

# ACTS: Devotion in Motion

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Jesus didn't say, "Go therefore and build the church", but rather "Go therefore and make disciples." Bringing people into "the church" is not our goal. When disciples are made, church happens. Acts is how the early Christian community made that happen.

### Acts 1:8-11

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." After he said this, he was taken up before their very eyes, and a cloud hid him from their sight. They were looking intently up into the sky as he was going, when suddenly two men dressed in white stood beside them. "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."

### For Personal Study

It's spring! So let's pretend you've just graduated from high school or college. Or maybe you're a ninth-grader who confirmed your faith here last week. After years of hard work, learning, and self-discovery, you're now on your own. No class syllabus to follow or requirements to meet. Chances are that no one will hound you if you slack off and don't *really* use what you've learned.

So what will you do? Relax? Be sentimental for the way things were? Wait for something to come along? You could. But maybe it's time to get up and get out there. Show God, yourself, and the world all you've learned and become. Keep learning & becoming!

Be encouraged and assured. If you don't feel *self*-confident, try being *Jesus*-confident. Know that Jesus has sent the Holy Spirit to help you. Use what you've learned to help others. Do good

works... do God's work!

Let's consider Acts 1:8-11. When Jesus ascended to Heaven, his parting words to his disciples were words of assurance and encouragement. He wasn't telling them that they had worked hard and should take a break. No, he told them that they had important work that they were *going to do*. And he assured them that the Holy Spirit would be there and would give them strength and *power*.

Even so, the disciples still stood around watching where Jesus had gone into Heaven. But the angels wouldn't have it. They basically said to stop pining for the past, don't worry, Jesus will be back!

If you need any more confirmation about what Jesus wants you to do, take a look at where this verse comes from. It's at the beginning of the Bible's book of *Acts*. It wasn't named "Take It

Easy," or "Take the Easy Road." The book of Acts describes what *actions* the disciples did after Jesus went up to Heaven!

So what if you didn't just graduate or weren't just confirmed? Does any of this apply to you? Of course! Move into your next phase: go out and do good works for God's kingdom. The Holy Spirit is already with you giving you strength and power. Continue the actions of the early disciples and take the good news of Jesus to your family, your friends, and to the ends of the Earth.

### Readings & Questions



Turn to page 2 for more inspiration and learning, on your own or in a group!

*(Continued from page 1)*

## **Readings & Questions for Daily Discovery or Group Discussion**

### **Monday, June 12**

*Jesus' prayer for his disciples is a deep, heartfelt prayer. In what ways does it encourage you to continue to grow?*

John 17:20-24

### **Tuesday, June 13**

*What does Jesus' prayer and God's protection mean to you?* John 17:11 & 15

### **Wednesday, June 14**

*What does it mean to be in the world but not part of it? What challenges do you currently face "in the world?"*

John 17:14-16

### **Thursday, June 15**

*Before the prayer, Jesus talked about the Holy Spirit. How will this change the disciples' lives? Yours?*

John 14:16-17 & 16:6-15

### **Friday, June 16**

*If we love others with Jesus' love, what can we accomplish?* John 13:31-34

# **God's Church in Action**

## **Reclining Into Recovery**

*Your gifts to ELCA Domestic Disaster Response fund\* disaster **recovery** efforts such as volunteer coordination, spiritual and emotional care, and hardship grants. Over \$24 million in contributions to ELCA Domestic Disaster Response designated for Gulf Coast Hurricanes will fund a multi-year response in the region. Thank you for this amazing generosity!*

Frank and his wife, Georgia, live in a small home in East Biloxi. When Hurricane Katrina hit the Mississippi Gulf Coast, a 10-foot storm surge swept through their house, taking most of their possessions with it. In the midst of the surge, Georgia waited on the roof while Frank stood with water up to his neck, holding on to their two dogs.

After the water receded, with nowhere else to turn for shelter, the couple remained in their home. Frank, who is unable to stand for long periods of time, sat each day and slept each night in his recliner. The recliner smelled of musty mildew and mold, never having properly dried after the storm.

There are signs of new life and hope these days for Frank and Georgia. Lutheran volunteers from Christus Victor Lutheran Church in Ocean Springs found them temporary housing while their house was being cleaned out. Volunteers then arranged for a FEMA trailer to be placed in their front lawn. In cooperation with Lutheran Disaster Response, your gifts to ELCA Domestic Disaster Response have allowed volunteer teams to muck out their house, eradicate the mold, hang new sheetrock, and make necessary repairs to the roof. The best gift of all, though, may be Frank's brand new recliner. The volunteers set it up so that he could watch them work.

*This fund is among several which have received gifts from our congregation during 2005-2006, part of your compassionate outreach sharing God's love to our community, nation, and world. Thank you!*