

Awaken: Acts 27-28
As Christ Followers We Must...
February 17, 2008
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On Sunday April 22nd we began our journey through Acts. When we began the church we started with a series in the book of Luke. As you guys know, Luke wrote his gospel and the one we have been in since last April, The Acts of The Apostles. I have to tell you that I feel like I have developed some kind of relationship with Luke. I feel like I know the way he writes and have grown to know him the same way I would anyone who shared this much of their life with me. There is a part of me that feels like I am saying farewell to an old friend.

I hope some of you feel this way too. Depending on when you came to join us here at The Crossings, I hope you feel a familiarity with either or both Luke and the book of Acts. I believe very strongly in Biblical preaching. Another way to say that might be that I don't think I have anything good to say to you guys apart from this book and the Holy Spirit working through it. I believe it is my calling to preach this book. I believe it is my job and mandate to open this book week after week and offer you the truth found in it after I have spent many hours studying and praying through it. When we finish a series it is my hope and prayer that you would have a comfort level with the book that would allow you to flip through its pages as you would have need. If you need to turn to a text regarding baptism, the Holy Spirit, missions, or you just need some encouragement as you are journeying through this life as a Christ follower – I hope you can flip through the pages of this book and find some familiar stories that God can use in your life.

Next week we will begin a four-week series on the book of Jonah. I am really excited to dive into Jonah for a few weeks. Then, beginning on Easter Sunday, March 23rd, we will begin a series on the Atonement. That series will be a little bit different in that we will not be traveling through one book, rather we will be looking at specific units of scripture each week in regards to the atonement. So, one week we will look at Romans chapter 3 and another we will look at Isaiah 53 and so on. But today, we have a book to finish.

I think these last two chapters are a great way to finish the books of Acts because we are going to see four ideas here that have permeated this entire story of the church. So today, as we conclude our Awaken series as well as this book, I believe God is asking us to awaken to the life he has created us to live as followers of his son. I am a sucker for a good action movie. These last two chapters are packed with exciting history.

As we examine these closing chapters and connect them in summary of what has come before, we will see a four-prong challenge to all of those who follow Christ. These are all things that we have seen throughout the past months as we have traveled through this book.

As Christ followers we must:

- Listen to the Holy Spirit (27:10).
- Feast on and trust in his word (27:25).
- Believe in his provision (28:1)
- Tell his story (28:23).

In life we have basic needs such as food, water, and shelter. Without these things your life begins to wither and you will end up dying. These elements are the nourishment and protection that your body must have to continue life. Contrary to what many people think, your spiritual life requires some nourishment. In the same way that life itself has a beginning at birth, our spiritual lives begin when we place our faith in the one who died on the cross in our place – paying the price for our sin. But that begins a spiritual life that requires nourishment. Listening to the Holy Spirit, feasting on and trusting in his word, believing in his provision, and telling his story are the food, water, and shelter of our spiritual lives.

Men are really good about telling stories of the good old days. Back when I played football, everyone had to run a mile in under 6 minutes or they weren't on the team. Back when I was in college I could bench-press 350 pounds. I used to run 6 miles everyday before I went to work in the morning. Or even more common, I used to weigh fill-in-the-blank pounds soaking wet. I don't want to be an "I used to be" follower of Jesus. Will you commit to nourishing your spiritual lives through the many truths that we have found through our journey in the book of Acts? Will you commit to a life of listening to the Holy Spirit? Will you commit to a life of feasting on the word of God as nourishment to your soul? Will you commit to a life of believing in his provision? He will provide where he calls. Will you commit to a life of proclaiming his Son?

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SMALL GROUP DISCUSSION

1. What are some of your memories of our study in the book of Acts? Can you remember any ideas that God put in your mind during our months in Acts?
2. What comes to mind when you think about the Holy Spirit? How do you hear the Holy Spirit today? (*Facilitators, there can many different answers to this question... If someone says through their Ouija board then you might want to talk with them afterward, otherwise allow some freedom with this question.*)
3. Do you interact with his word (scripture) during your week? If so, how do you? Is it difficult for you to find time or take time to do this? Are there some things that have worked for you that might help others in the group?
4. Do you feel different when you are spending quality time in the scriptures? Does it have any type of real effect on your days or week?
5. Some people are very “faithful” people (willing take any risk and always saying “God will provide”) while others are more planned people (still faithful but definitely people who have thought through every possible outcome and weighed the pros and cons several times before making a commitment). On a scale from 1 to 10 how would you rate yourself? A number 1 is a person who doesn’t think through a particular situation at all and just jumps screaming “God is in control” as he flies off the cliff. A number 10 has several excel spreadsheets containing multiple formulas in an attempt to calculate every possible outcome and perceived risk. Which one are you? What are some things you can do to move in a more healthy, faithful direction?
6. The fourth aspect of being a Christ follower that we talked about Sunday was “proclaiming his Son.” Last week in our small group we asked this question - If I asked you to write down 5 names that you are praying for and trying to welcome into your life, home, schedule, and heart, could you do it? Let’s take just a minute and write those down. You are not going to have to read them out loud or share them with anyone. Just write the names down on a piece of paper and as we close in prayer let’s spend just a minute praying for those names.