

Relevant Acts

Week 1

Relevant Acts: The Church—What It Is and Why It Matters

Introduction

- Purpose: Revisit the foundations of the early church in Acts
- Goal: Help the church today see its relevance and rekindle love for Christ and His church

1. What is the Church? (What Jesus Has Already Done)

- Jesus' promise: Matthew 16:18 – "I will build my church"
- Pentecost (Acts 2:1-12, 37-41)
- Living Stones: 1 Peter 2:4-12
- The church as:

A work of Jesus

Holy

One (unified in Christ)

Powerful

How the church begins to take form:

- **A Holy Nation:** Diversity in unity (Jews, Gentiles, various ethnic groups, social classes)
- **The Body of Christ:** Diverse members working together (1 Corinthians 12:12-27)
- **Spirit-Empowered:** Temple of the Spirit

The church is: The Authentic Presence of God in the world- Craig Van Gelder
(The essence of the Church)

Key Point: The church remains what Christ made it, even when actions falter.

2. What Does the Church Do? (Our Responsibilities)

- Preaching & Teaching (Doctrine)
- Prayer & Worship
- Sacraments: Communion & Baptism
- Fellowship & Discipleship
- Serving Others:

Widows, orphans, hungry, lost, hurting, enemies

- Witnessing

Note: Even when shortcomings occur, the identity remains.

3. The Diversity of Churches & Denominations

- Historical overview:

From persecution to influence & institutionalization

The Reformation & diversification

- Focus of diversity:

Worship styles

Leadership structure

Sacrament practices

Spirit-led practices (prayer, operation in Spirit)

Social issues

Core Beliefs Across Churches:

- Jesus founded the church
- Holiness from the Lord
- One family of faith
- The Great Commission (Matthew 28)
- Unity of faith (Ephesians 4:13)

Diversity as Part of God's Plan:

- Different groups prioritize different aspects of the church's mission
- Reach a diverse world

Personal Reflection:

- Assemblies of God priorities: Spirit movement, empowerment, multicultural, missional

4. Why This Matters Today

- **Affinity:** Understanding the church's true nature helps reduce division

Unity in love (John 13:35)

Call for collaboration, not competition

- **Awareness:** You are meant to be in community

Local body for receiving & giving (1 Corinthians 12:18)

- **Appreciation:** The kingdom surpasses preferences & differences, a part of something bigger than you. A life of purpose.

God's promise to build His church

Pray for unity (John 17:20-23)

Prayer focus: City churches of various denominations

Closing & Prayer

- Pray for unity and effective ministry across denominations
- Ask God to heal wounds, foster forgiveness, and renew faith
- Pray for Calvary Orlando:

Fulfillment of God's plan