



January 4, 2015
Celebration | 8:45 am
Elevation | 10:45 am
Pastor David Mitchell

God's Vision for the Church Acts 2

The Church: God's place where Jesus continues to overcome by changing people, turning them away from sin and toward righteousness Acts 2:38-39

"For the promise is for you and your children and for all who are far off, as many as the Lord our God will call to Himself." And with many other words he solemnly testified and kept on exhorting them, saying, "Be saved from this perverse generation!" "

- Church: *ekklesia*, *ek* = out; *klesia* = to call.

We are 'called out' of the world and a life of sin by God's grace into His kingdom and life in Christ.

We want to plant more churches so more people will be reached with the saving truth of Jesus Christ.

When people are convicted of their sin by the Holy Spirit and are changed by Jesus Christ, the Church must show them how to live according to God's Word. Acts 2:37

"Now when they heard this, they were pierced to the heart, and said to Peter and the rest of the apostles, "Brethren, what shall we do?" "

- The Church's answer to "what shall we do?"
 - **Be a place for spiritual change and growth toward maturity in Christ.** Acts 2:41-43
"So then, those who had received his word were baptized; and that day there were added about three thousand souls. They were continually devoting themselves to the apostles' teaching and to fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer. Everyone kept feeling a sense of awe; and many wonders and signs were taking place through the apostles."
 - **Be a place for reaching out in love and grace, sharing generously to meet personal needs.** Acts 2:44-45
"And all those who had believed were together and had all things in common; and they began selling their property and possessions and were sharing them with all, as anyone might have need."
 - **Be a place where we connect people with God and others as they are saved by Jesus Christ.** Acts 2:46-47
"Day by day continuing with one mind in the temple, and breaking bread from house to house, they were taking their meals together with gladness and sincerity of heart, praising God and having favor with all the people. And the Lord was adding to their number day by day those who were being saved."

Digging Deeper:

Acts 2 is the beginning of the Church. Never before was there an entity known as the Church where both Jew and Gentile unite as the Body of Christ. All would be saved by putting their faith in the death, burial and resurrection of Jesus Christ. The Church is not just another social organization trying to do good for society. It is a place where lives are spiritually changed, as Jesus turns them away from sin toward righteousness when God convicts them by the power of His Holy Spirit. We need to respond by living out our faith in Jesus every day and sharing the life we have found in Him with others. We need to carry forward God's vision for His Church, calling others out of the world and into life with Christ. And, we need to prayerfully pursue more church plants, which can exponentially grow by reaching more new people with the love and grace of Jesus Christ.

LifeGroup Discussion:

1. Jesus taught on the change that people need. Read John 5:24.
 - What does Jesus call us to do regarding His life and Word?
 - What change will result when that happens?
 - When did that change occur in your life?
2. What promise does Jesus make to all that believe in Him according to John 6:39-40? Are you trusting in that promise today?
3. The church is a place for spiritual change and growth. According to II Corinthians 5:20, Christ will reconcile us to God. Reconcile means to change us. We do not change ourselves, but Christ accomplishes that for us. Read II Corinthians 5:21. What is the biggest change Jesus accomplishes in our lives?
4. After we are changed, what are we to do according to II Corinthians 5:18-20?
5. Spiritual growth results from spiritual food. Our primary diet should be consuming God's Word, the Bible. According to I Timothy 1:4-5, what should we not listen to? What results from that alleged "truth?" What is the goal of our instruction? Where do you see evidence of that in your life?
6. According to II Timothy 2:14-16, what message should we avoid? How should we treat the Bible?
7. According to II Timothy 3:15-17, what is a good age to begin a study of the Bible? What results from our knowledge of the Bible?
8. According to II Timothy 4:2-4, what is a dangerous trend of some churches regarding the teaching of the Bible?

Next Steps:

1. **Use Calvary's new discipleship study called 'Following Jesus' so you can grow spiritually.** *Following Jesus*, with editions for both students and leaders, is available in Calvary's Corner Bookstore. calvarylife.org/grow
2. **Join a LifeGroup to learn more about the Bible and how to apply it in your life.** LifeGroups are ongoing small group communities that gather together throughout the week to CONNECT in a smaller setting, GROW together in our faith, and REACH out together to our community. There are many LifeGroups available on Calvary's campus and in homes across Orange County. Learn more at calvarylife.org/lifegroups
3. **Pray for Prodigal Church, Calvary's new church plant in Irvine.** We are excited to commission Prodigal Church as they begin their services next week. Please join us in praying for them and the lives that they will impact throughout Orange County. Learn more about Prodigal and the ways to support and pray by visiting prodigaloc.org