

Acts Bible Study - Part 1

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[0 : 0 0] Great. So we're going to do acts, which is a quite a journey. And so I thought I would begin with some some background information and we'll kind of see what you know and what I know.

But before we do any of that, let's pray. Wonderful God, send your spirit here that we may be touched and moved by your word, that we might be taught by each other in this time and space and use your word to your glory in Jesus name. Amen.

All right. So I think I had said once that one of the I use this in confirmation class long ago and far away when we were going through the Bible that I had the students.

We would use the the message Bible, but we weren't necessarily reading the Bible. We were reading the introduction because the message Bible has an excellent introduction to each book of the Bible.

And so I want to start by sharing what Eugene Peterson writes about acts because the story of Jesus is so impressive. God among us, God speaking a language we can understand, God acting in ways that heal and help and save us.

[1 : 3 0] There's a danger that we will be impressed, but only impressed as the spectacular dimensions of this story or suddenly dawn upon us. We could easily become enthusiastic spectators and then let it go at that.

Become admirers of Jesus, generous with our oohs and ahs and in our better moments, inspired to imitate him. It is Luke's task to prevent that, to prevent us from becoming mere spectators to Jesus, fans of the message.

Of the original quartet of writers on Jesus, Luke alone continues to tell the story as the apostles and disciples live it into the next generation. The remarkable thing is that it continues to be essentially the same story.

Luke continues his narration with hardly a break, a pause perhaps to dip his pen into the inkwell, writing in the same style, using the same vocabulary.

The story of Jesus doesn't end with Jesus. It continues in the lives of those who believe in him. The supernatural does not stop with Jesus. Luke makes it clear that these Christians he wrote about were no more spectators of Jesus than Jesus was a spectator of God.

[2 : 4 3] They are in on the action of God, God acting in them, God living in them, which also means, of course, in us. So, having shared that kind of introduction to, as Eugene Peterson writes, one of the, some of the questions that I wrote down to start with is, what do you know about acts in terms of who wrote it?

Audience, do you know, do you come with it with any already established understandings? I had known that Luke had written it and that Luke was a physician.

Right. And I guess I always thought of it as the acts of the disciples. What do the disciples do?

Hi, Debbie. Hi. I'm sorry. I've been having problems. Well, Adrian joined us and told us that you were having problems. So, you're here now and that's the good thing.

And we have little tiny pictures on my phone. We were, I just read a little blurb about acts and kind of, so we were just talking about what do people know about acts.

[4 : 11] And so then, Linda, why don't you say again what you said? That Luke had written it and that Luke was a physician. And I always looked at it as the acts of the disciples.

What the disciples did after Jesus had left and after the Holy Spirit came upon them. Right.

And Luke was a Gentile as opposed to some of the others were Jews. Yes. Writing from that perspective. No. Anything, Debbie?

Do you come to any with anything about acts? Yeah. I read that it was about the birth of the church, but I think that was something you wrote. It is described as that.

And so it actually, I have to switch out my message Bible for a different Bible. That when the, one of the things, there are a couple of things that are helpful to realize.

[5 : 17] And one begins in the first chapter of Luke. So if you have your Bible and you turn to the first chapter of Luke, and Debbie, your picture is frozen, but you're smiling.

So it's all good. You're all frozen too. We can still hear you. I hope we're smiling too. I won't tell you what your mouths are shaped like on my screen.

Oh. So if somebody would read just that first paragraph of Luke 1, including the title that you have on your version, that would be great.

Mine says Luke's purpose in writing. And then it reads, Many have undertaken to draw up an account of the things that have been fulfilled among us, just as they were handed down to us by those who from the first were eyewitnesses and servants of the word.

With this in mind, since I myself have carefully investigated everything from the beginning, I too decided to write an orderly account for you, most excellent theophilus, so that you may know the certainty of the things you have been taught.

[6 : 43] So the way that some understand those first couple of verses is that Luke is acknowledging that he himself did not witness it, that what he is trying to do is to create an orderly account of what had happened from those witnesses, from the people who witnessed Jesus and all the things that had happened.

Now, Luke, as a learned person, as a physician, who also has the ability to write, he is writing what he understands to be the story, taking the pieces from here and here and here and making it into a story.

So the other question that comes is, who is Theophilus? Anybody know? I think I've read that it could be an actual person or it could be a lover of God.

Like that's what the... A believer, yeah. So it's quite an interesting, Theophilus is quite an interesting name and identity.

As you said, Theophilus means loved by God. And so some of... Oh, love by God. That's better than what I said.

[8 : 08] I said lover of God, but it means loved by God. Right. Okay. I mean, at least that's how I understand it. So Theophilus is...

There are several options. Theophilus of Antioch. Some describe him as an early Christian patriarch, second century Roman bishop, who promoted a moralistic Christianity.

Now that's one thought. He also was thought to possibly be Paul's lawyer. There was another thought that...

That as this friend or loved by God title, that because of what it meant, that essentially that Luke and Acts are written to anyone who falls into that description.

So if you follow that particular train of thought, it leads you to extrapolate that the audience for both Luke and Acts are not the completely unchurched.

[9 : 31] It's not for people who don't know anything about Jesus. It's for people who actually already do know and have a sense of a relationship with God and know some things about Jesus.

So it's... There's just a whole list of possibilities for who Theophilus was.

And so the question of, is it an actual person? Is it... Is it written to Theophilus as in kind of adding a dignitary title that relates to someone who's a real person?

There's no proof. There's no proof of what that is or who that is. But Theophilus is...

Both Luke and Acts are directed to Theophilus. It's thought by some biblical scholars that Luke and Acts were written as a contiguous piece of writing, that they were not meant to be separated.

[10 : 45] And the understanding that Luke... Luke and Acts were written in a highly educated version of Greek, not everyday ordinary people.

And that also describes that who the reading audience was, were people who were educated. People who would be called learned, that they...

This was... So then they then could impart the message to people who could not read or people who did not have an education. But the initial audience was people who were educated.

And they... That was determined by the kind of Greek that was used to... How... The Greek... The kind of Greek that it was written in.

So... The... The... It's... One question... I'm sorry to interrupt. Go ahead. No, you go ahead. Um... And then maybe we table this for a later time discussion, but why John is comes...

[12 : 09] Why it goes Matthew, Mark, Luke, John, Acts. I know. And... Well, and the other thing is we call... We call... We call... And it was historically known as the Acts of the Apostles, but it's not.

It's not... It's not about the Apostles. It's about new disciples and new followers of Jesus. You know, Stephen and some of the others, the figuring out who was going to replace Judas.

Um... Things like that. And... It doesn't mean that it's absent in conversation about the... The disciples, but... It depends on how you define disciple and apostle.

Yeah. Because some people understand disciples are the twelve that Jesus thought. Apostles are the followers, sort of the lineage of those who follow Jesus.

Uh... Remember me telling you about Matt's ordination and how they had the succession of... How that came down. That's... That... Some people would call that an apostolic succession of people of faith.

[13 : 14] Uh... And I always thought of it the other way around, where it was the apostles were the original twelve and the disciples were the followers of Christ. All in... Yeah, me too. I thought that as well.

Well, and I think probably you can find that... You can find either one. You can find them kind of flipped. I think... We...

We don't have much of a... Use for the word apostle. Mm-hmm. In our... In our church language.

In our... Um... Sense of... Kind of titles. We do have disciples. We do talk about disciples, discipleship.

Um... Like that. But... You don't... You don't see the... The word apostle said by Jesus describing his followers.

[14:12] Nor did he necessarily call them disciples. They were the twelve who were chosen. Um... So... Apostles. Like I said, it doesn't have...

It doesn't... Um... I think... I'm not sure that that's... Whether that's... Uh... More of an early church language or a different kind of faith background language.

Um... Um... But... Not so much... Not so much ours. Um... And... So... It... Like I said, it could be different depending on...

Uh... We... On how you look at it. And... Um... What that feels like. So...

What are you looking up, Linda? Um... I'm just thinking about the... United Methodists go and make disciples. And when Jesus sent them out, is that what he said? Was go and make disciples.

[15:12] Go... And make disciples. And I was trying to remember where that was. Is it the end of... I think it's in Matthew. The end? Matthew 28. The Great Commission.

Yeah. Yeah. That's it. Yeah. There's a reason to have a pastor in the... In the group. Many reasons. Yeah.

It's... It's... All authority in heaven and earth has been given me. Therefore, go and make disciples of all nations. Baptizing them in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. Even have an underline.

That's... Yeah. Um... It's... So... If you... If you did a quick Google on apostles, what would you...

Why don't you see what you can find? Okay. Um... I don't like that. Oh... Google... Um... Google... Google... Mine says, um... Um...

[16:09] Any important early Christian teacher, especially St. Paul. Yeah. That's what...

That's what mine says, too. And mine says, I just looked up, um... In the apostle, and it says, now, each of the twelve chief chief disciples of Jesus Christ.

An early... An early... An important early Christian teacher, especially St. Paul. Yep. The first successful Christian missionary in a country or to a people. An apostle, and it says, now, each of the twelve chief chief disciples of Jesus Christ.

An early... An important early Christian teacher, especially St. Paul. Yep. The first successful Christian missionary in a country or to a people. An apostle, and it says, I just looked up, um...

An apostle is likened to an ambassador. That person has been chosen by the ruler, commissioned to carry out commandments.

[17:09] An apostle knows the message and knows what the sender wants him to do. He is obligated to fulfill that mission that was committed to him, which could be anybody. You know, it has...

Right. I guess some of that, um... The... The definition of apostle fits when we think of the...

Um... Of the commissioning, and yet, um... Who is one of the twelve? Did he know? Did Judas know?

Would he be... What category does he fall into? And Paul gets to be an apostle. Um... And... So... I think that probably we don't have to be kind of tunnel vision on the definitions...

Right. ...of words, because I think if we looked up disciple, we would find a follower, a person who is faithful to the teaching. Actually, one thing I have here is, um, what's the difference between a disciple disciple disciple, a disciple and an apostle.

[18 : 21] And it says, while a disciple is a student, one who learns from the teacher, an apostle is sent to deliver those teachings to others. Apostle means messenger.

Right. And... When you think about, like, that, that apostolic succession that I described about, it's...

It starts from one of the disciples, or apostle, and then it goes to bishops and to, you know, the scientific, significant people as it follows down the historic chain of, um, sort of, who passed on the mantle to carry on the apostolic mission, not the disciple mission.

I'm, you know, we can talk about... Well, does a disciple graduate to become an apostle? Um... um i hope not because i don't think you should ever graduate from learning and being students yeah but it's um so the makeup of acts is that it's 28 chapters and it's broken up into sections and um the first the first 12 are about the last meeting of jesus with his disciples and the beginning of paul's work as a missionary and then the next 16 chapters are about paul's missionary activity um and so the uh the second part starts with his mission to the church at antioch um and ends with his residence in rome as a prisoner of the roman government so it's that so it literally is okay so we're at um emmaus and then we jump to um the beginning of acts of jesus um and part of the first section talks about the ascension of jesus into heaven um the choosing of a disciple to remain to replace judas um the feast of pentecost and the gift of tongues peter's sermon and then the arrest of peter and john in the temple the sin of ananias and sapphira the stoning of stephen and then it goes on to the eunuch and the baptism and the and paul's conversion on the road to damascus so part of what that's about is this giving some insight into what does the early christian community look like um and which i think can be very fascinating one of the reasons i ended up being drawn to acts because is because of the newness but also the chaos and the confusion and well here we are 2020 the united methodist church but the church as a whole in a state of chaos and um unfortunately political division which has been has been very difficult and so hearing what did what was it that these early christians actually believed because um they are the idea is that the message is for jews and gentiles um and so that means not as opposed to hebrews where we talked about the fact that they came from a strongly jewish background um and were pretty um um stuck at times in the the safety of the rules and the regulations and the guidelines as opposed to this new liberated life which also carried with it much responsibility this time now in reading and reading acts it's a mixed it's a mixed audience um jews and gentiles so which leads to some interesting interesting interesting understandings um and so it's um so that's that's just a little bit like a little

kind of introduction into um acts and a little history um um so the i think the other thing that's probably important to point out is that um as i said luke was written with the idea that people already knew about jesus and so one of the things that is suggested in pointing to people to read the gospel of luke is that um it's it's sometimes is better read not by people who are seeking conversion but rather people who are already conversion conversion long day who are already converted to help them to understand jesus to learn his life to learn the story of jesus ministry and how that unfolded um and which you can understand that kind of like if you're my old testament professor uh who was so so integrated into what the old testament said but then he picked the gospel of mark to read he actually memorized the gospel of mark then went back to the old testament to pick up on all the strings that that you have in the gospels that pull from all these places in the old testament um so if you're familiar with the old testament then it's easier to read the gospels and understand them um and there's a sense that um it's easier to read luke if you already believe in jesus i think i find that kind of interesting yeah but i'm also not sure i don't know what passage of scripture is do you think there is a passage of scripture that you would point somebody to that you would hope might come to believe in jesus i think probably john 3 16 just because that's what popular culture has told us so familiarity that people would if they've been to a football game they would have seen it or an ice hockey game or whatever wherever they hang the banners around yeah a friend of mine i'd send an older bible of mine um um and it didn't start with john 3 16. it was like telling it was a series of verses on how to tell somebody to be saved and it was and i wrote it in my bible where it started and then the next it was almost like a scavenger hunt at the end of the verse the next verse i'll have to grab my other bible sometime and look at that i think it might have started in romans for some reason i don't know have you ever seen that seen that i have seen that um and i think that's that's very good for the person who's guiding that person i don't know about you know i didn't have any guidance in reading the bible you know i got a bible and i started reading it and where you start you start at the beginning wrong wrong wrong um you know once you get past creation then you have it's a pretty rocky road to figure out who god is reading through genesis and leviticus and um things like that and so that it's it's one of those things that i think it were hard pushed to just hand somebody a bible and say here find jesus um and i think that um

[27:13] i think more people are brought to faith by hearing what scripture speaks to us and why um what makes us believe in the goodness of god you know it could be john 3 16 night knowing that jesus died for our sins um it could be uh some of romans it could be um i didn't really come to terms or come to know romans 8 in terms of nothing separating us from the love of god that was not an early biblical verse for me but i wish it had been i wish i had known that i don't think i ever didn't believe it but i wish i would have had the bible to back me up because i didn't know why i believed it um what about you linda anything that you would point to the 23rd psalm keeps popping into my head that that the lord is my shepherd that he'll take care of me yeah that he'll always be there for me and he will for you too right and again a passage that people might have heard right if they've been to a funeral they've heard it right and even if it wasn't shared it might be on a little funeral card right you know if the funeral's at a funeral home and it's not a particularly religious ceremony um that might be on a funeral card because that's what somebody picked why did they pick it because it's familiar right even if they don't actually have a sense as to what it is or where it came from right more like a poem or something to that right yeah yeah it's um so i don't think that i don't think that i've ever read the gospels from the perspective of if you read this story you will be converted so i if you don't look at it from that perspective then i don't know that it i think any one of the gospels if you read them like a like almost like a novel if you read them as our old testament professor again he taught us to read um we it was an old testament class but then he would ask us because he was teaching us about this mark thing he asked us to read the gospel of mark in just a couple of settings so that we would read for story not for what's your old testament professor going to ask you on a quiz um which you know are two different things and i think that um that any of the gospels are really wonderful if they're read as a story that's so interesting that you say that um we with the kids the teens last week our lesson was about um following in jesus's footsteps and we talked about you know in 20 years ago when everybody wore the what would jesus do bracelets um but the curriculum made the point i can't take credit for it they said what we really need to do is look at what did jesus do right and not make it so hypothetical what would he do in this situation if you look at his life and it said you know encourage the the teens to read read them as biographies read the gospels as biographies and you're learning about this person and how he handled everything from rage to temptation to um sin and all those things and so i thought that was a i had never thought about that as an adult that way you know i learned just as much as they do as we're doing as we're doing our study and you're very right you know i mean i think that you know our my kids were young 20 years ago but i did have one teenager and they um

um there they all had the wwjd bracelets um but really when you think about Jesus' life you can look at some of some of the contemporary issues but not look at them from what's what's right and wrong now I mean in terms of politics and stuff but more let's talk about well how did Jesus treat women very different from his culture um how did Jesus deal with people um what did it take to make Jesus angry right and and how did he and some of that we don't know you know we talk about the turning over of the tables in the temple but you know was that like an Indiana Jones like just obliterated or was it tipping over a table and having all the coins um be spread but did he say did he talk loudly did he right and I just think those are some great questions but teams thought he did a like a Buffalo Bills table breaking have you seen that pastor kid you know Bill's Mafia that's part of the Buffalo Bills tailgating experience aha jump on a table and break it oh that was one one of the teams said yeah just like at the Buffalo Bills games so do you have to jump from the ground onto the table or from the back of a truck either I think it's either because I'm picturing anybody jumping off the ground up onto the table with enough downward force to break it because you have to be big enough but if you're big enough getting up high enough so I would vote for jumping off the back of the truck and most Bills fans aren't big enough with us with our chicken wings and and all the layers of clothing you have to put on to stay warm that's true you don't convert that's right um but but I think that people tend to forget when they ask what would Jesus do they always think of course you're going to be nicey nice well sometimes Jesus did flip those tables right or right in the sand and make everybody run away yeah all the dirt and probably not sand um and when Jesus confronted sinners he didn't make it pretty he didn't take their sin away from them I mean not in the he didn't make it seem as though they hadn't done anything wrong the woman well he named her without her even having to say how many husbands have you had and are you even married now um he he didn't he didn't he didn't go the route of poor neglected woman he treated her with great compassion and healing um but it was an honest conversation Jesus didn't talk around things except for the parables the parables have a lot of talking around things and trying to sort it out but I do think what did Jesus do yep um and and so it's this journey of going from Luke into Acts and the the how did we Luke is how did we get here how did we get to even having a church and then Acts begins with some of of what that of some of what that looks like so let's look at it let's look at the beginning of Acts whole lot of introduction um

so we start out in the beginning of Acts one does yours do your Bible say the promise of the Holy Spirit um what is it type do you have a title for your for chapter one well it says establishment of the church and Jesus taken up into heaven but the sections of chapter one through 12 it says Peter's ministry go ahead that same same okay mind starts with the promise of the Holy Spirit then the ascension of Jesus then Matthias chosen to replace Judas um and then nothing no more titles until chapter two yes we have a little introduction though also um it says the book of Acts begins where where the Gospel leaves off reporting the actions of the apostles and the work of the Holy Spirit beginning in Jerusalem the church is established it grows rapidly it then faces intense persecution which drives the believers out into the surrounding areas through this dispersion the garden Samaritans and Gentiles hear the good news and believe they um when we think about as we begin to look at this and the as mine says the promise of the Holy Spirit um do you remember when in your faith journey you might have ever begun to make any sense of the Holy

Spirit and what the Holy Spirit's purpose is? I did it as a teenager, but it really started making sense. The Trinity, I think just within the past 10 years of thought, God is my Father, Jesus is my Savior, and the Holy Spirit is there to convict, guide, comfort me.

Yeah. And I think I had a really juvenile view of it, obviously when I was little, but it probably hadn't changed much until, like you said, Linda, in recent years as an adult, I used to always, and I think probably a Sunday school teacher said it to me, that the Holy Spirit kind of guides you, it's like that pit of your stomach when you, you know, you shouldn't do something wrong, and it's trying to tell you to do something right, and it's just kind of that nudge from God. But I heard, you know, real recently, and I should check this if it's, if this is a Methodist belief, that, you know, the Holy Spirit really is a person, it's the third person of the Trinity. Do we believe that?

[38 : 22] Yeah. Yeah. And I think that, you know, we are a Trinitarian denomination, which is why the church that I served before, when I got there, when they did baptisms, they only, he only baptized them in Jesus' name, and I was like, wait, what? What? Wait, what? You know, and it was just unusual, because we are a Trinitarian denomination, and that when it comes to communion, when it comes to a baptism, it's very much a part of our, I baptize you in the name of the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Spirit.

And I do think that most people struggle with understanding the Holy Spirit, because, because God and Jesus have such a specific purpose. Right? God's the creator. God, you know, gave us life in the beginning and made the world. And then Jesus came to be our Savior. So the Holy Spirit, and yet, our understanding is that it was always the Trinity. It was never just God, it was never just Jesus, and it was never just the Holy Spirit. And, and yet, I think, because of the ethereal nature of the Holy Spirit, we struggle with understanding not only who is it. When I first learned about the Holy Spirit in seminary, I was convinced that the language that I was convinced that I had heard that the language around the Holy Spirit was more feminine than masculine. It's not true. But that's, that's how I interpreted it. But I think I might have interpreted it based on the description of the

Holy Spirit. Comfortably. Not necessarily the male, female language that goes with the, the talk about the Holy Spirit. Right. So when you both of you talk about the convicting nature of the Holy Spirit. I've definitely the sort of the nudging the the guidance, the kind of in some ways feels like the messenger.

And I just, I don't know. I don't know about the conviction part. Depends on how you interpret conviction. I think of it as I don't even quite know how to express it. But I just like, for example, when I'm going through make trying to make a decision.

I'll struggle and struggle and I'll get the nuts and such in my belly, but then and I'll pray about it. And it's like, as soon as I make my, it's like a piece that comes about me when I know that the Holy Spirit has guided me to the decision.

[41 : 51] Okay, you're convicted. Because see conviction to me can sometimes be interpreted as conviction, meaning I'm doing something wrong. Bless you.

That too, though. That that that it's, it's, it's kind of right, wrong, good, bad. And I don't, I don't think that's how it's meant. That's which is why I wanted to ask you about that about what does that mean?

What about you, Kelly? Yeah, and something else I have thought, as of late about the Holy Spirit, and I think I heard it and it kind of, it seemed like a light bulb to me, but I don't know if this is even a right way to think about it.

That, you know, if Jesus, when he rose from the dead and came back and visited people on earth, if he had stayed himself on earth, only the people that he was with at a certain time, could experience him and have his power, right?

And how he sent the Holy Spirit so that literally, everybody across the planet could have access to God to the Trinity.

[43 : 06] Yes. That, that seemed right? Yeah. Because I was like, oh, that makes perfect sense to me. Yeah. You know, because I often think like, why couldn't Jesus just stay with us? It would have been easier, you know?

The other thing I think, sorry, Kelly, is Jesus as a person couldn't dwell within us where the Holy Spirit can. Right. Well, and we tell kids, you know, I've got Jesus in my heart.

Yeah. Really, we're talking about the Holy Spirit. Yeah. Yeah. Yeah. But, you know, explain to a three-year-old the Holy Spirit. Right. It's easier to say I got Jesus in my heart.

Right. I think that my, when it comes to understanding grace and specifically, like when I look at my life story, I think about pervenient grace.

Right. The grace of those before us that before we ever even know who God is. And I think that was one of the places where I grew to understand the movement of the Holy Spirit, that God was preparing the way for me to believe all the days of my life.

[44 : 18] And, but even more so as I got to be a teenager. And sort of that pulling towards God.

Yeah. To the point where I think when I actually encountered a faith community, it was at least in spirit, I already believed.

It was really just now I have the framework for it, but I actually, I already believe this, even though I wouldn't have ever been able to articulate it.

But I couldn't articulate what had come before until I found my way into a Christian community and began to learn.

And I just thought that was the most amazing thing to think that God, you know, I'm one person. So that same thing is available to everyone.

[45 : 17] And I think that, but like you said, the kind of. The times when you kind of know which way to go when you've been.

And of course, the question is always that we always have to ask, is that the way I want it to go? Or is that? And the good thing is most of the decisions we make, it doesn't matter.

I mean, you know, because if we have our faith integrated into us, we're likely to be choosing between two decisions that are likely congruent with our faith anyway.

It's just a matter of kind of the subtlety. And I say that because I think that we don't always, we're not always aware of the Holy Spirit moving us.

And some of those places. And comforter. I think that was, that's been in ministry. That's been probably the one of the more overwhelming senses of why God spent, sent the Holy Spirit to be in some ways to be that sort of spiritual arms around us in our suffering.

[46 : 36] So some of one, one person describes the from a sort of a more human perspective that the early church experienced something very special and dynamic.

And part of that dynamic was that Jesus first followers were so sure of their message. The other part was that they were also sure God had given them power.

And what was so dynamic about the early church was its Holy Spirit inspired boldness. Luke's narrative about the day of Pentecost and the events leading up to it and following the story is how God gave them the confidence.

Not just that, that God gave them that fire of confidence to preach the message so that by giving them access to the Spirit's power.

And he's this, this author says, our problem today is not that we lack access to God's power. It's, and I think we can relate to this, it's that we often neglect to plug our spiritual appliances into the power source.

[47 : 51] I thought, since we're always wondering near a charger. Right. Especially if you had an iPhone 6 when the batteries started going.

That's fair. I was fortunate not to have one of those. So my husband now has the 6 and I have a 10, but I do remember because he was a, he was a flip phone person.

Then he went to an indestructible phone that was like, he found it himself online or maybe Katie helped him find it that literally we're talking made out of practically indestructible material because he's so hard on things.

So convincing him to move into the iPhone world. When, so now we only have one holdout in the iPhone world. My son, Jordan, he's a Android.

Android. So anyway, where we get our faith energy when we feel depleted.

[49 : 02] So again, that's another version of how it is that we can look to the Holy Spirit for that kind of refreshment and renewal. So can you, can you describe an experience where you were pretty sure that it was a pretty significant experience of the Holy Spirit?

It doesn't have to be life changing, just I know I have one.

I just can't remember what it is right now. And I don't know if I've ever like called it that I, I guess I like, I think of in worship, there are certain times when we're singing as a group that I just get chills and feel like, feel the presence of God.

Yes. I don't know if I've identified like when you lift up on your toes, when you're like in a choir and you're kind of up on your toes singing. Yeah. Actually, I do.

I can think of two times where I've felt the Holy Spirit. And one of them was actually when Pastor Lisa first started at Pendleton. And she came to choir that night because she wanted to experience all the different things going on at the church.

[50 : 22] And I sat next to her. And when it came to prayer time, I could feel the Holy Spirit resonating through her. It was awesome.

And then the other time was when we had that big service on a Saturday night for all the CLMs in the district. All the new CLMs were having the hands laid on them.

And it was just, I could just feel the Holy Spirit moving there. And it was pretty awesome. It was pretty awesome.

Yeah. Pretty wonderful. They, and I, I, I feel like I have a lot of experiences trying to figure out.

I think some of the music, as you said, I remember when, when I was in seminary, I joined the choir and the, the seminary was getting a new president.

[51 : 18] And so what, for the inauguration of the president, they, the choir did parts of the Valdi's Gloria. And that was probably the most powerful choral experience I'd ever had.

It was like, I felt like we were up on our toes more often than, than we were on our feet because the music just pulled us into this space of, you couldn't be in tears because you had to sing, but just resonated through your whole body.

That was just so amazing. I, I wish I could remember how it felt afterwards. Cause I, I imagine that we were probably exhausted, but it was such a high also.

Right. Um, so I, I heard there's a, uh, when I was doing my doctoral work out in Dayton, we would go for these, we would go have to go for a few, like four weekends or two day things a year, but then we would do two week long, um, intensives a year.

And when we were there for the intensives, all the other doctoral students were there as well. Not just the group that I was in, which was for pastoral supervision.

[52 : 40] There were 10 of us or 12, but the ones in preaching and the ones in history and the ones in this and that. And, um, and so we would have the advantage of hearing some of these people preach that what both the, the leaders, cause it wasn't just the seminary faculty, it was people that they brought in large, um, African-American population in this.

And there was this woman preacher who she, um, she, she framed her sermon around the, um, old song called order.

Order my steps, order my steps in your word, dear Lord, order my steps. And it kind of goes on. Um, but she, she, she walked big, big chapel, walked back and forth across the, the stage or the altar.

And she had on sneakers and, but she was, you know, order my steps, order where I go. And it was just the preaching style.

And if it had been an altar call, I would have been right there up front, but, um, just some of these really powerful, um, experiences of preaching and, uh, being in corporate worship, hearing incredible speakers, even being at some youth events, um, where it was a musician.

[54 : 09] That was like a group that was for the youth, but I'm right there. I got it. Yeah. That's, that's one thing I missed about annual conference this year. Was, was the worship experiences and the speakers and the Bible studies.

Yep. We miss the singing so much in church. Oh, yeah. It almost kills me not to sing. No. And I have to, go ahead.

No, you go, Linda. I was going to say that I have to admit, that's one thing I like about still being home during the services is I can still sing. Oh, yeah. Oh, yeah.

Yeah. We would sing a lot. Our family would sing in the living room. Yeah. I still sing that this is the day because I can.

And, and honestly, I mean, I, I hear people singing behind their masks and there are certain parts of the service that I hear it more than others.

[55 : 11] You know, it's, you're not going to get very, as much as, I mean, the summons that we did last week, it's one of my favorite hymns or however you want to put it. But it's not going to be the kind of thing that you're going to hear people singing because it's not that kind of hymn.

It's people don't have a long history with it because it's not been in our tradition for that long. But I'm okay, let's talk about for all the saints.

That's your rooted deeply in our singing tradition. And I've gotten pretty good at saying the words with sort of the song, the melody in the background.

But using a speaking voice so that I'm not causing any trouble. But, and I wish that I could, I wish that we could teach the congregation to do that.

So that they would have a little bit of permission. But the problem is, is that everybody interprets that differently. And some people's version of for all the saints, for all the saints, you know, and they think, well, I'm singing behind my mask.

[56 : 22] It's okay. Right. I get caught every time. It's so funny on the doxology. Yeah. Because I'm so ingrained. Okay. Like when that, when she hits those chords on the organ, I stand up and I start singing.

And she's always elbowing me. I watched just a few minutes of a church service of a colleague of mine. And they actually had a singing section in their sanctuary.

I mean, I'm watching it online. So I don't know what that looks like. How can you have a singing section with your mask on? You have to keep your mask on. But what I don't know is were the other people masks on or masks off or singing or not singing?

How far apart were they? So many questions. It's like having a smoking section with no walls around. I know. Right. I would vote no on that.

Yeah. So I don't know. So I don't, it's, I think there's nothing we would love to give back to the congregation more than singing. I know.

- [57 : 28] I feel bad that I even brought it up because I know it's, it's hard on everybody. It is. Well, but it's much more difficult on choir members and choir leaders, you know, as a, as a pastor.
- I mean, it's not that I don't love to sing. I suppose it would maybe be for me the equivalent of being told you can't preach. Right. Right. Mm hmm.
- I can't. What? Right. I went to Chris Mehar's funeral yesterday morning.
- Yeah. And it was beautiful. It was really beautiful. But I'd never been in that church before. And they had, they had a woman playing the piano and singing.
- I thought the music was from coming from the sound system because I couldn't find her. I couldn't find the piano. And it was like, you know, I didn't want to be like, but I was like, is that, is that recorded or is it live?
- [58 : 37] Because it was so good and so clear and it was live, but she was, you know, way over there. Um, and the, the priest chanted a little bit with the communion, but it was quite soft.
- Um, and behind the, they had the pulpit behind a, a, a, a well done big piece of plexiglass. Um, but it was very clear and it was essentially because the pulpit was a little bit projected.
- Um, so the, it would protect anybody that was sitting, um, close up to the, to the, the pulpit, but it was just an interesting way of seeing.
- Um, yeah. And it's very careful. There were signs everywhere. Um, how did they do communion? Um, they, they, the way they did communion was he, they only do the, the host, the waiver.
- Um, and you have to, he, and it was interesting. He said, make an altar out of your hands. So sign of the cross in your hands and that he would put it on your hand.
- [59 : 55] Um, and that you could, what did he say? I think he gave instructions about how to, how to take it, but, um, asked everybody to keep their distance.
- And, um, and only for Roman Catholics. Was he, um, he, he didn't, he was not exclusive in his invitation, but you could tell all the Protestants cause they didn't go.
- Um, and it was, um, and it was, it was largely a Protestant congregation, but because Chris's family is Catholic. Um, that was their parish, I guess.
- Um, but when I, when I figured out that it was going to be a mass, I was like, how much time do I have? Yeah. Right.
- Some that are quite long, but he did, he just did, he just did a really nice job. It was, it moved along and, um, none of it felt longer than it should be.
- [61 : 02] Um, so even if it had been longer, it wouldn't have mattered because it was the way it was supposed to be. And I felt like I finally got to meet Chris when his best friend spoke, um, and talked about him.
- That was, that was the point at which it was like, okay, now I feel like I've been introduced to this person that I never met. Yeah, that is such a, such a hard one to wrap your head around, you know, I mean, any sudden tragic, do you have any words of wisdom?
- I know Dan said he had a wonderful few minutes with you at church when he was around and just said how great you were about it all. I, we mentioned it to our, um, youth Bible study cause they knew about Mr. Mahar's brother passing away and Dan wasn't there cause he was helping at the church.
- Um, but I felt like I was at a loss with them. You know, I mean, I said, I, I know God didn't make this happen and doesn't want us to suffer and it's a broken world, but I just, I felt like, oh, I just, I wish I had the right thing to say.

Right. And I think that, um, I think if we can avoid providing a reason, um, in general, because it becomes so difficult for any of us to really understand, um, other than that, what you said, I don't, you know, my beliefs is that God, my belief is that God did not take his car off the road.

[62 : 35] Right. So that he should die. Um, but that God is, was ever present with him the whole time in whatever state of mind he was in.

Um, and, and certainly present to the, to the family. Um, because we can't, we don't, we don't do very well at explaining suffering, uh, most of the time.

Um, and so it's, it's just so much easier if we, um, offer our own sense and then see where they are. See, you know, I think it would be interesting to hear what their thought is about bad things happening in the world.

But the biggest thing with these kinds of losses is, is the shock. And it's, it's the shock that gets people through it. Yeah.

And that's true with any death, but with a, with a, a death that's so sudden and tragic like this, it's, it's much more intense.

[63 : 36] Um, being disoriented because you didn't see it happen. You didn't know it was going to happen and now you just never see the person again. Um, and often in accidents, you don't see the, you don't see the body, which at least they were able to do that.

But it's, so it's, this puts people in this place of how can this even be real? Right. How can this even be real?

Um, and you know, it was, you could sort of watch. The realization happened with the family and the, the, the sense of coming to terms with the fact that he's gone.

And how do people do that? And how do we do that? We just go alongside and let them guide us. Um, yeah. So it's, uh, no easy answers.

Um, just never promised us this road would be easy, but he did promise to be with us. Yeah.

[64 : 49] It just, when you think of, I mean, you can look through the Bible and see the things that happened to people. Jesus never in the ones that we know through Jesus, Jesus never takes responsibility for what happened.

It's because of the diseases for, um, the blindness for, um, Jesus doesn't get into the conversations. Well, I did that so that you would learn this.

Um, and we even hear, even when we hear the, the, the challenge of our, the sins of the fathers visited upon their children. Well, you can understand that in a couple of different ways.

One is that, um, that the things our parents and ancestors did wrong. We suffer the consequences for. There's a lot of truth to that, but it's not God's punishment.

It's like slavery. We, we, we continue to suffer grievous things because of, uh, our country's choice to take on slaves, um, from Africa and other places.

[65 : 59] And that is, or the, the indigenous people, the native Americans and the things that, that we did, does that mean we're bad people, but that is one of those places where, um, the sense of sin is perpetuated.

Mm-hmm. And, um, and, um, and the violation that, you know, the violence done by relatives, family members that, that continues to cause harm down through the generations.

Yeah. So I was with a friend today, um, that talked about her father who has passed away. It was almost his 80th birthday when he passed away, but she talked about how he just lived every day so happy and had such a love of life.

But she shared that, um, he originally was one of six children, um, two died in childbirth and two died in car accidents when they were rather young, like in the fifties and sixties.

And so it was just him and his sister. And he said, he just, he had such a love of life. I think just because you, that's like what I keep thinking about with poor Chris, you know, last Thursday morning, he woke up thinking this is just any other Thursday morning.

[67 : 20] It was a rainy gray day, almost the weekend and boom, it's just gone for all of them, you know, and you really do have to just embrace every single day.

Yeah. And the sense that, um, came up, I think it was some kind of conversation with somebody from the church. And it was that, that, that sense of maybe, and maybe it was referencing Chris's death or something else.

I don't know. But that sense of really, this is the, this is the day, this is the day we have. Um, and I think it was somebody going out of church on Sunday morning and, and, you know, there are people that you ask, well, how are you?

And, um, there's, there's an older generation that often responds with things like, well, as long as I'm on this side of the grass and, um, that kind of stuff.

It's a, any day that I wake up is a good day. Right. And, um, but there is a sense of joy in that, that sense. And I don't know that we have to lose people or be old to adopt that kind of, uh, an attitude towards life.

[68 : 36] Um, It's better if we don't have to. Right. It is much better. Um, yeah. And that's, um, but I think that the, the healing process for people who experience a sudden tragic death is, is a different process than, than many of us whose experience with death is after an illness.

Um, or, you know, something that, that you saw coming over time, even if you weren't ready for it, you saw it coming. Yeah. Um, but.

And, and not being able to really blame anybody, I think has got to be hard. It's, I, unfortunately I'm a little bit of a fan of like date lines and different things like that.

They just like the, the criminal mystery stuff. I know. Right. But you can like, there's a perpetrator and there's a victim and there's the police are the heroes. And, but you know, with, with things like this, that just, it's just senseless.

And there wasn't, there wasn't even another car, you know, it's just like, Oh, yeah. Right. So you can't, when there's an accident, you know, if there's a, if there's a drunk driver, then you blame the drunk driver.

[69 : 50] Right. Right. Fell asleep and at the wheel and you were in an accident with them, then you have something or a stroke. I mean, all kinds of things that we can blame another car for, or, or even, you know, and I don't know what physically happened to him that he went off the road.

Um, did, I didn't ask. Um, yeah, either. Yeah. Um, the, you know, whether it's falling asleep or some people having like a medical episode and, and driving off the road.

And I think most of them, most people would say, well, thank God there wasn't another car because that would only, if he had hit somebody or somebody had hit him when he went across, how much further that would have impacted everybody.

But then again, you have a hard time making sense of it. Right. Um, and that's, uh, some things that we may never, never understand.

Um, so I think as we, as we come to the end of our time, I think we'll actually, um, let's look at the first five verses of, of acts and, um, Linda, since Kelly read earlier, why don't you read the first five verses?

[71 : 13] In my former book, Theopolis, I wrote about all that Jesus began to do and to teach until the day he was taken up to heaven.

After giving instructions through the Holy spirit to the apostles, he had chosen after his suffering, he presented himself to them and gave many convincing proofs that he was alive.

He appeared to them over a period of 40 days and spoke about the kingdom of God. On one occasion, while he was eating with them, he gave them this command, do not leave Jerusalem, but wait for the gift.

My father has promised, which you have heard me speak about for John baptized with water. Father, but in a few days, you will be baptized with the Holy spirit.

The, um, so what does that say to you after we've been having this conversation?

[72 : 20] What do you think is the purpose behind these first few verses? What I mean?

Go ahead. I know we both come up with a thought at the same time. No, you Linda, go. You go. I may be leaving you in a physical sense, in a physical body, but my father's promised you something better.

So be prepared. Not even so much better, but he's promised to continue to be with you. What were you going to say, Kelly?

Um, I was almost looking at it from like a literary storytelling perspective. It kind of left me hanging in verse five, like got me excited about the Holy spirit.

Like, Oh, what is, what is that going to mean? You know, John baptized everybody with water, but we're going to be baptized by the Holy spirit. Like, and not many days from now, it says mine ends with not many days from now.

[73 : 32] Yeah. Ours says a few days. Yeah. Yeah. Yeah. That makes me want to keep going. That sense of the first, there's a validation.

This is the validation Jesus suffered, but then he stayed around and did many things to demonstrate that he had come back to life. Um, and then we go to this promise of, of the presence in the, and the, the action of the Holy spirit.

Um, and it's funny, it just, it just occurred to me about the eating with them. Um, that they, and I guess that they, but that Luke included that detail, you know, it makes it, it's a very human thing to do even after he was resurrected.

Right. It's yeah. An ordinary. And I think, you know, my, I've always thought of that as being a, God will use anything. Jesus would use any thing that we can connect with to be, to be, to be revealed to us.

Um, doesn't have to be something big and fancy. Yeah. But, um, and interesting that in the sharing of the meal, they recognized him.

[74 : 47] Yeah. Yeah. Yeah. Yeah. Yeah. Is it somewhere else? Like where, when he broke the bread, they recognize him. The road to Emmaus. Yeah. Yeah. Yeah. Yeah.

And yeah, I, I can't, that would be a Holy spirit moment. Oh yeah. Yeah. That of a presence that you for three years had been so much of your life that the power of that would be pretty incredible.

Mm-hmm. All right. Well, we'll carry on and we'll start working our towards self ourselves towards Pentecost. Um, as, as we continue.

And, um, are there things that, that you would like us to lift up in prayer tonight? I was so distraught last night about the whole election thing.

Yeah. I think that's what you guys began with as I was joining. Yeah. I just, just for everybody on all sides, you know, whether who you wanted to win is going to win or not.

[75 : 51] It's just, I just, just be nice. Yeah. And people need to be kind. It's just draining. I'm just drained by it. I got too involved.

Yeah. Well, you know, I, I, I made myself actually watch a few episodes of a show on, I don't know, one of the streaming channels, um, to get away from the election results because I could feel partly we're not getting anywhere anytime soon.

So why pull yourself into this? Um, and, but then I woke up at three o'clock in the morning to go to the bathroom and checked, you know, check to see, fortunately I went back to sleep, but, um, I don't know.

It might not have been that way if there was close, if there was some sense that we were closer to a decision. It's funny. I woke up about the same time, like two 30, two 45. And unfortunately I keep my cell phone by my bed now.

I never did that, but with the kids down, I keep it there. And so I looked at the phone and it said like how much strike there was. And I think the president had just said he declared victory anyway, two 45 in the morning.

[77 : 13] He did. I got up and I was just, oh, it was bad. I was up for a couple hours and took me a long time. So I read the book of Ephesians on my phone and I finally went to sleep.

I don't know why I picked Ephesians. I just did. We did. I don't know. And, you know, today was, was busy enough that it wasn't, it kind of popped in and popped in and popped in.

And during our all staff meeting, Scott and I talked later about, you know, keeping, he had to, you know, make sure his phone was off so that both the results and his family weren't popping in popping in popping in.

Yeah. But. Well, if either of you has trouble sleeping, let me know. And you can borrow my things I have to read for general conference.

And I'll cure your insomnia real quickly. That's a, well, you're, you're getting, but you know, the stacks are often like this.

[78 : 26] Luckily, I only have two sections that I have to read. So. Are they passing out sections? Well, each person. Because I'm an alternate, I'm the next up.

But, um, the people that were elected for jurisdictional because of the postponement, um, we are each taking a couple sections of the smaller groups to, um, read some of the material.

So that if. One of the delegates has to drop out, we'll be prepared to step in. So. So I only.

So you're doing understudy for a certain part of the. Yeah. Yeah. I'm, I'm looking at the discipleship and the global ministries sections.

So. And it's, yeah, it's, it's an interesting practice because you never know who's going to not be able to go or what section they're going to be. Right.

[79 : 31] But anyway, that's, there is certainly much, much to pray for. And many people who are fearful for their lives and their health insurance, their sense of well-being.

And regardless of which, which, um, which person might end up being elected. And. Yeah. Yeah.

Yeah. Yeah. And then I think, you know, the Mahar family is more important than any of that right now. You know, I think that's. I tried to keep telling myself that last night, you know, to just think about.

What's important in the grand scheme of things. Yeah. The king of kings. That's what's the most important. Mm-hmm. And as we talked about in staff meeting.

That. The places where we can make a difference in other people's lives. Right. You know, whether it's. The. The dinner on Thursday night or turkeys for Thanksgiving or beginning the process of.

[80 : 42] Figuring out how we help families in need for Thanksgiving and Christmas and. You know, things like that, that, that help us. To remember that it is not all about this. No.

