

Church Beginnings Continue

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As presented at PWSCT Meeting on October 16, 2009

NRSV - Acts 4: 11 This Jesus is the stone that was rejected by you, the builders; it has become the cornerstone.

There was a young Jewish carpenter who did not leave home at age 21 to receive the required 9 years training to work in priestly ministry. Instead he stayed home, learning to be human, getting on the job training. From His Father He learned humility as well as submission, suffering and patience. He also learned to live totally and completely in His Father's presence. God Himself was preparing His Son for Apostleship.

At another time, twelve ordinary men began hanging together, most could not read or write. They eat, sleep, talk, fight with one another, get their feelings hurt, pout, argue and gossip about one another. The Son, a teacher, calls them together knowing their weaknesses, hidden motives, corrupt hearts, and worldly ambitions.

For three years the men learn from doing nothing, exactly what their teacher expects. Being in the teachers' constant company, they watch His divine life. His presence surrounds their lives. During training, the twelve see what a prophet is, they listen to a great evangelist and recognize the characteristics of a teacher. They become aware of deacon service by being served and learn how church administration is handled. The men now recognize the true gift of benevolence as well as understanding the gift of discernment. The twelve always remember the love and acceptance they received and it reflects how they treat others. The disciples learn by observing the way Christ thought and lived.

Time progresses – Jewish people from all over the world are in town to pay taxes. After Christ's death, the Apostles empowered by the Holy Spirit share the news of the resurrection of Christ, leaving 3000 new believers wanting to experience the life of Christ with their brothers and sisters.

Now, the tax payers do not go home but stay in town, selling all of their possessions, pooling resources for shelter and food so they could sit on Solomon's Porch day after day hearing about Jesus Christ from the Apostles. The new believers learn to live, pray and serve together, in very close quarters, self is left behind, and focus is on Christ alone. The foundation laid, the church is born.

After years of learning about the life of Christ, Jewish Christians must leave Jerusalem since persecutions are becoming everyday events. Churches spring up in every town in Judea, Galilee and Samaria where the Christians move. The first gentile church has even begun in Antioch.

Again and again the cycle repeats itself **AS WE UNDERSTAND GOING TO CHURCH IS NOT THE SAME AS BEING THE CHURCH!**

Let us pray.

Gracious Father, our praises and thanks are lifted to you during this meeting, may we work together bringing new life to the work of Presbyterian Women. The wonder of your love brings us together to celebrate your life and the work of the church which endures because you are the capstone. Thank you, Lord for the many wonders we see every day as you bless our lives. In Christ's name. Amen