

Sunday Sermon Review: Week of May 2nd, 2021

Sermon Series: The Book of Acts

Sermon: Healthy Commitments for the Church

Speaker: Pastor Mike Burnette

Icebreaker

- What is your favorite thing to eat for breakfast?

Conversation Starters and Sermon Review

- What stands out the most to you from this sermon? What challenged you? Is there anything that you have questions about?
- What has been your biggest takeaway from Acts 1?

I. Committed to Right Devotions (Acts 1:12-14)

a. Devoted to Obeying Jesus

b. Devoted to Life Together

- Is there something you're waiting on God for? How do things go when you try to press forward on your own? How can you remind yourself of God's timing when it seems like it's taking too long?
- Are there situations or things in your life where you don't mind waiting? What makes waiting hard? Does your devotion change the longer you wait?
- Are you trying to obey out of intellectual obedience or out of your love for Jesus? Obedience seems so simple, but why is it so difficult?
- Pastor Mike said, "Don't be concerned with the ends of the world when you're not concerned with the end of your street." How does

your devotion look to those closest to you if you're too distracted by those further away?

- Is there a difference between connecting to devotions versus being committed to devotions? What are they? Where do you lie?
- As the leader of your house, are you leading your entire family to Jerusalem or are some being left behind? How can you get them onboard? Why is this important? How do you see your role in helping them know Jesus?

II. Committed to a Biblical Worldview (Acts 1:15-20)

- Sometimes we can find ourselves falling into a place where practices of faith become a routine. What are some ways that we can keep attending church, reading our Bible, and gathering in small groups fresh?
- When you confront those you disagree with, do you shove them the way you think they should go or do you gently guide them toward a better path?
- How much time do you spend in the Bible and how does this reflect when there is chaos around you? Are you reflecting fruits of the Spirit or what society says?
- How has looking to scripture changed how you look at the world?
- What are some worldly worldviews that you have struggled to put into biblical worldview?
- What's your idol? Who are you following and who are you leading people to? Who are you quoting? CNN, society, social media, the Bible?

III. Committed to Godly Leadership (Read Acts 1:21-26 as a group)

- What is the godly leadership that you have in your life right now? How can you get more of it?

- Not everything in the Bible is biblical. For example, in Acts 1:26, we read about the apostles casting lots or “rolling the dice” to choose the next apostle instead of praying and being led by the Spirit. How does this challenge you?
- Can you imagine making major life decisions based on “rolling the dice”? Do you roll dice or do you wait and listen to the Holy Spirit? Why should prayer be an important part in our decision-making?
- What are some ways that you can be the godly leadership that our world needs right now?
- How can our small group do life together other than just meeting once a week?

Act On It

Encourage: With the state of our world today, it’s totally natural for us to want to make sense of all of the craziness and chaos. When we have something that we can use as a foundation, we find it easier to stand strong in times specifically designed to blow us over. What a blessing that as Christians, we don’t have to pound the pavement trying to find the truth. We get our foundation from God’s Word and Spirit. We just have to decide to ground ourselves in His truth and let that be the filter we use in our lives everyday. If we follow the example of the early Christ followers in this passage, not only can we have peace, but we get to help others have it as well. Our world needs leaders that stand on a biblical worldview, and God has empowered us to become these leaders. Receive your assignment today.

Ask: Pray for God to open your heart towards obedience to Him. Pray for opportunities to be loving, committed, and devoted to his people in your life. Pray for scripture to be guiding light to your path in everything that you do each day. If you struggle with listening to voices from social media, the news, etc., pray that God’s voice becomes the loudest. Pray for a new filter

on your life, one that promotes a biblical worldview. Pray for chances to lead from the Bible and to just be nice to people, offering a service, a kind word, or prayer.

Challenge: Take a look at the commitments you currently have in your life. Are they right? Do they align with obeying Jesus and being devoted to people? If not, start taking some next steps to get them aligned. Set an appointment on your calendar to spend time in the Word of God and grow your devotion. Use Proverbs 25:21-22 as a guiding verse and pray for the enemies in your life this week. Decide that instead of bargaining with God, you are going to obey and move as He has called you. If you feel God has put on a calling on your life and you've been still, start moving. If you don't know how to move, share it with the group to receive some direction and accountability. You are more than welcome to reach out to volunteers, staff, or pastors at our church as well.

Prayer Request and Prayer

Heavenly Father, thank you for being our leader and source of direction in a world of things that compete to be the number one voice in our lives. Thank you for the empowerment you've given us through the Holy Spirit to be ambassadors of your leadership. Lord, move us into the Great Commission that you've assigned to us. Set our hearts on being obedient to you and being committed to your people, no matter what. Help us be the godly leaders that you have called us to be by resisting what the world tells we should think and proclaiming your word as the absolute truth. Speak to us as we learn and grow in your word so that we can use it as the active, sharp, and power tool that you breathed it to be. Transform us and direct us to a way of life that honors you everyday. Amen.

Sunday Sermon Review: Week of April 25th, 2021

Sermon: Living in the Tree of Life

Speaker: Pastor Chris Hodges, Lead Pastor of Church of the Highlands

Icebreaker

- When you hear the word “Cajun”, what comes to mind?

Conversation Starters and Sermon Review

- What stands out the most to you from this sermon? What challenged you? Is there anything that you have questions about?

I. Genesis 2:8-9 (NIV)

Now the LORD God had planted a garden in the east, in Eden; and there he put the man he had formed. And the LORD God made all kinds of trees grow out of the ground—trees that were pleasing to the eye and good for food. In the middle of the garden were the tree of life and the tree of the knowledge of good and evil.

- What was your definition of the Tree of Life and the Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil before today’s sermon? How does your definition differ from or mirror the definition shared by Pastor Hodges?

II. Genesis 2:16-17 (NIV)

And the LORD God commanded the man, “You are free to eat from any tree in the garden; but you must not eat from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, for when you eat of it you will surely die.”

- We live in a fallen world and know how sin affects us and others. What do you think Adam and Eve thought the Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil was? Do you think they were naive about it since they didn’t live in a fallen world? How many times do we commit sins thinking we are doing the “right” thing?

III. Genesis 3:1-7 (NIV)

Now the serpent was more crafty than any of the wild animals the LORD God had made. He said to the woman, "Did God really say, 'You must not eat from any tree in the garden'?" The woman said to the serpent, "We may eat fruit from the trees in the garden, but God did say, 'You must not eat fruit from the tree that is in the middle of the garden, and you must not touch it, or you will die.' You will not surely die," the serpent said to the woman. "For God knows that when you eat of it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil." When the woman saw that the fruit of the tree was good for food and pleasing to the eye, and also desirable for gaining wisdom, she took some and ate it. She also gave some to her husband, who was with her, and he ate it. Then the eyes of both of them were opened, and they realized they were naked; so they sewed fig leaves together and made coverings for themselves.

- Can you recognize a time in your life where you thought you were making the "right decision", but it turned out to be a behavior-centered choice instead of a heart-focused decision?
- Has religion gotten in the way of your relationship with God? How has God broken through those barriers to get to your heart?

IV. Tree of Life versus The Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil

Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil - Do more to get to God.

Tree of Life - Receive what Jesus already did.

Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil - Try to get God's approval.

Tree of Life - Receive God's love for me.

Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil - Focuses of the external.

Tree of Life - Focuses on the internal.

Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil - Obey out of duty

Tree of Life - Obey out of delight.

- What's the "why" behind the reason that you read your Bible? Go to church? Attend a small group?
- Describe ways you've tried to earn God's approval. What would it mean for you to remember that God loves you freely and unconditionally?
- Which tree do you find yourself living in the most? Is your walk focused more on external behavior or on internal changes?
- Have you fallen in love with Jesus? Use 1 Corinthians 13 as reference if needed.

V. How to Eat from the Tree of Life

1. Fall in Love with Jesus
 2. Respond to sin with Life
 3. Guard Our Hearts from Going Back
- Read John 14:15. Which side of the comma are you living on?
 - Describe the first time you experience God's love. How has it changed you?
 - In your relationships (marriage, parenting, work, friendships), are you showing grace and letting love change them? If not, what can you do differently to share God's grace?
 - What guardrails do you have in place to keep you from falling back into a mindset of going through the motions to please God instead of developing a relationship with God?

Act On It

Encourage: From the very beginning, we were created to be in relationship with God, but then sin entered the world, and now our current reality has been crippled by sin. God saw this and intervened and bridged the gap we could not close on our own with the Blood of Jesus. Because of His love for us, we get to love Him again and our relationship with Him. Galatians 2:21

tells us that if righteousness were obtained through works, then Christ died for nothing. So find comfort in knowing that we can't disqualify ourselves from his grace nor can we work ourselves to the bone to earn badges of it. God loves us and values that relationship above all. Love him and the rest will follow effortlessly.

Ask: Ask God to erase any thoughts or feelings you have about needing to work your way to God. Pray for discernment to know the tree from which you are currently eating and invite God to realign anything that falls short of the Tree of Life. Pray for any loss of innocence or shame to be overcome by God's promises. Pray for a reminder of the grace that God gives you everyday so that you can extend it to others. Finally, pray for God to help you build and fortify guardrails in your life that can keep you from falling prey back to a life focused on your own works rather than relying on the God that can do anything.

Challenge: Take an inventory of your relationship with God. Which tree does it resemble the most? What are some next steps that you can take to move into the Tree of Life? If you need help, ask the group for help. Does grace come first in difficult situations with difficult people? Decide that grace will lead the way when you're dealing with difficult people or difficult times this week.

Prayer Request and Prayer

Heavenly Father, thank you so much for giving us your unconditional love. Help us put this lesson into action and give us the wisdom to know when we're straying from you. Help us know when we need to stop trying to control and just surrender. Help us crave your presence above all. Protect us from anything that takes us out of the Tree of Life and keeps us from the things that you have planned for us. Help us live life today to bring honor to your name. Let us find rest in knowing that when we mess up, you extend your grace while we learn the truth. Your truth will always prevail. Amen.

Sunday Sermon Review: Week of April 18th, 2021

Sermon Series: The Book of Acts

Sermon: God's Power In Us, For Others

Speaker: Pastor Mike Burnette

Icebreaker

- If you were a condiment, what would you be, and why?

Conversation Starters and Sermon Review

- What stands out the most to you from this sermon? What challenged you? Is there anything that you have questions about?

I. God's Kingdom, God's Timing (Acts 1:6-7)

- Being a Christian means that the Holy Spirit lives inside of you. How does this truth affect you?
- Has there been a time in your life where you were looking for something that you thought was important and then God gave you an answer that changed your perspective? Can you understand why his timing was different?
- How do you trust in God when you have questions that still haven't been answered? What has been your typical response when you don't understand?
- Rather than asking God to do or show you something, what would it look like to first stop, submit to his authority, and let Him move at his pace?

II. We Receive The Spirit's Power with Purpose (Acts 1:8)

- How has God equipped you as a witness (Relationships, abilities, or opportunities)? Are you currently using these tools?
- How has someone else's witness affected your walk with Christ?
- What have you seen in your life that you know is from God and how have you seen God use his power through you?
- Have you ever been in a situation where it was uncomfortable or costly, but you followed the call of God anyway? What was the outcome?
- When was the last time you told someone about Jesus? What did the conversation look like? What was the outcome?

III. We Work While We Wait (Acts 1:9-11)

- Do you feel like you need to know more about God before you can work for him? What are you waiting on to happen before you move? Has this become an excuse to never take the next step?
- Romans 8:34 tells us that Jesus is praying for us all the time. How does that affect you? Does it build your confidence in God's promises?
- How are you witnessing to your Jerusalem (Friends, family co-workers, etc.)? If you're not, what's one thing you can do today? How can you be a better witness, make disciples, and walk in the power of God?
- Has your love for Jesus been enough to motivate you to move for Jesus? If not, what has gotten in the way of your witnessing and how can you start to remove those obstacles?

Act On It

Encourage: How freeing is it to know that we don't need to know every single detail of every step of everything in the world? Our trust in God brings us rest and comfort. Once we submit to his timing, his assignment for our lives, and the power he gives us to move, the path ahead of us gets a lot clearer and way easier to traverse. He won't call us forward into something without telling us what to do and how to do it, and he will equip us to accomplish it. His timing will always be different than ours, but it will always be better. 2 Corinthians 4:16 reminds us that because of the Holy Spirit, we don't need to get discouraged, anxious, or fearful while we wait, for we are being renewed on the inside every day. That same power equips and strengthens us to move forward into our assignment. If we have received the Holy Spirit, what do we have to fear?

Ask: Pray for peace to reign over whatever difficulties you're currently facing so that trusting the Lord gets easier. Ask for the Holy Spirit to come alive in the places of your life where you feel stuck. Pray for more opportunities for God to use you and what he's done in you to witness to others. Ask to see the tools that he's already given you to be a witness and how to use them. Pray that any anxious thoughts or fears associated with sharing your story be cast out by the fulfillment of growing the Kingdom.

Challenge: Be willing to get a little uncomfortable and messy in your assignment from God. Start switching the focus from yourself and start thinking of how you can help someone else get closer with God. Start a conversation with someone you know that needs to know God. Ask what they think of when they hear the word "church" and use that to open the door for witnessing. As you're out this week, look for someone you don't know and ask if you can pray for them. Invite them to join you for small group or for church. While you read your Bible this week, take one scripture that you're reading and figure out one practical way to put it into practice.

Prayer Request and Prayer

Heavenly Father, we thank you for giving us the same power that you gave to Jesus. From now on, as we move through our lives, help us to focus on your will, to rely on your love, believe in your timing, and to trust that you have our best interest in mind. Remind us that even though it may bend, stretch, or hurt us, you are still loving us and growing us. The benefits of waiting on you outweigh anything that we could do on our own. Give us the wisdom and boldness to reach out to others and share what you've shown us, even if it makes us uncomfortable. Encourage us to tell others around us about what you gave so that they can come to know you and start a relationship with you. We're ready to start living in our assignment, send us out. We thank you for the power, the people that you are going to send us to, and for the life change that you will do in and through us. Amen.

Sunday Sermon Review: Week of April 11th, 2021

Sermon Series: The Book of Acts

Sermon: Acts 1:8 Prioritize Disciples

Speaker: Pastor Sam Johnson

Icebreaker

- What has been the best idea you have ever had?

Conversation Starters and Sermon Review

- What stands out the most to you from this sermon? What challenged you? Is there anything that you have questions about?

I. Jesus's Plan

- Why do you think Jesus came to be a SERVANT of the world rather than coming as the KING of the world?
- Jesus's strategy was to invest in 11 faithful men to carry the message to the world after He was gone.
 - Why do you think Jesus began with a small group of 11 disciples to begin the church?
 - What would it look like for you to join His mission to expand the church?

II. Called to Witness

- **Acts 1:8 ESV - But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you, and you will be my WITNESS in Jerusalem and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth."**
 - How has someone invested in you, and who is someone you can invest into?

- We do not all have to be on staff at a church or a small group leader to be a witness. We are ALL called to be witnesses to the ends of the earth. We are the greatest Christian that someone knows in your lives. How can YOU be a witness to those around you to grow the church? (see Titus 2:1-10)
- *“By the power of the Holy Spirit you will do greater things.”* - Pastor Sam Johnson
 - Have you invited the Holy Spirit to come alongside you to fulfill the mission God has given you?

III. Faith and Evidence

- **Heb 11:1 (KJV) – Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen.**
 - What EVIDENCE have you seen from the FAITH you have placed in God?
 - What have you seen that COULD be, and believe that it WOULD be?
- At the end of the sermon Pastor Mike asked how many churches that Pastor Sam Johnson helped plant over the years; rather than focusing on the number of buildings constructed. Pastor Johnson reminded us of the true goal, that HUNDREDS of THOUSANDS of lives were being changed by JESUS as a result of those buildings!
 - We may be doing great things but how can you make an impact in other’s lives?

Act On It

Encourage: It may take longer than we like but we must hold to our faith and God's evidence will come. It does not all fall on you to witness, the same spirit that raised Jesus from the dead, that gave the Apostles the ability to speak in tongues, also rests in you and this great HELPER will help you accomplish the task God has given you. Even Peter denied Jesus three times and Jesus still used him to build His church. The invitation to respond to His call is still open no matter if this is the first or fifth time He has called you.

Ask: Ask God to help you speak boldly as we see in Acts 9:28 as Saul (Paul) was speaking about God in Jerusalem. Pray for God to give you opportunities to witness to the world and those around you. In those opportunities do not worry about what you should say or that you may fail at the lack of knowledge for the Holy Spirit will give you the words to speak as we see in Luke 12:12.

Challenge: You can be a part of the ministry of Jesus Christ as well. Your place might look different from someone else's. Perhaps you are led to share the Gospel in your home with a small group, in your city as part of an outreach ministry, or out in the world on missions. Maybe you can donate your time or resources. How will you step out in faith? If you are interested in missions, contact Pastor Mike Campbell at mike.campbell@lifepointchurch.tv. If you have never been on a mission trip, would you be willing to go?

Prayer Request and Prayer

Dear Heavenly Father, send your Spirit and make known to us the plan you have before us. Guide us in your mission for us to take part in your great commission to speak the Gospel to the ends of the earth. Father, send people alongside us that will help us achieve these things for your glory. Help us to remember that you have given us so much, even the suffering

and brutal death of your son on the cross for all of us when none of us deserved it, and now we have the opportunity to share this message with others. Father, give us the boldness when the opportunity comes to share your love with those around us, Amen.

Sunday Sermon Review: Week of April 4th, 2021

Sermon Series: The Book of Acts

Sermon: The Promise Fulfilled

Speaker: Pastor Mike Burnette

Icebreaker

- What is your go-to karaoke anthem?

Conversation Starters and Sermon Review

- What stands out the most to you from this sermon? What challenged you? Is there anything that you have questions about?
- When someone makes a promise to you, what's the first thought that comes to your mind? Does it depend on the person? Why?

I. God Has Promised to Change Our Lives

Have group members take turns reading **Genesis 1:26, Jeremiah 31:33-34, Ezekiel 36:26-28, and John 14:15-17.**

- What does it mean for us to be “image bearers of God”? How do you feel knowing that you are the very image of God?
- What makes it difficult to trust in God’s promises? What is your typical response when you feel like your prayers aren’t being answered?
- How has your thankfulness for God’s promises helped move you toward living the life that God wants you to live? What can you change in your life today that would bring you closer to God?
- If someone were to look at your life, would they see that you are being led by the Holy Spirit? Do your actions show your love for God?

II. God Has Kept His Promise Through Jesus

Have your group read **Acts 1:3-5**.

- In what areas of your life do you often doubt God's promises? Where have you been putting your faith instead?
- How have you seen God's promises come alive for you so far? What ways has the Holy Spirit asked you to be faithful with where you're at now and what has been your response?
- How does being baptized with water differ from being baptized with the Holy Spirit? Does this challenge your previous thoughts on baptism? How have you seen the baptism described in Acts 1:5 in your own life?

III. God's Promise is For You, Today!

Have group members take turns reading **John 14:15, 2 Corinthians 6:2,** and **2 Corinthians 5:17**.

- Compare and contrast your life before and after becoming a new creation in Christ. If comfortable, share some of the significant transformations you've noticed or some of the areas that God is still refining.
- What are some promises of God that you need to choose to believe today? How can our group help?
- Many believe in God, but do you LOVE Him? Does He have your whole heart? Are there stumbling blocks that are keeping you from your identity as a new creation in Christ?

Act On It

Encourage: Promises made by people get broken all the time. When that happens, we get disappointed, we get angry, and we start doubting who's really in our corner. That's why we are truly blessed that we can find rest and comfort in God's promises. His promises are always there, and they are always true. When we mess up, He promises to fix it, but we have to be willing to let Him work. God's best transformational work takes place when we humble ourselves, set aside our doubts, and pursue our relationship with Him. Through Christ, God has proven His love for us. And because He knows the troubles that we face, God takes His love a little further and gifts us with His Spirit as empowerment, guidance, and direction toward living an eternal life in a broken world. As we get closer to God, our love for Him will grow, our hearts will change, and our actions will follow suit. We don't have to work to get it right because God IS right.

Ask: Ask to be reminded of God's promise to change your life and for the sight to see yourself as an image bearer of God, even when you mess up. Pray that you discover the areas in your life that He desires to change and how He wants you to love Him. Pray that any obstacles that are preventing you from giving your heart to God be removed to make room for the Living Water of the Holy Spirit. Pray for the affections of your heart to be renewed and to reflect God and His ways.

Challenge: As you go through the week, stop and think about how God walks with you. Is it evident that you are a new creation in Christ? In the areas of your life in which you're struggling, pray and ask God what promises can you lean on for strength. While you're having your morning coffee, sitting in traffic, or mowing the lawn, thank Him for the promise of new life and think of practical ways that you can use to show your gratitude. Is it getting baptized? Starting a small group? Getting involved with Serve Day on April 10th? Don't wait! Move forward in the strength of the Holy Spirit, believe His promise, and receive His promise.

Prayer Request and Prayer

Lord, we thank you for the gift of your Son, who died for us so that we can live with you, and who rose from the dead after paying the price for our sins. Thank you for the promise of the Holy Spirit because through that, we can walk with and live for you every day. For any areas in which we struggle to believe your Word or that we try to hide from you, we hand them over to you and pray for peace in knowing that your promises never fail. We invite you to come into our lives, wholeheartedly. We ask for you to move us into action - help us desire to do more than just believe. Give us joy, encouragement, and peace as we let you have our hearts and start living the new life you've given us. We love you Lord, and we praise you, Amen.