

“This is Basic Stuff!”

Acts 1

Intro. – An officer in the South Pacific had been overseas for sixteen months when he received a letter from his wife. This letter, amongst other matters, told of a prayer the couple’s four year old daughter gave: “Dear Lord, Please send me a baby brother so we will have something to surprise Daddy when he gets home.”

It’s probably a safe guess that this officer wasn’t taught in basic training how to deal with this situation. Now for you who were/or are in the military, that phrase *basic training* probably conjures up all sorts of memories. How would you explain *basic training* to those who have no military experience? What descriptive explanation would you give to anyone asking about “boot-camp” or “basic training”?

Illus. - #1 = Sergeant-Major’s golden rules for Mess Hall Duty:

“If it moves, salute it. If it doesn’t move, sweep it up. If it’s too big to sweep up, pick it up. If it’s too big to pick up, paint it.”

#2 = Sergeant in charge of new recruits barked the following orders: “Men, when I blow the whistle, I want you to shoot at will.” Upon hearing this, one frightened recruit starting running across the grounds. “Who was that? Where is he going?” yelled the sergeant. “That was, Will” replied another recruit.

#3 = A Sergeant was explaining key points to a squad of recruits on the rifle range. “This type of bullet will penetrate 2 feet of solid wood,” he said, “So keep your heads down!”

Basic training – what kind of images come to mind when such reference is made. Those of us with no military background can we relate in any way to this? Is there some way we can grasp this?

Indeed there is! All servants of the most high God, all Christians are described as being in the Lord’s Army.

I may never march in the infantry
Ride in the cavalry, shoot the artillery.
I may never fly o’er the enemy,
But I’m in the Lord’s Army!

The book of Acts is the Christian’s “Basic Training.” From this book the gap is bridged between the OT and NT – the gap is bridged between the Gospels and the rest of the NT. In fact, one can be so bold as to say without the “basic stuff” found in the book of Acts, it’s impossible to understand the rest of God’s Word.

Purpose: to begin a study through the book of Acts

If we’re going to get back to the basics – basic training is essential. This means getting into the book of Acts. Brethren and friend, this is basic stuff. May our study result in much fruit to the honor of our Lord!

I Belief in THE RISEN LORD (1:1-11)

- 40 days after resurrection, Jesus ministered to His disciples... these appearances gave a group of eleven defeated and dejected men, the power to set the world aflame:
- A. Reality of His Resurrection(1:3a)
 1. What took 11, uneducated, defeated, overwhelm men and turned them in *a force* that even the Roman Empire couldn’t defeat?
 2. Nothing less than the bodily resurrection of Jesus Christ.
 3. The message of the Gospel is fully/wholly dependent upon the resurrection of Jesus – 1 Cor. 15:17 says it all, “...if He be not raised from the dead, then our faith is worthless (in vain)”
 4. What other *religion* is based upon its leader dying and rising from dead? None but Xtianity!
- B. Power of His Spirit (1:4-8)
 1. Apostles alone were promised the ability to reveal the redemptive plan of Christ by signs, wonders and miracles...
 2. Today, we have the Bible, God’s inerrant, complete and final word!
 3. 1:8 is key verse = speaks to two key matters:

- a. “witnesses” = used no less than 29 times in Acts... our English word *martyr* comes from this Greek word = “tells what is seen and heard and willing to do so no matter the cost!”
 - b. outline = Judea (Acts 1-7); Samaria (Acts 8-9); Uttermost Earth (Acts 10-28).
4. Today, Holy Spirit is ours (though not miraculous) to be His servants no matter where live!

C. Assurance of His Coming Again

- 1. Jesus ushered immediately into the presence of the Father at right hand (Acts 2:33 etc.)
- 2. As Jesus appeared and disappeared 40 days after resurrection, believers never knew when He would show up... our situation is none different...
 - a. so you see, conviction in the risen Lord is basic = living in the reality of His being alive, the power of His Spirit in our lives and the assurance of His coming again.
 - b. Illus. – young preacher called upon for a funeral. He hunted the 4 Gospels trying to find one of Jesus’ funeral sermons. His search was in vain. He found that every funeral the Lord ever attended, He broke it up for death cannot exist in Christ’s presence!

John 11:25 “*I am the resurrection and the life.*” That brethren and friend is basic stuff!

II Belief in ONE ANOTHER (1:12-14)

A. A Right Relationship with God

- 1. Note: the apostles did what the Lord instructed them to do – waited in Jerusalem...
- 2. They obeyed the Lord – i.e. their relationship with God was on solid ground = saved by grace (Christ’s works) to do good works!

B. A Right Relationship with One Another

- 1. They were “*all in one accord*” (note: proof text it is biblical to drive Honda...).
 - a. NASB says *with one mind*; NIV says *joined together*
 - b. it is a familiar phrase used no less than six times in book of Acts.
- 2. Would have been so easy for divisiveness to exist amongst disciples... certainly did prior to the Lord’s death where they often fought over who was the superior one next to Jesus...
- 3. The unity that bound them together, kind of unity needed today and is so possible!
- 4. Our relationship with God is fleshed out (revealed) in how we get along with one another.
 - a. this is so basic – Eaton and the surrounding areas watches as to how we relate to each other
 - b. nothing less than credibility of our Lord and His Church are at stake in how we relate to and with each other in the Lord!
- 5. Our belief in God is revealed through our love, confidence and belief in each other:

They will know we are Christians by our relationship to one another = basic stuff, brethren/friend!

III Belief in PRAYER (1:14)

A. Prayer Played a Significant Role

- 1. Believers prayed for guidance in making decisions (1:15-26)
- 2. Prayed for courage to testify for Christ (4:23-31)
- 3. Prayer was a *normalfundamental* part of life: Stephen prayed as he was being stoned to death (7:55-60); Saul prayed prior to becoming a Christian (9:11); Peter prayed before raising Dorcus (9:36-43); Cornelius prayed for learning forgiveness of sins (10:1-4); rest of book filled prayer...

B. Prayer Plays a Significant Role

- 1. How we view and practice prayer has a great bearing on our effectiveness for our Lord...
- 2. Do you view prayer as something ornamental for worship assemblies... as a means of manipulating and controlling God... as a last resort in critical matters?...
- 3. 1st Century Christians were fervent prayers... the tremendous accomplishments of first century Church were grounded and bathed in prayer...
- 4. Basically speaking for Christ’s Church in Eaton to accomplish what she can, we must grow taller on our knees in prayer!

IV Belief in GOD'S LEADING (1:15-26)

- A. God Answered Prayer
 - 1. Judas' replacement... lots are cast... God answers their prayers – Matthias takes Judas' place
 - 2. Note: this is nowhere near an endorsement for gambling... but it is an example of God answering the prayers of His servants...
- B. God Answers Prayer
 - 1. We have His promise... that He will hear and answer our prayers.
 - 2. Three things must realize in God's leading today:
 - a. inward impulse (talents God given and such are indicators of His will for our lives...)
 - b. God's Word...
 - c. trend of circumstances (providential happenings)
 - 3. Summary to above: God is in our hearts propelling us forward... God is in His Book harmonizing with propelling within our hearts... God is in circumstances harmonizing with the other two...
 - 4. God leads today, individually and collectively (e.g. doors of opportunity open for each of us and for the work of His Church here... such is basic stuff, brethren!

Conclusion: An explorer in a remote area of Africa came to a small clearing and observed the following: there were sticks of wood laid out as if for a fire; yet, no evidence of a fire actually being started. Puzzled, he waited to see who had done this. After waiting for hours, some chimpanzees came into this same clearing carrying more sticks. These sticks they also neatly stacked and arranged as if for a fire. Then, these chimps sat around the sticks just as men would sit around a campfire.

It was obvious by this the chimpanzees were simply imitating the actions of humans. They observed enough to know gather, place and set the wood, BUT, one thing they lacked – the spark to get the fire going.

Such helps to illustrate why so many churches and lives are so fruitless. Men, women and young people are tempted to go through the motions and give all the appearances rather than have and build upon a genuine faith. What they lack is FIRE! – the same fire that flamed 1st Century Christians who swept across the Roman Empire and the inhabited world.

Can we have that fire? Do we want that fire? This brethren, is basic stuff!