesses for Christ.

ACTS IS A RECORD OF THE CHURCH ON MISSION

I. Howard Marshall says, "Luke makes it clear that in his view the essential task of the church is mission. He says remarkably little about the inner life of the church and concentrates most of his attention on this aspect of the church's task." I want this emphasis of the church on mission to challenge us each week as we walk through this book.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. What stood out to you from the sermon and the biblical text from this Sunday?
2. Why is it important for you to have a confident faith, knowing that the Christian faith is grounded in fact?
3. Do you feel that you are living your life on mission "to make disciples everywhere by exalting Christ in everything"? End by praying for us—individually and corporately—to live on mission.