

“A.D. The Bible Continues”- Wk 4

“The Right Time to Stand”

New Life Community Church

INTRODUCTION

Our study of Acts continues this week as the church is empowered and grows through God’s Holy Spirit. The declaration of the truth of the Gospel has always faced strong opposition, but especially when the disciples in Jerusalem first declared it. What does it mean for you to take a stand for your faith, and what obstacles will you have to overcome to do so?

Ice Breaker (Optional—8 min)

What is one cause you have observed people taking a bold stand to defend?

STUDY QUESTIONS (45 MIN)

Stand for God not Man

Q1. Read Acts 4:1-3

Once the disciples had received power from the Holy Spirit they boldly proclaimed the good news of Jesus. How did the religious leaders respond? Have you ever encountered someone who reacted similarly when you have shared your faith? If so, why do you believe they had that reaction? (Did they feel jealousy, fear, threatened?)

Stand for God with Power & Passion

Q2. Read Acts 7:20; Acts 5:27-32; Acts 1:8

When questioned about the authority and power by which the crippled man was healed, the Holy Spirit enabled Peter’s response. What characterized his response in Acts 4:13? Even after this encounter the disciples boldly preached the gospel. What motivated them (Acts 5:29)? According to Acts 1:8, what should we be after receiving the Holy Spirit? What has God done in your life that you can’t help speaking about?

Stand for God with Compassion & Action

Q3. Read 1 John 3:16-18; Acts 2:44-45; Galatians 5:22

There was a culture of loving compassion amongst the believers in Jerusalem. How is God’s love for us connected to our love for others (1 John 3:16)? 1 John 3:18 tells us to love in deeds and truth, not only in our words. How is this love demonstrated in a practical sense (see

1 John 3:17, Acts 2:44-45)? What is it that can prevent us from expressing the kind of compassion described in the book of Acts?

Stand for God with Truth & Authenticity

Q4. Read Psalm 51:6; Joshua 7:1, 20-21; Acts 5:1-5

Psalm 51:6 tells us that God desires to see truth that comes from deep within us – “gut-level honesty”. In Joshua chapter 7 we see how the sin of Achan (stealing things devoted to God and hiding them) affected the people of Israel. When you read Peter’s explanation of Ananias’ and Sapphira’s deception in Acts 5:3-4, what insight do you gain into the spiritual significance of such sins? Where are you sometimes tempted to compromise your character? Are there areas you might be lying about to yourself, and to God? Set aside a few moments for prayer and reflection and ask God to show you any areas you have hidden that should be confessed and forgiven.

WRAP-UP

God sent His Holy Spirit at Pentecost, empowering the disciples to become bold witnesses to what they knew to be true – the good news that Jesus was raised from the dead and through Him, healing and salvation were now available to all. The Holy Spirit brought God’s people into a new community marked by love, compassion, authenticity and bold witness. That community of the Spirit continues today.

Memory Verse

But Peter and the apostles answered, "We must obey God rather than men."

Acts 5:29 ESV

PRAYER (20 MIN)

Ask your group to pray for you regarding one area where you can apply this study in your life: _____

Pray for your group members’ needs: (see back for more space) _____

Challenge: Ask God to help you see and respond to people in need in a healthy way.

Q1 Read Acts 4:1-3 ESV - 1 And as they were speaking to the people, the priests and the captain of the temple and the Sadducees came upon them, 2 greatly annoyed because they were teaching the people and proclaiming in Jesus the resurrection from the dead. 3 And they arrested them and put them in custody until the next day, for it was already evening.

Q2 Read Acts 4:7-20 in your Bible

Acts 5:27-32 ESV - 27 And when they had brought them, they set them before the council. And the high priest questioned them, 28 saying, "We strictly charged you not to teach in this name, yet here you have filled Jerusalem with your teaching, and you intend to bring this man's blood upon us." 29 But Peter and the apostles answered, "We must obey God rather than men. 30 The God of our fathers raised Jesus, whom you killed by hanging him on a tree. 31 God exalted him at his right hand as Leader and Savior, to give repentance to Israel and forgiveness of sins. 32 And we are witnesses to these things, and so is the Holy Spirit, whom God has given to those who obey him."

Acts 1:8 ESV - 8 But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you, and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth."

Q3 1 John 3:16-18 ESV - 16 By this we know love, that he laid down his life for us, and we ought to lay down our lives for the brothers. 17 But if anyone has the world's goods and sees his brother in need, yet closes his heart against him, how does God's love abide in him? 18 Little children, let us not love in word or talk but in deed and in truth.

Acts 2:44-45 ESV - 44 And all who believed were together and had all things in common. 45 And they were selling their possessions and belongings and distributing the proceeds to all, as any had need.

Galatians 5:22 ESV - 22 But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness,

Q4

Psalm 51:6 ESV - 6 Behold, you delight in truth in the inward being, and you teach me wisdom in the secret heart.

Joshua 7:1, 20-21 ESV - 1 But the people of Israel broke faith in regard to the devoted things, for Achan the son of Carmi, son of Zabdi, son of Zerah, of the tribe of Judah, took some of the devoted things. And the anger of the LORD burned against the people of Israel. ... 20 And Achan answered Joshua, "Truly I have sinned against the LORD God of Israel,

and this is what I did: 21 when I saw among the spoil a beautiful cloak from Shinar, and 200 shekels of silver, and a bar of gold weighing 50 shekels, then I coveted them and took them. And see, they are hidden in the earth inside my tent, with the silver underneath."

Acts 5:1-5 ESV - 1 But a man named Ananias, with his wife Sapphira, sold a piece of property, 2 and with his wife's knowledge he kept back for himself some of the proceeds and brought only a part of it and laid it at the apostles' feet. 3 But Peter said, "Ananias, why has Satan filled your heart to lie to the Holy Spirit and to keep back for yourself part of the proceeds of the land? 4 While it remained unsold, did it not remain your own? And after it was sold, was it not at your disposal? Why is it that you have contrived this deed in your heart? You have not lied to man but to God." 5 When Ananias heard these words, he fell down and breathed his last. And great fear came upon all who heard of it.

Prayer requests con't _____

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