

Wednesday wit 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 #1 Fuel for the Journey:

How to Get Through What You Are Going Through:

The Relationship Between Doubt & Belief that is Fueled By Worship and Witness

Lesson #2: January 16, 2019 -

The Evidence and Fulfillment of the Resurrection: The Holy Spirit has Come Acts 1:1-11

Introduction: We all have periods of doubt. We have times when it is hard to believe God. We have times where we question the promises of God. We have times when we question what God allows and what God decrees. We question the fairness of God. Doubt is a part of our journey. The questions is how do we get through those periods of doubt? How do we believe what God said when it looks like God has let us down?

I am going to suggest tonight that when we admit our doubt, worship God and then witness by telling who God is and what God has done in our live in word and deed it is an antidote for doubt. We have recognize the presence, promise and power of God in the midst of those moments of doubt. If the disciples doubted I know we do. So don't trip just deal with it!

The Evidence and the Promise

Acts 1:1-3

In the first book, Theophilus, I wrote about all that Jesus did and taught from the beginning **2** until the day when he was taken up to heaven, after giving instructions through the Holy Spirit to the apostles whom he had chosen. ***3 After his suffering he presented himself alive to them by many convincing proofs,*** appearing to them during forty days and speaking about the kingdom of God. NRSV

Post Resurrection Appearances:

Matthew 28:16-20

16 Now the eleven disciples went to Galilee, to the mountain to which Jesus had directed them. **17** When they saw him, they worshiped him; **but some doubted.** **18** And Jesus came and said to them, “All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. **19** Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, **20** and teaching them to obey everything that I have commanded you. And remember, I am with you always, to the end of the age.”

***He gives them a promise and a mission.**

Why did some worship and some doubt?

How do those of us who worship and have faith deal with those who have doubt?

What do you do when you doubt?

Is the answer to doubt worship?

Is this why worship is so important?

Worship drives out doubt. Worship empowers us to recognize and connect with the power of God. When we doubt don't trip just start worshipping God!

Oh God I worship you because _____

Note: Home Devotion & Reflection: Luke 24:13-35

Luke 24:36-48

36 While they were talking about this, Jesus himself stood among them and said to them, “Peace be with you.” **37** They were startled and terrified, and thought that they were seeing a ghost. **38** He said to them, “Why are you frightened, and why do doubts arise in your hearts?” **39** Look at my hands and my feet; see that it is I myself. Touch me and see; for a ghost does not have flesh and bones as you see that I have.” **40** And when he had said this, he showed them his hands and his feet. **41** While in their joy they were disbelieving and still wondering, he said to them, “Have you anything here to eat?” **42** They gave him a piece of broiled fish, **43** and he took it and ate in their presence.

44 Then he said to them, “These are my words that I spoke to you while I was still with you—that everything written about me in the law of Moses, the prophets, and the psalms must be fulfilled.” **45** Then he opened their minds to understand the scriptures, **46** and he said to them, “Thus it is written, that the Messiah is to suffer and to rise from the dead on the third day, **47** and that repentance and forgiveness of sins is to be proclaimed in his name to all nations, beginning from Jerusalem. **48** You are witnesses

of these things. **49** And see, I am sending upon you what my Father promised; so stay here in the city until you have been clothed with power from on high.”

Once again we see doubt?

Why are they doubting what they are seeing when what they are seeing is what they were told?

Do we believe the word of God?

Do we trust the word of God?

Is it hard sometimes to trust and believe, what we hear, read and see? If so, why?

How do we deal with this?

Are we willing to confess it?

To whom should we confess it?

How did the disciples respond to this moment of faith that was filled with awe, doubt, belief and conviction?

The Response:

Luke 24:50-53

50 Then he led them out as far as Bethany, and, lifting up his hands, he blessed them.

51 While he was blessing them, he withdrew from them and was carried up into heaven. **52** And they worshiped him, and returned to Jerusalem with great joy; **53** and they were continually in the temple blessing God.

How do we bless God?

What does it mean to bless God?

Psalm 34:1

I will bless the Lord at all times;
his praise shall continually be in my mouth.

Psalms 145:1-2,21

I will extol you, my God and King,
and bless your name forever and ever.

2

Every day I will bless you,

21

My mouth will speak the praise of the Lord,
and all flesh will bless his holy name forever and ever.
and praise your name forever and ever.

See: Deuteronomy 8:10; Psalm 100:4; 145:10; 103:2; 96:2-3; 104:1; 1st Chronicles 29:10

To bless is to give admiration, gratitude, honor and service.

How do we bless God?

We bless God by worshipping God.

We bless God by acting on God's word.

We bless God by answering our call and being and doing what God created us to do and be.

We bless God by giving back to God what God has given us.

We bless God by using our God given gifts to give God glory.

We bless God by believing!

John 20:19-23

19 When it was evening on that day, the first day of the week, and the doors of the house where the disciples had met were locked **for fear of the Jews**, Jesus came and stood among them and said, "Peace be with you." **20** After he said this, he showed them his hands and his side. Then the **disciples rejoiced when they saw the Lord**.

21 Jesus said to them again, "Peace be with you. As the Father has sent me, so I send you." **22** When he had said this, he breathed on them and said to them, "Receive the Holy Spirit. **23** If you forgive the sins of any, they are forgiven them; if you retain the sins of any, they are retained."

Why were they afraid?

What does fear do to us? What did it do to them?

We cannot allow fear to make us doubt or stop us from doing what God has called us to do. We must stand on the promises of God in the midst of fear and intimidation.

They rejoiced but here comes Thomas!

John 20:24-28

24 But Thomas (who was called the Twin^[a]), one of the twelve, was not with them when Jesus came. **25** So the other disciples told him, "We have seen the Lord." But he said to them, "Unless I see the mark of the nails in his hands, and put my finger in the mark of the nails and my hand in his side, I will not believe."

26 A week later his disciples were again in the house, and Thomas was with them. Although the doors were shut, Jesus came and stood among them and said, "Peace

be with you.” **27** *Then he said to Thomas, “Put your finger here and see my hands. Reach out your hand and put it in my side. Do not doubt but believe.”* **28** Thomas answered him, “My Lord and my God!” **29** Jesus said to him, “Have you believed because you have seen me? Blessed are those who have not seen and yet have come to believe.”

What do we need to believe?

Have you ever been Thomas?

Have you ever had to deal with Thomas?

The thing about Thomas is he wasn't there and he can't believe what you believe because he / she didn't see and or experience what you did.

You have to believe for yourself and testify to what God has done in your life. Don't let what Thomas needs make you doubt what you believe.

Why was all of this written?

John 20:30-31

30 Now Jesus did many other signs in the presence of his disciples, which are not written in this book. **31** But these are written so that you may come to believe that Jesus is the Messiah, the Son of God, and that through believing you may have life in his name.

Back to Acts!

Acts 1:4-11

4 While staying with them, he ordered them not to leave Jerusalem, but to wait there for the promise of the Father. “This,” he said, “is what you have heard from me; **5** for John baptized with water, but you will be baptized with [b] the Holy Spirit not many days from now.”

6 So when they had come together, they asked him, “Lord, is this the time when you will restore the kingdom to Israel?” **7** He replied, “It is not for you to know the times or periods that the Father has set by his own authority. **8** But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth.” **9** When he had said this, as they were watching, he was lifted up, and a cloud took him out of their sight. **10** While he was going and they were gazing up toward heaven, suddenly two men in white robes stood by them. **11** They said, “Men of Galilee, why do you stand looking up toward heaven? This Jesus, who has been taken up from you into heaven, will come in the same way as you saw him go into heaven.”

We talked about this extensively last Sunday. To be a witness is to do and tell. They did more than they preached. They met the needs of the people. To be a witness who Jesus is, is to do what Jesus did. It is based in our faith in God and the ways of God.

Putting the Missional Church in Action: Serving our Mission Field

Mission Field Highlights:

- 176,651 people live within three miles of Wheat Street
- The top individual segment is Struggling Black Families 21.6% (18,140 people)
- African American 38.4%
- Largest age group Millennials (17 to 36) 73,681 or 47.1% (73,681 people)
- The area is extremely non-traditional due to the below average presence of married persons and two-parent families (Single Never Married 64.2% = 98,657 people)
- Single-female headed households 6,630

What ministries do we have in our church that specifically reaches out to and supports this population?

Where we are growing!

1,500

150

Real Ministry, Real People, Real Difference

The Missional Church in Action: Building Relationships, Building Partners, Building Bridges

“As leaders discern needs in their community, they must develop ways to demonstrate God’s love by meeting those needs in practical, tangible ways in order to gain credibility for their message. Just like a missionary, we have to “earn the right to be heard” in the culture we live in! Rather than only trying to create events to invite people to attend (attractional), we find events and venues where people already are and find ways to serve there (missional). We must be intentional about bridging our service to more opportunities for ministry connections. A key principle is “Where people congregate, we will operate.” Watch for God’s divine appointments and open doors. Ask how you can help and find ways to serve in your community. Then, go... love...serve! As you do, God will give you favor and relationships with people. Listen to their story. Learn more about those needs. Keep serving them in love and you’ll find spiritual conversations happening naturally...and supernaturally!”¹

An Example: The Hope-Hill Story: 1 of 150 Ministries

Hope-Hill Elementary & Inman Middle School Partnership Ministry
Servant Leader: Sister Debora Jones

¹Roehl, Tim. Game Plan: Developing Intentional Missional Ministry (Kindle Locations 1789-1796). Kindle Edition.

Mission: To foster a relationship between the church and school by becoming actively involved in the school activities, provide resources needed for success and be supportive for students, parents and teachers.

What defines success / missional faithfulness?

What are the key objectives and results that should be monitored as makers of missional faithfulness?

“An OBJECTIVE, is simply WHAT is to be achieved, no more and no less. By definition, objectives are significant, concrete, action oriented, and (ideally) inspirational. When properly designed and deployed, they’re a vaccine against fuzzy thinking— and fuzzy execution.

KEY RESULTS benchmark and monitor HOW we get to the objective. Effective KR’s are specific and time-bound, aggressive yet realistic. Most of all, they are measurable and verifiable.”²

Missional Calendar: Living the Vision and Realizing the Mission through the Calendar

“Church” Calendar: major religious holidays and church events. Seek to maximize these experiences so that people want to invite people and then follow up to nurture the relationships (Christmas, Easter, Thanksgiving, Family and Friends, Church Anniversary).

Ideas:

“Culture” Calendar: secular special days are times we can be intentional about planning and or participating in events that honor this rhythm (Super Bowl, Valentine’s, Juneteenth, Watch Night, Mother’s Day, Father’s Day, 4th of July, Oktoberfest / Halloween).

Ideas:

“Community” Calendar: “Every community has special events that provide ways for churches to become known as valuable servants and community partners. Community festivals during seasons are times to implement the principle “where people congregate, we will operate.”³

“Churches don’t always have to plan events to get people to come to them, we can go where people already are and demonstrate God’s love in practical ways there!”⁴

² Doerr, John. Measure What Matters: How Google, Bono, and the Gates Foundation Rock the World with OKRs (pp. 14-15). Penguin Publishing Group. Kindle Edition.

³ Roehl, Tim. Game Plan: Developing Intentional Missional Ministry (Kindle Locations 1836-1838). Kindle Edition.

⁴ Roehl, Tim. Game Plan: Developing Intentional Missional Ministry (Kindle Locations 1840-1842). Kindle Edition.