

# CONNECT RESOURCE NOTES

# The Ripple Effect

## Campaign Introduction

**Dates:** Sunday 21<sup>st</sup> May to Sunday 11<sup>th</sup> June 2023

**Purpose of this campaign:** To help our Church step into the "work of the ministry", we exist to help them be fully equipped and empowered to be the Church, every day of the week.

**Key texts for this campaign:** Luke-Acts and Metaphors for the Church

**Explanation of why this campaign matters:** The tone of this campaign is evangelistic. The campaign outlines the impact and effect of the death, resurrection and ascension of Christ upon the Church and the world. In the Great commission Christ gave us a command to go, this is the mission of the Church. The Church is gathered to grow and commissioned to go.

### **Weekly Overview:**

Week 1: Gathered and Scattered Summary (Ps Alex Video Preach)

Week 2: The Church Empowered

Week 3: The Church Gathered

Week 4: The Church Scattered – Commissioning Sunday (ministry response as part of service)

## Key historical context, commentary, or references:

### An overview of the Book of Acts

The Book of Acts needs to be considered with the Gospel of Luke as the same author wrote them as one history in two parts (this was a common Greco-Roman practice for authors to create 'parts' when recording histories). Luke is the account of what Jesus did and said, Acts is the account of the disciples replicating Jesus, and what the disciples did and spoke.

The author is the largest contributor to the New Testament in terms of verse count: 2157 verses (28%) of the New Testament, so these works should be taken seriously.

Authorship is attributed to Luke, the Physician, which (from internal evidence in the writings) we know the following details:

1. A Christian and well-educated writer
2. Had good knowledge of the Old Testament
3. Not an eyewitness, but used sources of previous works (see Luke 1:1)
4. Probably a companion of Paul (see the "we" verses in Acts - 16:10-17; 20:5-15; 21:1-18; 27:1-28:16)

Luke-Acts can be a difficult book to date as, on the one hand, Acts contains no events post 62 AD and is missing key events such as the death of James (62 AD), of Paul, or the destruction of Rome (70 AD). So, there are some suggestions it couldn't have been written after that date. However, it has also been suggested that based on the purpose of writing that Luke didn't feel the need to continue writing about events further than that point and that Paul's arrival in Rome acted as an excellent conclusion - note that Acts has an intentional abrupt ending. Considering this, most scholars tend to lean towards the later theory and date the book around 70 AD.

In Luke 1 and Acts 1, the author acknowledges that they are writing to a person named 'Theophilus.' Now as 'Theophilus' means 'friend of God', there has been some speculation from scholars that Luke was writing to someone who loved God or to the general body of believers as a collective 'friend of God'. Most scholars today agree that Theophilus was a real person, possibly a government official, as suggested by the 'most excellent' (Luke 1:3). He was either a patron funding the writing of these histories, or Luke was trying to convince him of the truths of the Gospel narrative. 'Most excellent' (Luke 1:3) was used for government officials or those in authority (see Acts 24:3 'most excellent Felix').

Key theological themes in Luke-Acts:

- The Kingship of Jesus
- The inauguration of the Kingdom of God
- Emphasis on the work of the Spirit

### **A basic ecclesiology (theology of the Church)**

This campaign behaves like an ecclesiological (study of the Church) study from the book of Acts, so it is essential to have some key ideas regarding the Church.

### 1. What is the Church?

The Church is, first and foremost, the **people** who have accepted Christ. Although, as our current use of the term suggests, when we think theologically, the Church is not a building, an institution, or something we simply 'go to' on a Sunday. We don't go to Church; we are the Church.

### 2. Biblical metaphors

The Bible includes many metaphors to help us understand the nature of the Church. These key ones are explored in fuller detail in Week 1 and are then found through the relevant topics in Weeks 2-4. These include:

- The Church as the People of God (1 Peter 2:9-10)  
Application: Belonging, Identity and Community
- The Church as Body of Christ (Romans 12:4-6, Ephesians 1:22-23)  
Application: Unity in Diversity, Headship and Mission
- The Church as the Temple of the Holy Spirit (1 Corinthians 3:16-17, 6:19-20)  
Application: Presence, Holiness and Empowering

### A note on the spread of Christianity

Acts 1:8 (see below) outlines the whole book of Acts as the author traces the spread of Christianity through the known world.

*“But 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.”* – Acts 1:8 (NIV)

Chapters 1-7 are focused on the city of Jerusalem, chapters 8-12 see the Church spread through the surrounding regions of Judea and Samaria, and lastly, chapters 13-24 recount the missionary journeys of Paul and others through the Roman Empire, ending with Paul's arrival in the capital city Rome.

As Acts recounts the spread of the early Church, there is a valid emphasis on the role of responsibility on the Apostles and important vital characters such as Paul on church planting. However, we miss the part of the 'ordinary' believer in the spread.

Acts chapter 2 includes this interesting passage in verses 5-11: *“Now there were staying in Jerusalem God-fearing Jews from every nation under heaven. <sup>6</sup> When they heard this sound, a crowd came together in bewilderment because each one heard their language being spoken. <sup>7</sup> Utterly amazed, they asked: “Aren't all these who are speaking Galileans? <sup>8</sup> Then how is it that each of us hears them in our native language? <sup>9</sup> Parthians, Medes and Elamites; residents of Mesopotamia,*

*Judea and Cappadocia, Pontus and Asia,<sup>[b]</sup> 10 Phrygia and Pamphylia, Egypt and the parts of Libya near Cyrene; visitors from Rome” (both Jews and converts to Judaism); Cretans and Arabs—we hear them declaring the wonders of God in our own tongues!”*

Pentecost was originally a Jewish festival that saw multitudes of the Jewish population from the Roman empire converging on Jerusalem. Just see the many cities & regions listed in the passage above.

These same people received Christ and the Gospel message at the end of Acts chapter 2. Post-Pentecost these people were to return to their home cities and regions, though not the same as they were before. They took the Gospel message with them and were empowered by the Spirit to be a witness.

So, it is safe to say that the initial spread of the Church was not due to Paul and his missionary journeys which came some 10-15 years later, or because of the efforts of the Apostles. Still, the 'ordinary' believer was impacted by the Gospel message and lived out their day-to-day as the Church.

### **Resources**

Acts (Tyndale New Testament Commentary), I. Howard Marshall, 2008

The Acts of the Risen Lord Jesus: Luke’s Account of God’s Unfolding Plan, Alan J Thompson, 2011

[Bible Project Luke-Acts Podcast \(Episodes 5-8\)](#)

[Bible Project Acts Overview \(Part 1-2\)](#)

Acts for Everyone, Tom Wright, 2008

The Acts of the Apostles, William Barclay, 2003

# Week 1: Ps Alex Pre-recorded Preach

## Weekly subtitle: Gathered & Scattered

**Date:** Sunday 21<sup>st</sup> May 2023 (VIDEO PREACH WITH PS ALEX)

**Key Point of this week:** To help our people understand their **identity** as the Church and **the mission** of the Church purposed for others.

**Key Response:** For our people to be confident in their understanding of what it means to be the Church and activated in the mission.

### Key Scripture:

Acts 1:8

### Historical Context, Commentary + supporting references:

#### Summary of all the weeks

- Definition of the Church
- Understanding the purpose and mission of the Church in terms of:
  - o To Gather
  - o To Scatter
- Initially exploring Biblical metaphors of the Church

### Supporting points to Key point:

Coming off the back of our last couple of campaigns through the Book of Romans and Easter, we have a solid foundation of knowing what the gospel is, what it means for us, and how to live our lives empowered by the Spirit.

The Church is an important part of the life of a Christian. When we get saved, we don't just receive Christ into our lives, but we get to be a part of the community that follow Him. In this campaign, we are going to talk about the heart and mission of the Church, what is the Church and what is the mission we are now a part of. We are called to gather on Sundays to be empowered and grow so that we can go out into all the world and preach the good news of Jesus.

### What is the Church?

It needs to be understood first and foremost that the Church is not a building, it is not an institution, it is not something we simply attend, but the Church are the people of God.

The Church are those who have accepted Jesus Christ as their Lord and Saviour.

Teaching note: Be careful not to overload the term *Ekklesia* because, culturally speaking, it refers primarily to a group of called-out people gathered in one place. It means gathering, meeting or assembly, just as *Synagogue* was used. And therefore, it may not be a solid foundation to place onto all our theological understanding of the Church.

## **Biblical Metaphors of the Church**

Through this campaign, we will see various ways the Bible defines the Church using metaphors. These include:

### **1. Empowered: The Church as the Temple of the Holy Spirit (1 Cor 3:16-17, 6:19-20)**

In the Old Testament, we saw that the temple was the location of the presence of God on Earth. Now, post-Pentecost, the Spirit has been given to each of us, and the presence of God resides in each of us as His Church.

**1 Corinthians 3:16-17 NIV** <sup>16</sup> Don't you *know* that you are God's temple and God's Spirit dwells in your midst? <sup>17</sup> If anyone destroys God's temple, God will destroy that person; for God's temple is sacred, and you together are that temple.

The Spirit within us purifies us and empowers us to do what God has called us to do – be His witness to the ends of the earth.

**Acts 1:8 NIV** <sup>8</sup> But 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.”

Application: Presence, Holiness and Empowering

### **2. Gathered: The Church as the People of God (1 Peter 2:9-10)**

Those who have accepted Jesus Christ as their Lord and Saviour are technically an eclectic and misfit bunch of people. But under the banner of Jesus Christ, we are identified as “The People of God”.

We now have our identity and belonging found in who we belong to – God. And from this point, we have an unbreakable connection with those who Paul identifies as our "brothers and sisters" in Christ.

**1 Peter 2:9-10 NIV** <sup>9</sup> But you are a chosen people, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, God's special possession, that you may declare the praises of him who called you out of darkness into his wonderful light. <sup>10</sup> Once you were not a people, but now you are the people of God; once you had not received mercy, but now you have received mercy.

Application: Belonging, Identity & Community

### **3. Scattered: The Church as Body of Christ (Romans 12:4-6, Ephesians 1:22-23)**

Firstly, we need to acknowledge that as the Church, we are the body, and Christ is the head, both in terms of origin and leadership. We must submit to the leading and guidance of Jesus because, without the head, the body can do nothing.

**Ephesians 1:22-23 NIV** <sup>22</sup> And God placed all things under his feet and appointed him to be head over everything for the Church, <sup>23</sup> which is his body, the fullness of him who fills everything in every way.

Paul explains how the body comprises of many different parts, each with its unique role, gift, and purpose. Similarly, the Church consists of many unique people playing a different part in being the Church. Yet, in our diversity, we are unified under the same mission.

**Romans 12:4-6 NIV** <sup>4</sup>For just as each of us has one body with many members, and these members do not all have the same function, <sup>5</sup> so in Christ, we, though many, form one body, and each member belongs to all the others. <sup>6</sup> We have different gifts, according to the grace given to each of us.

Lastly, Christ is the image of the invisible God (Colossians 1:15). Jesus was incarnate (made flesh) and became physically visible to the world. Now, post the ascension of Christ, the Church is the Body of Christ and, therefore, must act as the visual representation of God to the world.

Application: Unity in Diversity, Headship and Mission

## **What is the purpose & mission of the Church?**

The Book of Acts, written by Luke as a 2<sup>nd</sup> volume of his Gospel account, records the history of the early Church. In this book, we see the Church engaging in two main actions. As the Church, they gathered and scattered.

### **1. To Gather: Empowered and Equipped**

The first purpose of the Church is empowerment. We gather to pray and to be empowered for our mission. Acts 2:1-4 they were all together in one place, but they were gathered for a purpose, to pray and to be filled with the Holy Spirit. Being filled with the Spirit is not a one-off moment. We are baptized in the Holy Spirit and continually filled (Acts 1:8, Ephesians 5:18, Acts 4:31).

The Church in Acts 2:42-47 is shown to be dedicated to gathering for equipping and to the following key practices:

1. The words (teaching) and works (signs and wonders) of God
2. Shared fellowship and resources
3. Breaking of bread
4. Prayer & Worship

Just as the author of Hebrews encourages believers: “*let us consider how we may spur one another on toward love and good deeds, <sup>25</sup> not giving up meeting together, as some are in the habit of doing, but encouraging one another—and all the more as you see the Day approaching.*” Hebrews 10:24-25.

### **2. To Scatter: To Go**

We see through the book of Acts the early Church spreading first through the city of Jerusalem (chapter. 1-7), the regions of Judea and Samaria (chapter. 8-12) and then to the “end of the Earth” (chapter. 13-28). The catalyst for the scattering in the

early church was persecution. We don't need to be persecuted to remind us to go - to be the Church in the community.

The Church was never meant to hold onto the Gospel message for ourselves, but we have been empowered, as Acts 1:8 states, to be 'witnesses' of Jesus Christ and have been given the Spirit to empower us as we do so.

To live as the Church doesn't mean an either/or of gathering or scattering, but both.



## Week 2:

### Weekly subtitle: The Church Empowered (Pentecost Sunday)

**Date:** Sunday, 28<sup>th</sup> May 2023 (Pentecost Sunday)

**Key Point of this week:** To help our people understand the origins of the Church and how Pentecost affects us.

**Key Response:** For people to feel empowered and enabled by the Spirit for their own lives and for the mission.

**Key Scripture:** Acts 2:1-4

**Supplementary Metaphor:** 1 Corinthians 3:16-17

#### Historical Context, Commentary + supporting references:

- Summary of the events of Pentecost
- Explanation of the tongues of fire
- Exploration of the Church as the temple of the Holy Spirit
- Definition of the purpose of the Spirit according to Acts

#### Supporting points to Key point (3-5 points max):

#### What happened at Pentecost and why is it important to us?

At the beginning of Acts chapter 1, we see the resurrected Christ command His apostles to "*not leave Jerusalem, but wait for the gift my Father promised*" (1:4). The apostles do exactly this after Jesus ascends (1:10) by returning to Jerusalem, going to the upper room of where they were staying and "joined together constantly in prayer" (1:14) with the others that were with them. Finally, we join in on the story at the beginning of Acts chapter 2.

*"When the day of Pentecost came, they were all together in one place. <sup>2</sup> Suddenly, a sound like the blowing of a violent wind came from heaven and filled the whole house where they were sitting. <sup>3</sup> They saw what seemed to be tongues of fire that separated and came to rest on each of them. <sup>4</sup> All of them were filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other tongues as the Spirit enabled them."* – Acts 2:1-4 (NIV)

#### 1. Empowered: The Church as the Temple of the Holy Spirit

*see notes Week 1: The Church as the Temple of the Holy Spirit*

Post-Christ, the presence of God no longer resides in the temple but in His people – the Church.

In this way, Paul calls the Church the "Temple of the Holy Spirit," as seen in the following passages:

*“Don’t you know that you yourselves are God’s temple and that God’s Spirit dwells in your midst?”<sup>17</sup> If anyone destroys God’s temple, God will destroy that person; for God’s temple is sacred, and you together are that temple.” – 1 Corinthians 3:16-17*

*“<sup>19</sup> Do you not know that your bodies are temples of the Holy Spirit, who is in you, whom you have received from God? You are not your own; <sup>20</sup> you were bought at a price. Therefore, honour God with your bodies.” – 1 Corinthians 6:19-20*

The Church as the Temple of the Holy Spirit means we each have access to the presence of God, and it is His presence that purifies us and guides us on the journey of sanctification.

### **a. Why Tongues of Fire?**

On the day of Pentecost (50 days after Passover), the Holy Spirit came like a "violent wind" and appeared as a "tongue of fire" on each that was there.

Out of the context of the Old Testament, it makes little sense for the Holy Spirit to appear as a fire, but in the Old Testament, we see a couple of occasions where the presence of God appears in the form of fire:

*“<sup>7</sup> Then Moses led the people out of the camp to meet with God, and they stood at the foot of the mountain. <sup>18</sup> Mount Sinai was covered with smoke because the LORD descended on it in fire. The smoke billowed up from it like smoke from a furnace, and the whole mountain trembled violently.” – Exodus 19:17-18 (NIV)*

*“<sup>15</sup> On the day the tabernacle, the tent of the covenant law, was set up, the cloud covered it. From evening till morning, the cloud above the tabernacle looked like fire. <sup>16</sup> That is how it continued to be; the cloud covered it, and at night it looked like fire.” – Numbers 9:15-16 (NIV)*

God's presence has been seen as coming like fire, and it is the same here in the book of Acts, yet the main distinguisher is that it is not just one flame but multiple 'tongues' of fire on each person.

The point is that now each person has the same access to the presence of God. When Jesus died on the cross, the curtain inside the temple was torn (as seen in Matthew 27:51). This curtain separated the 'ordinary' people from accessing the 'Holy of Holies' - God's presence, and only the priests who had properly purified themselves were to enter.

But now, through the purifying work of Christ and on the day of Pentecost, those who had accepted Christ can personally enter the holy presence of God.

## **2. Empowered and Equipped**

### Application: Presence, Holiness and Empowering

The Holy Spirit was given for a purpose.

*“I am going to send you what my Father has promised, but stay in the city until you have been clothed with power from on high” - Luke 24:49*

*“But 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” - Acts 1:8*

The Holy Spirit brings power, not just power, for the sake of power; it is enabling and empowering power that assists Christ's followers in being a witness. (More on the Church as a witness and ambassador of Christ in Session 4: The Church Scattered).

Teaching note: Yes, *dunamis* (power) is the root of the modern word *dynamite*, but please refrain from comparing the two and concluding such as the 'explosive' nature of the power of the Holy Spirit because the author, Luke, did not have dynamite (invented some 1800 years later) in mind when he is using that word and it's not helpful comparison.

The immediate impact of the Holy Spirit on those in the upper room is that they began speaking in other languages that were unknown to them but were known by the many Jews who were in Jerusalem for the festival of Pentecost. They exclaimed - *“we hear them declaring the wonders of God in our own tongues!”* <sup>12</sup> *Amazed and perplexed, they asked one another, “What does this mean?”* (2:11b-12).

Teaching note: In the account of Acts, when those filled with the Spirit spoke in other 'tongues' (Acts 2:4), this is different to our tongues/heavenly language (as seen in 1 Corinthians 14:2-4). In this instance, the 'tongues' were the various languages of other regions (see Acts 2:6-11) and 'tongues' could be better rendered as 'language' (such as in the saying 'mother tongue').

This led Peter to preach the Gospel of Jesus Christ, and "three thousand were added to their number that day" (Acts 2:41). It is this same Spirit that we have access to today, which provides us with the same enabling power. To be a witness for Christ is not something you have been asked to do in your own strength. But God has graciously given us a 'helper' (John 14:15) to assist us in all that God has called us to do.

## CONNECT QUESTIONS

28<sup>th</sup> May

The Church Empowered (Pentecost Sunday)

### GATHER:

- We the church are the Temple of the Holy Spirit post-Jesus, what are some of the things that we do/could do to make Him feel welcome?
- All believers now have access to God's presence through Christ, but many powerful moments have been occurred when we are gathered together.

Share any stories you have of the power of being together when “God shows up” in a physical way.

**GROW:**

- What has the Holy Spirit enabled you to do for Christ? Is there a next step you need to take if you haven't received a baptism of the Spirit already? Maybe you took a next step at the service on Sunday?
- The Holy Spirit is not just fire but can also come as a life-giving wind (like in Ezekiel's dry bones). Is there something that needs reviving in you, to empower your ministry?

**GO:**

- Sharing the gospel often involves “speaking their language” metaphorically. What are points of connection that you have with those in your life? (e.g. trying to be a good parent or the struggle between honesty and financial security).
- The Holy Spirit convicts a person of their sin, enabling them to come to God. How does He help you do your part (telling them the good news)?

## Week 3:

### Weekly subtitle: The Church Gathered

**Date:** Sunday 4<sup>th</sup> June 2023 (Child Dedications)

**Key Point of this week:** For our people to understand the purpose and need in gathering as the People of God.

**Key Response:** For people to be encouraged to gather so that we grow, gathered to grow.

**Key Scripture:** Acts 2:42-47

**Supplementary Metaphor:** 1 Peter 2:9-10

**Supporting points to Key point (3-5 points max):**

**1. Gathered: The Church as the People of God**

*see notes Week 1: The Church as the People of God*

When we receive Christ, we are joined into the “People of God.” It is part of our identity as the Church. As the apostle Peter says:

*“<sup>9</sup> But you are a chosen people, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, God’s special possession, that you may declare the praises of him who called you out of darkness into his wonderful light. <sup>10</sup> Once you were not a people, but now you are the people of God; once you had not received mercy, but now you have received mercy.” – 1 Peter 2:9-10*

The Church, as it grew, would have been considered quite the group of misfits. It would have included both Jews and Gentiles (non-Jew) from all kinds of backgrounds, both culturally and socio-economically. The many gatherings of the Church across the Greco-Roman world would have included the rich, the poor, the powerful, the slave, male, female, the young, the old, and everything in between.

The Church we see today is not much different. As the Church, we are multi-ethnic and multi-generational. This is the beauty of it. And as we gather under the name of Jesus Christ, we get to not just participate in the same actions of the early Church (teaching and discipleship, serving, fellowship, worship) but also get to celebrate this community that we have the honour of being part of – God’s own people.

To be part of the Church means to find our belonging, identity, and community. And when we choose to gather on a Sunday and in connect groups, we glorify God, for He has knitted us together as His people.

**2. Gathered to Grow**

Application: Belonging, Identity and Community

Immediately after the events of Pentecost (as we explored in Week 2), the author Luke gives an overview, a bird's eye view if you may, of how the early Church operated, as we see in Acts 2: 42-47:

*“<sup>42</sup> They devoted themselves to the apostles’ teaching and to fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer. <sup>43</sup> Everyone was filled with awe at the many wonders and signs performed by the apostles. <sup>44</sup> All the believers were together and had everything in common. <sup>45</sup> They sold property and possessions to give to anyone who had need. <sup>46</sup> Every day, they continued to meet together in the temple courts. They broke bread in their homes and ate together with glad and sincere hearts, <sup>47</sup> praising God and enjoying the favour of all the people. And the Lord added to their number daily those who were being saved.”* – Acts 2:42-47 (NIV)

Acts 2:42-47 should not be separated from the context of the section that precedes it – Peter's gospel message at Pentecost. The author Luke is drawing a connection between firstly how one receives God's Spirit (see Acts 2:38) and how someone acts now that they received the Spirit (Acts 2:42-47).

Verse 42 acts as an initial summary of the verses that follow, and we see the four key practices are:

1. The words (teaching) and works (signs and wonders) of God
2. Shared fellowship & resources
3. Breaking of bread
4. Prayer and Worship

We can also see how these practices have a logical and consequential order involved:

When we have (1) the solid foundation of God's word and His power in our lives, we can (2) generously share our resources with our community that then allows each person to (3) join in the breaking of bread and (4) worship and thank God for what He has done and how He has united us together.

This section of scripture begins (Acts 2:41) and ends (Acts 2:47) with the acknowledgement of the Church growing in numbers. When the Church operates like this, those who see it cannot help but be drawn towards the Church and to God. This is about being a part of the family, not a part of a club – at a club, you are a spectator that visits to enjoy the facilities, but as part of the family, you are involved, part of the furniture, engrained in the life of the Church.

## Week 4:

### Weekly subtitle: The Church Scattered

**Date:** Sunday 11<sup>th</sup> June 2023 (Commissioning Sunday)

**Key Point of this week (in context of the overarching point):** For our people to understand the Church is the body of Christ, and our mission is to go.

**Key Response:** To encourage our people to live as the Church in their day-to-day lives, we are commissioned to go.

**Key Scripture:** Acts 5:42

**Supplementary Metaphor:** 2 Corinthians 5:17-21

#### Supporting points to Key point (3-5 points max):

##### 1. The Church as the Body of Christ – all in and all moving

*see notes Week 1: The Church as the Body of Christ*

To be the Church means to be the Body of Christ (1 Corinthians 12:27). This helps us understand our identity in terms of our unity and diversity, but also in mission, which is our focus.

Colossians 1:15 states that “*The Son is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn over all creation,*” and John 1:18 affirms that “*no one has ever seen God, but the one and only Son, who is himself God and is in closest relationship with the Father, has made him known.*”

Jesus was incarnate (embodied in human form) and became physically visible to the world. Now, post the ascension of Christ, the Church is the Body of Christ and, therefore must act as the visible representation of God to the world.

There is a myth that only some believers are ministers of the Gospel. Ephesians 4 busts that myth by emphasizing that some in the Church have specific roles, but ALL are to complete the “work of the ministry” (Eph 4:11 – ESV). This work of the ministry is, as Paul explains in 2 Corinthians 5, the ministry of reconciliation. We have been reconciled to God through faith in Christ, and now we as the Church are called to be ambassadors of Christ, implore (beg earnestly or desperately) others “*on Christ’s behalf: Be reconciled to God*” (2 Corinthians 5:20).

##### 2. Commissioned to Go

Application: Unity in Diversity, Headship and Mission

Please read A note on the spread of Christianity in the Luke-Acts summary.

“Day after day, in the temple courts and from house to house, they never stopped teaching and proclaiming the good news that Jesus is the Messiah.” (Acts 5:42)

At the end of Acts chapter 5, we begin to see the persecution of the early Church and those who were spreading the Good News of Jesus Christ. But regardless of external concerns and threats, the believers continued to spread the Gospel. As Peter said in verse 29 - "we must obey God rather than human beings!" (Acts 5:29)

Impassioned with the **Great Commission**, Matthew 28:16-20 speaks of the mission of the church, this is called the Great Commission, to go into all the world and make disciples. It's a commission, not a suggestion.

In *Designed to Lead*, Geiger says it like this, "Everyone called to be a disciple of Jesus is also called to make disciples of Jesus." (page 80)

As we mentioned in the beginning, we see the Church as not a building but as what we are. If we see the Church as what we do on Sundays in a building, we will never leave the building. But as we see the Church as who we are, we will take it everywhere we go, into our workplaces, schools, cafes, and the wider community. We see through the book of Acts the early Church spreading first through the city of Jerusalem (chapters 1-7), the regions of Judea and Samaria (chapters 8-12) and then to the "end of the Earth" (chapters 13-28), just as Acts 1:8 calls the apostles to go and make disciples.

The Church was never meant to hold onto the Gospel message for ourselves, but we have been empowered to be "witnesses" (Acts 1:8) of Jesus Christ and have been given the Spirit to empower us as we do so. The purpose of this gathering is to scatter so that the lives of believers are living as salt and light in their community (Matthew 5:13-16).

We are commissioned to go and make disciples.

## CONNECT QUESTIONS

11<sup>th</sup> June 2023

### The Church Scattered

#### GATHER:

- You might be a visible part of Christ's body on a Sunday or maybe you feel like the liver (invisible but still valuable), but during the week you are all Christ's body on display to the world. What are some of the struggles we have with this? (Introverts and extroverts please share!)
- How does it make you feel to be part of this enormous chain letter (the good news of Jesus), spanning 2,000 years and the entire planet?

#### GROW:

- What are the things that you struggle with in being Christ's ambassador/evangelism? Other members of your group may have words of comfort or encouragement if you wanted to share - otherwise talk to God about it.



- As we near the middle of the year, consider your ministry to others: is there something you'd like to do differently? What will your next step be? "The world" is busy thinking about money: how will you be different?

**GO:**

- Do you feel confident telling someone why you go to church or believe in God? Maybe you've only just started on the journey -that's ok! What has changed for you so far that you can talk about?
- Who are the people on your heart to reconcile to God? Pray for them but also maybe write down what you think they most need to hear: "God loves you", "God isn't angry with you", "God wants to help you with that problem". Sometimes having a plan of what to say can help if a moment arises.

**Connect Group Resources:**

"Evangelism is one beggar telling another beggar where to find bread" D.T. Niles

<https://thefour.com/en/> - an online four-point presentation of the gospel by Power To Change (formerly known as Campus Crusade for Christ)

