

**The Story: Chapter 28**  
**A New Normal**  
**Acts 1-10**

Today we look at Chapter 28 of the Story:

**TIMELINE**

Remember, the Story breaks the Bible up into 5 movements, or sections.

Last week, with the resurrection of Jesus, we finished section #3 where we got to see this:

**The Story of Jesus**

Jesus left the Upper Story to come down into our Lower Story to be with us and to provide the way for us to be made right with God. Through faith in Christ's work on the cross, we can now overturn Adam's choice and have a personal relationship with God.

Today we get to look at the fourth section:

**The Story of the Church**

Everyone who comes into a relationship with God through faith in Christ belongs to the new community God is building called the church. The church is commissioned to be the presence of Christ in the Lower Story – telling His story by the way we live and the words we speak. Every story of the church points people to the second coming of Christ, when He will return to restore God's original vision.

But, first I want to look back at Easter:

**Easter weekend around here was just fabulous.**

- The Journey to the Cross was beautifully done, thank you so much for all who made that happen.
- The volunteers all day were wonderful and loved on our community with the love of Christ.
- The Good Friday service was super meaningful and touched lives in many different ways.

- Easter Sunday morning, we had a large number of guest with us that you guys invited and brought with you. It was so great to meet those that you brought.
- Our Worship Team led us straight to Jesus all morning, from the first song to the last.
- And, the preacher was ok but the truth of the message that Jesus had paid our spiritual debt in full is life changing.

**The Truth:** We worked really hard, we prepared really well, and we prayed with expectation that God would do great things on Easter.

And, He did!! We had decisions made for Christ, we had people grasp what "Paid in Full" really means to us, and I know of one church in Texas that had 225 salvations that weekend. Just because they didn't happen in this room doesn't mean we don't celebrate them.

**The Big Question:** What did we expect God to do today?

Statements: "Well, we made it through Easter. Now we can get back to normal."

- "Now that Easter is over we'll get back to the normal crowd."
- "We invited all of our friends for Easter. Now we don't have to worry about them for a while."

**Here's another big question:** What if we came to expect a New Normal?

**A New Normal:**

... implies that something which was previously abnormal has become commonplace.

The current state of being after some dramatic change has transpired.

And, I'm not talking about the Easter services. I'm not saying we had such a great Easter that none of us should ever be the same.

I'm talking about Jesus...

What if the moment we surrendered to Jesus as our Lord and Savior really did create a completely NEW NORMAL for us?

**Last week:**

One of the big things we talked about last week was that the Disciples, and the followers of Jesus, were NOT expecting Him to be missing from that tomb on that Sunday morning.

As far as they believed, Jesus was dead, and He was not coming back to life.

- They had zero expectations of Him on that Sunday morning.

But, when they found out that Jesus was alive again, it blew their minds.

- The truth that He came out of that grave literally changed EVERYTHING for them.

- And we're going to see that in the way they lived moving forward.

- It created a whole NEW NORMAL for them.

And they kept at it for the rest of their lives.

**But, here's the truth for us:** The fact that Jesus came out of that grave literally changed EVERYTHING for us too!

But, our normal still seems pretty normal.

- We don't really expect Jesus to show up and do miracles anymore.

- We don't expect anything to happen when we come to church that's really going to effect us.

- Let's just get through those crazy different times like Easter and rush back to our normal routine...

But, look at what the New Normal looked like for the followers of Christ in Acts.

We're going to see the start of the church in these passages but here's where it really started:

**Here's the Key:****1. They were filled with the Holy Spirit.**

Jesus had told them that He was going away but that He would send them a helper. He even said that it would be better for them to have the Helper because He would live inside of them and guide them on every step.

### **Acts 1:7-8**

<sup>7</sup> He said to them: “It is not for you to know the times or dates the Father has set by his own authority. <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.”

Out of all the things Jesus could have told them right before He left, He reminded them that the Holy Spirit was going to empower them to **make sure everyone, everywhere heard His story.**

This is what that looked like:

### **Acts 2:1-6**

<sup>2</sup> 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. <sup>5</sup> 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 them speaking in his own language.

The purpose of the disciples speaking in different languages was so that **everyone** in the crowd could hear the message of Jesus in their own language.

This was actually a bookend to what took place in **Genesis 11**. The people started building a tower to “make a name for ourselves” and God confused their language and scattered them all over the earth.

Then, He uses **Pentecost** to bring them all back together under the truth of the Gospel message of Jesus!

- This also started the process of learning that the Gospel was for all people, not just the Jews. Peter shows us more of this later as well.

**And, then, look at what became the New Normal for them:**

2. They immediately began sharing the **message of Jesus**.

Acts 2:14

<sup>14</sup> Then Peter stood up with the Eleven, raised his voice and addressed the crowd:

From v 14 -39 he preached the message of Jesus.

Acts 2:37-38

<sup>37</sup> When the people heard this, they were cut to the heart and said to Peter and the other apostles, "Brothers, what shall we do?" <sup>38</sup> Peter replied, "Repent and be baptized, every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins. And you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.

And it says God added 3000 new Believers to the family that day.

And, once they started preaching, they just wouldn't stop:

Acts 4:18-20 Before the Sanhedrin

<sup>18</sup> Then they called them in again and commanded them not to speak or teach at all in the name of Jesus. <sup>19</sup> But Peter and John replied, "Judge for yourselves whether it is right in God's sight to obey you rather than God. <sup>20</sup> For we cannot help speaking about what we have seen and heard."

Later, they were flogged and eventually thrown into prison. And, none of it stopped them from teaching others about Jesus.

**As a part of that process:**

They devoted themselves to the **fellowship** of the Believers.

This is what we call the church.

Acts 2:42

<sup>42</sup> They devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and to the fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer. <sup>43</sup> Everyone was filled with awe, and many wonders and miraculous signs were done by the apostles. <sup>44</sup> All the believers were together and had everything in

common. <sup>45</sup> Selling their possessions and goods, they gave to anyone as he 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 favor of all the people. And the Lord added to their number daily those who were being saved.

I'm not too sure they knew that it was going to be called "church" but they immediately committed to the fellowship with other people trying to follow Christ.

Many of them were killed because of what they were teaching.

Stephen was the first to be killed for the message he was preaching.  
- He basically confronted the religious leaders with the truth and then spoke the entire history of the Bible in front of them:

**Acts 7:57-58**

<sup>57</sup> At this they covered their ears and, yelling at the top of their voices, they all rushed at him, <sup>58</sup> dragged him out of the city and began to stone him.

They saw the Church grow through **persecution**.

**Acts 8:1-3**

After they stoned Stephen a great persecution started against the church.

As a part of that, the Christians were scattered to different places out of fear.

And, here's what happened:

**Acts 8:4-5**

<sup>4</sup> Those who had been scattered preached the word wherever they went.

<sup>5</sup> Philip went down to a city in Samaria and proclaimed the Christ there.

**But, more than anything...** They spent the rest of their lives getting as many people to Jesus as they could.

How about us today:

## Questions for evaluation:

What if **inviting all of our friends** to church and telling them what Jesus has done in our life became the new normal?

What if we jumped fully into fellowshiping with other Believers, studying the word, praying together, and **helping each other on this journey**?

What if we lived like Jesus being raised from that grave **ACTUALLY** did change everything for us too?

What if we really did expect God to come through on every promise that He has made to us?

What if we spent the rest of our lives doing what Jesus told the Disciples to do?

Be my **witnesses**.

Make **disciples** of all nations.

Loving God and Loving People with the love of Christ!!!!

**Struggle:** We're not motivated. Nobody wants to hear that from us. We're afraid we might be rejected. We just want to go back to the normal Christian life we've been living.

**Listen very closely:** Jesus Christ did not die on the cross, rise from the grave, and place Holy Spirit in your heart for you to live the "normal Christian" life!!!!

## Here's how:

The power comes from being filled with **Holy Spirit!**

If you have ever surrendered your life to Jesus as your Lord and Savior, He has placed Holy Spirit inside of you.

- The SAME Holy Spirit that He placed inside the Disciples at Pentecost.  
**Our lives should be lived in response to the resurrection of Jesus from that tomb.**