

World Upside Down: The Book of Acts

Acts 2:37-47

- 1. If you asked people on the street what actions and attitudes characterize churches, what might they say?**
- 2. The Word does the work (v. 37).**

For the word of God is living and active, sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing to the division of soul and of spirit, of joints and of marrow, and discerning the thoughts and intentions of the heart.

- Hebrews 4.12

That we may obtain this faith, the office of preaching the Gospel and administering the Sacraments was instituted. For through the Word and Sacraments, as through instruments, the Holy Spirit is given, who works faith; where and when it pleases God, in them that hear the Gospel.

- Augsburg Confession V

- 3. God's promise for all is received by faith & baptism (vv. 38-39).**

Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age."

- Matthew 28:19-20

Holy Baptism is...

- i. In the name of Jesus Christ (shorthand for Trinity)
- ii. For the forgiveness of sins
- iii. With the gift of the Holy Spirit
- iv. For us and our children

And they were bringing children to him that he might touch them, and the disciples rebuked them. But when Jesus saw it, he was indignant and said to them, “Let the children come to me; do not hinder them, for to such belongs the kingdom of God. Truly, I say to you, whoever does not receive the kingdom of God like a child shall not enter it.” And he took them in his arms and blessed them, laying his hands on them. (Mark 10.13-16)

4. The Holy Spirit is saving souls for the new people of God (vv. 40-41).

Sothete = “let yourself be saved”

“The Rock, his work is perfect,
for all his ways are justice.
A God of faithfulness and without iniquity,
just and upright is he.
They have dealt corruptly with him;
they are no longer his children because they are blemished;
they are a crooked and twisted generation.
- Deuteronomy 32:4-5; cf. Philippians 2.15

5. The gospel is embodied in the Christian community (vv. 42-43).

i. The Apostles’ teaching (*didache*)

For I delivered to you as of first importance what I also received: that Christ died for our sins in accordance with the Scriptures, that he was buried, that he was raised on the third day in accordance with the Scriptures, and that he appeared to Cephas, then to the twelve.
- 1 Corinthians 15:3-5; cf. 1 Cor. 11.23, 1 Timothy 3.16

ii. The fellowship (*koinonia*)

That which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we looked upon and have touched with our hands, concerning the word of life—the life was made manifest, and we have seen it, and testify to it and proclaim to you the eternal life, which was with the Father and was made manifest to us—that which we have seen and heard we proclaim also to you, so that you too may have fellowship (*koinonia*) with us; and indeed our fellowship (*koinonia*) is with the Father and with his Son Jesus Christ.

- 1 John 1:1–3; cf. 1 Corinthians 1.9

iii. The breaking of bread

The cup of blessing that we bless, is it not a participation in the blood of Christ? The bread that we break, is it not a participation in the body of Christ?

- 1 Corinthians 10:16

On the first day of the week, when we were gathered together to break bread, Paul talked with them, intending to depart on the next day, and he prolonged his speech until midnight.

- Acts 20:7

iv. The prayers

Lex orandi, lex credendi: “the rule of prayer is the rule of believing.”

6. The community’s *koinonia* spills over into its *oikonomia* (vv. 44-45).

By this we know love, that he laid down his life for us, and we ought to lay down our lives for the brothers. But if anyone has the world's goods and sees his brother in need, yet closes his heart against him, how does God's love abide in him? Little children, let us not love in word or talk but in deed and in truth.

- 1 John 3:16–18

For you know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though he was rich, yet for your sake he became poor, so that you by his poverty might become rich....For I do not mean that others should be eased and you burdened, but that as a matter of fairness your abundance at the present time should supply their need, so that their abundance may supply your need, that there may be fairness. As it is written, "Whoever gathered much had nothing left over, and whoever gathered little had no lack."

- 2 Corinthians 8:9, 13-15

7. When the church orders its life faithfully, the entire community is blessed. (vv. 46-47).

So then, as we have opportunity, let us do good to everyone, and especially to those who are of the household of faith.

- Galatians 6:10

"You are the light of the world. A city set on a hill cannot be hidden. Nor do people light a lamp and put it under a basket, but on a stand, and it gives light to all in the house. In the same way, let your light shine before others, so that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father who is in heaven."

- Jesus, in Matthew 5:14-16

8. "Christ builds His church!"

"It is not we who build. Christ builds the church. No man builds the church but Christ alone. Whoever is minded to build the church is surely well on the way to destroying it; for he will build a temple to idols without wishing or knowing it. We must confess—he builds. We must proclaim—he builds. We must pray to him—that he may build."

- Dietrich Bonhoeffer