

Seeing the Big Picture

Scripture used: [Acts 1:8-11](#)

OVERVIEW

Pointillism is a painting technique made up of small, individual dots that, when viewed from a distance, create a larger image. The same is true of the church—we are individual “dots” in God’s greater masterpiece. If we get too fixated on the dot (ourselves), we miss the big picture God is painting through the Church. The same is true of the Church. Each of us is a “dot”—a part of the greater work God is painting through His people. But if we only focus on ourselves—our lives, our struggles, our comfort—we can miss the greater image God is forming through His Church. The book of **Acts** gives us a glimpse of that larger image. It shows how Jesus’ movement continued after His resurrection, how ordinary people became vessels for extraordinary work, and how the Church became a dynamic and transformational force in the world.

4 Characteristics of the Early Church (Acts)

1. **Relational** - People formed deep connections with others they normally would never associate with. A great example is the relationship between Matthew the tax collector and Simon the zealot. One worked for the oppressive Roman system; the other likely wanted to overthrow it. And yet, both became disciples of Jesus and part of the same community. That’s the power of the Gospel—it brings together what the world would keep apart.
2. **Diverse** -Christianity wasn’t meant to stay in one place or one culture. From the very beginning, it was a faith that broke down barriers—between Jew and Gentile, slave and free, male and female. The Church in Acts spread beyond Jerusalem into Judea, Samaria, and the ends of the earth. The early Church showed us that God’s heart is for all people, and His Spirit empowers the Church to cross boundaries and break divisions that society builds.
3. **Spiritual**- The early believers were constantly engaged in spiritual practices: prayer, fasting, and obedience. These weren’t empty rituals—they were ways of seeking God and responding to Him. We see over and over again that when they prayed, they acted. When they fasted, they obeyed. The question we must ask ourselves is this: *Are we doing what God has asked us to do? Are we obeying the promptings of the Holy Spirit and living with spiritual intention?*
4. **Generous**- In [Acts 2:44-45](#) we see the church move with generosity. They didn’t just give out of abundance—they shared out of love. Their money, their time, their resources—it all belonged to God, and they acted like it.

Strategy of the Gospel (Personal Application)

1. **Go and do what you know.** Spiritual growth isn’t always about knowing more. Often, it’s about doing what we already know is right. One quote from C.S. Lewis states, *“The present is the only place where any duty can be done or any grace received.”*
2. **Don’t be weird.** The Apostle Paul often shared the Gospel in public spaces like the **agora**, the ancient equivalent of a modern shopping mall. He didn’t isolate himself from culture—he engaged with it. Relatability and humility go a long way.
3. **Expect it to be hard.** Jesus went to the cross. Paul was beaten, arrested, and constantly in danger. Following Jesus isn’t always easy—but it’s always worth it. Don’t be surprised when it costs you something.
4. **Seek conversations, not arguments.** We’re not called to win debates—we’re called to love people. Especially with those outside the faith, it’s important to be listeners, not just lecturers. Ask questions. Be curious. Make observations. Respect people.

5. Don't fear the sneer. In Acts 17, Paul preached in Athens. Some mocked him—but others leaned in and wanted to know more. If we only fear rejection, we'll miss out on opportunities. Sneers will come—but so will curiosity. Don't let fear keep you silent.

6. Ministry is always done in teams. No one is meant to follow Jesus alone. In Acts, people were always sent out in pairs or groups. No matter where you are in life or what your past includes, you are qualified to be a representative of Jesus. You're a part of the image He's painting.

DISCUSSION

- 1) **HEAR** - Which of the four characteristics of the early Church do you see most clearly in your own life?
- 2) **UNDERSTAND** - Read [Acts 22:42-47](#). How did the community's way of life seem to attract people to Jesus? Which part of this passage convicts or inspires you the most?
- 3) **DO** - Right now, take a few quiet moments to reflect. *What's your next right thing?* If you feel comfortable, share your "next right thing" with the group and pray for one another.