

Acts 1:1-14

¹In my former book, Theophilus, I wrote about all that Jesus began to do and to teach ²until the day he was taken up to heaven, after giving instructions through the Holy Spirit to the apostles he had chosen. ³After his suffering, he presented himself to them and gave many convincing proofs that he was alive. He appeared to them over a period of forty days and spoke about the kingdom of God. ⁴On one occasion, while he was eating with them, he gave them this command: "Do not leave Jerusalem, but wait for the gift my Father promised, which you have heard me speak about. ⁵For John baptized with water, but in a few days you will be baptized with the Holy Spirit."

⁶Then they gathered around him and asked him, "Lord, are you at this time going to restore the kingdom to Israel?"

⁷He said to them: "It is not for you to know the times or dates the Father has set by his own authority. ⁸But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth."

⁹After he said this, he was taken up before their very eyes, and a cloud hid him from their sight. ¹⁰They were looking intently up into the sky as he was going, when suddenly two men dressed in white stood beside them. ¹¹"Men of Galilee," they said, "why do you stand here looking into the sky? This same Jesus, who has been taken from you into heaven, will come back in the same way you have seen him go into heaven."

¹²Then the apostles returned to Jerusalem from the hill called the Mount of Olives, a Sabbath day's walk from the city. ¹³When they arrived, they went upstairs to the room where they were staying. Those present were Peter, John, James and Andrew; Philip and Thomas, Bartholomew and Matthew; James son of Alphaeus and Simon the Zealot, and Judas son of James. ¹⁴They all joined together constantly in prayer, along with the women and Mary the mother of Jesus, and with his brothers.

Series: God's Story: Finding our Place in His Unfolding Plan

Nov 5, 2017: Incipient Church

The Rule of 120

Do you think of God's activity on earth as a completed story of what happened in the past, or of a present, ongoing story?

After all of Jesus's ministry, it appears that there were only 120 committed followers. Do you find this surprising?

The Call: Wait on God (1-11)

1-5 – Though He was ascending to heaven, how would Jesus still actively be at work on earth? (Matthew 28:18-20, John 14:18-26)

6-11 – How did the disciples' hopes for the kingdom differ from Jesus's plans? How would the kingdom grow?

Worship: Putting God First (12-26)

12-26 – The disciples were told to wait for the Holy Spirit to come, to empower and guide them in ministry. So, they gathered to seek God's will through prayer and Scripture.

Why are prayer and the Word so important?

Why are they the ingredients of the "incipient" church, before the outward, secondary activities of fellowship, service, and outreach?

The Seed is Planted

In Mark 4, Jesus compared our hearts to soil, and His Word to a seed. Good soil is simply receptive to the seed. What could this look like for us?

This week – try combining prayer and Scripture to foster communication with God. Be open and willing to hear.

Try activities like:

- *Morning: Lord's Prayer (Mat 6:9-13)*
- *Evening: Prayer of Examen (Psalm 139:23-24)*
- *Daily: Prayer Calendar (in foyer)*
- *Constantly: Breath prayer (memorize & meditate)*
- *Gather with others (Thurs. 10:30am, Sun. 9:30am)*