

“Faith to Start”

We Are Sent- week #4

done through the apostles. 44 And all who believed were together and had all things in common. 45 And they were selling their possessions and belongings and distributing the proceeds to all, as any had need. 46 And day by day, attending the temple together and breaking bread in their homes, they received their food with glad and generous hearts, 47 praising God and having favor with all the people. And the Lord added to their number day by day those who were being saved.

Romans 10:8-10 ESV - 8 But what does it say? "The word is near you, in your mouth and in your heart" (that is, the word of faith that we proclaim); 9 because, if you confess with your mouth that Jesus is Lord and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved. 10 For with the heart one believes and is justified, and with the mouth one confesses and is saved.

Acts 10:11-14 NLT - 11 He saw the sky open, and something like a large sheet was let down by its four corners. 12 In the sheet were all sorts of animals, reptiles, and birds. 13 Then a voice said to him, "Get up, Peter; kill and eat them." 14 "No, Lord," Peter declared. "I have never eaten anything that our Jewish laws have declared impure and unclean."

2.

Hebrews 12:1-2 NKJV - 1 Therefore we also, since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which so easily ensnares [us], and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us, 2 looking unto Jesus, the author and finisher of [our] faith, who for the joy that was set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame, and has sat down at the right hand of the throne of God.

1 Corinthians 3:7 NLT - 7 It's not important who does the planting, or who does the watering. What's important is that God makes the seed grow.

3.

Isaiah 6:8 NIV - 8 Then I heard the voice of the Lord saying, "Whom shall I send? And who will go for us?" And I said, "Here am I. Send me!"

INTRODUCTION

We view the early church depicted in the book of Acts as a starting place. But it was actually a snapshot of what the Church became over a season of time. They allowed their declaration that Jesus IS Lord to transform their community into God's powerful body of believers who changed the world. But they didn't attain this level of maturity and impact instantly. It took time, failed attempts, corrections and adjustments as they grew into the church we find described in Acts 2:42. Our own spiritual development is also a journey. It has always been human nature to put our best foot forward and hide our failures. Even more so with the advent of social media. But expecting instant perfection can paralyze us and prevent us from even attempting what God may be calling us to do. Let's consider what it means to take the first step on that journey.

Ice Breaker (Optional—8 min)

Do you have pictures or video of your child's first step?

STUDY QUESTIONS (45 MIN)

Jesus is Lord

1. Read Acts 2:42-47, Romans 10:8-10, Acts 10:11-14

Jesus is Lord. This statement is pivotal in our salvation. (Romans 8:9) But what do we mean when we make this declaration? How did the believers in the second chapter of Acts live out the truth of this statement daily? How would you explain what it means to make Jesus Lord of your life?

In Acts 10:14 Peter was told 3 times in a vision that God had made all the animals clean and that he could now eat of them. Peter responded, "No, Lord!" If Peter have given the Lord absolute power, authority and control of his life, why would his response make no sense?

Peter is not the only one who has trouble giving over total control to God. We might find a sense of security from staying where we are without taking risks. But if we are afraid to risk or afraid to fail, what do we do when God calls us to step into something we've never done before? What is the greatest change, or "leap of faith" that God has called you into? Describe what it was like as you decided to take the first step.

God is faithful to finish

2. Read Hebrews 12:1-2; 1 Corinthians 3:7

There are many reasons we hesitate to undertake God's call. What is one thing that could cause you to hesitate to step out in a new area of ministry? If the task seems overwhelming, you might be doubting your ability to complete the call God has for you. What do you think it means that God is not only the author but also the "finisher" of our faith (Hebrews 12:2)?

In 1 Corinthians 3:7 Paul describes three different ways we might be involved in the Lord's work. Can you describe your experience in ministries you've "planted", "watered", or "harvested"?

"Start by doing what is necessary, then what is possible, and suddenly you are doing the impossible."

— Francis of Assisi

Think Big, Start Small

3. Read Isaiah 6:8

When Isaiah heard the Lord ask, "Whom shall I send?" he responded, "Here am I. Send me!" What would happen if you were to ask God to send you out to have a world-wide impact? Impossible? We serve a God of miracles and He has the power to use you in ways that seem utterly impossible. The thing that prevents you from doing the impossible is simply taking the first step to live out the proclamation that Jesus is Lord in your life.

Brainstorm with your group some ways each of you might take a first step with the potential to change the world. Here are some suggestions to get you started. See if God is calling you to take a first step in one of these areas-

Feed the poor. What food programs are you aware of locally? Globally? Do they need people to give their time to help, food to distribute, funds to support their work?

Share the Good News. Who will you see this week that is not a believer but needs to hear that God loves them? Do you reach people through social media who need reassurance in the goodness of God in the face of world events?

Heal the sick. Do you have friends suffering from long-term illness who you can pray with and encourage? Is there an organization you know of that brings medical relief to those in need?

WRAP-UP

When the Holy Spirit fell at Pentecost the believers received power. From that point they began to grow into a force that changed the world. Every day they lived out the implication of the statement that Jesus is Lord. But none of it would have happened if they hadn't taken a first step, and day by day made choices that inched them closer to what God was calling them to be. God wants to do big things through us, but he also delights in our faithful small beginnings. Nothing happens without that. Right now, God might just be calling you to plant, or to water what He is doing. Rest assured He is faithful to finish it in His time for a bountiful harvest. But we need to be willing to be used by Him in whatever way He calls. Over the course of a lifetime of faithfulness God can use you to impact the world.

Memory Verse

And they devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and the fellowship, to the breaking of bread and the prayers. - Acts 2:42 ESV

Challenge- If you haven't taken that "first step" you can check out some opportunities on our website at newlifepismo.com/sent and join us in impacting our community. If you are serving in a ministry, ask God to keep you growing in your impact for His kingdom.

PRAYER (20 MIN)

Ask your group to pray for you regarding one area where you can apply this study in your life: _____

Pray for your group members' needs: (see back for more space)

Bible Verses

1.

Acts 2:42-47 ESV - 42 And they devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and the fellowship, to the breaking of bread and the prayers. 43 And awe came upon every soul, and many wonders and signs were being