

### ***434 Even when we get things wrong...***

My important starting point is that our all-mighty, all-loving God is working with fallible humans to restore the world and the people in it; ours is to cooperate. Now, because God is so lovingly passionate, even though we get things wrong (sometimes very wrong), God can and does use us. Amazing!

Even so, that's no excuse; we really should read our Bibles and do our best to work out how best to play our small part in that overall Plan.

Right, so a few weeks ago, two different friends urged me to read through Acts, so I did, and God helped me to notice several *different* things. Indeed, I'm reading it through again now and I think I've come up with something. [Spoiler alert!]

The Holy Spirit came on the apostles, and 3000 people came to faith that day.<sup>2:41</sup> I'm not saying that if we publicly speak in tongues people will come to faith, but I did notice that 'many remarkable deeds and signs were performed by the apostles.'<sup>2:43</sup>

Then, days later, a paralysed man is healed – 'leaping and praising God'<sup>3:8</sup> – and Peter gets the chance to preach: the number reached 5000.<sup>4:4</sup> Later, God uses Peter to heal Aeneas, and '*Everyone* who lived at Lydda and Sharon saw it and *turned to the Lord*.'<sup>9:35</sup> Next, it was Tabitha – she was actually raised from the dead! 'This became known throughout the whole of Joppa, and many believed in the Lord.' Wonderful!

Do we want loads of people to come to faith? Does God want loads of people to come to faith?! Can God still bring healing to people in 2026? Of course! And is this what the Bible teaches. Yes! Maybe we shouldn't start by praying for dead people, but let's step out in faith, get out on the streets, offer to pray for people, and let's believe for people to come to faith.

Now, I remember getting *really* cross with God many years ago. A group of Bible students visited my previous church and led an evangelistic service. The sermon was one of the worst I've ever heard, and the young chap gave what I felt was a totally cringe-worthy altar call... and two people came to faith! Why does God *do* that?! Grrr!

More recently, walking through a busy pedestrianised shopping street in Lincoln, we saw (well, we first *heard*, from a distance) a solo preacher shouting 'the wages of sin is death!' Again I cringed but, knowing God's amazing love, maybe someone gave their life to Christ that day, too!

Yes, even when we get things wrong, God *can* use us.

For my first 40 Christian years, I thought I was 'right' and persuaded other people, but I fear that my attitude (bigotry – let's call a spade a spade!) also helped to turn other people away from God.

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