

# Penetrating their World

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## Introduction:

### A. Simon of Cyrene is interesting.

1. We don't know much about Cyrene, it is far from Jerusalem.
2. Simon was chosen to go to the feast in Jerusalem for two months.
3. Adults look forward to this and Simon would tell about it when he returned.
4. What might he be thinking as he went to Jerusalem?
  - a. He saw the hills around the temple.
  - b. He might have seen the crowds around Jesus as he carried the cross.
  - c. He saw the sign "King of the Jews."
  - d. A soldier told him to pick up Jesus' cross.
  - e. He might have worried about being identified with the accused Jesus.
  - f. He saw Jesus comfort some women along the way.
  - g. Simon probably dropped the cross quickly and thought of getting out of the way, but he saw people crying over Jesus.
  - h. He must have wondered who Jesus is and what he had done.
  - i. He must have heard rumors the following day about Jesus the Messiah.
  - j. Acts sets the stage for Simon to learn who Jesus is.

## I. Who is Jesus?

### A. The disciples of Jesus saw him die but they also saw him resurrected.

1. They were average people.
2. Jesus told them to wait for the gift of the Holy Spirit. (Acts 1:8)
3. They desired Jesus to restore the kingdom to Israel.
4. Jesus told them to witness unto Him.

5. This command to witness to the whole world was amazing to hear.
6. There might have been 120 of them, Jews mostly.
7. Jesus didn't even give them a strategy, just a command.
8. The next day they were filled with the Holy Spirit. (Acts 2)
  - a. They spoke in other tongues.
  - b. Others understood what they spoke.
  - c. They glorified God in the native tongues of many nations.
  - d. A person from Cyrene was mentioned.
9. The disciples were accused of being drunk. (Acts 2:14)

B. Jesus commands believers of all generations to:

1. Wait for the Holy Spirit.
2. Pray for God's guidance.
3. Preach with the power of the Spirit.
  - a. Peter often failed in following Jesus.
  - b. We can relate to him because of this.
  - c. When we become weak in our strength God comes through for us.
  - d. I was swimming at a dangerous lake once that killed many good swimmers because of the dangerous conditions.
  - e. Peter even denied Jesus three times but now under the power of the Spirit he preached a great message in power.
  - f. Peter might have preached thinking that he would be killed for it.

C. Jesus commands us to be in prayer and be surrounded with others of like minded faith.

1. The apostles stuck together.
2. Individualism is the enemy of church power.
3. We are dependent on each other.
4. Discipleship is not for loners.

D. Jesus takes the little things to make them great.

1. He took Gideon to save Israel.
2. He took David to kill Goliath.
3. He took the Galileans to impact the larger world.
4. Paul reached out to Hellenistic Jews.
5. Christianity outnumbers all other religions by 600 million believers with Islam second.

1. Christianity has 1.4 billion members though many are nominal.
  2. Islam has 800 million.
  3. God is doing great things in Africa and Korea and other places.
6. God reveals his strategy slowly.

a. Exciting things took place in Jerusalem but it seems they didn't want to leave the city. (Acts 1-8)

1. Three thousand people were saved when Peter preached.  
(Act 2:40)
2. They devoted themselves to teaching, fellowship, and prayer.
3. They did not go out into all the world.
4. Only the apostles knew the intimate teachings of the Lord.
5. They taught others in small groups meeting in houses.
6. They shared their goods with each other.
  - i. Rwanda has the fastest growing church in East Africa.
  - ii. I visited them and asked who had planted the most churches.
  - iii. One man told how he went out inviting people to a meeting where he preached Christ.
  - iv. He would plant a church until it reached 100 then move out to do it again.
  - v. The Lord adds to the church daily.

7. Back in Jerusalem rumors must have circulated about the crucified Jesus and his followers.
8. People being discipled by the apostles must have been changing.
9. When Peter preached again more were saved. (Acts 4:4, 31)
10. Ananias and Saphira were disciplined by God and more believed. (Acts 5:14)
11. The problem with distribution of food to widows showed how many people were in the ministry. (Acts 6)
12. Prayer was the focus on the apostles' ministry.
13. Even priests joined the faith. (Acts 6:7)
14. No one wanted to leave Jerusalem, forgetting about the rest of the world. (Acts 1:8)

b. God allowed persecution to come to Jerusalem, scattering the disciples.

1. Those scattered preached the word wherever they went. (Acts 6:4)
2. They go to Samaria. (Acts 8-12)
3. They went into Antioch (Acts
4. God told his followers to be his witnesses, not to go out and witness. (Acts 1:8)
5. When they replaced Judas they selected one who had been with them from the beginning. (Acts 1:22)
6. They were not to go out to tell but to just witness the power of God in their own lives.
7. The power of God is the power that raised Jesus from the dead. (Ephesians 1:19-20)
8. When people praise God for scoring touchdowns is not resurrection power; it is how God works in the heart of a person.
9. Paul often talked about his weakness in glorifying God.

7. I travel in Europe often and met a special man, Papa Krupa.

- a. He was a manager of a large ceramics factory and was a Christian.
- b. He loved the people working for him.
- b. When the communists came in they demoted him.
- c. He continued loving the people working for him.
- d. When he refused to join the communist party they demoted him again and again.
- e. Finally they falsely accused him and imprisoned him.
- f. He found priests and ministers in prison.
- g. He cleaned toilets.
- h. He prayed for a man whose family was ill and God healed that one.
- i. Soon a prayer meeting began and many became believers.
- j. The soldiers accused him of being a pastor to these men.
- k. They put him in solitary confinement for three weeks.
- l. During that time the prayer group grew.
- m. Soon the guards took Papa Krupa to another barracks where he began to minister all over again.
- n. Genuine revival spread through that prison because of Papa Krupa.
- o. Once the archbishop of the Catholic church in Czechoslovakia came to pray with Papa Krupa.