

# ***St. Mark's Tidings***

## **July & August 2016**

### **PASTOR'S CORNER**

***“Yet more than ever believers were added to the Lord, great numbers of both men and women, so that they even carried out the sick into the streets, and laid them on cots and mats, in order that Peter’s shadow might fall on some of them as he came by. A great number of people would also gather from the towns around Jerusalem, bringing the sick and those tormented by unclean spirits, and they were all cured.”*** (Acts 5:14-16)

I have always been fascinated with the Book of Acts and how Luke laid out for us the beginning of the Church. It all began on the Day of Pentecost, when the disciples were gathered in the Upper Room waiting for the promised gift of God. While in prayer, the Holy Spirit came upon them and they were all empowered by God to continue the mission of Jesus. It tells us in the second chapter that Peter went out in the streets and began to preach with such power that his “words cut to the hearts” of those in attendance and three thousand people were baptized that day.

I have to ask myself, “What has happened to the church today?” I remember hearing about John Wimber, the founder of the Vineyard Church. He tells us, of when he had a powerful encounter with Jesus that radically transformed his life. Like many people, he had been swallowed up by the world and drifted far away from the Church. After his transformation he began attending church regularly and immersed himself in prayer and studying Scripture. One Sunday after the church service he asked his pastor, “When do we do the stuff”? His pastor was confused and asked him what he meant.

John replied, “In the Bible it tells us how Jesus and His disciples would preach the Good News and then heal the sick, the lame, the deaf and mute, the blind and even raised the dead. When do we do that stuff?”

The pastor responded by saying, “Well, we believe in the stuff, we just don’t **do** the stuff.”

It was then that John began the Vineyard Church which has grown over the years and believe me they “do the stuff” with the same power and anointing of the early church.

You see I think this is one of the reasons the church is in such decline. Not only are there far too many people (including clergy) not devoting themselves to prayer and study, the church as a whole has stopped “doing the stuff”. In a large extent, we have turned too many pulpits into a wing of a political party or made our social agendas the topic of most sermons.

I thank God every single day for the people of St. Mark’s!! We still do “the stuff” and proclaim the Good News with boldness; “reaching forth our hands in love to bring those who don’t know Jesus into the love and knowledge of him, and always to glory of God.”

In Jesus’ love

***Fr. Jim+***