

Small Group Questions | November 4th, 2018

Called to Explore—Jerusalem

Acts 2:42–47

Other Passages Referenced: Acts 1:8, 10–11; 2:1–4, 36–47

Introductory Comments to Group Leaders:

This week is our first sermon and study of the series “Called to Explore” based on a three-week overview of the gospel’s movement in the Book of Acts. The series will clarify how our Next 40 initiatives intentionally seek to align with the Jerusalem, Judea, Samaria, and ends of the earth framework we find in Acts. The series will culminate with a Commitment Sunday on November 18. We want to remind our members that our commitment as partners in God’s mission includes a financial component, but our commitment to grow as witnesses who present and represent Jesus faithfully is at the core. I’d like to point out that in your discussion of Acts 2:1–7, we will see the wondrous outpouring of the Holy Spirit that Jesus promised He would send. You may well have members of your group who have very different views on speaking in tongues and the baptism of the Holy Spirit. Please take care to not let the discussion get sidetracked on the gifts of the Holy Spirit or the baptism of the Spirit. The study passage is not emphasizing those points. We may have passages at other times which will, but this is not one of them. This passage is emphasizing the power the Holy Spirit gives believers to witness about Jesus. In this case, it is not about praying in tongues, but it is about the Holy Spirit giving believers a special ability to speak a language they had not studied so that linguistic barriers were overcome. People heard the gospel in their own languages, giving tremendous credibility to the event as a great act of God. Please focus on the Holy Spirit giving normal believers extraordinary power to witness and keep moving. 😊 Apart from that one topic, the passages for our group discussion are pretty straight-forward in the **LOOK** section so we can devote more time to the **Practical Applications**.

Extra Resource: The sermon mentioned a booklet by Dick Woodward entitled “10 Fingerprints of the Church.” We have plenty of copies available if you would like to get one for yourself or give them to your members.

Again this week, I put some answers to the questions and commentary in bold text at the bottom of this document. The numbers correspond to the numbers of the questions. Please refer to those answers after you have delved into the text on your own.

Sermon Recap: Being a mobile disciple of Jesus is not an optional, extra credit assignment for particularly eager disciples. It is Jesus’ command and expectation of everyone who follows Him. His disciples are to be witnesses that present Him in word and deed. The Book of Acts describes a movement of believers testifying about Jesus, beginning in Jerusalem (where they were), spreading throughout Judea (the region), to Samaria (a partially shared ancestry and cultural background), to the ends of the earth (crossing national, cultural, and linguistic barriers). **What** is the significance of Jerusalem for us? Jerusalem is where the presence of God came to rest on each believer with the gift of the Holy Spirit. Many of the first believers, like Jesus and the twelve apostles, were not from Jerusalem but God placed them there at that time and moment to be the starting point of His mission to present Jesus to all peoples on earth. **How** did the believers present Jesus in their Jerusalem? They devoted themselves to practices that presented Jesus as present in their lives and community. As a result “the Lord added to their number day by day those who were being saved” (Acts 2:47). **The Big Idea to take away: Together, the earliest church devoted themselves to practices that presented Jesus as present in their lives and community.**

Hook: *A Question to Help Ignite Conversation*

Where are you from originally and what brought you to Williamsburg? (It would be good to go around and ask each person in the group to answer the question. In addition to getting to know one another better, the question will play into application question 1 later.)

Look:

Read Acts 1:8–11 & 2:1–7, 36–47

1. What are the key factors to being Jesus' witnesses mentioned in Acts 1:8? Does anyone have any questions about what this verse means?
2. What do we learn about the origins of many people dwelling in Jerusalem in Acts 2:5?
3. What happened when the Holy Spirit was poured out on the believers on the Day of Pentecost?
4. Where did those hearing the disciples speaking in other languages say they were from?
5. What were the four practices listed in 2:42 to which the believers were devoted?
6. What does 2:47 tell us that happened, apparently as a result of those practices?

Illustrations:

Illustrations and quotes can be found on the "Sermon Slides" link at the bottom of www.wcchapel.org

Took: *Applying the message to our lives.*

Practical Applications:

1. What difference does it make to you to consciously think, "I am not just living in Williamsburg, but Jesus has placed me in Williamsburg at this moment in time to present Him as present in my life and community"?
2. If Jerusalem is where God places us to present Jesus, in addition to a geographic place, **what** do you see as your figurative Jerusalem—where God has specifically placed you to present Jesus? (For example workplace, homemaker, school, etc.)
3. If you are already a follower of Jesus, when and how did you first realize that the Holy Spirit had entered your life and given you power to witness for Jesus?
4. As to **how** believers are to come together to present Jesus, our passage in **Acts 2:42–47** mentions four practices to which the earliest believers in Jerusalem were devoted:
 - a. The apostle's teaching
 - b. Fellowship (two or more people in the same boat rowing in the same direction together.)
 - c. Breaking of bread
 - d. Prayer

They committed themselves to these practices in both larger groups (in the temple) and smaller groups (in homes), not simply as individuals in their own homes and families. Which of the four practices do you most consistently do with other believers? ... Which do you practice the least? ... What would need to change for you to be consistently devoted to each of the four? (Remember the photo of the bicycle seat chained to a pole but not the bicycle. How might you be chained to the wrong devotions?)

5. Can you think of other practices that would help us as a church/small group of believers to present Jesus as present in our Jerusalem and beyond?
6. Can we recall the four initiatives of our Next 40 and where they fit into the framework of Jerusalem, Judea, Samaria, and the ends of the earth?
7. Will you pray for God to lead you to someone who needs to hear what God's word has been teaching you through this sermon/study?

Verse (You might consider memorizing this one): "But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you, and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth." — Acts 1:8

Prayer:

- Please pray for God to bring unity and healing to the divisions in our nation. Pray that we as Christ's Church might present Him as the true King who shows love even for those who oppose Him.
- As you pray for one another, please also remember the mission team in the Ukraine, the upcoming Christmas concerts.
- **You can text next40prayer to 41411 to receive up-to-date prayer requests related to our Next 40 initiatives.**

"Lord Jesus, please rearrange our habits so that we are most devoted to the practices that present you to those who don't yet know you but through our witness will be added to Your Kingdom."

What we hope members glean from the passage.

- 1. The Holy Spirit will come upon the believers and they will have power to be Jesus' witnesses to all peoples on earth.**
- 2. People were dwelling in Jerusalem who came from all over the known world.**
- 3. They began to speak in other languages so that people from other language groups began to hear the disciples' message in their native languages.**
- 4. Galilee (2:7)**
- 5. The apostle's teaching, fellowship, breaking of bread, prayers.**
- 6. The believers enjoyed favor with outsiders and the Lord added to their number day by day those who were being saved.**

The four initiatives of The Next 40 emphasis:

- **Jerusalem: Worship Buddies**
- **Judea & Samaria: East Side Church Plant**
- **The end of the earth: Thailand**
- **Our collective call to be Christ's witnesses wherever we are**