

UNLEASHED

The Holy Spirit's work in and through His people.

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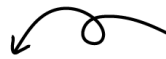
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INTRODUCTION TO THE BOOK OF ACTS: UNLEASHED

We've heard it said again and again, "These are unprecedented times." For us they may be unprecedented, but they are not unprecedented in the full meaning of the word. This current moment caused by Covid-19 is unique for us, but it's not unique.

However, there was a time that was truly unprecedented and unique -- that is the time of The Book of Acts. In The Book of Acts, Luke's 2nd volume (The Gospel of Luke being 1st volume), records the unfolding of truly unprecedented and unique events of Jesus' Spirit at work in and through the disciples.

Think about the resurrected Jesus ascending into heaven.

Think about the first time the Holy Spirit was poured out into the lives of Jesus' people.

Think about the first Christian sermon preached by Peter.

Think about the first Christian church emerging.

Think about the first time the church felt growing pains.

Think about the first time the church faced external pressures.

Think about the first time the church went global.

Although there are timeless and eternal principles to learn from these pages of Acts, let's not forget that The Book of Acts is an unfolding story of a truly unprecedented and unique event. So as we try to make sense of and grapple with our different circumstances and are faced with our own unprecedented and unique events, we can learn precious lessons from The Book of Acts. The emerging, establishing, exciting, and launching of the church then speaks into how we seek to re-emerge, re-establish, re-excite, and re-launch.

As we search for these theological truths or principles in Acts, it can be tempting to strip away the historical events of this book. But God has given us a story. And we need to respect that. The story of Acts matters, because God is inviting us into it. As we listen to the story God is telling us in Acts, we begin to connect with it. We see ourselves a part of what God is doing.

Want to discover more about The Book of Acts? Scan the QR Code below.



WEEK 1 | ACTS 2:37-47

FAMILY GROWTH

For parents: If your kids watched the Quizworx videos at home during lockdown, they heard about Peter's speech in this passage and learned Acts 2:38 as a memory verse song. This would be a great opportunity to remember the story of Pentecost together. You can find the song on YouTube with the QR code.



Are you reading through Acts as a family? What time in the day or week works best for you? Don't be afraid to try some different options, but try to settle on a routine when you can. For younger kids, you could colour in a star each time you read this week:



WEEK 1 | ACTS 2:37-47

GROWTH GROUP

Have a look at the Southside Re-Emerge document at the end of this study.
How have you personally found the process of re-emerging to church after isolation?

Read Acts 2:37-47

Each person take a turn to retell the story of Acts 2:37-47 in your own words, by adding one detail that hasn't been mentioned yet.

What does Acts 2:37-41 tell us about the emerging of the Church?
(Also see Acts 1:1-14; 2:1-4)

What does Acts 2:42-47 tell us about this new identity and way of life? How did it shape the emergence of the church?

As Southside re-emerges, why is the story of Acts 2:37-41 important for us?

Reflect on what resonates with you in particular from the story of Acts 2:37-47.

- What is one thing that resonates with you?

- How do you think God wants to use this to shape you as Southside continues to re-emerge?

Share what has resonated with you from the story of Acts 2:37-47 with God. Pray about how you think He's wanting to use this insight to shape your life at the moment. Use this moment talking with God to ask Him to strengthen you to do this.

WEEK 1 | PRAYER

How has God been at work in your life this week?

How are you going with God?

How are you going with others God has placed in your life?

Something God's put on your heart from the passage?

Who are the people you are on mission to?

What can we pray for them this week?

WEEK 1 | COVID & SOUTHSIDE RE-EMERGING

We have already to a large extent experienced this stage of re-emerging. Re-emerging began as we gathered as a church for the first few times in July.

During the stage of Re-Emerging, the outcomes were simply to:

- Get some excitement back for meeting together in our building.
- Build some enthusiasm by looking forward to the future and getting back on mission together.
- Encourage one another as we gathered together physically. Getting teams together again.

Yet during this stage of Re-Emerging, there were some expected difficulties:

- It's hard to get excited when significant change is happening (Covid-19, 2 Services, loss of critical mass, limited social interaction) and not to mention it's winter time, so it's cold.
- Not everyone is feeling enthusiastic or comfortable about leaving home, whether due to being at a higher risk of sickness, struggling with mental health or laziness.

So there were a few things we needed to do to in this stage of Re-Emerging:

- Have God speak into the Re-emerging stage and remind us of what a life of true worship means; that all we do in life matters.
- Facilitate 2 church services to provide a safe place to gather under the QLD Government Covid-Safe guidelines.
- Organizing teams and groups to meet again face to face.

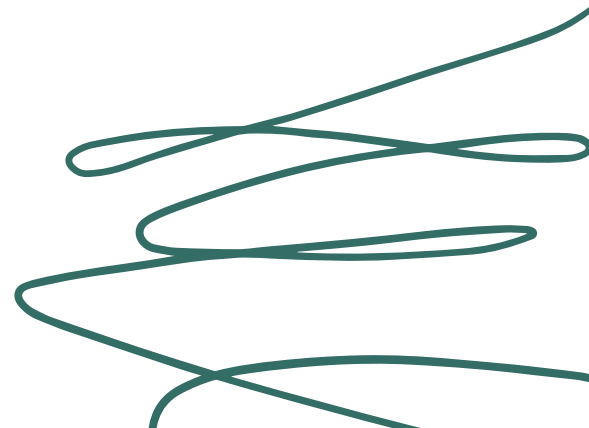
WEEK 2 | ACTS 6:1-7 PERSONAL GROWTH

In those days when the number of disciples was increasing, the Hellenistic Jews among them complained against the Hebraic Jews because their widows were being overlooked in the daily distribution of food. 2 So the Twelve gathered all the disciples together and said, "It would not be right for us to neglect the ministry of the word of God in order to wait on tables. 3 Brothers and sisters, choose seven men from among you who are known to be full of the Spirit and wisdom. We will turn this responsibility over to them 4 and will give our attention to prayer and the ministry of the word."

5 This proposal pleased the whole group. They chose Stephen, a man full of faith and of the Holy Spirit; also Philip, Procorus, Nicanor, Timon, Parmenas, and Nicolas from Antioch, a convert to Judaism. 6 They presented these men to the apostles, who prayed and laid their hands on them.

7 So the word of God spread. The number of disciples in Jerusalem increased rapidly, and a large number of priests became obedient to the faith.

My reflections



WEEK 2 | ACTS 6:1-7 FAMILY GROWTH

For parents: If your kids watched the Quizworx videos at home during lockdown, they heard that Stephen's job was to make sure that everyone in the church had everything they needed. But he still had time to tell people about the Risen King Jesus, even though people didn't like what he said. Do your kids remember what happened to Stephen?

Are you reading through Acts as a family? Perhaps this week you could have a look at the setting of Acts on a map, like this one:



For younger kids, you could colour in a star each time you read this week:



WEEK 2 | ACTS 6:1-7 GROWTH GROUP

Have a look at the Southside Re-Establish document at the end of this study.
How have you found re-establishing the rhythms of life and church post isolation?
Do you feel you're re-established in a new normal?

Read Acts 6:1-7

Each person take a turn to retell the story of Acts 6:1-7 in your own words, by adding one detail that hasn't been mentioned yet.

As the Church emerges, what internal threats to the establishment of the church does Acts 6:1-7 show us?

What action do the Apostles take in Acts 6:1-7 to bring stability to the Church?

Acts 6:1-7 is showing us that God is at work in and through our internal hardships, How does the Spirit work in and through the early church's different levels of leadership and serving teams, and what can we learn from this?

Reflect on what challenges or resonates with you in particular from the story of Acts 6:1-7.

- What is one thing that challenges or resonates with you?

- How do you think God wants to use this to shape you as we seek to re-established at Southside?

Share what has resonated with you from the story of Acts 6:1-7 with God. Pray about how you think He's wanting to use this insight to shape your life at the moment. Use this moment talking with God to ask Him to strengthen you to do this.

WEEK 2 | PRAYER

How has God been at work in your life this week?

How are you going with God?

How are you going with others God has placed in your life?

Something God's put on your heart from the passage?

Who are the people you are on mission to?

What can we pray for them this week?

WEEK 2 | COVID & SOUTHSIDE RE-ESTABLISHING

For many people, the month of August may have been the time when we experience the Re-Establishing stage of life at Southside. The Re-Establishing stage involves establishing the relationships and rhythms of church life again.

During the stage of Re-Establishing, the outcomes are simply to:

- Encourage consistency in church attendance and involvement in ministries.
- Champion Membership ministry to re-establish community and relationships.
- Get ready to hook into ministry teams.

Yet during this stage of Re-Establishing, there are some expected difficulties:

- A lack of consistency for some (due to sickness, routines, winter, new habits).
- The possibility that if people have not come by now, they might not come back.
- There are new people settling in.
- Community and serving can be messy and hard.

So there were a few things we needed to do in this stage of Re-Establishing:

- Be reminded of why we do what we do as a form of worship (Malachi Series)
- Ministries back on and Teams serving.
- Membership events (Family Dinners, revamping and recording the Southside Membership Course).
- Maintain our willingness to change, if a 2nd wave leads to tighter restrictions or if current restrictions ease.

WEEK 3 | ACTS 8:1-40 PERSONAL GROWTH

26 Now an angel of the Lord said to Philip, "Go south to the road—the desert road—that goes down from Jerusalem to Gaza." 27 So he started out, and on his way he met an Ethiopian eunuch, an important official in charge of all the treasury of the Kandake (which means "queen of the Ethiopians"). This man had gone to Jerusalem to worship, 28 and on his way home was sitting in his chariot reading the Book of Isaiah the prophet. 29 The Spirit told Philip, "Go to that chariot and stay near it."

30 Then Philip ran up to the chariot and heard the man reading Isaiah the prophet. "Do you understand what you are reading?" Philip asked. 31 "How can I," he said, "unless someone explains it to me?" So he invited Philip to come up and sit with him. 32 This is the passage of Scripture the eunuch was reading:

"He was led like a sheep to the slaughter, and as a lamb before its shearer is silent, so he did not open his mouth. 33 In his humiliation he was deprived of justice. Who can speak of his descendants? For his life was taken from the earth." 34 The eunuch asked Philip, "Tell me, please, who is the prophet talking about, himself or someone else?" 35 Then Philip began with that very passage of Scripture and told him the good news about Jesus.

36 As they traveled along the road, they came to some water and the eunuch said, "Look, here is water. What can stand in the way of my being baptized?" [37] 38 And he gave orders to stop the chariot. Then both Philip and the eunuch went down into the water and Philip baptized him. 39 When they came up out of the water, the Spirit of the Lord suddenly took Philip away, and the eunuch did not see him again, but went on his way rejoicing. 40 Philip, however, appeared at Azotus and traveled about, preaching the gospel in all the towns until he reached Caesarea.



WEEK 3 | ACTS 8:1-40 FAMILY GROWTH

For parents: If your kids watched the Quizworx videos at home during lockdown, they may have watched the bonus video telling the story of Philip and the Ethiopian from Acts 8:26-40. What is surprising about this story?



Are you reading through Acts as a family? Some time this week, you could get creative with one of the passages, like we saw in the bonus video. You could draw a scene, make a comic strip, act it out with toys or put on a play.

For younger kids, you could colour in a star each time you read this week:



WEEK 3 | ACTS 8:1-40

GROWTH GROUP

Have a look at the Southside Re-Excite document at the end of this study.

On a scale of 1 (low) to 10 (high), how excited have you felt about gathering as a church again? What in particular has or hasn't excited you?

Read Acts 8:1-40

Each person take a turn to retell the story of Acts 8:1-40 in your own words, by adding one detail that hasn't been mentioned yet.

As the Holy Spirit continues to work in and through God's people, what external threats to the church does Acts 8:1-3 show us?

Despite external threats, the Spirit is working in surprising and exciting ways. In this passage Luke records two stories in verses 4-25 and verses 26-40. These stories are similar to each other but also different from the other stories we've heard so far in Acts.

- How are these stories different from others so far?
- What makes these stories surprising and exciting in the unfolding story of Acts?

God works in and through external hardships to see His church grow. How might the story of Acts 8:1-40 be leading us to see the surprising and exciting ways the Spirit could be at work in and through us, as we face external hardships?

Reflect on what challenges or resonates with you in particular from the story of Acts 8:1-40.

- What is one thing that challenges or resonates with you?
- How do you think God wants to use this to shape you as we seek to get re-excited about church at Southside?

Share what has resonated with you from the story of 8:1-40 with God. Pray about how you think He's wanting to use this insight¹⁶ to shape your life at the moment. Use this moment talking with God to ask Him to strengthen you to do this.

WEEK 3 | ACTS 8:1-40 PRAYER

How has God been at work in your life this week?

How are you going with God?

How are you going with others God has placed in your life?

Something God's put on your heart from the passage?

Who are the people you are on mission to?

What can we pray for them this week?

WEEK 3 | ACTS 8:1-40 GROWTH GROUP

We all adjust to change differently and so the Re-Exciting stage could be our experience towards the end of August, in September or later. Whatever the timeframe may be for you, the Re-Exciting stage happens when we begin to get excited about why we do church and what there is to gain from gathering together as the local church.

During the stage of Re-exciting, the outcomes are simply to:

- Rekindle a burning desire for what church is and why it matters and why it's worth the commitment.
- Rekindling desire to be an active Member of Southside.
- Rekindling a desire to share in the Mission of Southside.

Yet during this stage of Re-exciting, there are some expected difficulties:

- People may be in survival mode and just getting by.
- Being at church simply might not excite some - the time away has been too "good".
- Or the mission of the church doesn't excite them.

So there are a few things we need to do to in this stage of Re-exciting:

- The Unleashed Preaching Series from the Book of Acts
- Growth Groups working through the Unleashed Series
- Remembering why we gather and what we're on about - to make and grow disciples and reach 1% of our community.

WEEK 4 | ACTS 28:17-30

PERSONAL GROWTH

17 Three days later he called together the local Jewish leaders. When they had assembled, Paul said to them: “My brothers, although I have done nothing against our people or against the customs of our ancestors, I was arrested in Jerusalem and handed over to the Romans. 18 They examined me and wanted to release me, because I was not guilty of any crime deserving death. 19 The Jews objected, so I was compelled to make an appeal to Caesar. I certainly did not intend to bring any charge against my own people. 20 For this reason I have asked to see you and talk with you. It is because of the hope of Israel that I am bound with this chain.” 21 They replied, “We have not received any letters from Judea concerning you, and none of our people who have come from there has reported or said anything bad about you. 22 But we want to hear what your views are, for we know that people everywhere are talking against this sect.”

23 They arranged to meet Paul on a certain day, and came in even larger numbers to the place where he was staying. He witnessed to them from morning till evening, explaining about the kingdom of God, and from the Law of Moses and from the Prophets he tried to persuade them about Jesus. 24 Some were convinced by what he said, but others would not believe. 25 They disagreed among themselves and began to leave after Paul had made this final statement: “The Holy Spirit spoke the truth to your ancestors when he said through Isaiah the prophet:

26 “ ‘Go to this people and say,

“You will be ever hearing but never understanding; you will be ever seeing but never perceiving.” 27 For this people’s heart has become calloused; they hardly hear with their ears, and they have closed their eyes. Otherwise they might see with their eyes, hear with their ears, understand with their hearts and turn, and I would heal them.’

28 “Therefore I want you to know that God’s salvation has been sent to the Gentiles, and they will listen!” [29] 30 For two whole years Paul stayed there in his own rented house and welcomed all who came to see him. 31 He proclaimed the kingdom of God and taught about the Lord Jesus Christ—with all boldness and without hindrance!



WEEK 4 | ACTS 28:17-30 FAMILY GROWTH

For parents: In Acts, we learn that the mission of the Risen King Jesus cannot be stopped, and that mission continues today. At the end of their Acts series, Quiz Worx released a new video of their song 'Kids Everywhere'. As the song says, "Jesus wants everyone to know about Him, all throughout the world." Look closely at the video and you might see some familiar faces.

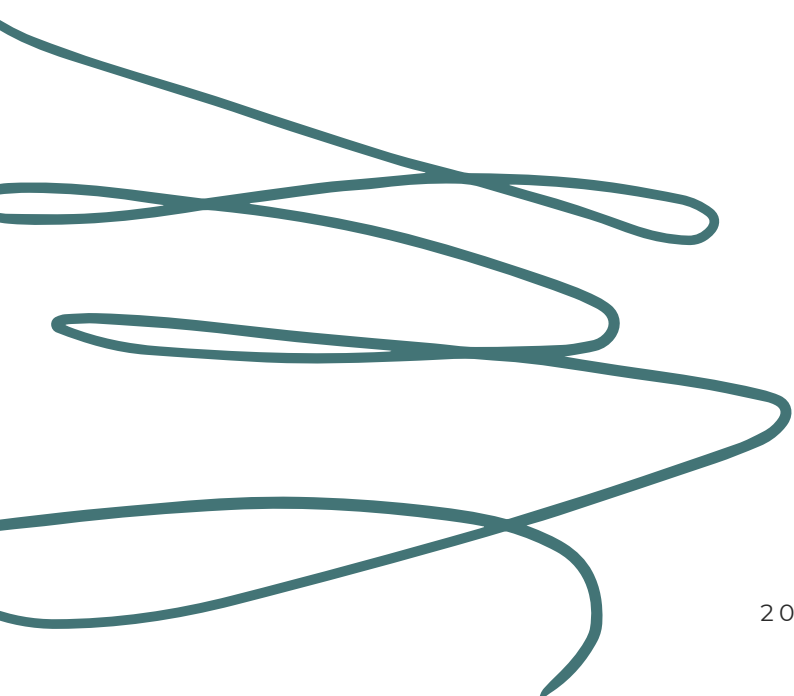


Scan me

Are you reading through Acts as a family? Keep going! Doing a small thing regularly makes a big difference over the course of a month, a year or a decade, even if it seems hard or insignificant at the time.

Have you had any 'golden moments' so far, when your child really understood a concept, asked an interesting question or enjoyed an activity? This would be a great time to share those moments on the Southside Parents Messenger group, so we can encourage each other to persevere in our ministry to our kids. If you're not part of the group and would like to be, let Petrina know.

For younger kids, you could colour in a star each time you read this week, and make up your own star chart to use over the holidays.



WEEK 4 | ACTS 28:17-30 GROWTH GROUP

Have a look at the Southside Re-Launch document at the end of this study.
How do you feel about being on mission right now? Why do you feel that way?

Read Acts 28:17-30.

Each person take a turn to retell the story of Acts 28:17-30 in your own words, by adding one detail that hasn't been mentioned yet.

So far Luke has been telling us the story of how the Holy Spirit was unleashed in and through God's people out into the world. How is 28:17-30 a *fitting* end to the book of Acts?

How is 28:17-30 a surprising end to the book of Acts?

How is 28:17-30 an encouraging end to the book of Acts?

If Acts 28:17-30 is the launching pad that the rest of church history flows from, how should this story shape the ways we seek to relaunch as a church?

Reflect on what challenges or resonates with you in particular from the story of 28:17-30.

- What is one thing that challenges or resonates with you?

- How do you think God wants to use this to shape you as we seek to re-launch?

Share what has resonated with you from the story of Acts 28:17-30 with God. Pray about how you think He's wanting to use this insight to shape your life at the moment. Use this moment talking with God to ask Him to strengthen you to do this.

WEEK 4 | ACTS 28:17-30 PRAYER

How has God been at work in your life this week?

How are you going with God?

How are you going with others God has placed in your life?

Something God's put on your heart from the passage?

Who are the people you are on mission to?

What can we pray for them this week?

WEEK 4 | COVID & SOUTHSIDE RE-LAUNCHING

Re-launching is the final stage as life starts to stabilize into our new normal (Southside may not feel the same as it did before COVID as some restrictions are likely to remain in place). At this time the reservations we previously had lie behind us. We are now ready to re-launch and push onwards in our mission to make and grow disciples of Jesus. This final stage in the process could likely be our experience in October or November.

During the stage of Re-launching, the outcomes are simply to:

- Know who we are as a church and why it matters.
- Be aware of what God is doing in and through us in our local communities.
- Recommit to the Mission of Southside.

Yet during this stage of Re-launching, there are some expected difficulties:

- Lack of excitement and commitment of some dampening the re-excitement and recommitment of others.
- The uncertainty of further change if second wave restrictions occur.

So there are a few things we need to do to in this stage of Re-launching:

- Missional Prayer Cards.
- Mission Course in Term 4.
- Continue to remind one another of why Southside exists and what we're here for.

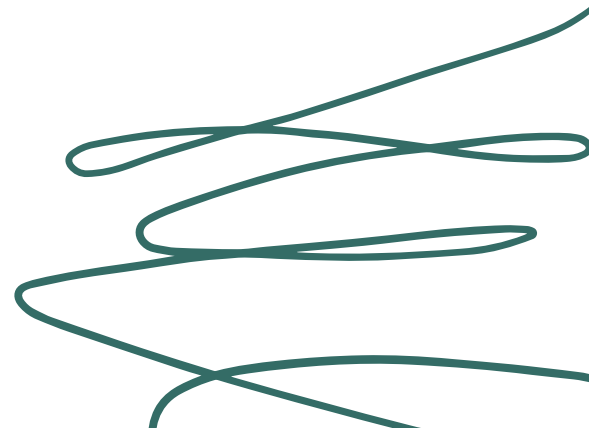
AND THEN THERE WERE THREE. RECOVERING THE DOCTRINE OF THE HOLY SPIRIT (1) GOSPEL COALITION AUSTRALIA

Even though I'm Irish, I have known Don Bradman's Test batting average is 99.94 since I was a kid. I knew that he was out for a duck in his last innings, when he only needed four runs to secure a career average of 100. I knew that Eric Hollies was the bowler, and that the match was played at the Kennington Oval in London in 1948. But what I didn't know was that Arthur Morris - batting at the other end - went on to score 196, and helped Australia secure victory in three days.

If I were Arthur Morris, I'd be a bit sore to be forgotten like that! And I suspect that if I were the Holy Spirit, I'd be similarly sore about the way people overlook my role in God's work today.

Of course, I'm not the Holy Spirit, and as we'll see, the Spirit loves nothing more than to direct our attention to the beauty, power and holiness of the Father and the Son. But that doesn't mean it's okay to neglect the Spirit in our thinking, conversation and church life. We need to re-examine the Bible, repent and change...

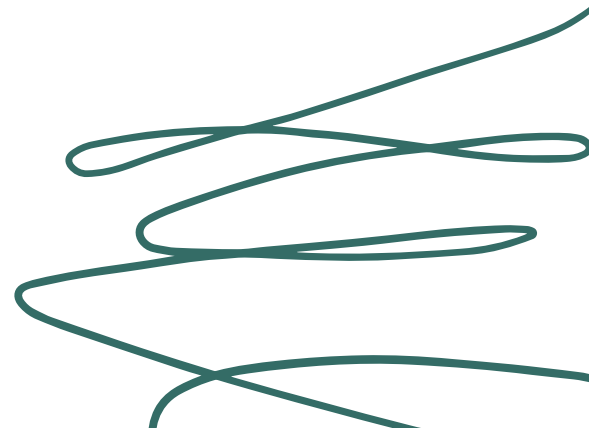
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THE SPIRIT AND CHRIST. RECOVERING THE DOCTRINE OF THE HOLY SPIRIT (2) GOSPEL COALITION AUSTRALIA

This is the second part of our three-week series on the Holy Spirit. In last week's post we thought about what it means for the Spirit to be the third person of the Trinity. We also saw how the Bible presents him as the giver of life. In this post we'll see how the Spirit enables us to speak about Jesus, live like Jesus, and how he lets us share in Jesus' relationship to God the Father...

Want to keep reading...



WHAT THE SPIRIT GIVES. RECOVERING THE DOCTRINE OF THE HOLY SPIRIT (3) GOSPEL COALITION AUSTRALIA

This is the last of our three week series on the person and work of the Holy Spirit. In our first week we examined the Spirit as divine person and life-giver. Last week we explored the ways in which the Spirit enables us to speak about Jesus, live like Jesus, and know God like Jesus. This week we'll find out what the Spirit wants to "give" us...

Want to keep reading...

