



WARM-UP

Are you someone who likes to wait til the last moment for the best deal possible or someone who likes to jump at the first opportunity? Why?

How often are you on Facebook? When did you first hear about Facebook? Why did you join?

Define the word 'viral' and give an example of what it means to 'go viral'.

WORD

"In my former book, Theophilus, I wrote about all that Jesus began to do and to teach until the day he was taken up to heaven, after giving instructions through the Holy Spirit to the apostles he had chosen. After his suffering, he presented himself to them and gave many convincing proofs that he was alive. He appeared to them over a period of forty days and spoke about the kingdom of God. On one occasion, while he was eating with them, he gave them this command: "Do not leave Jerusalem, but wait for the gift my Father promised, which you have heard me speak about. For John baptized with water, but in a few days you will be baptized with the Holy Spirit." Then they gathered around him and asked him, "Lord, are you at this time going to restore the kingdom to Israel?" He said to them: "It is not for you to know the times or dates the Father has set by his own authority. But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth.""

- Acts 1:1-8 (NIV)



INTRODUCTION

The Book of Acts is the amazing story of the birth and viral growth of the Christian church. It tells of the coming of the Holy Spirit and the spread of the Gospel across the Roman Empire. Acts 1:8 is the key verse of this section and an overview of the whole book as we see the Gospel going viral, from Jerusalem to Judea, Samaria, and to the ends of the earth. Along the way we will be reading and discussing the ancient record of amazing miracles, tense confrontations, dangerous journeys, and acts of bravery, boldness, sacrifice, and love of the fledgling Christian church began to take shape and take flight.

The world today is vastly different from the world of the book of Acts. Our high-tech world is growing smaller and smaller and moving faster and faster. We've seen everything from cute videos of cats to nation-changing political movements go viral overnight. But the church is also growing at a historic rate and even though much of that growth is in Asia, Africa, Latin America, and now the Middle East it nonetheless happening.

Over these next 10 weeks, as we study the remarkable growth of the Church over its first 30 years, our hope is that you will be inspired and equipped to be a part of the continued work of the Holy Spirit in the Earth today, spreading the Gospel in a city that needs it.

DISCUSSION

1. Verses 1-2 of Acts 1 inform us that the book of Acts is Dr. Luke's sequel to the gospel of Luke. Both books are addressed to Theophilus, which means "friend of God". What do you think it means to be a friend of God?

2. In verse 3, Luke tells us that Jesus spent 40 days on Earth between his resurrection from the grave and ascension into heaven. He spent that time convincing his disciples that he'd risen from the dead. In fact, in 1 Corinthians 15:3-6, Paul says:

"For I delivered to you first of all that which I also received: that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, and that He was buried, and that He rose



DISCUSSION CONTINUED...

again the third day according to the Scriptures, and that He was seen by Cephas, then by the twelve. After that He was seen by over five hundred brethren at once, of whom the greater part remain to the present, but some have fallen asleep."

What convinced you that Jesus rose from the dead? If you're not convinced, what would it take to get there?

3. Verse 3 tells us that Jesus spent 40 days talking about the 'Kingdom of God', but verse 6 tells us that his disciples still didn't fully understand what he meant. How would you describe the Kingdom of God?

4. Based on their question to Jesus in verse 6, how do you think the disciples would have described the 'Kingdom of God'? [Note: Most Jewish people had expected the Messiah to be a political/military ruler who would set Israel free from Roman rule and establish Israel as a great political power.] How does Jesus redirect their attention?

APPLICATION

1. Discuss with the group what you could do this week to get more 'convincing proofs' of Jesus' resurrection.

2. What can you share or do to help convince others of Jesus' resurrection? Ask God to show you who you might share with this week.

3. The Gospel went 'viral' in the one city (Jerusalem) most hostile to Christ-followers at that time. Our current cultural atmosphere in North America is often resistant and hostile to the message of the Gospel. Yet we know Jesus' message is 'viral' in many other parts of the world. What can you do this week to help continue the 'viral' spread of the Gospel? What might be holding you back from fully pursuing or committing to the 'viral' message of the Gospel?



PRAYER

Ask God to reveal more 'convincing proofs' to you of Jesus' resurrection and to give you opportunities to share those proofs with others.

Jesus taught us to pray, 'your kingdom come, your will be done'. Ask God to show you what you can do to help his kingdom come and his will to be done.

Pray that the Gospel – the message of Jesus' resurrection and God's kingdom – would go viral and ask God to show you how you can help it to spread.