Week 1:
6 Catalysts of the Early Church

LIFT OFF

Questions

1. In Luke 24:36, Jesus appears to the disciples and says, “Peace be with you,” even though they are startled, frightened, and full of doubt. What does that moment reveal about the way Jesus meets fearful people before calling them into his mission?
2. When you think about fully following Jesus, what part feels most challenging or uncertain for you? How has the peace of God helped reassure you in those fears and doubts?
3. In Luke 24:45, Jesus “opened their minds so they could understand the Scriptures.” What does that reveal about our need for God’s help not just to read his Word, but to truly understand and respond to it?
4. Share a time when you have encountered scripture and felt God’s timing or a sense of the Holy Spirit making it personal and meaningful for a circumstance in your life.
5. In Luke 24:46–47, Jesus says that his suffering, resurrection, and the message of repentance and forgiveness were always part of what was written. How does seeing the cross and resurrection as the center of God’s plan deepen your understanding of the message the church is called to carry?
6. Pastor Ron’s primary thought says the same catalysts that were present in the early church are still present today. Which of the catalysts in Luke 24 (see below) feels most necessary in your life right now, and why?
7. If the same catalysts that launched the early church are still occurring today, why do you think your faith feels strong and alive in some seasons, but distant in others? What does your response to Jesus have to do with that?

Scripture References

Luke 24:33–49

33 They got up and returned at once to Jerusalem. There they found the Eleven and those with
them, assembled together 34 and saying, “It is true! The Lord has risen and has appeared to
Simon.” 35 Then the two told what had happened on the way, and how Jesus was recognized by
them when he broke the bread. 36 While they were still talking about this, Jesus himself stood
among them and said to them, “Peace be with you.” 37 They were startled and frightened,
thinking they saw a ghost. 38 He said to them, “Why are you troubled, and why do doubts rise in
your minds? 39 Look at my hands and my feet. It is I myself! Touch me and see; a ghost does not
have flesh and bones, as you see I have.” 40 When he had said this, he showed them his hands
and feet. 41 And while they still did not believe it because of joy and amazement, he asked them,
“Do you have anything here to eat?” 42 They gave him a piece of broiled fish, 43 and he took it
and ate it in their presence. 44 He said to them, “This is what I told you while I was still with you:
Everything must be fulfilled that is written about me in the Law of Moses, the Prophets and the
Psalms.” 45 Then he opened their minds so they could understand the Scriptures. 46 He told
them, “This is what is written: The Messiah will suffer and rise from the dead on the third day, 47
and repentance for the forgiveness of sins will be preached in his name to all nations, beginning
at Jerusalem. 48 You are witnesses of these things. 49 I am going to send you what my Father
has promised; but stay in the city until you have been clothed with power from on high.”

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Matthew 28:19–20

19 Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, 20 and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age.”

Takeaways

- Several catalysts were involved in the lift-off of the early church - and those catalysts are still crucial in the mission of the church today.
- Which of these catalysts might be helpful to you in this next season of walking with Jesus?
- Catalyst #1:
    - Comparing notes with other believers concerning Jesus.
- Catalyst #2:
    - The peace and presence of Jesus when you’d expect scolding or distance.
- Catalyst #3:
    - Jesus’ ability to silence fears, give strength, and provide assurances for our faith.
- Catalyst #4:
    - The Word of God for us to learn and remember.
- Catalyst #5:
    - The opening of our minds, hearts, and eyes by God to truly understand.
- Catalyst #6:
    - A message of good news to share as a witness to Jesus’ work.

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