



SERMON NOTES

ACTS OF THE SPIRIT

Building Spiritual Momentum

What is spiritual momentum?

- It is spiritual maturity and growth (mass), coupled with reaching people where God places and sends us (velocity).
- Spiritual momentum cannot succeed with only mass or velocity. It needs both.
- Spiritual momentum allows for us to not just rush into things unprepared, but to spiritually bulk-up and advance the Gospel.

How do we spiritually bulk-up (Acts 2:42-47)?

- By devoting ourselves to God's Word (v. 42a).
- By engaging in fellowship with other believers (v. 42b).
- Through communion and prayer (v. 42b).
- By sharing life together and being for each other (v. 44-45).
- By meeting together corporately (v. 46).
- By celebrating and praising God (v. 46-47a).

What is the result?

- Grow in your faith and relationship with Jesus.
 - Act: Get involved in community (v. 44).
- Take a step of faith and serve.
 - Sign up for Church Beyond the Walls.
 - Commit to serving tangibly this year (v. 45).
- Live out and share your faith (v. 47b).
 - Who is God placing in your life right now for you to show them Jesus?
 - Heart transformation allows for outward replication.

DEVOTIONAL GUIDE

Description for Series

Acts is a bridge for the writings in the New Testament as it joins the ministry of Jesus to the work of the early church. The phrase “began to do and teach” is the key phrase that links the teaching and ministry of Jesus in the gospels to the apostles’ teaching and ministry in the book of Acts. The theme of the book is best summarized in Acts 1:8 and becomes an outline of the rest of the book as the gospel goes forth into the world. The foundation of the ministry is the power and presence of the Holy Spirit who works through the apostles and the new converts to Christianity who proclaim the gospel throughout the world.

Before you begin this study, take time to think about your relationship with Jesus. We are embarking on a journey through the book of Acts where we will see how the power and presence of the Holy Spirit directed and guided the lives of the early disciples. Have you started on a journey of faith by receiving Jesus’ redemptive work for yourself? The Holy Spirit indwells those who have accepted the gift of salvation and then empowers them to experience change and transformation. If you don’t know what it means to receive Jesus and live by the power of the Spirit, reach out to Deb Hinkel at dhinkel@hersheyfree.com.

Prayer Focus

Pray these prayers for the month of September and give the Spirit freedom to work in you and others as you posture yourself before the throne with anticipation and expectation that God will hear and answer you.

Pray for your neighbors, coworkers, teachers, and friends.

Dear Lord, my heart is burdened for my family and friends who don’t know the hope of the gospel. I know how hard life can be, and for many, there seems to be no way out. I pray that you will soften their hearts and give me opportunities to share the good news of Jesus. I pray that you give me wisdom and courage as I seek to make a difference and bring hope in the darkness.

Pray for the churches in our area.

Dear Lord, I pray specifically for Hershey Free Church as we seek to share the gospel with those in our communities who don’t yet know the truth. Help us to faithfully preach the gospel and be a people who love others. Show us how we can care for others. I pray this same prayer for all the local churches. Protect those who lead these churches and give them wisdom and strength.

Pray for the schools in our area, especially the ones in your district!

Heavenly Father, thanks for the hard work of the teachers and administration in educating children. Please let the children, the teachers, and the staff of our school come to understand their need for your grace. May the school be a safe and life-giving place that helps these young people to thrive and reflect your character.

Pray for the local government authorities to have wisdom and courage as they lead.

Gracious God, thank you for establishing authorities to keep peace and order. May our leaders have wisdom and courage as they lead through difficult times. Let there be peace even in the midst of difficult political times.

DEVOTIONAL GUIDE

SEPTEMBER 15

The devotional guide will continue the same rhythm that we used for the last devotional guides where we practiced the 3 x 20 pattern. Spend at least 20 minutes, 3 times a week, in God's word. Each of the three days you will be asked to implement the **Read. Reflect. Respond.** pattern to help get more deeply into God's word.

What does it mean to be healthy? What does it look like for a church to be healthy? In the opening scenes of the church in Jerusalem, Acts provides a summary statement of this church at work. As they lived out their mission empowered by God's Spirit, they were learning together, loving one another, and they were filled with worship and great joy.

DAY ONE

The church is not an afterthought in God's story; it is central to his plan and mission. The fledgling early church provides a beautiful picture of how the people in the church are to function. Earlier in Acts, we read that 3,000 people received the gift of salvation and the empowerment of the Spirit. At the end of chapter two, we read that they worked out their salvation by rearranging their lives to make their love of God and others a priority. As you spend time in the passage this week, give the Spirit space and freedom to speak into your heart about how you engage the body of Christ at Hershey Free.

Read Acts 2:42-47 to get an overview of the passage.

1. To what things was the early church devoted? How would you define devotion?
2. Based on the events described earlier in chapter 2, what enabled the believers to function in the manner that they did?
3. What happens if a church community neglects any of the things mentioned in verse 42?

Reflect on the way that the early church is described in verse 43. When are you filled with awe because you experience God's power in your life? Why is it important to share your experiences with others in the church community? Why is it necessary to hear about their experiences?

Respond by taking opportunities to share about God's presence in your life. Don't be afraid to share even the small things. You never know how your life and experiences may encourage someone else.

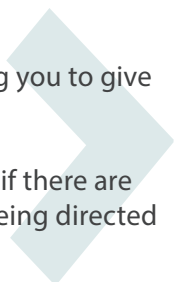
DAY TWO

Read Acts 2:42-47 again.

1. What do you think it meant that the believers had all things in common? Re-state this verse in your own words thinking of our church community.
2. This verse specifically speaks about selling property and possessions. What are your thoughts about the way we look at our property and material possessions? What makes it hard to give to others?
3. How did the early believers make community a priority?

Reflect on what it means to sell your material possessions. Have you ever sensed God's Spirit nudging you to give away something you owned to someone else? What was that experience like?

Respond by praying for openness to the work of the Spirit in your personal life. Ask him to show you if there are ways he is leading you to give away any personal possessions. (Be careful to not feel guilt if you are being directed to change how you look at your possessions or spending habits.)



DAY THREE

Read Acts 2:42-47.

1. What response did the early church have to seeing God at work in their community?
2. Think about the phrase, "they enjoyed the favor of all the people." What do you think caused the basis of that response from the people?
3. How did the attitudes and behavior of the early church followers result in living God's mission?

Reflect on verse 47. Why did the early church impact non-believers in such a significant way? What potential obstacles does Hershey Free Church face in reaching the surrounding communities?

Respond by praying about your involvement in the community at Hershey Free Church. Are you being prompted to take next steps in making community a greater priority in your weekly schedule and choices?

SMALL GROUP QUESTIONS

1. How would describe the early church culture?
2. How do the behaviors described translate to our church culture?
3. Do you think we are being called today to sell our possessions and property and give it away to others? What would it look like to obey this principle in our culture?
4. What does biblical community look like today at Hershey Free Church? How are you participating in and valuing community for yourself? What do you need to do to make it a priority in your week?
5. As a family, or small group, pray together and ask the Spirit to guide your next steps in making biblical community a priority?