

437 Famous last words (of Jesus)

Reading Acts is still affecting my thinking about change, especially the major changes guided by the Holy Spirit in those formative years. But we can't (mustn't!) just take *what they did* as a blueprint for today. In Acts, they got things wrong; we get things wrong; but thankfully God brings good out of those situations.^[435]

Have you made any major changes recently? In your autobiography, what will you say about *how* you made those changes? (On my heart are two very dear friends who left their churches as a matter of principle.)

The history of the church is littered with major changes, not least the Reformation, but thankfully it's not my job to analyse those changes as 'right' or 'wrong'. Mine is to marvel at God's 'signature dish': restoring lives, and restoring the planet, despite the fact that we get things (sometimes very) wrong.^[435]

I'd like to suggest that our job is to check our *motives*; so it's probably good to think about Acts-and-church-history to see what their motives could/should have been.

Paul and Peter had to make massive mind-changes (repentance)^[436] to get the church started, so how do *we* make life decisions, such as (1) leaving a church we've attended for many years and (2) deciding which church to attend next?

I don't have any answers, sorry, but a friend who is in our precious five-person, five-church weekly prayer group on Zoom is at stage (2) and is considering a church that has 'radical' as part of its name.

You know me and words(!): I looked up 'radical', and it relates to 'radis' (root) – returning to the roots of what we believe – the basics, the important foundational things. Where do we find those? In Acts, perhaps?

So I started reading yet again at Acts 1:1, but only got three verses in: the neon lights switched on! If you're Jesus, and you've been resurrected, but you've only got 40 days left in a physical body on earth, only 40 days to teach your disciples, what will you speak about? What's the most important radical thing?

'He was seen by them for forty days, during which he spoke about God's kingdom.'

That's it! Luke tells us nothing else. That's the 'radis' – God's kingdom. And that's what the early church announced; that's what set the world alight. And today...?

PTO!

Recently, I googled a summary of the main world religions:

Christianity: Based on the teachings of Jesus Christ, Christianity emphasizes love, forgiveness, and the belief in salvation through Jesus. It's the largest religion globally, with *a wide array of denominations*.

Why my bold? Jesus' final words to the disciples before he died^{Jn 13-16} were about love, and his prayer to the Father was 'that they may be *one*, as you and I are *one*'.

So why are we characterised as having, 'a wide *array* of denominations'? Why do we spend so much time and effort on disagreeing?!

'Thy kingdom come, thy will be done on earth.'

Paul Bev. 3.7.26