

“TO BE CONTINUED...”

ACTS 29

The history of the church is being written through the lives of every disciple who faithfully, fearlessly and persistently moves forward to join the Holy Spirit in the Kingdom agenda. Whenever we read the book of Acts, we are ushered on to the stage of eyewitness testimony and the very history of Christianity. This is a record of ‘Acts.’ Acts that demonstrate:

- **Resilience** under pressure
- **Dynamic adaptation** to a changing world
- **Faith** in seasons of struggle and distress
- **Growth** of the family of God
- **Community** and Christian culture
- The embracing and development of a new **worldview**
- **Baptisms** (New births) by the thousands
- Undaunting/unflinching **conviction**, even to the point of death
- Passionate **preaching** and teaching
- First century **Apologetic** practices
- Persistent **prayer** and petition to God
- **Service** and servants with a heart for people and God
- **Leadership** development
- **Women** in dynamic **ministry** actions
- Benevolence and a spirit of **giving**
- Uncompromised **praise** and **worship**
- **Healing** and deliverance
- **Hope** and expectation of the return of Jesus

These ‘Acts’ are but a few of the layers that are within Luke’s masterful historical account of Christianity. This text is forever relevant for the church and disciples who would ask what does ministry look like in a COVID/Post-COVID context? How does the church adjust to the shift in the playing field or the world as we once knew it to this dynamic new terrain? How do we meet the battle of “necessary change” on our once “normal and comfortable” ground of service?

The answers to these and other questions are found within the historical account of Christianity. The early church mastered the posture of being dynamically adaptable, changing method without changing the message, worshiping God within any place or position and being comfortable being uncomfortable. We are given the tools to respond to our current climate and beyond.

In this study we will be challenged to take a closer look and to unpack the principles from the historical account to meet the needs for our current plight. In this study we will be challenged to remain missional and intentional toward God’s agenda. In this study we will take a high view/appreciation of Scripture, celebrating the fact that The Word of God gives the church the means to reimagine ministry and methodology.

The Holy Spirit continues to invite the disciples of Christ to *come*. One can hear the Spirit, in and through the book of Acts, bid us... “Come and follow, Come and join, Come and continue the next chapter of ‘Acts!’”

The intention of God is that the Acts of Holy Spirit are “to be continued.”

The purpose of our overall study/theme is to develop the notion **“To Be Continued,”** with an aim to have an in depth study of the history of the church in Acts and to observe how disciples remained missional in difficult, different, and dynamic times *so that* we understand and apply the principles of ***forward focused faith*** in a COVID/POST-COVID season.

Additionally, it is to create a deeper discipleship culture in the church through the various platforms of meeting which we will have to work within, i.e. virtual settings, social media, limited small groups and partial assembly occasions.

Also, it is to consider the need to continue the development of leaders and teachers who can teach others and thereby increase the church’s overall reach into an unchurched, de-churched, seeking or skeptical world with The Gospel of Christ.

Finally, and most significantly, it is to intentionally join The Holy Spirit in the ‘Acts’ of changing the community and world around us by relationally meeting with neighbors, who become friends, and friends who will become followers of Jesus. Ultimately, we want to “be up to whatever God is up to!”

In order to accomplish this purpose, the year will be developed in quarterly focuses that reiterate our mission statement. This means that we will study of the book of Acts as our focus text to understand Evangelism, Equipping, Encountering, and Empowerment. The book of Acts will take center stage as each quarter will find its basis there. The goal is to see the first century disciples in high definition and learn the dynamic means of remaining forward focused and faithful to the mission. After all, the mission is meant **“to be continued!”**

The purpose of the Roosevelt-Freeport church of Christ is to accomplish ‘The Great Commission’ of Christ through intentional leadership and the ongoing development of Kingdom-focused followers of Jesus.

This mission of the church is to fulfill its purpose through *evangelizing our world, equipping disciples, encountering God and empowering servants.*

The result of this mission is that the Roosevelt-Freeport church of Christ will be a family of disciples who Love God, Love their neighbors and Love souls!

AGENDA

The four aspects of our mission statement will be taught and explained through four quarters. Each month an aspect of the mission for that quarter will be taught through the lenses of the book of ACTS in order to see the purpose of the theme explained while accomplishing our mission of *evangelizing our world, equipping disciples, encountering God and empowering servants.*

Evangelizing our world by purposely developing relationships with others, using relevant outreach efforts to reveal the Gospel of Christ to them.

We Value Evangelism! This means that our evangelistic mission is to ensure that everything we do is an occasion to expose seekers to the saving power of Calvary. This means that we must be outward focused, seeker sensitive, and others oriented.

You are a Witness, with a Testimony and called to Preach!

Evangelism is first developed and defined in the growth of the church Jesus promised to build. The truest meaning of evangelism is developed in the history of the church. We learn that the disciple's practiced the notion of connecting with the world around them to impart the message of salvation by being witnesses (martyrs) of their conviction of Jesus (Acts 1:8). They moved about with a testimony of the significance of Christ in their lives and they tirelessly preached (herald) The Good News of Jesus to every person they met (Acts 8:4). Evangelism, in the book of Acts, is seen as a passionate effort that was tirelessly engaged in because lives were at stake! This is the case even now. *This quarter will be aimed at unpacking what it means to evangelize our world according what we witness in the history of the church.*

Equipping disciples of Christ through expository teaching, preaching and training to defend the Christian Worldview.

We Value Discipleship! This part of our mission is seeing the call to make disciples and deepening the discipleship of others. It is characterized by teaching, training, students, and learners; NOT FANS, NOT SPECTATORS! This means that our mission is to ensure that everything we do is an occasion to teach followers more about living out a Biblical worldview.

You are called to be a fully functional disciple of Christ!

Discipleship is transformative. Every follower of Jesus is called to walk **after** Him, walk **like** Him and walk **for** Him! Becoming His possession and growing in Christlike character leads to a life of change, in which The Word becomes flesh in the life of the Jesus follower (Acts 2:42). The mission of equipping leads to fully functional disciples. In Acts we see that Christianity is directly resultant on the depth of one's discipleship. In fact, the followers of Jesus were recognized as His students before they were called Christians (Acts 11:26). *This quarter will be aimed at unpacking what it means to equip disciples according to what we witness in the history of the church.*

Encountering God through impactful, intimate and transformative worship moments and spiritual formation.

We Value Worship! This means that part of our mission is to ensure that everything we do is an occasion to meet God in worship, in respect, in praise, in prayer, and in thought. Worship and seeking out God ought to be done with hearts that are passionate, sacrificial, honoring, and adaptable to meeting with God.

You are a worshipper and God is worthy of worship in any season we live!

What is worship? What is it that God wants from the being who gives Him worship? Who is the disciple in the economy of worship? These most basic of questions are the best starting place to see the full and dynamic range of worship. These questions are developed in the history of the church and one can witness Christians offering God true worship in the most dynamic of occasions. We also witness the power of God to use the worship of His followers to change culture and free people from less significant worldviews.

The disciple must see the beauty of meeting God and all that comes out of such a meeting. The “meeting with God” for worship is NOT tied to the location one sits but the love of one’s heart and one’s motive in the moment. Worship is centered on God! We give worship to the One who is worth it! God is indescribable, powerful, awesome and undeniably worthy of our devotion to Him. Whenever and wherever we worship, we are brought to this realization. *This quarter will be aimed at unpacking what it means to **encounter God** according what we witness in the history of the church.*

Empowering servants to become practical demonstrations of God’s grace as they serve their community through life and ministry.

We Value Serving! This means that part of our mission is to ensure that everything we do is an occasion to move servants into a context to *be servants* to the world around them. We are sent and sending, mobilizing, reproducing and systemizing for the purpose of covering our world with Grace as salt and light.

You are uniquely shaped and empowered to serve God in this world!

One cannot embrace the character of Christ without practicing the things of Christ. An empowered disciple is one who recognizes the unique imprint that their lives make on the context God has placed them in to serve. We see this unique and powerful illustration all throughout the book Acts. In the book of Acts, one learns of empowered disciples such as Peter, Paul, James, Aquila and Priscilla, Apollos, Silas, Barnabas, Lydia, Dorcas, and more. Understanding the dynamic mission of one’s individual ministry and how it shapes the disciple’s character is imperative.

Furthermore, understanding that God has uniquely shaped each disciple to accomplish ministry, is equally important. Ministry Glorifies God and God is interested in glory. He purposed the church to bring Him glory and that glory is seen in every occasion where a life is changed, impacted or made better by one’s empowered act of service. The awe, acknowledgment and praise that comes out of the hearts of those being served is glorifying to God; and, in those instances of acknowledgement, the mission of empowerment is realized! *This quarter will be aimed at unpacking what it means to be empowered to serve God according what we witness in the history of the church.*

Remember, The Holy Spirit continues to invite the disciples of Christ to *come*. Through study and intentionally listening one can hear The Spirit, in and through the book of Acts, bid us... “Come and follow, Come and join, Come and continue the next chapter of ‘Acts!’” After all, it is *“to be continued.”*