

# HEARTS ON FIRE – LEADERS NOTES

\*Please note some study questions did not need notes

## STUDY 1: TURNING THE WORLD UPSIDE DOWN (ACTS 1:1-11)

1. Read Luke 1:4 and Acts 1:1-3. From these verses what reasons do you think Luke had for writing these accounts for his readers (one of whom was named, Theophilus)?

*Assurance for followers.*

2. What convinced Luke to go to such lengths (Luke 1:1-4) to write these detailed accounts (Acts 1:3)?

*The life of Jesus, his death, resurrection. Perhaps the way Jesus treated and cared for the vulnerable. This is all evidence that gave Luke the drive to not only write the accounts but to take time to investigate, to talk with people. Putting these accounts together was no small feat.*

4. What do you think is behind the question asked in verse 6?

*Expectation Jews had of their Messiah still looms large.*

5. In verse 8 what does Jesus mean when he says they 'will receive power'?

*Power to be witnesses, power to live a holy life. Power is not just given but comes with being united with Christ.*

### GOING DEEPER

6. In verse 3 we are told that Jesus gave many convincing proofs that he was alive. What makes these proofs convincing? What things can you think of that make the resurrection such good news? Why is the resurrection of Jesus so difficult for people to accept today?

*Perhaps you can also ask how can we speak of the resurrection as convincing proof. Look at Matt 28, Mark 16:1-8, Luke 24, John 20-21.*

8. Is the first coming of Christ as exciting as the promised second?

*With this question I am trying to get people to think about the idea that life with Christ has already begun. It is not just about getting to heaven but about having peace with God which we have now. How much does Jesus and what he has done really mean to us?*

### MAKING IT STICK

12. For the gospel (the witness to him) of Jesus to go to the ends of the earth we all need to be involved. What do you think it means to be Jesus 'witnesses'?

*To speak the gospel in love. To help the vulnerable. To care for his world. Obedient servants. Love God and love others.*

## STUDY 2. WAITING FOR THE WORLD TO CHANGE (ACTS 2:1-41)

1. In Acts 2:1-41, what Old Testament judgements (Genesis 11:1-9) are overcome and how? What Old Testament prophecies has Jesus fulfilled?

*People could understand what was being said in their own language (not hearing one language). Gospel message reaches across all languages. Pouring out of the Spirit. Resurrection. Line of David. Verse 33 from Psalm 2. Verse 36, Jesus is God's Messiah and Lord, again in Psalm 2. Receiving of the Holy Spirit for all who repent and believe. People from different nations Isaiah 2 etc.*

2. In Acts 2:5-12 those in the crowd ask three questions, what were they? How do some in the crowd answer these questions? How does Peter answer these questions in his speech?

3. What happened to the people when they heard Peter's speech?

*Verse 37.*

4. What announcement does Peter make that would stun the crowd (verse 36)? What is significant about this for those listening? Is this significant today, why or why not?

*Today it seems people are still looking for a Messiah. For example, Barak Obama, wealthy people or the accumulation of wealth (our own Messiah), celebrity preachers etc.*

### GOING DEEPER

6. What do you understand by what Peter says in verse 39b, 'for all whom the Lord has called'?

*This question is to encourage people to think about God's work in saving them. It is not like we go looking for God but he comes looking for us. There are different ways of thinking about 'call' in the NT. It may be God calling people back to himself, it may be God calls people into a specific role of service. The doctrine of election may come up in this question and this ought to be tackled from the view that the work of saving lost people is the work of God alone. We are simply asked to repent and believe.*

### MAKING IT STICK

8. Peter tells those listening in verse 38 that they must repent and believe.

*By repenting have you turned lordship of your life over to Jesus? As Christians we then live a life of repentance are there things for which you ought to repent?*

## STUDY 3. THE CHURCH EVERYBODY WANTS (ACTS 2:42-47)

### GOING DEEPER

8. Some people say that we need to be an Acts 2:42-47 church. Is there anything wrong with this statement? Should we try to transplant what we read here into our day and age? Why or why not?  
*I think often people make this statement because they think it 'works'. When we try to be this God will add to our number. Perhaps we should be more reliant on God's Holy Spirit and be careful not to merely look for a silver bullet.*

### MAKING IT STICK

10. Our lives are busy. What good reasons do we have that makes it difficult for us to meet together with other believers? What would it cost to make sure you are meeting with other believers?  
*Good reasons could include children's sport, work, weekends away, tiredness, social justice (eg fund raising activities).*

## STUDY 4. CAN SOMEBODY HELP ME? (ACTS 3)

2. In verse 4 how did Peter and John respond to the beggars request for money? In what ways do you think this might be significant?

*They look straight at him. These people were insignificant maybe even thought of as sinners because of their condition. You did not have anything to do with such people. You would not help them except maybe give them some money which was for your own holiness or benefit not the beggar.*

3. Where does the man go after he is healed? Is this significant? Why or why not?

*The power of Jesus means that temple boundaries are overcome he is no longer an outcast or someone who cannot come to enter the temple.*

5. What response does Peter tell them to make?

*Verse 19. Our need for repentance is as crippling as the mans ability to walk. Interesting that he is crippled from birth. Perhaps this says something about our need for Jesus forgiveness also.*

### GOING DEEPER

7. In verse 19 from what is Peter asking them to repent? The God of the bible is not merely another god among many so what do you think Peter means when he says repent and turn to God?

*See verses 13-15 for first question. Second question is trying to get at the idea that being a Christian is not simply a choice.*

*God is not in a marketplace of gods but is unique and holy. He demands our allegiance and our affections which is for our good and his glory.*

9. Which is more important, our physical healing or spiritual? Why or why not?

*Both are important.*

*God created both and we will be restored physically when Jesus returns as we have been restored spiritually while we await his return.*

## STUDY 5. COURAGE UNDER FIRE (ACTS 4:1-22)

1. Why did Peter and John get arrested?

*Not just because they were preaching but what they were preaching. Why is the resurrection so offensive do you think?*

2. What gave Peter the courage to speak so boldly? *Verse 8.*

3. Why is Jesus name where the power to heal and to save comes from? *Verse 10.*

### GOING DEEPER

6. Peter moves from talking about healing in verse 10 to salvation in verse 12. Are these connected? If so, how? If not, why not?

*Perhaps also look at Luke 11:20 and the bearing it has on healing.*

*"The purpose of Jesus' startling deeds was not to evoke a belief in miracles today but rather to inspire a longing for the day when God's kingdom comes fully upon the world. That's the perspective of the Gospels. Throughout history, Christian faith has always involved a restless hope—a hope captured perfectly in the prayer "Your kingdom come!" The previews of the kingdom glimpsed in Jesus' miracles has typically made Christ's followers dissatisfied with the way things are and desperate for the way things Christ said they would one day be. Christian hope is thus confident but restless: it praises God for the preview (in Jesus' life) and pleads him for the finale (in the "kingdom come"), when evil will be overthrown, humanity healed, and creation itself renewed.*

<http://www.johndickson.org/blog/2018/1/17/healings-of-jesus-today>

### MAKING IT STICK

10. What stops us today from having courage in Jesus and his word?

*Lack of faith? Not knowing God's words? Opportunities?*

## STUDY 6. A PRAYER WITH A VIEW (ACTS 4:23-35)

3. What do you notice about what is prayed?

*No specific answers here. Just looking for what people notice.*

5. What was their prayer evidence of as seen in verses 32-35?

*Evidence of unity.*

### GOING DEEPER

6. Whenever Old Testament is quoted in the New Testament the writer has in mind the whole context. Why do you think they quote Psalm 2 (Read Psalm 2)? How does Psalm 2 add to our understanding of Chapter 4?

*Jesus is God's promised son and king.*

7. What does this passage tell us about God?

*Be careful that you identify what it says about God not just what God does. For example God made the heavens and the earth. What this says about God is that he is creator, He is outside creation etc.*

## STUDY 7. CONSPIRACY INSIDE AND OUT (ACTS 4:32-5:16) PHIL 2:1-4

2. How were the people united?

*They were united in heart and mind. This reflects how they were to love God.*

4. In verse 8 what opportunity was Peter giving to Sapphira? Why did she not take the opportunity afforded her?

*He gave her the opportunity for confession. For the second question make sure you consider Acts 4:32-35 as well. They sinned and it seems they were not of one mind and thinking of others. God is serious about us taking care of each other and about unity it seems.*

### GOING DEEPER

7. We do not see events such as what happened with Ananias and Sapphira today (that I am aware of). Why is this story, therefore, important for us? What kind of response do you think the church would get in our western context if this happened? What do you learn from it about God and about us?

*Perhaps it acts as warning about the future. Judgement will be swift and true. Jesus is establishing his church, which we are told in Acts 20 that he bought with his own blood. Perhaps the precedence is being set. God is doing something extraordinary (see Joel 2:28-32), his church is like nothing that has been seen before. What has happened when you look at the 21 century church?*

8. What is the significance of naming these people?

*There are other times when a story is told that names are not used. For example, in Acts 16 when Paul visits Philippi we are told about Lydia but the slave girl and the jailer are not named.*

### MAKING IT STICK

12. What things in your life expose the motivation of your heart?

*Lying to God? Lack of humility in taking an interest in others? What are your idols?*

## STUDY 8. WHOSE WORK IS IT ANYWAY? (ACTS 5:17-42)

### GOING DEEPER

5. In what ways is Christianity opposed and criticised today? Is it justified? How would you answer the opposition and criticism that have been raised?

*Be honest with the second question.*

6. Why do you think the Sadducees were filled with jealousy?

*Sadducees were a sect within the Sanhedrin who did not believe in the resurrection. People were responding to the risen Lord Jesus and it undermined any credibility that they had. Jesus was still at work even though they put him to death.*

### MAKING IT STICK

10. How can we teach those around us the good news (or gospel) whether believers or unbelievers?

*This discussion ought to include friends at church, families, neighbours, brothers and sisters in Christ, those to whom we know are not Christian. Must at some point be proclamation. Reading the bible with our family.*

*Hospitality.*

## STUDY 9. THE UNSTOPPABLE WORD (ACTS 6:8-7:53)

1. What was Stephen full of?

*Make sure it is answered as God's grace and power. Why is it important that it is God's grace and power? The work being done is the work of God.*

2. Even after false accusations what was remarkable about Stephen? *Verse 15.*

## **STUDY 10. UPSETTING THE NEIGHBOURS (ACTS 7:51-8:1A)**

1. In Acts 7:52 what is Stephen saying happened to the prophets? What was the role of the prophets?

*They were the ones who brought good news.*

### **GOING DEEPER**

6. What did Stephen mean by Acts 7:56?

*Here we are thinking about the majesty and position of Jesus as king. It is just as Jesus said it would be it also shows the outcome of Acts 1 giving witness to where Jesus ascends.*

## **STUDY 11. THE DEEP MAGIC (ACTS 8:1-39)**

3. What did those who were scattered do? How do you feel about this? What was the result of this?

*Third part of the question, they paid attention and there was great joy in the city.*

6. Why do you think the encounter Philip had with the Ethiopian is important? What do you learn about sharing Jesus with others?

*To see gospel make its way to the ends of the earth. We can learn about the power of the Word, how to use scripture, God creates opportunities for us.*

### **GOING DEEPER**

7. In Acts 8:4-8 the word was preached and signs were performed. In Acts 8:9-16 people heard the good news of the kingdom of God that Philip proclaimed. In Acts 9:25 Peter and John preached the gospel. In Acts 9:26-40 Philip preached the good news about Jesus. There is an emphasis on speaking the truth about Jesus to people and this was often accompanied by amazing signs. What was the significance of the signs? Why is speaking the message important?

*The significance of the signs shows people that the kingdom that they were proclaiming was here as evidenced by the signs. Kind of like putting two and two together. The second question can be thought of on at least two fronts. One is it takes the conversion of people out of the speakers hands as they are there to deliver the message and as a result Jesus glorifies God in the changing of peoples hearts and restoring them to have peace with God. Secondly, nothing can stop words being spoken. The message is already moving. Thirdly, it is the means by which God chooses to work as His Spirit works through the word that is proclaimed.*