

## THE UNSTOPPABLE SPIRIT Part 1: The Church is Born

Note: This plan follows the content of Pastor Derek's podcast, "Acts Daily Devotional." You can also find this plan on YouVersion. Find more information at [www.whoisgrace.com/acts](http://www.whoisgrace.com/acts)

### PART 1/ WEEK 1

#### DAY 0 WELCOME TO THE JOURNEY

**Scripture:** Acts 1:1, 12-14; 2:1

**Reflect:** Imagine standing in a room with about 120 people. You're scared, huddled together, uncertain what comes next. Jesus, your leader, was just crucified three weeks ago. He's the one you gave up everything to follow. Then he came back to life. Spent forty days with you, eating meals, teaching, proving he was really alive. And then he left again. Told you to wait in Jerusalem for something he called 'the promise of the Father.' So here you are. Waiting. Praying. Wondering what in the world is about to happen. That's where the book of Acts begins. And for the next 141 days, we're going to walk through this story together. Not as ancient history, but as a living playbook for what it means to follow Jesus today.

**The big question:** *How does the unstoppable Spirit of God advance the mission of Jesus through ordinary people like us?*

**How this plan works:** Each day provides a brief summary of the content. The full teaching reflection is found in the audio portion. Taken together, each day reflects on a short passage in Acts, setting up the story by connecting what we're reading today with what has come before. Then we'll take some time to reflect on what the scripture is saying. But we won't stop at understanding. Every day ends with a section called '*What might a step of Ordinary Obedience look like today?*'

That phrase matters. Because throughout Acts, we'll see that God doesn't just use super-spiritual giants. He uses ordinary people taking ordinary steps of obedience. Fishermen who turn preachers. Widows who become witnesses. Tentmakers who share their faith in the marketplace. The unstoppable mission of God advances through ordinary obedience.

#### DAY 1 JESUS' RESURRECTION APPEARANCES

**Scripture:** Acts 1:1-3

**Reflect:** The Gospels told us about Jesus, his birth, his teaching, his miracles, his death, and his resurrection. That story ended with Jesus ascending to heaven. But now Luke is writing again, and he's got news: that was just the beginning. What you're about to read isn't the story of what happened after Jesus left. It's the story of what Jesus kept doing after he ascended, just through different people, in different places, empowered by his Spirit.

The BIG QUESTION we're going to wrestle with the whole way through the book of Acts is, *How does the unstoppable Spirit of God advance the mission of Jesus through ordinary people like us?*

**What might a step of ORDINARY OBEDIENCE look like today?**

**Today's REFLECTION:** What do you actually believe about the resurrection? Not the churchy answer you'd recite if someone asked you in a church lobby, but what you functionally believe, the kind of belief that shapes how you face a difficult Monday morning. If Jesus really walked out of that grave, what does that change about any fear, or discouragement, or the stuck place you're sitting in right now?

**Pause to Pray:** *Jesus, you are the resurrection and the life. And I need your life because I am afraid, stuck, discouraged... Amen*

## **DAY 2 GO, BUT WAIT FOR THE PROMISE**

**Scripture:** Acts 1:4-5

**Reflect:** These disciples had just spent forty days with the risen Christ. They were fired up, probably bursting with stories to tell. And Jesus says, "Don't leave Jerusalem. WAIT."

They had witnessed the resurrection, but they didn't yet have the power to proclaim it. They had the message, but not the messenger within them. Jesus knew something that they didn't know: activity without anointing is just noise. You can have the right theology, the right motivation, even the right calling, and still be running on empty if you haven't been filled with the Spirit's power.

God rarely fills hands that are already full. He fills people who've come to the end of themselves, who've stopped striving long enough to receive. The Spirit isn't a reward for spiritual overachievers. He's a gift for people who know they can't do this on their own. The Spirit isn't a reward for the strong. He's a gift for the dependent. And that's actually really good news.

### **What might a step of ORDINARY OBEDIENCE look like today?**

**Today's CHALLENGE:** Find fifteen minutes today to practice waiting on God. Not praying a to-do list at him. Not asking for anything specific. Just sitting in silence and letting God search you. Ask him to reveal any places where you've been running on human effort, trying to do spiritual work without spiritual power. Confess your need for his Spirit. And then listen. The Spirit isn't hiding from you. He wants to fill you.

**Pause to Pray:** *Lord, here I am. And I need your Spirit. I confess... I know you are here and I am ready to listen...*

## **DAY 3 THE MISSION OUTLINED**

**Scripture:** Acts 1:6-8

**Reflect:** The disciples are still misunderstanding what Jesus was teaching, so they ask Jesus a question. It's an understandable question. And it's the wrong one. "*Lord, are you restoring the kingdom to Israel at this time?*"

But they were thinking too small. They wanted a national renovation. Jesus had a global mission in mind. They were imagining a restored Israel. Jesus was launching a redeemed world. They wanted a kingdom. Jesus gave them a mission.

Acts 1:8 is the mission statement that will serve as the table of contents for the rest of Acts: "*You will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth.*" He wasn't just restoring one nation; He was redeeming the whole world.

This is still our mission. The Spirit still empowers. The circles still expand outward from wherever you are. Every follower of Jesus is on mission and in motion. The church was never meant to be a weekly event you attend. It was always meant to be a movement you're part of, carrying the testimony of Jesus into every room you enter.

**What might a step of ORDINARY OBEDIENCE look like today?**

**Today's TAKEAWAY:** You don't need a strategy to be a witness. You need a story and the willingness to tell it. Jesus didn't commission his disciples as lawyers to argue his case or judges to rule on people's worthiness. He called them witnesses. That's your calling too! You have a story of what Jesus has done in your life, and someone in your circles needs to hear it. You may feel timid or ill-equipped for that. Good. That's exactly the kind of person the Spirit loves to use.

**Pause to Pray:** *Jesus, I can't believe I get to be part of your mission. I pray for \_\_\_\_\_... Give me courage to share You with them... Amen.*

**DAY 4 THE ASCENSION**

**Scripture:** Acts 1:9-11

**Reflect:** The roadmap was drawn. The promise was given. And now, with his final words still hanging in the air, something happens that the disciples aren't prepared for. Jesus doesn't walk away toward the horizon. He goes up.

Jesus didn't stop existing when he disappeared into that cloud. He didn't become less real or less involved. He ascended to the right hand of the Father, which in the ancient world was the position of authority and power. The one who walked the dusty roads of Galilee resumed his reign over the cosmos. He's not absent. He's ruling. And from that throne, through his Spirit, he's still directing the mission of his church.

**What might a step of ORDINARY OBEDIENCE look like today?**

**Today's REFLECTION:** Are you living like Jesus is reigning right now, or have you slipped into a kind of spiritual holding pattern, going through the motions until something changes? The angels' rebuke was pointed: stop staring at the sky and get moving! Is there something in your faith you've been putting off until "someday"? A conversation, a step of service, a risk of obedience? What would it look like to act today as if your King is already on his throne?

**Pause to Pray:** *Jesus, you are glorious and worthy of praise! You are on the throne I don't want to be no earthly good... Today, I will... Amen.*

## DAY 5 THE UPPER ROOM PRAYER MEETING

**Scripture:** Acts 1:12-14

**Reflect:** The group gathered in the upper room was diverse. Peter the impulsive. Thomas the skeptic. Matthew the former tax collector who had collaborated with Rome. Simon the Zealot, a political revolutionary who, before he met Jesus, would have despised everything Matthew represented. Women and men together. Jesus' family alongside his followers. Notice two words in verse 14; "continually" and "united." It's one Greek word that appears six times in Acts. It means they weren't just in the same room. They were of one heart. Given the personalities involved, that's remarkable.

This is where every great move of God begins. Not with brilliant strategies or charismatic leaders, but with ordinary people praying together. Prayer is the confession that we can't pull this off on our own. Community and prayer aren't side dishes on the menu of the Christian life. They're the main course.

**What might a step of ORDINARY OBEDIENCE look like today?**

**Today's CHALLENGE:** When was the last time you really prayed with other believers? Not a quick blessing before a meal, but brought your hearts before God together? If you're part of a small group, a Bible study, or even just have one or two Christian friends you trust, reach out today and set a time to pray together this week. It doesn't have to be formal. It doesn't have to be long. Just gather and bring your real needs before God. And if you can't gather with someone today, take ten minutes right now and pray for your church community. Pray for unity. Pray for the Spirit to move. Pray that your church would be as devoted to prayer as those 120 believers were in that upper room.

**Pause to Pray:** *Jesus, together we want to be part of your unstoppable movement... Amen*

## DAY 6 PETER ADDRESSES THE GAP

**Scripture:** Acts 1:15-20

**Reflect:** In the middle of the Upper Room prayer meeting, Peter stands up. He's got something to say. There's unfinished business the group needs to deal with before the Spirit comes. A wound that hasn't been addressed. This is Peter's first recorded act of leadership in the early church. And the first issue Peter chooses to tackle is the matter of Judas. They could have tried to ignore it and moved on. But Peter understood that you can't build a healthy future on unaddressed pain.

There's a quiet lesson here about how God works in community. The worst thing that could happen to a group, the betrayal of a trusted insider, didn't end the story. It became part of the story. God's mission doesn't rise or fall on any one person's faithfulness. When one falls away, God raises up another. The church is built on Christ, and Christ doesn't quit.

**What might a step of ORDINARY OBEDIENCE look like today?**

**Today's REFLECTION:** Have you ever been hurt by someone in the faith that you trusted? A leader who fell, a friend who walked away, a community that let you down? That kind of wound can make you want to pull back from the church entirely. Peter knew that wound. He'd inflicted a version of it himself. But he didn't let the failure of one person paralyze the mission of God's people. Is there a betrayal or

disappointment you've been carrying that's keeping you from fully engaging with the community God has placed you in? What would it look like to grieve it honestly, like Peter did, and then trust God to fill the gap?

**Pause to Pray:** *Lord Jesus, you see this hurt and I ask you to heal the wound, restore trust, remove bitterness, and help me move forward... Amen.*

## **DAY 7 MATTHIAS CHOSEN**

**Scripture:** Acts 1:21-26

**Reflect:** The twelve apostles represented the twelve tribes of Israel, and moving forward with only eleven would leave the foundation incomplete. So the group agreed: the gap had to be filled. Choosing Matthias was the right call, bathed in Scripture, saturated in prayer, and surrendered to God's sovereign choice. Curiously, we never hear his name again. He vanishes into the background of church history. Most of the apostles do. The mission was never about building a personal platform. Matthias became a foundation stone of the church, a witness to the resurrection, and his faithfulness didn't need an audience to count. Sometimes the most important roles in God's kingdom are the ones nobody ever talks about.

### **What might a step of ORDINARY OBEDIENCE look like today?**

**Today's REFLECTION:** Matthias spent years walking with Jesus in complete obscurity. He wasn't in the inner circle. He isn't mentioned in any Gospel. And yet when the moment came, his faithfulness in the background qualified him for one of the most significant roles in the early church. So here's the question: What if the season you're in right now, the one that feels invisible, the one where nobody seems to notice, is actually the preparation for what God has next? Where in your life might you be confusing "unseen" with "unimportant"?

**Pause to Pray:** *Lord, I believe you see me and I trust You to prepare me for what You have next... Amen.*

## **PART 1/ WEEK 2**

## **DAY 8 PENTECOST ARRIVES**

**Scripture:** Acts 2:1-4

**Reflect:** Take the deepest breath you've taken all day. Slow. Deliberate. Feel your lungs fill. Breathing is the most basic thing your body does to stay alive. You don't think about it, but without it, everything stops. Scripture uses this exact image to describe what happened at Pentecost.

The 120 were praying in a room when a violent rushing wind filled the house. The Hebrew word for "spirit" is ruach, and it also means "wind" and "breath." When God created Adam, he breathed into him and Adam became alive. When Ezekiel stood in the valley of dry bones, God told the wind to breathe on the dead and they came to life. Now that same breath was filling a room full of ordinary believers, and everything was changing before their eyes.

The timing is noteworthy. Pentecost was a harvest festival, the celebration of first fruits. Farmers brought their first wheat to the temple as an offering to God, trusting that the rest of the harvest would follow. The 120 believers in that room were the first fruits of the church. Three thousand more would be added by the end of the day. And the harvest has never stopped.

**What might a step of ORDINARY OBEDIENCE look like today?**

**TODAY'S CHALLENGE:** Pick three ordinary moments today, maybe when you wake up, in the middle of your afternoon, and before bed, and pause for one slow, deep breath. Let that breath remind you of your dependence on the Spirit. The Spirit isn't hiding from you. He wants to fill you, guide you, and empower you for the life God has called you to live. Start breathing him in.

**Pause to Pray:** *Holy spirit, I need you like I need my next breath. Fill me again... Amen.*

## **DAY 9 SPEAKING IN TONGUES**

**Scripture:** Acts 2:5-13

**Reflect:** The Holy Spirit had arrived. Wind, fire, and languages the disciples had never studied, all at once. The 120 believers in that room were filled with the Spirit, and something spilled out of them that couldn't be contained by four walls. The sound drew a crowd. Jerusalem was packed with Jewish pilgrims from across the known world and they came running. What they found was a group of Galilean nobodies speaking fluently in languages from three continents.

Most of these pilgrims understood Greek or Aramaic. God could have used a common language and kept things efficient. Instead, He chose to speak to each person in their heart language, the language of their mother, their childhood, their deepest identity. The gospel doesn't erase who you are. It meets you where you are and speaks your name in a voice you recognize.

That's still how the Spirit works. He fills ordinary, unimpressive people with power that doesn't make sense on paper. He speaks through your life in ways you couldn't manufacture on your own. And the people watching will have the same three reactions they had in that courtyard: wonder, curiosity, or dismissal. Your job isn't to control their response. Your job is to stay filled and keep speaking.

**What might a step of ORDINARY OBEDIENCE look like today?**

**TODAY'S TAKEAWAY:** The Spirit's first public act was to speak the magnificence of God through ordinary people in languages they didn't know, to a world that didn't expect it. He's still doing that. Your life, your words, your ordinary Tuesday conversations are the languages the Spirit uses now. Stay filled. Keep speaking. Let the contrast between who you are and what comes out of you do the heavy lifting.

**Pause to Pray:** *Jesus, You are extraordinary! May your Spirit do extraordinary work in me... Amen.*

## **DAY 10 PETER'S SERMON: JOEL'S PROPHECY FULFILLED**

**Scripture:** Acts 2:14-21

**Reflect:** The same Peter who weeks earlier was hiding and afraid. He stood up with the Eleven, raised his voice, and opened his mouth to preach his very first sermon. He reaches back 800 years into the

Hebrew Scriptures and pulls out the prophet Joel (Joel 2:28-32). Peter is a fisherman who denied Jesus and here he is standing up to tell thousands that rescue is available to anyone willing to call out for it. Ordinary people, empowered by the Spirit, declaring an open invitation from God. That's how the church began. And the Spirit who empowered Peter that morning is the same Spirit at work in you right now.

In the Old Testament, you needed a prophet to hear from God. After Pentecost, every believer carries the Spirit. You don't need a mediator to access God's presence anymore. The Spirit doesn't visit. He moves in. And that has huge implications for how you and I live today. You carry the same Spirit Peter was filled with. The question is whether you're living like it.

**What might a step of ORDINARY OBEDIENCE look like today?**

**Today's Reflection:** Peter went from cursing at a servant girl to preaching to thousands. Same man. Completely different posture. The variable was the Holy Spirit. Where in your life are you still operating out of your own strength, your own cleverness, or your own willpower. The Spirit is available and waiting to be invited in! What would it look like to stop white-knuckling it through life and actually ask for His help today?

**Pause to Pray:** *Holy Spirit, I need You... Amen.*

**DAY 11 PETER'S SERMON: JESUS' DEATH & RESURRECTION**

**Scripture:** Acts 2:22-28

**Reflect:** Peter had connected the dots for the crowd. The phenomenon wasn't drunkenness. It was fulfillment. Joel prophesied 800 years ago that God would pour out His Spirit on all people, and Peter declared it was happening right now. The last days had arrived. Salvation was available to anyone who called on the Lord's name. But Peter wasn't done. He'd explained the "what." Now he was about to name the "who": Jesus of Nazareth... and *you killed him*.

Verses 22 through 24 form one of the earliest Christian confessions in existence. Jesus lived. He performed mighty works. You killed him. God raised him. This four-part statement is the skeleton of the original gospel outline that the church would preach for the next two thousand years. Everything Peter says in this sermon, everything Paul will later write in his letters, everything the church has confessed across centuries, traces back to these few sentences. The gospel has always been this simple.

**What might a step of ORDINARY OBEDIENCE look like today?**

**TODAY'S CHALLENGE:** Identify one area of your life where you're living like death has the final word. Maybe it's a relationship that feels dead. A dream that's died. A sin pattern you can't seem to break. A fear of failure or rejection. Now speak resurrection truth over it: "Jesus is alive. Death doesn't win. God can bring life out of this." Write it down. Pray it out loud. The same God who raised Jesus from the dead is at work in your life. Don't underestimate what He can do.

**Pause to Pray:** *Jesus, You are alive and death does not win in my life. Where I am broken, bring life... Amen.*

## DAY 12 PETER'S SERMON: DAVID'S PROPHECY FULFILLED

**Scripture:** Acts 2:29-36

**Reflect:** Peter's argument has reached its crescendo. He's proven Jesus rose from the dead. Now he answers the question that must have been hanging in the air: if Jesus is alive, where is he? Peter quotes Psalm 110, the most frequently cited Old Testament passage in the New Testament, referenced roughly 25 times. In this royal psalm, Yahweh speaks to David's Lord: "*Sit at my right hand until I make your enemies your footstool*" (Psalm 110:1, CSB). The Jews already understood this as messianic prophecy. Jesus himself had pointed to it when challenging the Pharisees about the Messiah's identity. Peter's logic is airtight: David didn't ascend to heaven. David isn't seated at God's right hand. So who is David's Lord? Jesus. And where is he? Peter leaves no room for doubt. The man they crucified is now commanding the universe. God has crowned the one they condemned. God enthroned the one they entombed.

This section of the bible is important for your everyday faith. Jesus isn't a historical figure you study. He's a reigning King whose authority touches every corner of your life. He is Lord over your career, your relationships, your finances, your anxiety, your ambition. Lordship is trust with skin on it. It's believing that Jesus is right about the stuff you're still trying to figure out on your own. And the same Spirit that Peter pointed to as evidence of Jesus' reign, that Spirit lives in you right now, giving you the power to actually live under his authority instead of just agreeing with it in theory.

**What might a step of ORDINARY OBEDIENCE look like today?**

**TODAY'S TAKEAWAY:** Ask yourself, "Where am I resisting Jesus' lordship?" Lordship isn't a theological category. It's a daily surrender. He's right about the thing you're wrestling with, even when his way feels harder than yours. Is there an area of your life where you've been calling the shots instead of surrendering to Him? Maybe it's how you spend your money. Maybe it's a relationship you know isn't honoring to God. Maybe it's unforgiveness you're harboring. Name it. Confess it. And surrender it to Jesus today.

**Pause to Pray:** *Jesus, you are Lord. I give you authority over this part of my life. Lead me. I'll follow... Amen.*

## DAY 13 3,000 RESPOND

**Scripture:** Acts 2:37-41

**Reflect:** Luke tells us the crowd was "*pierced to the heart*" (Acts 2:37, CSB). That phrase carries the force of a spear. These weren't people who disagreed with Peter and needed more evidence. They were gutted. The Spirit had taken Peter's words and driven them past the intellect straight into the conscience. Some of these people had been in Jerusalem weeks earlier shouting for Jesus' crucifixion. Now they were learning that the man they rejected was alive and seated on the throne of the universe.

Peter preached one sermon. One. And by sundown, the church went from 120 to over 3,000. Not because of clever marketing or emotional manipulation. The Spirit moved, the Word was proclaimed, and people responded. That's always been the pattern. God does the heavy lifting. Ordinary people show up and say yes.

**What might a step of ORDINARY OBEDIENCE look like today?**

**TODAY'S REFLECTION:** Peter's audience had to go public with their faith in a culture that was hostile to it. Baptism wasn't a private spiritual moment; it was a declaration that rearranged their relationships and reputation. Where in your life are you keeping your faith private because going public would cost you something?

**Pause to Pray:** *Jesus, I confess that the cost feels high... Holy Spirit, I need you to make me bold... Amen.*

**DAY 14 THE FIRST COMMUNITY**

**Scripture:** Acts 2:42-47

**Reflect:** How do you live as a brand-new follower of Jesus? These people hadn't grown up in church or spent years in their parents' Bible studies. These were the first converts of a brand-new movement - nobody knew what they were doing! They needed direction. They needed community. They needed to know what it looked like to follow Jesus together. And what happened next would become the blueprint for the church in every generation since.

This passage is like the "thesis" for everything that follows in the Jerusalem church. It sets the tempo. And the word that drives the whole passage is "devoted." The word carries the idea of single-minded, ongoing commitment, the kind that doesn't waver when it gets inconvenient. These new believers gave themselves fully to four things: the apostles' **teaching, fellowship, breaking of bread, and prayer.** Luke isn't listing church programs. He's describing the rhythm of a community that the Spirit had taken hold of.

All the growth was downstream from the devotion. God was adding to His church because his people were all in with each other. They showed up, took responsibility for their own spiritual lives, and pulled their weight for the people around them. That kind of community is rare. And when it shows up, the world notices.

**What might a step of ORDINARY OBEDIENCE look like today?**

Your Christian faith isn't a lone ranger activity. It's a team sport. You were never meant to do it alone. Here's **TODAY'S CHALLENGE:** Pick one of the four devotions from Acts 2:42 and take a specific step toward it today. Devotion is built one ordinary decision at a time.

- Text someone and invite them to grab a meal this week (fellowship).
- Spend ten minutes in Scripture with no agenda except to listen (teaching).
- Sit in silence for five minutes and pray for someone by name (prayer).
- Share something you have with someone who needs it (generosity).

**Pause to Pray:** *Jesus, I wanted to live my life fully devoted to You and your church... Amen.*

Find more resources at <http://www.whoisgrace.com/ACTS>.