1. **Intro:**

1.1. **Embryogenesis** is the **formation** and **growth** of an **embryo**.
   1.1.1. A new human being progresses from a **single cell**.
   1.1.2. When an egg is fertilized it is called a **zygote**.
   1.1.3. When the zygote begins to divide it becomes an **embryo**.
   1.1.4. After 8 weeks it becomes a **fetus**.
      1.1.4.1. A zygote contains a full set of chromosomes, ½ from the male & ½ from the female cell in its inception.
   1.1.5. I see the **book of Acts** as the **Embryogenesis** of the **Church**.
      1.1.5.1. It shows the **formation** & **growth** of the early Church.
   1.1.6. It’s a **spiritual zygote** of the **Holy Spirit & man** coming together to bring about **New life**!

1.2. **Q:** How has God’s Spirit moved in **our country’s history** since its inception?

1.3. **1st Great Awakening** (1720’s)
   1.3.1. **Started**: Dutch Reformed; spread to Congregationalist, thanks to Jonathan Edwards in Mass.(1734); which sparked George Whitefield & the Wesley’s in New England & the Middle Colonies(1739); next to the Presbyterians; Baptists; Methodists.
   1.3.3. At least 10% of New England was converted in the **1st Great Awakening**.

1.4. **2nd Great Awakening** (late 1700’s) [due to **Concerts of Prayer** set up with diff pastors]
   1.4.1. Finney Revival’s (early 1800’s) N.Y.
   1.4.2. The revival of 1858 – Quite different. No great names attached to it, **laymen** were most responsible. Some say it was the **Business people** of N.Y. because of a bank panic, scared people into a new dependence on God. But the 1st outbreaks in U.S. in Virginia & the Carolina’s occurred among slaves. Ultimately over 100,000 African American’s were converted in the 1858 revival.
   1.4.3. **D.L. Moody** (late 1800’s)

1.5. **Evangelical revival**:
   1.5.1. Azusa St. Revival in LA. (early 1900)
   1.5.2. **Billy Graham** (mid-late 1900’s)
   1.5.3. **Jesus Movement**(starting in late 1960’s) which **we** were birthed out of
1.6. Some movements were started with God using popular individuals; some with the average Christian business men, some with folks getting together & pleading/praying for revival; but each a deliberate, intentional, purposeful moving of the Holy Spirit.

1.7. The book of Acts is simply history written with a purpose.
   1.7.1. It is the development of the early church.
   1.7.2. No person set out to create the Church. The Holy Spirit birthed it right into the very soul of His people.

1.8. Q: Where is the Church today?

1.9. J. I. Packer said, "The outside observer sees the Christian faith staggering on from gimmick to gimmick and stunt to stunt like so many drunks in a fog, not knowing at all where we are or which way we should be going. Preaching is hazy; heads are muddled; hearts fret; doubts drain strength; uncertainty paralyzes action. Unlike the 1st Christians who in 3 centuries won the Roman world, and those later Christians who pioneered the Reformation, and the Puritan Awakening and the Evangelical Revival, and the great missionary movement of the last century, we lack certainty. Why is this? We blame the external pressures of modern secularism, but this is like Eve blaming the serpent. The real truth is that we have grieved the Spirit...we stand under divine judgment. For 2 generations our churches have suffered from a famine of hearing the words of the Lord."

1.10. G.K. Chesterton said, “Christianity has not been tried & found wanting; it has been found difficult & not tired.”

2. **INTRO TO ACTS!**

2.1. Interesting Nuggets:

2.2. Q: What were Jesus last words (recorded words)? A: The Great Commission in Acts 1:8

2.3. I love the intro in my Bible (Broadman & Holman), “The book of Acts is the story of the men & women who took that commission seriously & began to spread the news of a risen Savior to the most remote corners of the known world.”

2.4. **Book Overview:**

   2.5.1. Luke was a close friend & traveling companion of Paul.
   2.5.2. Ps: We will be having the actor David Payne back out, Wed night Sept.12th, “Prisoner of Passion” Paul in prison w/Luke by his side, & a slave girl.
      2.5.3.1. Paul wrote in 2nd Timothy, “only Luke is with me.” (4:11)

2.6. We know Luke was a Gentile & a Physician.
   2.6.1. The Anti-Marcionite prologue to Luke’s Gospel (2nd cent a.d.) states that he was a native of Antioch, Syria, never married, & died in Boeotia (Bee-o-shee-a/ Ancient Greece) at the age of 84.
2.7. Luke wrote in the early 60’s (he ended Acts w/Paul still awaiting trial in prison)
2.7.1. The Emperor Nero had not yet tuned against the Christians (64 AD)

2.8. It records the acts of Peter (ch.1-12) & the acts of Paul (ch.13-28).
2.8.1. Peter used “the keys” to open the door of faith to the Jews (2);
the Samaritans (8); & the Gentiles (10).
2.8.2. Paul took the good news to the Gentiles in the Roman Empire.

2.9. Some say the best title would be The Acts of the Holy Spirit through the church!
2.9.1. This book then is for every Christian who wants to experience the power of the Holy Spirit & be a witness for Jesus Christ “to the end of the earth”.¹
2.9.2. Q: Do you want to experience the power of the Holy Spirit in your life?
2.9.3. Q: What part does God want you to play in taking the good news to the world? It simply starts with 1 phrase, like Paul used in 9:6 (read).

2.10. We can also break it down into 3 sections:
2.10.1. Ch.’s 1-7; 8-12; 13-28.
2.10.2. Each focus in on: a particular audience, a key personality, & a significant phase in the expansion of the gospel message.
   2.10.2.1. i.e. Jerusalem – Judea & Samaria – end of the known earth.
   2.10.2.2. Each expansion was brought on by persecution.
   2.10.2.3. But they were able to watch the gospel message penetrate geographical, social, racial, & religious barriers.
2.10.3. So Acts 1:8 really outlines the book!

3. THE EMBRYONIC CHURCH! (1-3)
3.1. (1) Do & teach – Don’t you just love the order?
3.1.1. May we not just be known for our sayings, but of both our sayings & doings!
3.1.2. And, may it be said that our doings did not clash with our sayings!

3.2. Jesus began both to do & teach - Acts is an account of the continuation of Jesus’ work, through the Holy Spirit, in the early church.

3.3. (3) Many infallible proofs - The word “proofs” occurs only here in the NT, and looks at demonstrable evidence in contrast with evidence provided by witnesses.
3.3.1. In other words, the Resurrection was proven by touch, sight, and feel.
3.3.2. Luke 24:39 “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.”
3.3.3. 1 John 1:1 That which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked at and our hands have touched this we proclaim concerning the Word of life

¹ Warren Wiersbe; With The Word; pg.705
Questions to Ponder: (Think, Dream & Ponder with me on these!)

Q: What is God going to do in/with our church by going through this?

Q: What is God going to do in/with me by going through this?

Q: How do we or how should we judge if the Spirit is working in our church/in us?

Q: Is our God limited to moving how He did during the Jesus Movement? (i.e. afterglow’s?)

Q: Is it about us experiencing something, or the world experiencing Him?

Q: Would we be satisfied with a world won for Christ & the Father blessed with worshipers…or do we need more?

Q: What if God wanted to emphasize only the boldness of faith in this next spiritual awakening would we be ok with that?

Q: What will the next Jesus movement look like? How will it be different? Who will He use?

( Look what it changed last time: youth came back to church; the music style completely changed; the spotlight became what was on the inside, not on what you wore to church; it focused once again on the Essentials of The Book, & not the opinions of The Majority; it took a total different direction then the church was going at the time)

Q: What will the next Jesus movement look like? How will it be different? Who will He use?

Q: Will you offer yourself to pray for, to be used in, & to be open to HIS next move? (moving is changing, & changing is growing)

Growing Faith lives each day with eternity in view!
Growing Faith isn’t afraid to embrace a vision greater than oneself.
Growing Faith isn’t afraid to take on a God sized assignment!
Growing Faith invests in the most important things…People!

It's being in mission with Jesus Christ! (mission = assigned task: a particular task given to a person or group to carry out)

It is whether or not we are willing to accept God’s mission, as our mission?

If we do…Warning!

Warning: The Devil always fights the church when the church is on the move!

Charles Spurgeon used to say that Satan never kicks a dead horse!

Satan knew that the church was on the move, so he attacked it.

In Acts 2 we read that 3000 people were converted.

Then what happened? According to Acts 4, Satan came like a lion and had the apostles threatened.

In Ch.5, Satan came like a serpent, influencing Ananias and Sapphira to infect the church with their lying and hypocrisy.

If Satan can’t win by persecution from the outside, he will try pollution on the inside.
Then Satan came as the accuser in Acts 6. One group of widows accused the other group of widows of taking over. “We are being neglected,” they said. Satan likes to get the saints to accuse one another.

Then according to Acts 12, Satan came as a murderer. James was killed, and Peter was put into prison to be kept for execution.

Next time (1:4-8) we’ll look at Power.

Jesus didn’t only promise the Holy Spirit’s Presence to His disciples, but also a desperately needed transfusion of Power!²

“The Task ahead of you is never as great as the Power behind you!”

² Swindoll; Christ at the Crossroads; pg. 146