

Acts of the Holy Spirit pt 12 Yes means...

Intro: Stefan Duerksen Lead Pastor

Church-Wide Prayer: Life on Mission (Mt 28:18-20, Mt 22:37-40): Love, serve & disciple people to Jesus

- Fathers heart for people in our region
- “laborers for the harvest” in Southeast MB
- For Schools, teachers & students
- For businesses, employers & workers
- For doctors, government officials, lawyers
- Pray for boldness in sharing our faith, compassion and genuine love in how we treat people, for our personal testimonies to be strengthened, known for hard work, honesty, generosity, love, kindness, and for speaking the truth.

Recap: P. Martin brought us through **Acts 10** Peter and Cornelious

Read Acts 11:1-18 Now the apostles and the brothers who were throughout Judea heard that the Gentiles also had received the word of God. So when Peter went up to Jerusalem, the circumcision party criticized him, saying, “You went to uncircumcised men and ate with them.” But Peter began and explained it to them in order: “I was in the city of Joppa praying, and in a trance I saw a vision, something like a great sheet descending, being let down from heaven by its four corners, and it came down to me. Looking at it closely, I observed animals and beasts of prey and reptiles and birds of the air. And I heard a voice saying to me, ‘Rise, Peter; kill and eat.’ But I said, ‘By no means, Lord; for nothing common or unclean has ever entered my mouth.’ But the voice answered a second time from heaven, ‘What God has made clean, do not call common.’ This happened three times, and all was drawn up again into heaven. And behold, at that very moment three men arrived at the house in which we were, sent to me from Caesarea. And the Spirit told me to go with them, making no distinction. These six brothers also accompanied me, and we entered the man's house. And he told us how he had seen the angel stand in his house and say, ‘Send to Joppa and bring Simon who is called Peter; he will declare to you a message by which you will be saved, you and all your household.’ As I began to speak, the Holy Spirit fell on them just as on us at the beginning. And I remembered the word of the Lord, how he said, John baptized with water, but you will be baptized with the Holy Spirit.’ If then God gave the same gift to them as he gave to us when we believed in the Lord Jesus Christ, who was I that I could stand in God's way?” When they heard these things they fell silent. And they glorified God, saying, “Then to the Gentiles also God has granted repentance that leads to life.”

A. “YES” means - ALL are welcome at the table!

- V.3 the circumcision party is upset... why? Because Peter preached to Gentiles? NO. Because he ATE with them.
 - **Do we do this TODAY?** Preach to whomever you want. Let them know they are SINNERS. BUT... don't be friends with them – you don't want to be seen as approving of their lifestyle!

- Jewish culture, like many today, saw eating together as sacred. You didn't just eat with anyone. **Eating together was a sign of friendship, intimacy, acceptance, approval and status.**
- The table was often used to segregate people or to promote an individual's status. Teachers wouldn't eat with sinners or the poor. Those with status ate with others of status.
- Peter wasn't the first one to ruffle feathers through sharing a meal!
- **Matthew 9:10-13** And as Jesus reclined at the table in the house, behold, many tax collectors and sinners came and were reclining with Jesus and his disciples. And when the Pharisees saw this, they said to his disciples, "Why does your teacher eat with tax collectors and sinners?" But when he heard it, he said, "Those who are well have no need of a physician, but those who are sick. Go and learn what this means: I desire mercy, and not sacrifice.' For I came not to call the righteous, but sinners."
- **Jesus was a Master of breaking MAN-MADE rules!** He actively tore down racial, ethnic, class or gender barriers.
 - **Social Justice!** Racism! Bigotry! These are BIG issues in our world today! The BEST answer? **CHRISTIANS giving Jesus their "YES" and living it out!**
 - **Augustine, "Love God and do whatever you want!"** When you give God your YES – truly – then you reorient your life around His HEART & PRIORITIES.
- **He created ALL people in his Image.** And treated them accordingly. "Jesus, friend of sinners!"
- **V.18** "when they heard these things, they fell silent. And they glorified God, saying, then to the gentiles also God has granted repentance that leads to life!"
- **PRACTICAL CONSIDERATION:**
 - Do you spend more time showing love to people? or, worrying about approving of their lifestyles?
 - Are you friends with any unbelievers? Or, people who live lifestyles you disagree with?
 - **REMEMBER:** Jesus came to help the SICK
 - Who can you invite to your table?
- **Do we do this today?** Treat people differently because of their beliefs, political leanings, opinion on Covid, lifestyle choices, race, status, popularity?
 - **Galatians 2:11-14** But when Cephas came to Antioch, I opposed him to his face, because he stood condemned. For before certain men came from James, he was eating with the Gentiles; but when they came he drew back and separated himself, fearing the circumcision party. And the rest of the Jews acted hypocritically along with him, so that even Barnabas was led astray by their hypocrisy. But when I saw that their conduct was not in step with the truth of the gospel, I said to Cephas before them all, "If you, though a Jew, live like a Gentile and not like a Jew, how can you force the Gentiles to live like Jews?"

Acts 11:19-30 Now those who were scattered because of the persecution that arose over Stephen traveled as far as Phoenicia and Cyprus and Antioch, speaking the word to no one except Jews. But there were some of them, men of Cyprus and Cyrene, who on coming to Antioch spoke to the Hellenists also, preaching the Lord Jesus. And the hand of the Lord was with them, and a great number who believed turned to the Lord. The report of this came to the ears of the church in Jerusalem, and they sent Barnabas to Antioch. When he came and saw the grace of God, he was glad, and he exhorted them all to remain faithful to the Lord with steadfast purpose, for he was a good man, full of the Holy Spirit and of

faith. And a great many people were added to the Lord. So Barnabas went to Tarsus to look for Saul, and when he had found him, he brought him to Antioch. For a whole year they met with the church and taught a great many people. And in Antioch the disciples were first called Christians. Now in these days prophets came down from Jerusalem to Antioch. And one of them named Agabus stood up and foretold by the Spirit that there would be a great famine over all the world (this took place in the days of Claudius). So the disciples determined, every one according to his ability, to send relief to the brothers living in Judea. And they did so, sending it to the elders by the hand of Barnabas and Saul.

B. “Yes” means – The Fathers business is our business

- Persecution was ramping up! But the church was spreading and reaching the lost
- V. 21 “the hand of the Lord was with them and a great number who believed turned to the Lord”
- The Holy Spirit gave them wisdom, favor, power, boldness, spiritual gifts! ... BUT... not just to make their lives easier! No! He gave them power to accomplish the FATHERS BUSINESS!!
- Christians were generous, hard working, loving, they took care of the poor, the widows, and they shared the Good News with those around them!
- **Augustine**, *“Love God and do whatever you want” when you get the first part right, you will get the second part right!*

Acts 12:1-16 About that time Herod the king laid violent hands on some who belonged to the church.

- **Christians were disruptive** – they were non-violent, peaceful, loving, generous, BUT... they declared JESUS WAS LORD which both enraged Rome, as they declared Caesar to be Lord.. and enraged the Jews, who had crucified Jesus!
 - **People today don’t care if you call Jesus Lord!** We don’t use such titles.
 - **BUT** – truly live for him? Hold to what is true? You will live a disruptive life!
 - **Question:** Are you a God pleaser? Or, people pleaser? We cannot consistently please BOTH.
 - **Example:** sexuality – in an overly sexualized culture – where expressing yourself sexually in whatever ways you want is seen as true freedom, love and living your authentic self... we hold to sex inside marriage between ONE man and ONE woman. Any heterosexual or homosexual behavior outside this definition is against God’s design, is harmful to people, and is harmful to us. Will you hold to God’s truth? Or, will you compromise God’s truth to please people?
 - **Example:** a missionary to went to share the Good News with a tribe of cannibals... who killed him... leaving behind his wife and kids... Christian response? What a waste! He should have prioritized FAMILY – who’s family? OURS? Or, GODS?

He killed James the brother of John with the sword, and when he saw that it pleased the Jews, he proceeded to arrest Peter also. This was during the days of Unleavened Bread. And when he had seized him, he put him in prison, delivering him over to four squads of soldiers to guard him, intending after the Passover to bring him out to the people. So Peter was kept in prison, but earnest prayer for him was

made to God by the church. Now when Herod was about to bring him out, on that very night, Peter was sleeping between two soldiers, bound with two chains, and sentries before the door were guarding the prison. And behold, an angel of the Lord stood next to him, and a light shone in the cell. He struck Peter on the side and woke him, saying, "Get up quickly." And the chains fell off his hands. And the angel said to him, "Dress yourself and put on your sandals." And he did so. And he said to him, "Wrap your cloak around you and follow me." And he went out and followed him. He did not know that what was being done by the angel was real, but thought he was seeing a vision. When they had passed the first and the second guard, they came to the iron gate leading into the city. It opened for them of its own accord, and they went out and went along one street, and immediately the angel left him. When Peter came to himself, he said, "Now I am sure that the Lord has sent his angel and rescued me from the hand of Herod and from all that the Jewish people were expecting." When he realized this, he went to the house of Mary, the mother of John whose other name was Mark, where many were gathered together and were praying.

C. **"YES" means – everything flows from prayer**

- **V. 5 & 12** - shows they turned to PRAYER in their need. Desperate prayer.
- **Our prayer life says a LOT about our beliefs.** Our view of God, our view of the world.
- **As JI PACKER says,** "show me how much time you spend in prayer, and I'll show you how much you know God"
- **QUESTION:** what are the mountains you are facing? Have you brought this to God in prayer? Are you continuing to pray? Are you getting your strength through prayer? Direction?

D. **"Yes" means – we trust God to do what is best**

- **Our "YES" costs something! It does! we trade our life for Christ's life!**
- This results in us bearing **FRUIT** – GREAT! But also results in us facing **HARDSHIP**.
- **Contrast the end outcomes of James & Peter**
- **Peter was freed... But what about James?**
- **V. 2** Herod KILLED JAMES the brother of John...**FULFILLING PROPHECY Mark 10:35-40** And Jesus said to them, "The cup that I drink you will drink, and with the baptism with which I am baptized, you will be baptized, but to sit at my right hand or at my left is not mine to grant, but it is for those for whom it has been prepared."
- **Have you ever thought about that?** How do you think John felt? Peter? The church? Those close to James?
- **Perhaps you are here and you feel this way!** Maybe its: 1) healing, 2) addiction, 3) finances, 4) relationships, 5) lost family member or **FILL THE BLANK**.

Why does God heal one now, and not the other?

- **POINTS TO CONSIDER:**
 1. **Do you trust God to make the right decision?**
 - **God is working things for good – even when you don't see it**
 - **Joseph** – God allowed great suffering in his life – and in the end it led to his family and people being saved!

- **Jesus** – he too prayed, “if this cup can pass, but not as I will, but as you will” and an angel was sent to strengthen him... strengthen him to DIE. **FOR YOU AND ME.**
- Like Job... we don’t get all the answers to our questions, but we do get a choice.
- Will we trust God? Or will we become offended and bitter?
- Is God using your struggle to grow your character? Teach you something?
- Is he doing something in someone else’s life? Using you as an example?

2. Will we submit to God’s plan or become bitter?

- Our final salvation is coming! The restoration of all things! In this life? We will face plenty and want – following Jesus will bear fruit and cause us hardship!
- **John is IN PRISON Matthew 11:4-6** And Jesus answered them, “Go and tell John what you hear and see: the blind receive their sight and the lame walk, lepers are cleansed and the deaf hear, and the dead are raised up, and the poor have good news preached to them. And blessed is the one who is not offended by me.”

Prayer Commitment: Make your choice today! Let’s continue giving our “YES” – whatever is HIS WAY, is OUR WAY.

- First time commitment – lead
- Opening our homes & lives to the lost – All are welcome at our table
- Changing our priorities – Fathers Business
- Prayer – submitting our lives and bringing our needs to God in prayer
- Loving God and TRUSTING him above all else – even when it hurts!

AFTER SERVICE PRAYER – PRAYER ROOM – 9AM ONLY

MARANATHA!! Come soon Lord!

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SC CHURCH WIDE PRAYER REQUESTS 2023

Cruise ship → → → → → Battleship

1. **Life on Mission** (Mt 28:18-20, Mt 22:37-40): Love, serve & disciple people to Jesus
2. **Next Gen** (Ps 78:7-8): Encounters with Jesus, strong mental health, boldness & belonging
3. **Persecuted Church** (Lk 21:13): Faith, fortitude & wisdom “to not waste the opportunity to share the Gospel”
4. **Heart of Prayer** (Ps 27:4): Every generation to find Jesus & learn to bring their needs to Him in prayer
5. **Church Renewal**: Directors for India and other new countries & many global disciple makers