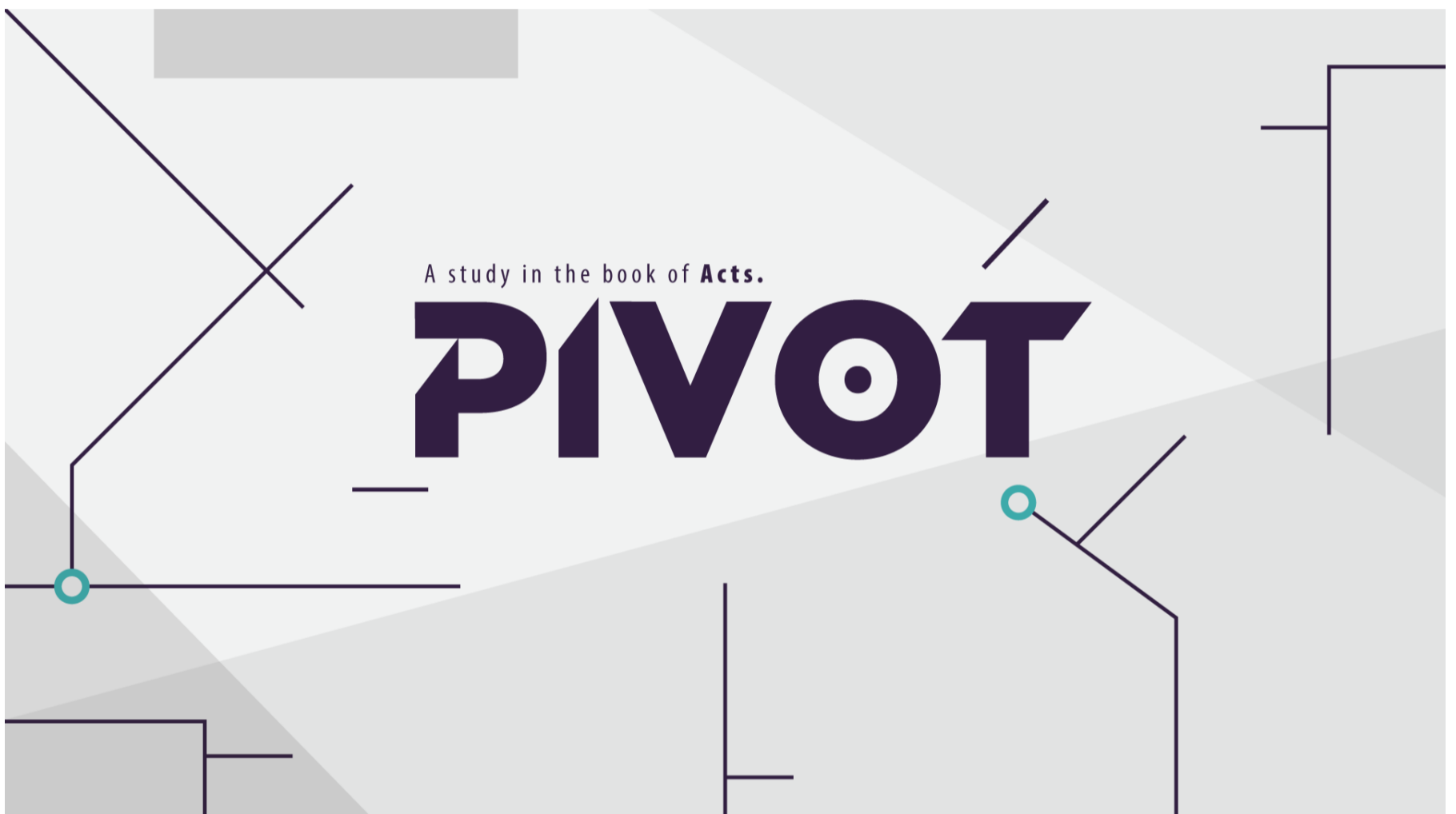


August 16, 2020

COMMUNITY GROUPS

NMC SERMON SERIES CONTENT



“Pivot: A study in the book of Acts” SERIES OVERVIEW:

Everything in our lives seems to be changing these days and every change is causing us to pivot in a new direction. As we look into the book of Acts, we will see how the early church was formed, grew, and learned to pivot as God led them to new people and places. In this series, we’ll be reminded that the same God who was with the early church at every pivot is also still with us.



Leadership Moment:

LEADER ESSENTIAL: “REPLACING YOURSELF, PART 3”

Replace Yourself

By passing on knowledge, skills, and opportunities, you are preparing others for future leadership while sharpening your own abilities.

Essential Question:

How are you intentionally investing in a potential leader in your Community Group?

In addition to being Biblical as a reason to “Replace Yourself”, here are two other reasons as to why this Leader Essential is important:

1. **Its Practical** – by replacing yourself, you as a leader will continue to grow as well as the person with leadership potential you have invited to join with you on this journey. Nothing helps you grow as a leader like instructing someone else in how to lead.

Raising up other leaders also helps the entire LifeGroup get better. As you hand over responsibility to your apprentice, they bring their knowledge, talent, and experience to the equation. They find new and better ways to lead, which gives you the opportunity to learn from them. And when this takes place, everyone gets better.

2. **Its Strategic** — If our mission is to help people FIND and FOLLOW Jesus and if groups are the best environment that we know of to help people grow, then we need to create space for everyone. This will always call for more and more LifeGroup Leaders.

And those who have been apprenticed by other LifeGroup Leaders make the best LifeGroup Leaders.

So now the big question: how do you know who in your group might make a great apprentice? When thinking about an apprentice, keep in mind you’re not looking for someone who will be ready to lead a group tomorrow. You are looking for someone you can share the journey with, and someone who is humble, teachable, curious, and intentional.

A person with those qualities (someone who thinks of others first, is eager to learn, someone who is more prone to ask questions than offer quick opinions) has the kind of spiritual maturity necessary to be a good leader.

Application Question:

Is there anything you can delegate in your group as you continue to use “Promote Participation” as the foundation of “Replace Yourself”?

**More information on the 8 Community Group Leader Essentials can be found at northmetro.org/leaders*

THE BOOK OF ACTS

Author: The book of Acts, also called Acts of the Apostles, does not specifically identify its author. From Luke 1:1–4 and Acts 1:1–3, we know that the same author wrote both Luke and Acts. The tradition from the earliest days of the church has been that Luke, a companion of the apostle Paul, wrote the books of Luke and Acts (Colossians 4:14; 2 Timothy 4:11).

Date of Writing: The book of Acts was likely written between AD 61 and 64.

Purpose of Writing: The book of Acts was written to provide a history of the early church. The emphasis of the book is the fulfillment of the Great Commission. Acts records the apostles being Christ's witnesses in Jerusalem, Judea, Samaria, and the surrounding world. The book of Acts sheds light on the gift of the Holy Spirit, who empowers, guides, teaches, and serves as our Counselor. Reading the book of Acts, we are enlightened and encouraged by the power of the gospel as it spread throughout the world and transformed lives. Many miracles were performed during this time by the apostles to validate their message. The book of Acts covers the transitional time between the ascension of Christ and the completion of the New Testament canon, and the apostolic miracles were God's means of authenticating His message through the men who penned the Bible.

Key Verses:

Acts 1:8: "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."

Acts 2:4: "All of them were filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other tongues as the Spirit enabled them."

Acts 4:12: "Salvation is found in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given to men by which we must be saved."

Acts 4:19–20: "But Peter and John replied, 'Judge for yourselves whether it is right in God's sight to obey you rather than God. For we cannot help speaking about what we have seen and heard.'"

Acts 9:3–6: "As [Saul] neared Damascus on his journey, suddenly a light from heaven flashed around him. He fell to the ground and heard a voice say to him, 'Saul, Saul, why do you persecute me?' 'Who are you, Lord?' Saul asked. 'I am Jesus, whom you are persecuting,' he replied. 'Now get up and go into the city, and you will be told what you must do.'"

Acts 16:31: "So they said, 'Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and you will be saved.'"

Brief Summary: The book of Acts gives the history of the Christian church and the spread of the gospel of Jesus Christ, as well as the mounting opposition to it. Although many faithful servants were used to preach and teach the gospel of Jesus Christ, Saul, also called Paul, was the most influential. Before he was converted, Paul zealously persecuted Christians. Paul's dramatic conversion on the Damascus road (Acts 9:1–31) is a highlight of the book of Acts. After his conversion he went to the opposite extreme of loving God and preaching His Word with power and fervency in the Spirit of the true and living God. The disciples were empowered by the Holy Spirit to be His witnesses in Jerusalem (Acts 1—8:3), in Judea and Samaria (8:4—12:25), and to the ends of the earth (13:1—28:31). Included in the last section are Paul's three missionary journeys (13:1—21:16), his trials in Jerusalem and Caesarea (21:17—26:32) and his journey to Rome (27:1—28:31).

Connections: The book of Acts serves as a transition from the Old Covenant to the New. This transition is seen in several key events in Acts. First, there was a change in the ministry of the Holy Spirit, whose primary function in the Old Testament was the external "anointing" of God's people, among them Moses (Numbers 11:17), Othniel (Judges 3:8–10), Gideon (Judges 6:34), and Saul (1 Samuel 10:6–10). After the ascension of Jesus, the Spirit came to live in the very hearts of believers (Romans 8:9–11; 1 Corinthians 3:16), guiding and empowering them from within. The indwelling Spirit is the gift

of God to those who come to Him in faith.

Paul's conversion in Acts 9 is a dramatic example of the power of God unto salvation (see Romans 1:16) and the opening of spiritually blinded eyes. Paul admitted that, prior to meeting the risen Savior, he was the most zealous of Israelites and was blameless "concerning righteousness based on the law" (Philippians 3:6), going so far as to persecute those who taught salvation by grace through faith in Christ. But, after his conversion, Paul realized that all his legalistic efforts were worthless, and he considered them "rubbish, that I may gain Christ and be found in him, not having a righteousness of my own that comes from the law, but that which is through faith in Christ—the righteousness that comes from God and is by faith" (Philippians 3:8–9). Before he met Christ, Paul had been blinded by a pharisaical misinterpretation of the law and an inflated opinion of his own righteousness. After he met Christ, the "scales fell from Saul's eyes," as it were (Acts 9:18). His boasting of his own goodness was replaced by his glorying in the cross of Jesus Christ (Romans 3:27; Galatians 6:14).

Peter's vision of the sheet full of unclean animals in Acts 10:9–15 is another sign of the transition from the Old Covenant to the New Covenant's unity of Jew and Gentile in one universal Church. The "unclean" animals in Peter's vision symbolized the Gentiles, who were declared "cleansed" by God through the sacrificial death of Christ. The Old Covenant law had served its purpose (see Galatians 3:23–29), and both Jews and Gentiles are united in the New Covenant of grace through their faith in the death and resurrection of Christ.

Practical Application: God can do amazing things through ordinary people when He empowers them through His Spirit. The book of Acts shows how God essentially took a group of fisherman and commoners and used them to turn the world upside down (Acts 17:6). God took a Christian-hating murderer and transformed him into history's greatest Christian evangelist, the author of almost half the books of the New Testament. God used the persecution the Christians endured to help stimulate the incredibly rapid expansion of the fledgling church. God can and does do the same through us—changing our hearts, empowering us by the Holy Spirit, and giving us a passion to spread the good news of salvation through Christ. If we try to accomplish God's work in the world in our own power, we will fail. Like the disciples in Acts 2, we must faithfully proclaim the gospel, trust God for the results, and devote ourselves "to the apostles' teaching and to fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer" (Acts 2:42).

Taken from:

<https://www.gotquestions.org/Book-of-Acts.html>

Video Overviews of the book of Acts:

Acts 1-12

<https://youtu.be/CGbNw855ksw>

Acts 13-28

<https://youtu.be/Z-17KxpjL0Q>

"PIVOT" WEEK 2



Community Group Icebreakers:

In what ways have you had to "Pivot" the most in this season of COVID-19?

In what ways do you anticipate having to "Pivot" in the days ahead?

Community Group Discussion Questions:

Read Acts 2:1-3.

What positive, confusing, or negative experiences have you had in the past with how people have talked about "the work of the Holy Spirit?"

How do you think the disciples would have felt in the days between the Ascension and Pentecost? How do you think you would have felt if you were in their situation?

Do you have any fears regarding the Holy Spirit, such as, "What if God doesn't show up?"

What if God does show up and then asks you to go somewhere or do something that's really uncomfortable?

Why does God often ask us to do uncomfortable things?

Read Luke 9:1-6.

What mission did Jesus send the disciples on in this text?

Why do you think Jesus told them to “take nothing for the journey—no staff, no bag, no bread, no money, no extra tunic”?

In Luke 22:35, Jesus asks the disciples (referencing this event in Luke 6): “When I sent you without purse, bag, sandals, did you lack anything? They responded by saying that they lacked “Nothing.”

What did they learn about the power of the Holy Spirit as they followed Jesus’ command to walk into the unknown?

Would you be willing to follow the Lord, no matter how risky it would be, or is there a level at which you would cut off your willingness to risk it?

Nobody likes to be mocked. Are there particular circumstances or situations in your life where a fear of being mocked for Christ weighs heavily on you?

Read Ephesians 4:30.

What does it mean to “grieve” the Holy Spirit? Do you think that you have ever done that? If so, explain.

How do you know that the Holy Spirit has been grieved?

What do you do when you know you have grieved the Holy Spirit? (Hint: Take a look at Acts 3:19-20)

Looking back at this week’s teaching and study, is there one thing you’d especially like to remember this week?

What questions do you still have? How can the group help you / pray for you?