

The Great Reset - Part 6

Acts 2:36-47; Coast Community Church; Pastor Earl Miles; April 25, 2021

Introduction

I've called this series, *The Great Reset*. This refers to three things:

- Rebellion of Mankind (Genesis 11:4-6)
- Return of Jesus Christ (2 Peter 3:10-13)
- Repentance of Sinners (Acts 2:36-38)

Acts 2 is a description of life among the early Christians in Jerusalem and is helpful in thinking through how we are to live in our 'interesting times.'

- *The Picture: The Early Church*
- *The Picture's Backdrop: A Perverse Generation, A Reigning and Returning King* (see Acts 2:40 and Acts 1:8-11; Matthew 28:18)
- *The Picture's Frame: Be patient and ordinary and different and faithful.* (in light of the rest of Acts and the New Testament)
- *The Picture as a Facebook Post: There is nothing 'fallacious' about what Scripture describes here in Acts 2, but there can be a temptation to think that this is a picture of a perfect church culture that included no sin and no weaknesses and no 'tares' and would never include people who might walk away from the faith. (See Acts 5, 6, 8, 11, and 15, for instance)*

So, what is the 'framework' for understanding how to apply what we see in Acts 2?

Be patient: *We are called to live patiently in the face of suffering, waiting for God to fulfill His promises of full and lasting joy.*

Be patient, because you must live this way in the midst of a perverse and hostile world until Christ returns. One of the things that stands out in the book of Acts is the reality of suffering for believers, especially Christian persecution. – Acts 14:19-22; James 5:1-11

The bottom line: If we don't understand that suffering is an expected part of life in a fallen world and especially of life as a Christian, we will be tempted to walk away. The Church in Acts was not a 'suffering-free zone'!

Be ordinary: *We are called to live ordinary Christian lives that are both radical and routine.*

Be ordinary, because the Christian life is about using the ordinary means of grace to honor an extraordinary God and Christ in the ordinary things of life. A second thing that stands out in the book of Acts is the ordinary life of the early believers as compared to the extraordinary life of the apostles like Paul. – Acts 20:22-24, 34-35; 1 Thessalonians 4:1-12

The bottom line: If we don't see that the ordinary Christian life is the truly satisfying life, then we will be tempted to walk away. The Church in Acts was filled with Christians living ordinary lives. It wasn't always 'exciting and new and radical and extraordinary'!

Be different: *Everyone's life and role in the body of Christ is both similar and different.*

Be different, because God uses all kinds of people and gifts and vocations to accomplish the Great Commission that He has given to His Church as a whole. A third thing that stands out in the book of Acts is the giving and fulfillment of the Great Commission and the difference in gifting and lifestyle between those in the local church and the apostles. – Acts 9:15-16; 1 Corinthians 12:12-21

The bottom line: It's okay, and actually necessary, to be different as a member of the body of Christ (those who have truly repented and believed). The Church in Acts had some extraordinary people like Peter and Paul who played special roles, but most played very unspectacular roles of everyday faithfulness. Not everyone is meant to be a Paul or a Spurgeon or a Hudson Taylor.

Be faithful: *God is the one who is in charge of the fruit of our lives, but we are responsible for the faithfulness of our lives.*

Be faithful, because there are many trials of pain and many temptations of pleasure that must be overcome before you reach the goal of seeing God. A fourth thing that we see in the book of Acts is the need for faithfulness and the reality that not everyone who claimed Christ at some point was faithful to the end. – Acts 8:13, 20; Matthew 24:32-51

The bottom line: There are all kinds of things, 'threats' and 'treats' without and 'fears' and 'lusts' within, that tempt us to be unfaithful and unprepared for the return of Christ. The Church in Acts had people in it who seemed to be saved and weren't and the rest who were saints were still in the process of sanctification at best! – Matthew 13:20; Luke 8:14

What do you need to do? Trust God! Trust the Love!

- Trust the gracious love of God for sinners in Jesus! – John 3:14-21

The love of God for sinners is exceedingly wide! It is *provisional love* – meeting needs and fulfilling desires and offering life in His Son! If rejected, there is nothing left but judgment.

- Trust the everlasting love of God for saints in Jesus! – 1 John 4:14-21

The love of God for saints – His children who trust in Jesus – is exceedingly deep! It is *perfect love* – full and lasting, just like His love for His Son! Nothing can keep God from fulfilling His purpose and promises for those He loves with an everlasting love!

Saints are to see God as full of love to them. – John Owen