

Date: November 20, 2011

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Talk Title: "Amazing Acts- Then and Now (1): Inception"

1. Sunday Summary:

This week we begin a Sunday series focusing in on stories in the book of Acts. What's so powerful about the book is it is the story of how God moved in those early days in striking ways to launch the movement called the church. Our focus, however, will also be to draw the parallels of the ways in which those amazing activities of God can and still do happen now in our lives and community. Today's focus is on the very beginnings, or inception, of the church at Pentecost.

2. Connecting Questions:

- Take a few minutes and talk about Sunday's service - what stood out to you or what were the highlight moments to you?
- Just so we're aware where everyone in the group is coming into this series, rank your present familiarity with the (*book of Acts*) on a 1 - 10 scale. (No cheating!)

3. Truth Questions:

- Tonight we'll focus on the closing verses of (*Acts 2*). Have someone clearly read (*verses 36 – 47*).
- These verses begin with the wrap up of Peter's open-air sermon. This sermon has a strong confrontational quality to it. Discuss why sometimes this is very necessary and effective (as it was here!).
- One way to describe what is going on here in the listeners is called "*conviction of sin*". Where do you see that in these verses? Why is awareness of personal sin an important step in becoming a Christ follower?
- (*Verses 42-47*) describe the new community (3000) of Holy Spirit - filled believers. What four activities are described in (*verse 42*)? How are these four activities foundational to Christ-followers today?
- Review (*verses 43-47*) and generate 6 or 7 words (linking the word to a verse) that describe why that early Christian community was so powerful?
- Where do you see the importance of Big Church and Small Church involvements in these verses?
- This chapter describes people coming to faith in Jesus because a powerful message (*verse 41*) and others because of a powerful community (*verse 47*). Which of these have been most powerfully used by God in your life?

4. Transformation Question: (Taking it Further, Life Application)

- This chapter describes the three major factors that distinguish ordinary communities from a world changing movement.
 - 1) God's presence and power,
 - 2) Message clarity about Jesus, and the
 - 3) Experience of authentic, devoted, contagious community.
 - Take a few minutes to share examples of these qualities that you've experienced at FCCC.
- Close with a prayer for your part of the church that meets as a group, for FCCC as a whole, and for the broader church of Jesus in our world.