

Wednesday with the Word

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Vision:

We exist to develop mature disciples of Jesus Christ who make a real difference in the world by actively seeking the love, justice, freedom, liberation and peace of God.

“We are the church in the heart of Atlanta with Atlanta its heart!”
This is what love looks like.....

The Books Acts: Part #2: Difference Making Disciples

Course Dates: April 10 - June 12, 2019

Course Times: Wednesday - 6:00 to 7:00 p.m.

Course Description: In this course we will study how the early disciples actually made a difference in the world and grew the church. The course looks at the foundation of the birth of the church of Jesus Christ, the role of the Holy Spirit in that birthing process and the key actors who led this movement. Special emphasis will be placed on how these stories speak to us individually and collectively. We will also examine with intense focus the role, power, presence and work of the Holy Spirit as God grew God’s church through the work of God’s people.

Learning and Life Application / Integration Goals:

1. Disciples will be familiar with how the church of Jesus Christ was born.
2. Disciples will be able to apply what they learn about the maturation process of the early church leaders to their lives as they seek to mature in Christ.
3. Disciples will become acquainted with the third person of the Trinity, the Holy Spirit and how it is a force that is alive and well in the church today.
4. Disciples will begin to see how the church laid the foundation for the growth of the church and then be able to apply those theological principles and practices to inform the vision realization and growth of God’s church that we call Wheat Street Baptist Church.

Weekly Readings and Topics:

April 10, 2019 - Acts 5:1-11- Why Do We Hold Back What Belongs to God? Testing God

April 17, 2019 - Acts 5:12-16 - Are We Worth Looking At: The Miracle Power of God’s Church and God’s People

April 24, 2019 - Acts 5:17-42 - Persecution is Part of the Plan: Are We Doing Enough to Brought Up on Charges - Difference makers stay in trouble with the right people!

May 1, 2019 - Acts 6:1-7 - When We Do What We Are Called to Do God's Church Grows: What is Your Role? - Equal essence, different in function.

May 8, 2019 - Acts 6:8-15 - What Do People See In You: What Does Your Witness Say

May 15, 2019 - Acts 7:1-53 - Speaking Truth to Power: Inside and Outside the Church

May 22, 2019 - Acts 7:54-8:1 - The Victory in Losing: When Stoning Gives Your Life - you can't kill a witness because our death is a testimony!

May 29, 2019 - Acts 8:1- 3 Have You Met Saul Who Will Become Paul: Where Did God Bring You From - who are you praying for to have a turnaround?

June 5, 2019 - Acts 8:4-25 - Taking It to the Streets: Church Under 75 - A Dream or a Reality: Parking Lot / Barbecue Faith!!

June 12, 2019 - Acts 8:26-40 - Who Are You Teaching: Making Disciples, That Make Disciples, That Make a Difference

The Narrative Structure of the Book of Acts: The Growth & Expansion of God's Church

I. You Will Be My Witnesses in Jerusalem

I. Acts 1:15-8:3

II. You Will Be My Witnesses in All Judea and Samaria

I. Acts 8:4-11:18

III. You Will Be My Witnesses to the Ends of the Earth

I. Acts 11:19-28:31

April 10, 2019 - Acts 5:1-11- Why Do We Hold Back What Belongs to God?

For the church to grow those in the faith have to give by faith. They not only have to give of their earthly substance but what God really wants is all of them. God wants us and not our stuff. God owns all the stuff God allows us to have stewardship over. God can take the stuff God gives us away but God ask us to give back. Why are we so hesitant or resistant to trust God, take God at God's word and give God what is God's?

Back Story to Tonight's Lesson:

Acts 4:32-37

32 The group of followers all felt the same way about everything. None of them claimed that their possessions were their own, and they shared everything they had with each other. **33** In a powerful way the apostles told everyone that the Lord Jesus was now alive. God greatly blessed his followers, **34** and no one went in need of anything.

Everyone who owned land or houses would sell them and bring the money **35** to the apostles. **Then they would give the money to anyone who needed it.**

36-37 Joseph was one of the followers who had sold a piece of property and brought the money to the apostles. He was a Levite from Cyprus, and the apostles called him Barnabas, which means **“one who encourages others.”**

Your giving encourages others. We are starting one minute, taped, tithing testimonies to encourage others and tell them about the joy in giving. We cheat ourselves from one the most joyful aspects of being a Christian and that is the gift of giving. To give brings you joy and it brings you closer to God. To give by faith, when there is a fear it giving because we perceive we need what we are giving but when you give your faith grows. Your faith grows because you are giving by faith. For your faith to grow it means you are getting closer to God. The closer you get to God the more your faith is embolden. A central part of growing in your faith is growing in your giving. Giving of love, tithes, offerings, giving to others, giving to meet the needs of others, giving your talent and gifts back to the Lord, giving your faith away by sharing the story of salvation with others. All of this is giving. The more you give the more you GROW / Mature in the LORD!

Why is it that we hold back from giving?

What are those things that get in the way of our giving?

What role does fear play in our not giving?

Acts 5:1-3

Ananias and his wife Sapphira also sold a piece of property. **2** But they agreed to cheat and keep some of the money for themselves.

So when Ananias took the rest of the money to the apostles, **3** Peter said, “Why has Satan made you keep back some of the money from the sale of the property? Why have you lied to the Holy Spirit? CEV

Who owned this piece of property?

Who decided to do what?

Acts 5:1-3

But a man named Ananias, with the consent of his wife Sapphira, sold a piece of property; **2** with his wife’s knowledge, he kept back some of the proceeds, and brought only a part and laid it at the apostles’ feet. **3** “Ananias,” Peter asked, “why has Satan filled your heart to lie to the Holy Spirit and to keep back part of the proceeds of the land? NRSV

What role does Satan play in our not giving all to God?

What do you think Satan gets out of us not giving?

How are we cheated by not giving?

Who are we lying to when we don't give?

What are the consequences for not giving God all that belongs to God?

When you look back at Acts 4:34-35

34 There was not a needy person among them, for as many as owned lands or houses sold them and brought the proceeds of what was sold. **35** They laid it at the apostles' feet, and it was distributed to each as any had need. NRSV

What should be our number one priority when it comes to how we manage the monies that we are given stewardship over as God's church?

How does meeting the needs of others affect the growth of God's church?

Acts 5:1-6

But a man named Ananias, with the consent of his wife Sapphira, sold a piece of property; **2** with his wife's knowledge, he kept back some of the proceeds, and brought only a part and laid it at the apostles' feet. **3** "Ananias," Peter asked, "why has Satan filled your heart to lie to the Holy Spirit and to keep back part of the proceeds of the land?" **4** While it remained unsold, did it not remain your own? And after it was sold, were not the proceeds at your disposal? ***How is it that you have contrived this deed in your heart? You did not lie to us but to God!***" **5** Now when Ananias heard these words, he fell down and died. ***And great fear seized all who heard of it.*** **6** The young men came and wrapped up his body, then carried him out and buried him. NRSV

How does God look at our holding back what belongs to God?

Why were the people seized with fear?

Why are we not seized with fear when we don't give all that belongs to God?

Acts 5:7-9a

7 After an interval of about three hours his wife came in, not knowing what had happened. **8** Peter said to her, "Tell me whether you and your husband sold the land for such and such a price." And she said, "Yes, that was the price." **9** Then Peter said to her, "How is it that you have agreed together to put the Spirit of the Lord to the test?" NRSV

Where else does the Lord say put me to the test?

Malachi 3:10-12

10 Bring the full tithe into the storehouse, so that there may be food in my house, and thus put me to the test, says the Lord of hosts; see if I will not open the windows of heaven for you and pour down for you an overflowing blessing. **11** I will rebuke the locust for you, so that it will not destroy the produce of your soil; and your vine in the field shall not be barren, says the Lord of hosts. **12** Then all nations will count you happy, for you will be a land of delight, says the Lord of hosts. NRSV

Which test are we putting the Lord to?

We can start growing in our giving while we are struggling but the question becomes is this a test about us or a test about God?

God says, put me to the test!

Are we willing to put God to the test?

Acts 5:7-11

7 After an interval of about three hours his wife came in, not knowing what had happened. **8** Peter said to her, "Tell me whether you and your husband sold the land for such and such a price." And she said, "Yes, that was the price." **9** Then Peter said to her, "How is it that you have agreed together to put the Spirit of the Lord to the test? Look, the feet of those who have buried your husband are at the door, and they will carry you out." **10** Immediately she fell down at his feet and died. When the young men came in they found her dead, so they carried her out and buried her beside her husband. **11** And great fear seized the whole church and all who heard of these things.

What would happen if everybody who had put God to the test and held back on their giving died in church on Sunday?

Would we have done our job if we hadn't taught them the truth of God's word about giving?

Giving is what God wants us to test God at.

We have to put God to the test!

There are real consequences in not giving! There is a spiritual death in the stingy. There is a death in a church that fails to give to the needy freely. Ye shall know the truth and the truth shall make us FREE! Free to give and meet the needs of others!