

The Book of Acts Continues

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[0:00] Let's turn our Bibles to Luke chapter 24. I'm going to read two portions and then another Luke chapter 24 verse 27 and then we will read from verse 44 to 49 and then we go to Acts.

So Luke chapter 24 verse 27, and beginning at Moses and all the prophets, he expounded unto them in all the scriptures the things concerning himself. Verse 44, and he said unto them, these are the words which I speak unto you while I was yet with you, that all things must be fulfilled which were written in the law of Moses and in the prophets and in the Psalms concerning me. Then opened he their understanding that they might understand the scriptures. And he said unto them, thus it is written and that it behooves Christ to suffer and to rise from the dead the third day. And that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in his name among all nations beginning at Jerusalem. And ye are witnesses of these things. And behold, I send the promise of my father upon you, but tarry ye in the city of Jerusalem until you are endued with power from on high. And quickly, let's jump to Acts chapter 2. We are reading one verse there and I will indulge for all of us to read it from your Bibles. Doesn't matter the translation. Let's read it as it comes. Acts chapter, let me read from verse 41, then we all read 42.

Acts chapter 2, 41 says that, and they that gladly received the word were baptized. And the same day, there were added unto them about 3,000 souls. Now let's go to verse 42. Let's go. And they continued steadfastly in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship and in the breaking of bread and in praise. Amen.

Let's pray. Father, thank you for the privilege of hearing your word, receiving your word, believing your word, and living your word. As your word is taught, we pray, give us illumination.

Give us understanding. Open our understanding that we might comprehend the scriptures. Amen. So, when you look at the book of Acts, you can see it's taking us practically two and a half years to come through the book of Acts. So, when we look at the book of Acts, now, first of all, because I'm ending it, I want to just bring a close to it. First of all, I spoke about the theme of the book of Acts.

[3:23] The theme of the book of Acts is the propagation. So, Acts is about the propagation, the spreading, the sending out.

Acts is about the propagation of the resurrected Jesus. So, what is Acts about? The propagation of the resurrection.

So, he studied very carefully. They preached Christ as resurrected. But he died before he resurrected. But what's the point of his death if he didn't resurrect? But you can't talk about resurrection.

The mere fact of saying there is a resurrection means there has been a death. Okay. So, the resurrection actually captures as well the crucifixion. Does that make sense?

The resurrection is what gives the meaning to his death, his crucifixion. Now, so, the propagation of the resurrected Jesus. So, when you read Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John, it tells you about the human life of Jesus.

[4:32] Jesus. And Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John couldn't go further. The furthest it could go was Jesus ascending.

That's the furthest Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John, the gospel about Jesus Christ, the gospel accounts about Jesus Christ. The furthest it goes is the resurrection or the ascension.

But that's not the end of Jesus. So, there's a continuation after the ascension. So, it looks like the gospel of Jesus Christ doesn't really end.

What's the gospel of Jesus? I'm talking about the biography of Jesus, his life, how he lived. I'm talking about Jesus. Everybody say Jesus. Jesus. Talking about Jesus. Not God. Not the biography of God. We can't have that.

But the biography of Jesus. What do I mean by saying Jesus? When you say Jesus, you're talking about a human personality. So, that name itself, Jesus, means God, our Savior.

[5:38] So, who Jesus really was is God with us. It's like God has finally, you know, when people are beginning to hallucinate and have mental problems, sometimes they will be watching TV and they say, the man has jumped out of the TV.

And he's trying to strangle me. It's not real, but it looks like. But in our case, God has really come out of the TV. God has jumped out of heaven and he's actually living amongst us.

So, that's the meaning of Jesus. Jesus, I've taught you this, but permit me to keep emphasizing on it. Jesus is his human name. Before he became human, he wasn't called Jesus.

There were others who were called Jesus. He was not called Jesus. He was called, in the beginning was the word. So, that's it. And the word was God.

So, if you have to give him a name before he was born, wait. But his human name is Jesus.

According to Matthew chapter 1 verse 21, he says, Mary will give birth to a son and you shall call his name Jesus.

[6:52] That's why in the Acts of the Apostle, you see them mentioning Jesus Christ of Nazareth. Jesus Christ of Nazareth, because he wasn't the only Jesus who lived. Around his time and even now.

Before him, after him. In the Hebrew, it's the same as Joshua. Yeshua. Okay. So, God our savior. God saves. And the angel said, he'll be called Jesus.

Before Jesus was born, there was this widespread anticipation of God saving his people. Because God has promised that he's going to send his son. Or he has promised that he's going to send the Messiah and come and bring salvation to his people.

So, the Jews were anticipating salvation from God. So, around that time, many children who were born were called Jesus. Before then and around that, they were calling them Jesus because it's a prophetic name that God is going to save.

Then, another Jesus comes. Who was the actual Jesus? Jesus. And he is called the Jesus of Nazareth. So, the Bible says, how God anointed Jesus of Nazareth. Okay.

[7:52] When they asked, he said, by what name are you doing this? In Acts chapter 4. He said, we want you to know by the name of Jesus of Nazareth. The one you killed. So, Jesus is a historic figure. He's a human personality.

So, when we mention Jesus, that's why other religions are also trying to absorb him into their religion. Because he's a historic figure. He's actually lived.

So, when we say Jesus, we are talking about the human being who lived. But the uniqueness about him is that, the beauty about him is that, he's so human, there's no difference between him and us. He's human in every sense of the word. That's why he's called Jesus. But, the only difference between him and us is Hebrews chapter 4 verse 15.

He was without sin. So, that is what distinguished the human Jesus from all of us other humans. He's the only human being who lived without sin.

[8:56] So, he's Jesus the same as us. And Christ, as I've been saying, Christ is not his surname or his second name. Christ is his office. Christ is a Messiah who was coming.

Now, back to that point. The book of Acts is about the propagation of the resurrected Jesus.

Okay. So, the propagation of the resurrected Jesus in his ascension. That's so important. So, he died. He resurrected.

He ascended. And he's out. What did he do? He ascended. Okay. So, the propagation of the ascended Jesus. We are propagating. We are preaching him.

It's a resurrected Jesus. But, we are doing that while he's in his ascension. And, we are while he's in his session or ascension. So, the propagation of the resurrection of the resurrection of the resurrection.

[9:49] Jesus in his ascension. How do we do it? It's done by the Holy Spirit. So, a lot of theologians and scholars have said the act of the apostles should actually have been named the act of the Holy Spirit.

Because, the Holy Spirit is mentioned in the first 12 chapters over 30 times. The Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit. For instance, Acts chapter 13 verse 3 said, as they ministered and fasted, the Holy Spirit said. The Holy Spirit was so instrumental in this whole actions.

It was not them. Because, Jesus told them that wait until you are endued with power. And then, Acts 1 verse 8 said, you shall receive power after the Holy Spirit has come upon you. And then you shall be witnesses.

The propagation will start after the Holy Spirit has come upon you. So, it is not just us trying to do something. But, it is God doing something through us. It's not just us trying to do something for God. But, it's rather God doing something through us. In us. Hallelujah. And so, it's about the Holy Spirit. For instance, in the early church, there's a couple called Ananias and Sapphira who came lying.

[10:54] They came to church lying. In Acts chapter 5 verse 3 verse 5 verse 9. And Peter said, why do you lie against the Holy Spirit? He said, you have lied to who?

The Holy. Where is the Holy Spirit? He was talking to Peter. But, Peter said, it's the Holy Spirit who is the active agent here. So, Acts, one more time.

It's the propagation of the resurrected Jesus in his ascension by the Holy Spirit through his disciples. So, it's the Holy Spirit who is doing it.

But, how is he doing it? How is he doing it? So, when you study the book of Acts, you just saw characters. Personalities. Some of them, that name them.

What are the characters in the book of Acts? I know you say Paul. Because, Paul is the biggest of them. Paul. Peter. Stephen. Philip.

[11:52] Yes. Apollos. Mark. Yes, Mark. Barnabas.

Barnabas. Yeah, Barnabas. Priscilla. Aquila. Who said Isaiah? Peter. So, all these characters, they were the key figures.

It started with the 120 of them. Acts chapter 1, verse 15. They all went to the upper room. 120 of them started.

And then, as they prayed, they got a replacement for Judas. Then, the Holy Spirit came upon them in Acts chapter 2, verse 4. And then, Peter, verse 13, 14, stood out with the 12 and began to explain what has happened.

So, from there, it looks like Peter was the dominant character. In chapter 3, Peter and John, they were going to pray. They healed the sick. And then, Peter was the spokesperson. And then, chapter 4, they arrested them.

[13:00] And they were sent before the Sanhedrin. And Peter was the spokesperson. And Peter said, verse 7, if you are being queried by what name this good thing has been done to this man, then let it be known to you that it is by the name.

Peter started speaking. Then, in verse 12, he said, verse 11 and 12, there's no name given among men that we shall be saved. So, Peter was the main spokesperson. And then, in chapter 5, Peter caught Ananias and Sapphira lying.

And then, it didn't take long. And Ananias and Sapphira died. And then, so you can see, chapter 6, then Stephen shows up on the scene.

And Philip and Prochoros and Nicholas and all the early guys. Then Stephen dominated until chapter 7. He was off the scene. And then, chapter 8, we see Philip at work.

Peter and John shows up towards the end of chapter 8. Chapter 9, Paul shows up. And then, chapter 9 finishes chapter 10. Peter comes back on the scene because the work is moving to the next phase.

[14:02] So, Peter comes back on the scene in Cornelius' house. And then, Peter and the apostles, chapter 11, deliberations. Chapter 12, Peter was almost executed. But for an angel who appeared in the prison, Herod dies.

Chapter 13, now he moves to Paul and Barnabas. They were sent out as missionaries. The first missionaries sent out by the church. So, you see these characters.

And then, they had John Mark with them. And then, by the end of chapter 15, there was confusion. There was disagreement. So, they went their separate ways, Paul and Barnabas. Timothy shows up on the scene in chapter 16.

And Paul and Silas, Timothy, they were doing their traveling. Then, they went into Europe for the first time. Stepped into Europe. And then, came to Macedonia. And then, they were beaten, put in prison.

And they were brought out of prison. And Paul left town. And then, he went to Athens in chapter 17. Mars Hill, he preached with them. And a lot was happening. And chapter 18, he continued preaching.

[15:01] Chapter 19, in Ephesus, he was preaching. They beat him. They rose against him. All kinds of things were happening. Chapter 20, he was making his way to Jerusalem. He goes to Ephesus, call for the elders.

He preached till somebody died. No, he didn't die. He fell. Okay. So, now, it looks like Paul became the dominant personality.

Chapter 21, he was arrested. And then, the rest of Acts, the last seven or eight chapters, was all about Paul in his arrest. And then, the book ends in chapter 28 by saying that Paul stayed in his own house, rented apartment, and preached for two years.

And people were free to come to him and go out. So, you see, these were all characters. But they were not just on their own. It was the Holy Spirit who was working through them.

So, it's the propagation of the resurrected Jesus in his ascension through, by the Holy Spirit, through his disciples. For what purpose? Why would God be doing all that?

[16:03] For what? Why are you actually in church? Those who think we are in church so that we can have a better life. No, no, no. You have got it wrong. You've got it wrong. How about Stephen?

How about Paul? Do you call that? It depends on how you define a better life. Paul, Paul, since he became born again, they stoned him. At the point in time, they have to even, he had to escape through a basket.

They let him down, the wall of this, through a basket. What kind of difficult life is this? But it's called the gospel mission. So, the point here is God has an agenda.

God has a plan. God has a purpose. And we have to look for the purpose and fit our lives into it, not for God to change his agenda to fit our small lives.

And so, you see that, back again, he says that the theme of the book of Acts is the propagation. So, the main thing is about propagation. But what are they propagating? The resurrected Jesus in his ascension.

[17:07] And it's the Holy Spirit who is doing it through the disciples. For what purpose? For the producing of the church. This is very interesting. I want this to sink in that God's eternal plan and agenda was to produce a church.

How? That tempts me, which I don't want to do much, to go into defining what a church is. Because you won't appreciate that you know what a church is.

Because most of the time, when people hear the church, they think of some people who have got it. Singing hymns or clapping and others dancing. Or falling and one person laying hands and people. Depends on what you have been exposed to. So, most people say, I'm going to church. They have a particular aspect. Some people go. You're expecting people to be wearing gowns. When I tell you that God's agenda for earth is church, you might be thinking about that.

When I tell you that the agenda of God is church, if we don't define what the church is, you might be thinking of something else. So, usually, when you mention church, so many imagery comes into the minds of different people.

[18:11] Based on what has been modeled to them as church. But the only way we can define the church truly and rightly is from the pages of the text.

It's not the church that gives the Bible its relevance. It's the Bible that gives the church its meaning and its identity. So, for us to know what the church is, we have to go to the text.

Now, it says that, back to the theme, the propagation for the producing of the church. The propagation of the resurrected Jesus. That tells you what we preach matters.

And who is working in us matters. We have used the church as the go-to place for all solutions for our problems. Wrong and abusive use.

It's an abuse of the... It's wrong, wrong. The church is not meant to be a solution center for human problems. I've said something very serious now. It's not a solution center for human problems.

[19:12] The church is the community of the redeemed who exists for the fulfillment of God's agenda on earth. That's interesting. So, back to the point.

How did God do it? Now, the text we read is very interesting. Recently, I met... I think last two weeks when I was talking about Acts 28, he explained from the text.

I made it clear that Christianity is heavily reliant on history. Christianity. Heavily reliant on history. Any Christianity anybody practices, if it cannot be traced to history, suspect it. Anyone who comes to tell you, God has shown me something new. No one ever knows about it.

He might be genuine, but it's not God who showed him. He's a devil. That's how many of those strange religions start. By one person's personal encounter, either in a cave, in a room, or somewhere.

[20 : 16] It's interesting. Christianity is not like that. It's built on history. So, I think two weeks ago, I said, how can you ignore the Old Testament and expect to understand the New Testament?

So, what's the relevance of the Old Testament? The Old Testament is part of the journey. It's part of the bigger plan. It's not... This whole thing, we didn't start it. God started it from Genesis.

He started it from the beginning. And everything... Oh, that's the point. Everything going on now in the church cannot be detached from what started in Genesis. So, we are just a continuation of a bigger plan of God.

And we now have the baton to pass it on. Now, I'm going to talk about what are the essential things that we have to do in order that we don't lose the baton or compromise what God is doing.

So, that we also become the beautiful history as a continuation of what God has been doing. God is working. It started in Genesis and it's not finished until Christ comes back.

[21 : 23] So, we have been privileged to be called to be part of what God is doing. When you look at the text we read, going back to the text again in Luke. Now, why Luke? Because Luke is the one who penned the book of Acts.

Or, if I can call it, the gospel of Acts. Because if the gospel is about the biography of Jesus, Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John, then Acts is part.

In fact, Acts is a huge... As I told you last week, first book of Luke was from... It's to cover the story about Jesus from Galilee to Jerusalem.

The second book of Luke, which should have been probably second Luke, covers the story from Jerusalem to Rome. Or Jerusalem to the uttermost part of the world.

You understand that? So, the first book of Luke is a sequel to Acts. So, you will not probably appreciate what Acts is really about until you go and look at it.

[22 : 26] So, Acts starts by saying that the first treaty I wrote to you. So, Acts starts by saying that the former account I made. Making reference to the previous one.

So, it's good to take notice of the former account. What was the former account about? The former account was about the physical living of the human Jesus until he died, resurrected, and ascended. Okay? Now, that is very interesting. And then the second account. Why didn't they call it second Luke? Because they had to distinguish it very clearly from the first Luke. In what sense?

Because the second Luke, as you might call it, the book of Acts, you see the disciples... You remember what I said? It is the propagation of the resurrected Jesus in his ascension by the Holy Spirit through the disciples.

So, you see there were disciples in the book of Luke and there were disciples in the book of Acts. Right? But the disciples in the book of Luke seem to be significantly different.

[23 : 30] Even those same people, they had a different approach to life than the disciples in the book of Luke. The book of Luke ends by these disciples were timid, were hiding, and they were worried.

They were afraid. Now, Jesus, their Lord, had even left them. And then suddenly in the book of Acts, we see them all over the place, boldly preaching in Jerusalem, preaching on the streets, and preaching in the temple where the killers of Jesus were operating.

They went there, and not just that challenging and confronting those who killed Jesus. What happened to these guys? What changed? What caused they changed?

It's because three main things, but two are commonly known, but a third one which I'll focus on.

Three, number one, the resurrection emboldened them. Number two, the Holy Ghost coming upon them, give them what it takes to do it.

But number three, hallelujah, that's the main thing. Number three is, what gives these guys so much boldness? Number three has to do with the text I read. Because after the resurrection, Jesus met them.

[24 : 42] And when Jesus met them, guess what he did? Jesus, the miracle worker, wasn't working miracles. Jesus, the baptizer, what was he doing after the resurrection?

He met disciples after the resurrection, and what the text we read in Luke chapter 24, verse, let's take it from verse 24. It's nice. Luke chapter 24, verse 24.

And certain of them which were with us went to the sepulcher and found it even so, as the women had said, but him they saw not. Verse 25 says that.

Then he said unto them, O fools, and slow of heart to believe all that the prophets had spoken. Do you know what he did? He rebuked them and pointed them to scripture, pointed them to history. He was trying to tell them that what is happening is already recorded in history as prophecy. It was recorded in history as prophecy.

[25 : 41] So to know whether is to look at the text, what they've said. So he said, you are slow of heart to believe. Believe what? Not believe in me. He said, believe all that the prophet has spoken.

That makes the Old Testament make sense. Why God had to build a case before he shows up. So that by the time he shows up, all he's been telling them and he's pointing them to, they can go back and refer it and then measure it by Jesus and realize actually he is the one he has always spoken about.

That is why he couldn't have come in another community. He definitely had to come through the Jews because they had the oracles of God from Genesis. They had Moses. They had the prophets and they had the holy writings.

And now whatever is going to happen was supposed to be based on the holy writings. Matthew chapter 1, the New Testament opens up by saying that the genealogy of Jesus Christ, the son of David, the son of Abraham.

Abraham. So then he, guess what? He begins to go into history. Abraham begat Isaac. Isaac begat and begat begat. And then trace it all the way to Mary just to let the Jewish audience know that this thing has been going on before he showed up.

[26 : 53] So he points them to scripture in Luke chapter 24. He points them to scripture and he said to them that you slow of heart to believe all that a prophet.

And then he said, oh, this is good. Ought not Christ to have suffered these things and enter into his glory? They were talking about how Jesus Christ came.

They thought he was going to be the Christ. Now, out of jealousy, they've killed him. And some people said they've seen that he's resurrected because he's not in the tomb. And he says that you are struggling to believe this. Is it not exactly what was described about what the Christ is supposed to be?

So if you thought he was the Christ, then you should have noticed that he was supposed to have gone through this process. Then, because they didn't understand the text. The reason why people struggle with their Christian life is because they don't understand the text.

Understand that what thou readest? Are you getting what this thing is saying? So he began to take them. He took them through a crash course.

[27 : 56] The resurrected Jesus. You would have thought he would have thought he would be doing miracles. No. He took them through a crash course. Verse 27 is that, and beginning at Moses and all the prophets, not some of the prophets, all the prophets.

That's intense Bible studies. Beginning at Moses and all the prophets, he expounded, he opened, he unveiled unto them, not a personal revelation, but textual revelation.

A text-driven revelation. Jesus himself went to the text. So he expanded to them in all the scriptures, the things concerning himself.

That means that he's always been in the scriptures. Then in verse 45, he appeared to now the group. And the Bible says that, and he opened their understanding. You would think in our modern days, let me tell you something.

Many of us young men or young ladies who want God to use you, don't desire visions. That you are there and you'll be Bruce Almighty.

[29 : 05] I always say, it has infiltrated our philosophy about spirituality. Thinking that spirituality is all about mysticism. Mysticism. What we might even call supernatural.

Some of it is mysticism. Things that are ethereal. Things that are not tangible. Then you are in there. I saw.

That's why some of us start with credits on your dreams. I had a dream. I had a dream. I'm not saying dreams don't matter. But much of it don't anyway. How many of them get fulfilled?

Some of it is too much thinking. Others too much eating. And that thing is, I said to himself. So, all these spooky, spooky things. To the extent that, watch this.

Many men of God are judged by their supernatural power. It shouldn't be like that necessarily in the New Testament. The value and the quality of a man of God in the New Testament should first of all be judged by his ability to get you to understand the history.

[30:13] The text. Why am I saying history? Because it's called the record of God. From Genesis to Revelation. God has penned himself down in a holy book.

And the rest of us, our assignment is to get into the holy book to get the message. If you don't get the message, you will miss him. You will miss a lot of what God can do.

And so, Jesus Christ said, think about this. When he resurrected, he expanded scripture to them. And he opened the understanding that they might understand the scripture.

This is where I'm going. Suddenly, these boys, permit me to use that phrase. These young men, these gentlemen, this community of believers, suddenly, something hits them.

And he began to give them a certain level of boldness and audacity. So, when they stood before the lawyers of the day, the religious leaders of the day, they knew they were not wrong.

[31:12] Why? Because it's not just the Holy Spirit. It's not just the resurrection. But now they understand the text. Their understanding of the scripture is what gives them the impetus or give them the boldness, the courage, and the audacity to boldly declare.

Now, why am I saying that? Look, in Acts chapter 1, when they gathered, after Jesus left, they didn't wait for even 10 verses. After Jesus left, Jesus left in verse 9.

And then two angels stood by them in verse 11. And so, verse 10, Jesus went to heaven. Angels showed up in verse 11. And the angel addressed them in verse 12.

So, this angel's talking. And then Luke, the one doing the narration, said, they all, verse 14, they all went to the upper room and continued in prayer. Verse 15, he mentions the number of them.

Then the verse 16, that's the first time we heard them talking. Watch this. The first time we heard this community of the redeemed, community of believers, community of disciples talking.

[32:20] The first time we heard them talking. And guess what? Peter guessed up. He said, men and brethren. What? The scripture. When he started talking, they began to understand scripture in a different light.

Their message and their conversation was about what is written. That is what made the impact they made. Because they have come to appreciate. Oh, now we get it.

Now we get it. Now we get it. Now we get it. We get it. And we've seen it lived by Jesus fulfilled.

And in fact, the Jesus we are talking about, he's the Messiah the scriptures talk about. So he said, the scriptures must be fulfilled.

Then he quotes. David quoted. He quoted David. In chapter 1. Can you imagine? Early in chapter 1, he quoted David. And then they found a replacement. And in chapter 2, as they were praying, the Holy Ghost came.

And when the Holy Ghost came, people were having their own interpretation. He stood there again. Scripture. He points them to scripture. This is what, that verse 16 again. This is that which was spoken by the prophets.

[33:25] And then as though that was not enough, then there's 25. There's one message. There's 25. He quotes another scripture. 26 scripture. 27 scripture. He started bombarding and making reference.

That's short message. He quoted from about five or four different Old Testament references. In that short message. So you can tell how they are understanding and appreciation of scripture or the purpose of God as revealed in scripture.

The agenda of God as revealed in scripture has us, how it has captured their hearts. And then you go to verse chapter 3. He began to refer them to Jesus you killed.

He's the one scripture spoke about. Chapter 4. They stood before the elders and it says that Peter quotes scripture in Acts chapter 4 verse 12 that this is the, you know, he quoted Psalm 18 verse 22. The stone which the builders rejected has become, they were just, everything they were saying was scripture upon scripture upon scripture. And then in chapter 4 verse 25, they went to go and pray.

[34:31] And when they went to pray, guess what? They opened their mouth and they were praying scripture. As it has been written. He quoted Psalm 2 that why have the hidden, the kings of this world, they have gathered against your own, verse 27.

He started quoting Psalms and quoting scripture and quoting scripture and quoting in their prayer, quoting scriptures. Beautiful. That tells you how much the scripture has captured their hearts, their

understanding.

The reason why we do what we do, it should be our understanding and our appreciation to what is written. Because it's only what is written that can help us to define the agenda of God on earth. Else we will not know why we are here. Two things when it comes to Jesus Christ. Two things. Like Paul, when he was, that guy was a missionary. Negative missionary. Bible says in Acts chapter 9, he was causing havoc to the church.

He went for permission to travel to other nations. Is that not missions? Travel to other locations on a mission. To shut down churches, arrest people and bring them to prison.

[35 : 39] And God said, look at you. Look at you. I think you'll be a good one if I use you for my missionary way. So he became the first missionary of the church. Now, when he met Jesus, there are two things that we should all learn from.

The first one is that, who are you? When he met Jesus, and Jesus said, why thou persecuted me? He said, who are you? Who are thou?

Saul, ask Jesus, who are you? Unfortunately, there are people in churches who don't know who Jesus is. Who don't know? How can you be a Christian without knowing who Jesus is?

And now other people from other religions are beginning to tell you who Jesus is. And you say, ha, ha, ha, ha, ha, ha. But the first question that defines your place in the true church is who you know Jesus to be.

That's one. And secondly, not just who Jesus is. Secondly, what he wants you to do. Your mission in life, there are two births.

[36 : 42] The day you become born again is your first actual birth. The second one is the day you discover why you are alive.

That's why I'm trying to push this understanding that we are not in church simply to come and collect testimonies. Even though it's good.

God will be working amongst us. We are not in church simply to get married. You have come to church so you can find a wife. Come to church so you can find a... No, think about it. No, you are genuine.

No, you are not a bad person. Is it not even better than going to the club? Yeah, I mean, it's better. It's better. So please keep coming. You'll find one. Keep coming.

But sometimes God has a way of keeping you coming until the message gets to you. So by the time you find a husband, by the time you find a wife, the message has already settled inside you.

[37 : 39] You are purpose-driven. A purpose-driven wife. A purpose-driven husband. Hallelujah! Praise the Lord. And so, number one agenda is that we have to know who Jesus is.

And number two, besides knowing who Jesus is, we have to also know why he has called us. We have to know why he has called us. And so these things are so important for us as believers to know.

God called Saul and put him on a mission. Send him around the world. Send him around the known world for missionary work.

And so, coming back to the point I'm making, that Jesus Christ, when he resurrected from the dead, he opened their eyes to understand the scripture. And then number two, not just understanding the scripture, they themselves now had this better appreciation of scripture.

So much that if well, they are confident in their preaching. What is the usefulness of a preacher who doesn't know the scripture? You are a crisis. It's a major problem for the church.

[38 : 48] Nowadays, we have too many preachers, particularly from certain locations, who don't know the scriptures. So, what are you doing? May God speak to me.

Can you shut up? We are not interested in what God is telling you. We are not interested. Listen, we are not interested in what you said God is telling you. We are interested in what God has said. Jesus himself, even God himself, when he came on earth, Satan met him and said, it is written. It is written. It is written. Why are you coming to tell me, I have been told, I have been told, I have been told. And guess what? It's interesting. When he resurrected from the dead, wouldn't that have been the best time for him to show them new things?

The best time he should have showed them new things. Opened their eyes, began to show, you see, this territory. Demons are there, and this is how to deal with demons. And this territory, this person is going to be the governor for this. He should have showed them and showed them how to fight.

No! He took them to scripture. He opened their understanding that they may understand the scriptures. So, now, what began in Genesis, in the Old Testament, the promises of the Old Testament, it is God who was at work.

[40:00] Then we come to the Gospels, and we see Jesus at work. It was actually God who was at work in Jesus. And then we come to the book of Acts. It's not just the Acts of the apostles, and even the Holy Spirit is the same as God, but it's actually the Acts of God.

Now, the book of Acts never ended because God is still working in the New Testament church. God is still working in us. What did they do to sustain?

Watch this. What did they do to sustain what God has started from Adam, Abraham, Moses, the prophets, Jesus, the apostles?

It should have ended with the apostles. The apostles are no more on the scene. Long after Acts, they were not really on the scene anymore. They're gone. How come the church still thrives? Look, the church started with 120 people.

In the upper room, Acts 1, verse 15, there were 120. Then on the Day of Pentecost, about 3,000 were added. Acts 2, verse 41, about 3,000 were added. That's a big number.

[41:06] But then Acts 4, verse 4, about 5,000 were added. That's a bigger number. Then chapter 5, verse 14, those who believe, many of them, now stop numbers counting.

They just use multitudes. Multitudes. And chapter 6, when the church multiplied, then the church grew. Chapter 6, verse 1. Then verse 7 said that multitudes were added. And it doesn't end there. And you come to chapter 9, verse 31. Multitudes. Look at chapter 9, verse 31. You can see. They were just increasing. It says that, and then the church throughout all Judea, Galilee, and Samaria had great peace and were edified.

And walking in the fear of the Lord and in the comfort of the Holy Ghost were multitudes. I see the church multiplying. Hallelujah. The church will definitely multiply because you have been called to multiply in chapter 12, verse 24.

After Herod, who was trying to stop the church, he was taking off the seat. But the word of God grew and multiplied. Hallelujah. Hallelujah. The church is a multiplying, a growing force.

[42:14] In Acts chapter 17, verse 12. In Acts chapter 19, verse 20. I like Acts 19, verse 20. So mightily grew the word and prevailed. So you could see that the church kept growing.

And in our days, it must still keep growing. But Bible uses the word of God grew as a synonym for the church grew. So church growth is not church growth until it's word.

What? I'm coming to the cracks and then I'll be ending. Watch this. That's what the book of Acts is about. What exactly did these guys do to sustain the church across the generations and the ages? What did they do? Number one, it was a commitment to their message. I began to notice that appreciating good, sound teaching can also be an acquired taste.

Because sometimes you hear some things and you're wondering, but these people are enjoying this one. So what's going on here? What's going on here?

[43:26] Commitment to their message. Watch this. Watch this. Their message is transcendent. You don't have to change it to suit Jews or change it for Gentiles.

It's the same message that was preached to slaves and slave owners. Same message that was preached to Jews and Gentiles. Same message that was preached to male and female.

Same message that was preached to rulers and rebels. Same message that was preached to anyone, anywhere. Everywhere. In every place.

In any place. Same message. Don't change the message. Commitment to this message. Because the economy of God didn't start with us. That's why the Bible says that the scriptures preached the gospel to Abraham.

Abraham had it. It's the same message. But it was developing over the years. Over the years. That's why I said last week that the gospel is history to tell.

[44:27] What's the gospel? He died. He resurrected. Everything is history. It's already recorded. There's nothing new. Now, our commitment to gospel-saturated, text-driven, Christ-exalting, God-glorifying message is what protects the future of the church.

If we don't do that, we miss passing the baton to the next generation. It's not our style.

The gospel message transcends cultures. It's able to cross any culture. It's able to cross any national boundary. Any pastor whose message can only be appealing to a geographical group of people, their message will expire in just about two weeks.

Because the message is an alien message from God to us. Now, that's a very important thing I'm saying. And that was the secret behind the propagation of the gospel.

For us to continue living in our time, we have to have a commitment to the message. Didn't he say that they continued in the apostles? Ooh, Acts chapter 2, verse 4.

[45 : 39] And they continued in the apostles' doctrine. Anyone who says, ah, me, I don't like all this doctrine, doctrine, doctrine, teaching, teaching, teaching. Where I grew up, people could say things like, people are suffering, you're also talking about teaching.

That's sickening. Sickening to hear something like that. And confidently by preachers. Watch all those who claim power, power, power, power.

Without teaching. Without commitment to a message. What makes Christianity Christianity is our message. It's our message. It's our message. It's our message. They jailed them because of their message.

Not because of their just preaching. He said, did we not strictly warn you, Acts of 528? Did we not strictly warn you not to preach? Preach. This thing. But the elders said, you have filled Jerusalem with your doctrine.

You have filled Jerusalem with your doctrine. You have filled Jerusalem with your doctrine.

Hallelujah! Their worry was their preaching. And their content of their preaching.

[46 : 40] Not just preaching. Not just preaching. Because there are so many preachers nowadays, in this AI generation. Many, many preachers who are beginning to compromise and veer away from their message.

The message. Message. Message. Don't celebrate a pastor or a preacher who doesn't help you to understand the Bible. Don't celebrate. It's not worth it. It's not worth it.

That's a very bold statement. Any preacher who doesn't help you to understand Scripture and appreciate what is already written is veering away from the Christian norm.

Some might be genuine. But that's why I heard one great man of God, Wurtable, say, all preachers might attend Bible Seminary. So, commitment to the message.

Transcendent message. And number two, commitment to the redeemed community. Church. If you watch very carefully. Their commitment was to the church.

[47 : 39] When we say church. Let's have church. That's why sometimes I struggle to find people who are not born again. And are flourishing comfortably in church for a long time.

Because the church is not for unbelievers. They can come. But if you keep staying here for a year, two years, and you are still an unbeliever. It's not that it's wrong.

It's an affront to what we are ever preaching. We have to try as much as possible to sweep out unbelievers from our community. Sweep them out. But how if they get saved, maybe they may get saved.

I'm talking about those who don't want to save. They are not interested in our message. They are not interested in our Christ. But they lack our niceness. We have to strip them. God himself swept them out in Acts chapter 5.

He said, none, verse 13. None dared to join them. Because fear, if you go there, you will die. If you go and misbehave, you will die. So, none, how are the people still in their height? Look at the next verse. But God, believers were increasingly added.

[48 : 41] Even though not everybody gets added. They're believers. The church is for believers. So, this is the point I'm making. We have to be committed to serving the interest of the redeemed community.

The interest of the redeemed. How we can build one another. Study the test very carefully. So many scripture references. How forgive one another. Bear with one another. Love one another. I wrote down one or two.

In Romans chapter 12, verse 10. Romans chapter 13, verse 8. Romans 12, 10. It says that, be kindly affectionate to one another. It's a one another life. 1 Peter chapter 4, verse 9 and 10.

It's a one another life. Ephesians chapter 5, verse 21. It's a one another life. Ephesians chapter 4, verse 2, verse 25. It's a one another life. We have to be committed. That is why when you come to church, stop focusing about how I feel.

Every time, how I feel. How I feel. And not about how you feel about Christ. But how they spoke to me. How somebody. Can you forget about that? And start thinking about how can I commit? How can I also be a blessing?

[49:41] How can I be a blessing in building the church? Hallelujah. Hallelujah. Hallelujah. The message we have got is a message that transcends everything.

And it's not something new we are making. It's been from generations. From generations. From Genesis. All the way.

But revelation is coming. And now we are in the book of Acts. We are in the book of Acts. God is acting. Let's be committed to the message. And let's be committed. Sometimes, watch this.

Even in the book of Acts. Even in the book of Acts. The book of Acts. You watch their preaching. And it's their preaching that was very dominant. Their preaching.

They preach. They preach to Jews. They preach to Gentiles. And two longest messages preached in the book of Acts. Is Acts chapter 7 by Stephen. And Acts chapter 13 by Paul.

[50:40] And in both long messages. Watch it. It was heavy exposition and explanation of the Old Testament text that has been written. Saturated with explaining what the Old Testament.

Look at Stephen's message. When I was in Bible school. They taught us that Stephen was the one who summarized the entirety of the Old Testament in the New Testament. One chapter. Acts chapter 7 is a summary of everything the Old Testament was about in the New Testament.

And it was a message preached by Stephen. Commitment to the message. I want to challenge somebody and encourage somebody. Did you see how Acts started and how Acts ended? Ended by saying people were coming to Paul.

And he was expounding, explaining the things concerning the kingdom. He said, preaching, preaching the kingdom of God. And teaching the things which concern the Lord Jesus Christ. With all confidence. No one forbidding him. What's the next verse? Verse 32. None? But how do you finish a text like this? And it didn't even tell us what happened to Saul.

[51:43] We don't hear about Paul again. Because it's not important. It's God who is at work. And so it's our turn. It's our turn. Propagating. Propagating of the resurrected Jesus Christ in his ascension by the Holy Spirit through the disciples for the producing of the church.

God's agenda from Genesis is to produce a church. What's the church? His counterpart on earth. His habitation on earth. So that if you find the church, you'll find the house of God.

His house on earth. His habitation. That's why the church is called the bride of Christ. His counterparts. His counterpart. It is not good for man to be alone. And God created Adam like himself.

And Jesus is the last Adam, isn't he? So if the first Adam needed a bride, and so they cut him. You remember Jesus? They pierced his side. And life flowed. If they cut him to bring out Eve.

2 Corinthians chapter 11, verse 2, 3. He says that, for I am jealous for you with godly jealousy.

[52:49] For I have betrothed you to one husband that I may present you as a pure virgin to Christ. He was writing to a church. Look at the next verse.

Look at the next verse. Even more scary. But I fear, lest somehow, as the serpent deceived Eve by his craftiness, so the mind of the church, who is Christ's Eve, Christ's own wife, Christ's own bride. If we don't maintain the purity of the message, we will also become like Eve. Commitment to true message. That's what keeps the baton going.

And commitment to true Christians or the true church. Love the church. Serve the church. I'm talking to a believer. If you're a believer, serve the church. Build the church.

Put your resources in the church. Put your abilities in the church. Love the church. The church doesn't belong to a man. I don't understand that nowadays sometimes like this bastard's church. It's become a personal business.

[53:53] And sometimes you can tell it's kind of like a personal business for individuals. And that's why we have to work on ourselves to make sure that we don't own the church. Because the church is God's church.

Serve God's church. Build God's church. After you know Christ, you have to know why he saved you. And what he wants you to do. That's how the only way we can keep the continuum.

The only way the message and agenda of God can continue to be fulfilled on earth. Did you receive something? Hallelujah! Thank you. Hallelujah!

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[55:21] Thank you.