



God's Story, Our Stories

THE CHURCH:
God's Chosen
People in God's
Beloved World

Acts 2:36-47

³⁶ "Therefore let all Israel be assured of this: God has made this Jesus, whom you crucified, both Lord and Christ."

³⁷ When the people heard this, they were cut to the heart and said to Peter and the other apostles, "Brothers, what shall we do?"

³⁸ Peter replied, "Repent and be baptized, every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins. And you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.

³⁹ The promise is for you and your children and for all who are far off--for all whom the Lord our God will call."

40 With many other words he warned them; and he pleaded with them, "Save yourselves from this corrupt generation."

41 Those who accepted his message were baptized, and about three thousand were added to their number that day.

42 They devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and to the fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer.

43 Everyone was filled with awe, and many wonders and miraculous signs were done by the apostles.

44 All the believers were together and had everything in common.

⁴⁵ Selling their possessions and goods, they gave to anyone as he had need.

⁴⁶ Every day they continued to meet together in the temple courts. They broke bread in their homes and ate together with glad and sincere hearts,

⁴⁷ praising God and enjoying the favor of all the people. And the Lord added to their number daily those who were being saved.

If the fall resulted in fear, the church is in
awe at the work of God (v. 43)

If the fall resulted in anxiety,
the church shares resources (v. 45)

If the fall resulted in alienation,
the church fellowships and worships God
(vv. 45-46)



“It is true, of course, that what is an unspeakable gift of God for the lonely individual is easily disregarded and trodden under foot by those who have the gift every day... Therefore, let him who until now has had the privilege of living a common Christian life with other Christians praise God’s grace from the bottom of his heart. Let him thank on his knees and declare: It is grace, nothing but grace, that we are allowed to live in community with Christian brethren.”

DIETRICH BONHOEFFER, *LIFE TOGETHER*

If the fall resulted in folly, the church
has devoted teachers and authoritative
teaching (v. 42)

Just as the first mission was to be fruitful
and multiply, the Lord is adding daily to
their number (v. 47)

Acts 7:54-60

⁵⁴ When they heard this, they were furious and gnashed their teeth at him.

⁵⁵ But Stephen, full of the Holy Spirit, looked up to heaven and saw the glory of God, and Jesus standing at the right hand of God.

⁵⁶ "Look," he said, "I see heaven open and the Son of Man standing at the right hand of God."

⁵⁷ At this they covered their ears and, yelling at the top of their voices, they all rushed at him,

⁵⁸ dragged him out of the city and began to stone him. Meanwhile, the witnesses laid their clothes at the feet of a young man named Saul.

⁵⁹ While they were stoning him, Stephen prayed, "Lord Jesus, receive my spirit."

⁶⁰ Then he fell on his knees and cried out, "Lord, do not hold this sin against them." When he had said this, he fell asleep.

Acts 8:1-3

¹ And Saul was there, giving approval to his death. On that day a great persecution broke out against the church at Jerusalem, and all except the apostles were scattered throughout Judea and Samaria.

² Godly men buried Stephen and mourned deeply for him.

³ But Saul began to destroy the church. Going from house to house, he dragged off men and women and put them in prison.

How will the church handle death?
How will the church handle “exile”?

How will we?

1 Peter 1:1-2

¹ "Peter, an apostle of Jesus Christ, To God's elect, strangers in the world, scattered throughout Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia and Bithynia,

² who have been chosen according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, through the sanctifying work of the Spirit, for obedience to Jesus Christ and sprinkling by his blood: Grace and peace be yours in abundance.

Recognize our reality

1 Peter 1:3-7

³ Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ! In his great mercy he has given us new birth into a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead,

⁴ and into an inheritance that can never perish, spoil or fade--kept in heaven for you,

⁵ who through faith are shielded by God's power until the coming of the salvation that is ready to be revealed in the last time.

⁶ In this you greatly rejoice, though now for a little while you may have had to suffer grief in all kinds of trials.

⁷ These have come so that your faith--of greater worth than gold, which perishes even though refined by fire--may be proved genuine and may result in praise, glory and honor when Jesus Christ is revealed.

Praise in spite of suffering

1 Peter 2:1-3

1 Therefore, rid yourselves of all malice and all deceit, hypocrisy, envy, and slander of every kind.

2 Like newborn babies, crave pure spiritual milk, so that by it you may grow up in your salvation,

3 now that you have tasted that the Lord is good.

Choose the right food

1 Peter 2:4-5

⁴ As you come to him, the living Stone-- rejected by men but chosen by God and precious to him--

⁵ you also, like living stones, are being built into a spiritual house to be a holy priesthood, offering spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ.

Live sacrificially



God's Story, Our Stories

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1 Peter 2:9-10

⁹ But you are a chosen people, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people belonging to God, that you may declare the praises of him who called you out of darkness into his wonderful light.

¹⁰ Once you were not a people, but now you are the people of God; once you had not received mercy, but now you have received mercy.

Embrace our identity

Just as God used the weapons of the world to show his perfect love on the cross, so he takes and uses the power of the world for his purposes. God takes a church scattered in persecution and makes it the church dispersed in mission.

Acts 8:4

4 Those who had been scattered preached the word wherever they went.

If we place another alongside Jesus as the one in charge of the church, then we are committing idolatry. The sole-ness of Christ's rule is the universality of Christ's rule. If he does not rule alone, he does not rule atop. If he does not rule solely, he does not rule supremely.



Ron Cook

MINISTER OF PASTORAL CARE
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John Little

FACILITIES MANAGER
SINCE 2015

Communion

