

REPORT ON FHU LECTURES 2004

Int.

1. Aim: To give a brief summary of some of the lessons heard at the Lectures.
2. Acts 1:1
3. Theme: "Opening our Eyes to Jesus: From Darkness to Light in Acts." Intro from book
 - a. Occupying a unique place in the N.T., the book of Acts serves not only as a reliable historical record of the establishment and growth of the early church, but also presents inspired models for evangelism, conversion, leadership, and fellowship."
 - b. An in-depth study of this book will also provide opportunities for examination of current issues facing the church. Many of the difficulties facing many churches today could be resolved if only they could grasp the profound teachings of the great book of Acts¹
4. We attended 20 sessions - plus parts of others - singing - fellowship -
5. Jokes:
 - a. Man can in late and sat down by a little boy. He asked : 'Is he finished yet?" The little boy responded "Yes, but he hasn't quit."
 - b. One Sunday the preacher had a bandage on his face. People asked why? I was thinking about my sermon and cut my face. One of the sisters told him: Next time, think about your face and cut your sermon."
 - c. All of you with RED Bibles hold them up! All of them should be READ !
6. Opening our Eyes to Jesus: From Darkness to Light in Acts

Discussion

- I. **JESUS OPENS OUR EYES TO OUR CONDITION** - by Dan Jenkins ²
 - A. The world into which our Savior entered was a sick world.
 1. He left paradise to come to a cess pool !
 2. Because it is hard for us to imagine the grandeur of heaven, we cannot begin to imagine the magnitude of his loving sacrifice when he left a paradise to enter our world.
 3. If godly people today agonize over what is happening to our world, can you imagine how great his anguish must have been when he came to this land that was created through him!
 4. It was a paradise when he made it, but mankind had changed all of that.
 - B. The history of mankind is man trying to get away from God
 1. In the Garden of Eden Satan said to Eve "Let me open your eyes".
 2. From that time mankinds eyes have been closed by sin.
 3. Tragic to see the fruit of sin
 - a. Abel was killed by his brother Cain - Eve Saw death
 - b. In the days of Noah men were corrupt and evil - Gen. 6:1-6 - v. 5
 4. Our Lord entered into a sick world !
 - a. Rom. 1 describes the evil condition of the people.

b. He concluded this chapter with this list of the shameful lifestyles of the Gentiles. "Filled with all unrighteousness, sexual immorality, wickedness, covetousness, maliciousness; full of envy, murder, strife, deceit, evil-mindedness; they are whisperers, backbiters, haters of God, violent, proud, boasters, inventors of evil things, disobedient to parents, undiscerning, untrustworthy, unloving, unforgiving, unmerciful." NKJV

c. Jesus came to the earth filled with such men.

C. The condition of America

1. The description of the Jews and Gentiles of the first-century aptly describes the condition of our own world.
2. Take an honest look at what is happening around you and you see how corrupt we have become.
 - a. There are overt sins—murder, rape, drunkenness, homosexuality, adultery, divorce, abortion, extortion, filthy speech.
 - b. There are covert sins—greed, malice, prejudice, envy, pride, selfishness, jealousy.
 - c. A quick look at the statistics show there were 5,315,500 crimes of violence in 2000.
 - d. The Bureau of Justice Statistics reveals that in 2002, there were 23,000,000 crimes of all types in America.
3. Our world is so much like the world into which Jesus came.
4. All of this can be summed up in one simple phrase. We are lost.
5. Sin reigns in our land. It reigns in government, in business. It reigns in homes.

D. There is Sin - but there is Salvation

1. God's greatest joy is not found in the condemnation of the world but in the salvation of the world !
2. While it is true that no man has ever lived above sin and its consequences, it is equally true that no man has ever done enough wrong to exclude himself from the grace of God.
3. The Jews may have killed the Son of God by lawless hands (Acts 2:23), yet salvation was offered to every one of them (Acts 2:38).
4. Peter told those in Cornelius' house that every person in every nation can be accepted by the one who shows no partiality (Acts 10:34-35).
5. God is merciful and his mercies are certain.
6. Later in Athens he reminded those worshipers of the unknown God that he accepts all men everywhere who repent (Acts 17:30).
7. The book of Acts is a history of the proclamation of the amazing grace of God to every creature under heaven.
8. Because the nature of God is eternal and unchanging, his grace is still available.
9. It is universal in its scope.
 - a. Where sin has reigned, grace has triumphed over it.
 - b. Where Satan has brought addictive bondage, God has brought liberating freedom.
 - c. Where sin has brought sorrow, salvation has brought joy.
 - d. Where Satan has surrounded, he has been resisted and put to flight.
 - e. This is the greatest news of all. Lord, open our eyes to his grace.

10. God is not mocked.

- a. Sow to the flesh and you will reap corruption, but there is better news.
- b. God is not mocked.
- c. If you sow to the Spirit you will reap eternal life (Gal. 6:7-8).
- d. The judgment of God against sin is certain, but it is no more certain than the grace of God.
- e. That gospel that liberated men in Jerusalem, Samaria, Antioch, Troas, Philippi, Berea, Thessalonica, Athens, Corinth, Ephesus, Rome, and to the uttermost part of the world, liberates men today.

E. Lord, open our eyes to see our need of you. Open our hearts to let you come in and reign in our lives!

II. SAUL - FROM SINCERE TO SANCTIFIED - by Terry Edwards ³

A. The book of Acts is an amazing story told by a great and inspired storyteller.

1. In a sense Acts is the dramatic story of the debut of Christianity and its journey from Jerusalem to Judea and Samaria, and then on "to the remotest part of the earth" (Acts 1:8)
2. It tells the epic journey of an early Christian Hero, Paul of Tarsus.
3. His personal journey is from Saul to Paul (a cultural journey), from Jerusalem to Rome (a geographical journey), and from sincerely wrong to truly sanctified (a theological and spiritual journey).

B. The story of Paul is the journey of a real-life hero of faith.

1. His sincerity was real - Acts 23:1

2. He was sincerely wrong about the most important thing of all: the identity of the Messiah
3. Sincerity apart from knowledge of truth does not avail
4. Because he was sincere he was compelled to change - he was sanctified when he obeyed the truth.
 - a. His beliefs, his theology, his supposed certainties were held up to the sunlight of the truth of the resurrection of the crucified man, and he was found wanting.
 - b. Suddenly, in an instant, he was brought to the cataclysmic realization that he had been fighting against God, just as Gamaliel had warned.
 - (1) He needed every minute of those three days of blindness in that house in Damascus to sort things out.
 - (2) Blindness will do that for you: eliminate distractions, put things in perspective, help you to focus on that which you have avoided, ignored, not seen with healthy physical eyesight.
 - (3) Which is worse, asks Sophocles in that same play of his, the Oedipus Rex, to be physically blind, or to be intellectually blind?
 - (4) It is meant to be a rhetorical question: it is always better to know the truth, than to live a life that is a lie.
 - c. Paul was (for a short while) physically blind, but now he knew the most important truth of all.
 - d. Thus Paul made at Damascus the journey from sincere to sanctified: in the moment that the baptismal waters released him to a new life, he had been transposed from point A to point B, from dead wrong to righteous in Christ.

C. The Journey is definitely worth it:

1. Thirty-some years after he first made that journey from sincere to sanctified he sat in a dark, musty, over-crowded cell and wrote or dictated his last known thoughts before the executioner's ax came down upon his neck on the Ostian Way in Rome (the traditional account of Paul's death). His magnificent, inspiring, heroic words still ring out for all who would hear:
2. II Tim. 4:7-8 "I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith: 8 Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give me at that day: and not to me only, but unto all them also that love his appearing."

III. THE CONVERSION ON PENTECOST by Jim Roberts - Acts 2 ⁴

- A. The Spirit - v. 1-13
- B. The Savior - v. 14-36
- C. The Salvation - v. 37-41
- D. The Steadfastness - v. 42-47 Two things mentioned to stay steadfast
 1. Stay close to His word -
 2. Stay close to the people of God

IV. THE PRAYER FOR UNITY - by Tom Holland ⁵

A. I feel a burden in my soul as I think about unity. We are experiencing the trauma of another brotherhood problem.

1. "Behold, how good and how pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in unity."

Ps.133:1

2. 1 John 2:19 "They went out from us, but they were not of us; for if they had been of us, they would no doubt have continued with us: but they went out, that they might be made manifest that they were not all of us."

B. 1 Cor. 1:10 is the best definition of unity "Now I beseech you, brethren, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye all speak the same thing, and that there be no divisions among you; but that ye be perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same judgment."

1. Is it possible for us to all speak the same things?

2. Yes ! We must speak by faith - - Rom. 10:17

3. John 17 - Jesus prayed that we all be one

4. Song "How sweet how heavenly is the sight"

5. The division that exists today is enough to make angels weep.

6. It does not take a lot of intelligence to be a trouble maker in the church!

7. Prov. 6:16-19 "...he that soweth discord among brethren."

8. N.B. Hardeman is credited with saying: "I had rather be the soldier that pierced the side of Jesus than one who would split and divide the church."

9. Division releases so many base emotions:

a. Jas. 3:16 "For where envying and strife is, there is confusion and every evil work."

b. People will say and do things that are awful. Sometimes police have to be called because of a church fuss!!! - how shameful and terrible.

10. "Behold, how good and how pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in unity."

Ps.133:1

Conclusion

1. Jesus Opens our Eyes ⁶
 - a. Jesus performed the miracle of opening the eyes of the blind
 - b. But in the book of Acts he opened the eyes of those who were spiritually blind.
 - c. The book of Acts provides several examples of people getting their eyes opened to their spiritual condition and to the salvation that is possible through Christ.
 - d. Satan blinds us with sin, but Christ opens our eyes with the gospel.
 - e. Christ came to give recovery of sight to the blind !
2. The electrifying book of Acts tells the wonderful story of how this "eye-opening, soul-saving" gospel was preached "in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth" (Acts 1:8).
 - a. It shows how the Spirit-endowed apostles "turned the world upside down" with the message of Christ's redeeming love (Acts 17:6).
 - b. The fact is, the world was already upside down because Satan had turned it topsy-turvy.
 - c. But it had been upside down so long that men thought that such was the norm.
 - d. When the gospel was preached and people had "the eyes of [their] understanding...enlightened" (Eph. 1:8), their world was put right side up!
3. Saul's second question was "Lord, what do you want me to do?" Acts 9:6
 - a. The Lord instructed him to "arise and go into the city, and you will be told what you must do."
 - b. Saul arose from the ground, and while he could open his eyelids "he saw no one."
 - c. His temporary physical blindness typified the spiritual blindness which had so long characterized him.

- d. He was in this state of physical blindness for three days, during which he neither ate nor drank.
 - e. In Damascus a disciple named Ananias came and laid his hands on Saul and his physical sight was restored.
 - f. That same disciple then instructed him: "And now why are you waiting? Arise and be baptized and wash away your sins, calling on the name of the Lord" (Acts 22:16).
 - g. It was at this point that Saul of Tarsus received his spiritual sight as his sins were washed away in the blood of Christ through the waters of baptism.
 - h. In this act of obedience Saul "called on the name of the Lord."
4. You can have your spiritual eyes opened by obedience to the Gospel !!! You can go from darkness to light !

End Notes

- 1.FHU Lectures 2004 P. ii and notes from lecture
- 2.FHU Lectures 2004 P. 213 ff
- 3.FHU Lectures 2004 P. 119 ff
- 4.FHU Lectures 2004 P. 360 ff
- 5.FHU Lectures 2004 P. 175 ff and notes from lecture
- 6.FHU Lectures 2004 P.147

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