

ACTS

GROWING OUR FAITH & CHURCH



10 WEEK BIBLE STUDY

CAIRN

We chose the cairn for the symbol of this study on the book of Acts. A cairn is a simple stack of rocks left by travelers or hikers to mark the way for those that follow behind. These rocks can be a welcome signpost that says, this is the way, you are on the right path. As we look at the beginning and growth of the church, we are so thankful to Dr. Luke and the early church leaders for leaving us a pattern, a road map that says, this is what the church was intended to be, follow us and you will be on the right path too.

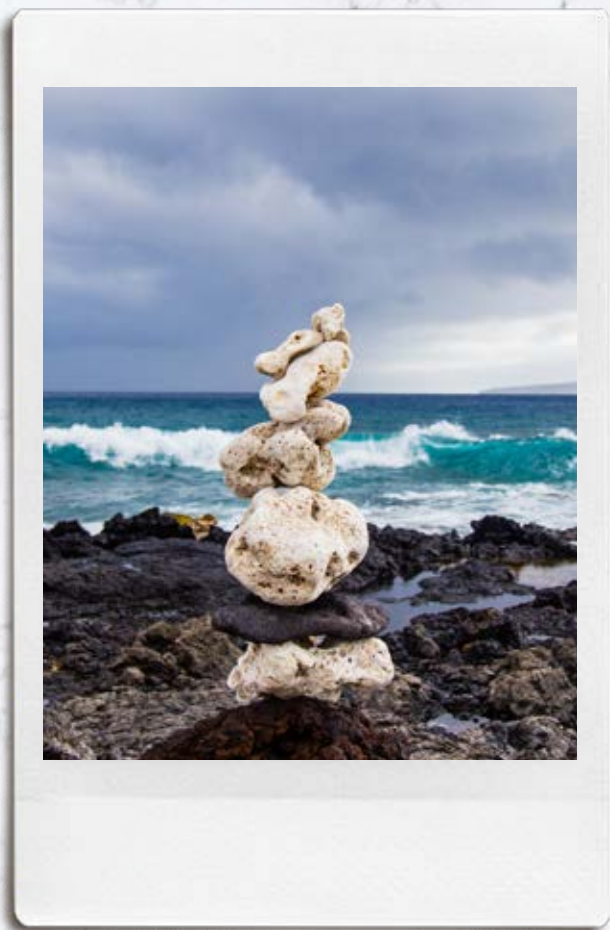
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WELCOME

The book of Acts is the second in a series written by Dr. Luke, a physician and companion of the Apostle Paul. Acts picks up where the Gospel of Luke concludes, at the ascension of Christ. In his second book, Luke recorded the birth and growth of the Christian Church. He emphasized the Holy Spirit's power to continue the witness of Jesus Christ through believers.

Acts is a dynamic book, following the expansion of the church much like one would follow the path of lava coming from a volcano. From Pentecost, to the stoning of Stephen, the conversion of Paul, Peter's vision to include Gentiles, to Pauls' missionary journeys, Luke painted a vivid picture of the persecution which caused believers to scatter, carrying their faith with them. Acts concludes suddenly with the apostle Paul in jail in Rome. Actually, the book of Acts does not have a proper ending, because the expansion of the Christian church continues today and beyond. The story is not over and will not be over until the return of Christ.

As believers, we are part of the story of the Acts of God in His church. This is our time to play our part, growing in faith as we participate in not only our own church family but also as members of the universal Church. The book of Acts portrays a journey, and we invite you to come along with us as we travel the road together.



WEEK ONE

Can I Get a Witness? Acts 1-2

“But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be My witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth.”

Acts 1:8 NIV

*Baptism in the Holy Spirit
results in power with a
purpose. not just power to
live Christian lives. but
also to be a witness of our
Risen Lord.*

DAY 1 : ACTS 1:1-11

Read Luke 24:36-45 and Acts 1:1-5.

From these 2 passages, which events did Luke want Theophilus to know about?

Read Acts 1:6-8 and Acts 10:41.

On whose authority were the disciples to be eyewitnesses of the Risen Lord?

Theophilus means 'Lover of God.'

“So all of us who have had the veil removed can see and reflect the glory of the Lord. And the Lord—who is the Spirit—makes us more and more like Him as we are changed into His glorious image.”

2 Corinthians 3:18 NLT

SMALL GROUP DISCUSSION QUESTION

Read Acts 1:9-11 and Luke 24:46-53.

How can you be a witness of Christ in your sphere of influence this week?

PRAYER

Praise God that, just as Jesus was taken back to heaven, He will return one day to establish His kingdom on earth. Thank the Father for the gift of the Holy Spirit. Ask The Spirit to empower your life to be a witness for Christ.

DAY 2 : ACTS 1:12-26

Read Acts 1:12-26.

List the names of the people involved in this scene. Where were they? What were they doing?

Why was it important that Judas' replacement be someone who had been with Jesus from His baptism to His ascension?

In this passage, we see Peter emerging as the leader of the new Church, as was foretold by Christ.

Read Matthew 16:13-18.

Looking back at Acts 1, did Peter choose Judas' replacement himself or seek God's counsel? How did he involve the other leaders in the process?

PRAYER

Pray for wisdom for our pastor and elders as they guide our church. Pray for the unity of our church family. Ask the Holy Spirit to guide you in any decisions you need to make this week.

Pentecost, from the Greek word for 50, was a celebration held on the 7th Sabbath after Passover. The Day of Pentecost, in Acts 2, was the momentous day in which believers were indwelt by the Holy Spirit for the first time. This day marked the beginning of the Christian Church.

SMALL GROUP DISCUSSION QUESTION

Read Acts 2:1-4.

Describe the sights and sounds of The Day of Pentecost. With what was every person filled?

“I will ask the Father, and He will give you another Advocate (paraclete (Greek), comforter, encourager, or counselor), who will never leave you.”
John 14:16

SMALL GROUP DISCUSSION QUESTION

Read Acts 2:5-13.

What did the Jews, assembled in Jerusalem for Pentecost, hear the disciples talking about in different languages?

SMALL GROUP DISCUSSION QUESTION

What wonderful acts of God have you been witness to this year?

PRAYER

Praise God for the gift of the Holy Spirit in your life. Thank Him for always keeping His promises. Relying on the Holy Spirit's power, who could you be a paraclete to this week?

“I will pour out my Spirit on all people.
Your sons and daughters will prophesy,
Your old men will dream dreams,
Your young men will see visions.
Even on my servants,
Both men and women,
I will pour out my Spirit in those days.”
Joel 2:28-29 NIV

SMALL GROUP DISCUSSION QUESTION

Read Acts 2:14-21.

What do you think is meant by “in the last days?”

*And everyone who calls on the
Name of the Lord will be saved.*

Read Acts 2:22-41.

As an eyewitness for Jesus Christ, what was Peter able to explain to the crowd? How was King David also a witness of Christ? What did David believe?

Was Peter's speech successful in explaining the truth to his listeners? What was the result?

PRAYER

Praise God for His prearranged plan to send His Son to die for your sins. Thank Him for raising Jesus back to life, and for offering salvation to all who call on His name. Ask the Holy Spirit for the words and the courage to share this good news with someone this week.

SMALL GROUP DISCUSSION QUESTION

Read Acts 2:42-47.

What activities characterized the early church?

What could our church learn from this passage?

“And let us not neglect our meeting together, as some people do, but encourage one another, especially now that the day of his return is drawing near.”

Hebrews 10:25 NLT

How did God bless their efforts?

PRAYER

Thank the Lord for this glimpse into the first century Church. Ask that He will guide us as we grow in faith together as a church body. Pray that the atmosphere of our congregation would be one of joy, generosity, and goodwill for each other.

The apostles were called by God to continue the witness of Jesus after His ascension. He enabled them to do miracles to help convince others of the truth about the life, death, and resurrection of Christ. When God calls a believer to a ministry, He always enables the call. That is true today for all of us in Christ.

In Acts Chapter 3, we see that Peter and John have an encounter with a lame man outside the Temple. This man was over 40 years old, and because he had been a beggar at the same gate for many years, he was known by the people of Jerusalem. It was very possible that Jesus, during His ministry, had walked by this man, but had not healed him. Clearly, the plan of God for this man's healing did not come until the day the disciples walked by.

WEEK TWO

Power with a Purpose Acts 3-5

“After they prayed, the place where they were meeting was shaken. And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and spoke the word of God boldly.”

Acts 4:31 NIV



DAY 1 : ACTS 3:1-26

Read Acts 3:1-11.

Who were the characters in this scene? Where were they?
What happened?

Read Peter's Sermon in Acts 3:12-26.

By what power did Peter claim to have healed the lame man?

The lame walked at a gate called Beautiful.

SMALL GROUP DISCUSSION QUESTION

What request would you like to make of God in Jesus' name?

There is Power in The Name of Jesus.

PRAYER

Praise God as the Holy and Righteous One. Thank Him for faithfully being the Author of your life. Place your request before Him, trusting in the mighty Name of Jesus.

SMALL GROUP DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

Read Acts 4:1-22.

How did the Jewish leadership react to the apostles' testimony about Christ? What specifically were they opposed to?

How did Peter respond to their accusations?

SMALL GROUP DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

Read Acts 4:23-31. In light of the Jewish leaders' threats, what did the apostles pray for?

Re-read Acts 2:22-24 and John 19:10-11. Besides holding the Jews responsible for Jesus' crucifixion, whose plan did Peter claim was the ultimate reason for Christ's death?

“Salvation is found in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given to mankind by which we must be saved.”

Acts 4:12 NIV

In which relationship, whether family, friends, or colleagues, do you need boldness to speak of Christ this week?

PRAYER

Praise the Lord for being the “Lamb that was slain before the foundation of the world” (Revelation 13:8). Thank Him for purchasing your salvation. Thank Him also for the gift of the Holy Spirit. Ask for the words and boldness to speak to others about Christ.

DAY 3 : ACTS 4:32-5:11

The onset of The Church was a unique time. We read in Acts 4 that all believers were of one heart and mind, sharing everything, often selling property to help any in need, and God's blessing and grace were powerfully at work in everyone. But Acts 5 paints a strong contrast. Ananias and Sapphira were part of the new church assembly, but their hearts were not committed to the Lord or to the group. They sold a piece of land and brought part of the money to the apostles. The money was theirs to give or not give, but they lied to the others and to the Holy Spirit. This was a heart issue. They cared more about what others thought of them than what God thought. We see here that God's justice was also powerfully at work in all, and He will not be mocked.

Read Acts 4:32-5:11.

Describe what happened in Acts 5:1-11.

SMALL GROUP DISCUSSION QUESTION

Who did Peter say was behind what was in Ananias' heart? What did Peter tell Sapphira that she and Ananias had conspired to do?

Read Galatians 6:7-10.

Is the Holy Spirit asking you to re-evaluate your motives in some part of your life, work, or ministry? Would you be willing to prayerfully consider this area?

“Whatever you do, work at it with
all your heart, as working for the Lord.”
Colossians 3:23 NIV

PRAYER

Praise God as the One who is gracious and just. Thank Him for calling you to be a vital part of His church. Ask for the transforming work of the Holy Spirit to change your focus from wanting to please others to solely desiring to please God.

DAY 4 : ACTS 5:12-40

Read Acts 5:12-32.

What were the apostles doing that made the Jewish leadership jealous?

What miracle happened to the apostles after they were imprisoned? What did the angel tell them to do?

How did Peter boldly respond to the angry council?

Read Acts 5:33-40.

How did God use the wisdom of Gamaliel to save the apostles?

PRAYER

Praise the Lord as your Prince and Savior. Thank Him for forgiving your sins. Ask the Holy Spirit to empower you with the ability to be a witness for the Lord, even when things are hard.

In case there is any doubt, the apostles were now radically different men than they were immediately after Christ's death. The men who had been hiding in the upper room, "with the doors locked for fear of the Jews" (Matthew 20:19), were now willing to defy the Jewish leadership who tried to silence them by imprisonment, flogging, and threats of death. They were able to boldly stand in the Temple Courts, day after day, proclaiming that Jesus was the Messiah, the Son of God.

The difference was that they had been indwelt by the Holy Spirit. They had seen the Risen Lord, and they had been given power with a purpose, to testify to the New Life that could be found in Christ. So powerful was their purpose that they could even rejoice for suffering for the name of Jesus.

SMALL GROUP DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

Read Acts 5:41-42.

Has there been a recent time in your Christian life when you were able to rejoice even though your circumstances were difficult?

If so, how did that experience strengthen your faith?

What does it mean to you that Jesus is the Messiah?

PRAYER

Praise God for defeating sin and death. Ask the Holy Spirit to empower you with a purpose. Pray for anyone you know who needs God's healing this week.



WEEK THREE

The First Martyr Acts 6-7

“Stephen, full of the Holy Spirit, looked up to heaven and saw the glory of God, and Jesus standing at the right hand of God.”
Acts 7:55 NIV



DAY 1 : ACTS 6:1-7

Throughout the first chapters of Acts, we have seen that the power to be a witness for Christ, and to grow His church, comes from the Holy Spirit. God has graciously invited believers into His process. As we continue to study His Holy Word and spend time in prayer and fellowship with other believers, we begin to reflect His image. This reflection changes us as well as those with whom we come in contact.

This week we will be introduced to three key figures in the growth of the church. They are Stephen, Philip and Saul (Paul). They each have a very different role to play, but we will see that their stories intersect in a dramatic way in Acts 7.

Read Acts 6:1-7.

The Hellenistic Jews were from a different culture than the traditional Hebraic Jews. What conflict arose between the two groups? What solution did the apostles offer?

The first deacons.

SMALL GROUP DISCUSSION QUESTION

What two activities did the apostles see as their primary work?

How did God continue to bless the early Church?

“Rejoice always, pray continually, give thanks in all circumstances; for this is God’s will for you in Christ Jesus.”
1 Thessalonians 5:16-18 NIV

PRAYER

Thank the Lord that we are allowed to be part of His church. Ask that we would be a people of prayer. Ask the Lord to continue to bless and grow our church family.

Read Acts 6:8-15.

Looking at Acts 6:5 and 6:8, how was Stephen described?

SMALL GROUP DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

What did the Jews of the Synagogue of the Freedmen do when they could not out debate Stephen?

Were their accusations true or false?

“Destroy this Temple and
I will raise it again in three days.”
John 2:19 NIV

“Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, the new creation
has come: The old has gone, the new is here!”
2 Corinthians 5:17 NIV

SMALL GROUP DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

Read Matthew 10:16-20. What did Christ say would happen to His disciples?

What did He promise would be given to them?

In times when you are asked to defend your faith, how could the Matthew passage give you courage?

“Fight the good fight of the faith. Take hold of the eternal life to which you were called when you made your good confession in the presence of many witnesses.”

1 Timothy 6:12 NIV

PRAYER

Praise the Lord as the Author and Perfecter of our faith. Thank Him for promising to provide the right words at the right time when we are called to witness for Him.

DAY 3 : ACTS 7:1-19

Read Acts 7:1-19.

When the High Priest asked Stephen if the charges were true, did Stephen answer the question? If not, what did Stephen do?

Stephen chose to answer the accusations of the false witnesses indirectly by rehearsing Israel's history. Every person in the room would have known this history by heart, and Stephen wanted them to see that God had faithfully been guiding His people before the Law of Moses or the Temple existed.

Even though Israel's history was filled with hardship, list several ways from these verses that you see God's faithfulness.

SMALL GROUP DISCUSSION QUESTION

How have you seen God's faithfulness in your life this past year, even during hardship?

"Trust in the Lord with all your heart, and do not lean on your own understanding; in all your ways acknowledge Him, and He will make your paths straight."

Proverbs 3:5-6 NIV

PRAYER

Praise God as the Author of history. Thank Him for his care and guidance in your life. Ask Him for wisdom and direction in any area that you are feeling anxious about this week.

DAY 4 : ACTS 7:20-50

Read Acts 7:20-38.

The Bible records three, 40 year sections of Moses' life. Where was he in each section?

Looking at verse 35, who had sent Moses to Israel to be the ruler and deliverer?

Read Acts 7:39-43. In this passage, Stephen pointed out that the Israelites' ancestors rejected Moses' leadership, echoing the same accusation he was facing. Which Old Testament story did he speak about to prove his point?

Has there been a time in your life when you rejected God's plan for growth, and in your heart turned back to something familiar? (Acts 7:39) If so, what did you learn from this experience?

SMALL GROUP DISCUSSION QUESTION

Finally, Stephen quoted the prophet Isaiah saying that God does not live in a place built by human hands.

Read Acts 7:44-50 and 1 Corinthians 3:16. How is it possible that as believers, we are God's Temple?

PRAYER

Praise God for His compassion. Thank Him that in times of trouble, He faithfully sees your hardship, and hears your groaning. Ask that you will be able to feel the Holy Spirit's presence and guidance in every difficult situation you face this week.

DAY 5 : ACTS 7:51-8:1

Read Acts 7:51-53.

Here the accused became the accuser. List the charges Stephen brought against the Jewish leaders.

SMALL GROUP DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

Read Acts 7:54-8:1.

How did the Jewish leaders react to Stephen's accusations? What did Stephen see?

Why do you think Jesus was standing?

Read Luke 23:34.

It was not lost on Luke that Stephen repeated the prayer of Christ, as he was dying. What did they both ask of the Father?

“Take off your sandals, for you are standing on holy ground.”
Acts 7:33 NLT

PRAYER

Praise the Lord Jesus Christ as the Righteous One who came to save us from sin. Thank Him that, even though He is in heaven at the right hand of the Father, He is aware of every detail of your life. Ask that you would follow the Holy Spirit’s guidance in your daily walk, and not resist Him when things get hard.

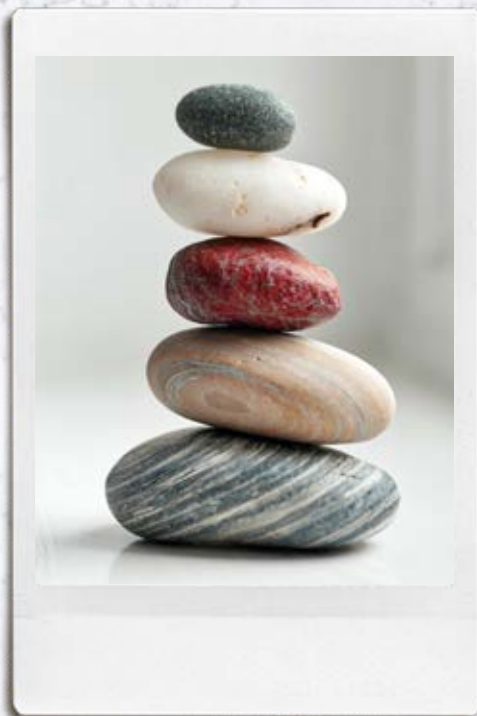
Probably several years had passed since Pentecost and the beginning of Acts Chapter 8, and the Christians were still in Jerusalem. No one had pursued Christ's command to be witnesses in Judea and Samaria until now, when their feet were held to the fire. Persecution often leads to a scattering, and a scattering of Christians results in the spread of the Gospel.

We read in Acts 8:4 that the "believers who were scattered preached the Good News about Jesus wherever they went." Philip, in particular, went to Samaria, a place that had been off limits to the Jews because the Samaritans had intermarried with pagans, and were considered unclean. But Philip, who was most likely a Hellenistic Jew, was used to racial differences and prejudice. He was uniquely prepared to cross cultural barriers and carry the Gospel to Samaritans.

WEEK FOUR

**To Judea and Samaria
And the Ends of the Earth
Acts 8-9:31**

“This man is my chosen
instrument to proclaim my
name to the Gentiles and their
kings and the people of Israel.”
Acts 9:15 NIV



DAY 1 : ACTS 8:1-8

Read Acts 8:1-8.

What was the match that struck the flame of persecution against the Jerusalem church?

Who was leading the charge to destroy the church?

SMALL GROUP DISCUSSION QUESTION

Has there been a time when you were in an uncomfortable situation, only to realize that was exactly where God wanted you to be?

“And we know that God causes everything to work together for the good of those who love God and are called according to His purpose for them.”
Romans 8:28 NLT

PRAYER

Praise God as your Redeemer. Thank Him that He promises to redeem every life experience and use it for His ultimate good. Ask the Holy Spirit to help you trust that there is a purpose for any difficult situation you find yourself in now.

Read Acts 8:9-13.

Who was Simon the Sorcerer?

SMALL GROUP DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

Read Acts 8:14-17 and Luke 9:51-56. How did Philip pave the way for Peter and John to put aside their prejudices against the Samaritans?

What confirmation did Peter and John receive that this was the right thing to do?

The Mystery: "was kept secret for centuries and generations past, but now it has been revealed to God's people. For God wanted them to know that the riches and glory of Christ are for you Gentiles, too. And this is the secret: Christ lives in you. This gives you assurance of sharing His glory."

Colossians 1:26-27 NLT

Read Acts 8:18-25.

Do you think Simon was a true believer or not? What was Peter's opinion?

Note that Peter and John were changed men after this experience, "And they stopped in many Samaritan villages along the way (home) to preach the Good News." (Acts 8:25 NLT)

PRAYER

Praise God that He is the God of all people. Thank Him that He "so loved the world." Ask the Holy Spirit to help you see each person you come in contact with through His eyes of love.

DAY 3 : ACTS 8:26-40

Read Acts 8:26-35.

What instruction did an angel of the Lord give to Philip?
Did Philip obey?

SMALL GROUP DISCUSSION QUESTION

God took Philip away from a large successful ministry and sent him down “the desert road” to speak to one man. What does this say about how God feels about each one of us?

SMALL GROUP DISCUSSION QUESTION

We read that Philip began with the same Scripture the man had asked about and told him the Good News about Jesus. How could Philip’s example help you share the Gospel with others?

Read Acts 8:36-40.

List three things that happened in these verses.

“Rejoice in the Lord always.
I will say it again: Rejoice!
Let your gentleness be evident to all.
The Lord is near!”
Philippians 4:4-5 NIV

PRAYER

Praise God as a personal God who cares about every individual. Thank Him for choosing you to be His child. Ask the Holy Spirit to show you opportunities to share the Good News about Christ.

DAY 4 : ACTS 9:1-19

Paul : Roman name

Saul : Jewish name

Read Acts 9:1-9.

What happened in this scene? What did Paul ask? What did the Lord answer?

Read Acts 9: 10-16.

What did God ask Ananias to do? What rumors had Ananias heard about Paul? What did God say about Paul?

SMALL GROUP DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

Read Acts 9:17-19.

How did Ananias address Paul? What did this say about his faith? What happened to Paul after Ananias laid his hands on him?

*God bless the Damascus
Road that led me straight to you.*

PRAYER

Praise Jesus as the Son of God. If you are His disciple, thank Him for the irresistible call on your life. If you are unsure where you stand with the Lord, ask the Holy Spirit to show you how to become a Christ follower. If you choose to become a Christ follower this week, share this decision with a fellow Christian.

The conversion of Paul resulted in a dramatically changed life. Paul went from being an extreme persecutor of the church to being the most influential witness for Christ of all time. Like the other apostles, Paul's change came from meeting the Risen Lord and the indwelling of the Holy Spirit. Paul was saved by God's grace alone, meaning not because of anything he had earned or deserved, but by a gift of favor from God.

The same is true for each one of us. Salvation cannot be earned. It is not a matter of the good outweighing the bad in our lives. It is a free-gift from God. Grace deeply marked Paul's life. It was something he never forgot. With the testimony of his own experience, Paul spent the rest of his days speaking about God's grace to anyone who would listen.

Read Acts 9:20-25. How do you think Paul "proved" that Jesus was the Messiah?

Paul, who came to Damascus blind, now had to leave in a basket in the dark of night. What does this tell you about his resolve to continue to witness?

Read Acts 9:26-31. How did Barnabas help Paul?

SMALL GROUP DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

What does it mean to “fear the Lord?” Would you say that you have a reverent fear of the Lord?

*Barnabas means
'Son of Encouragement.'*

PRAYER

Praise the Lord as the Prince of Peace. Express your gratitude that we have the Holy Spirit to strengthen, encourage, and increase our church family. Ask for the understanding of how to live in the fear of the Lord.

In the last few chapters of Acts, we have seen the winds of change gathering. We know from our study of Genesis, that God had chosen Israel as His holy nation. Israel was solely entrusted with the scriptures, the promises, and the legacy of faith. But now, stirrings of change have begun. Samaritans were putting their faith in the Messiah, as did the Ethiopian Eunuch. Soon God would call an important meeting of two very different men of faith, one Jew and one Gentile. This meeting would prove to be a hinge point in the growth of the Church, and the plan of God for His church would be revealed.

First let's catch up with Peter as he travels about the country healing and preaching.

WEEK FIVE

The Winds of Change Acts 9:32-12:25

“We can see that God has also given the Gentiles the privilege of repenting of their sins and receiving eternal life.”

Acts 11:18 NLT



Read Acts 9:32-35.

What was wrong with Aeneas and how long had he been bedridden? How was he healed? What was the result in Lydda and Sharon?

SMALL GROUP DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

Read Acts 9:36-43. What qualities characterized Tabitha's life?

How did she use her gifts and talents to help others?

Do you think her actions made a difference in her community? How do you know?

Consider what skills, experiences, and talents you have, and how they might be useful in our church family and community.

Jesus Christ heals you!

PRAYER

Praise God as the Great Physician who heals and raises from the dead. Thank Him for caring for you during times of illness and injury. Ask the Holy Spirit to reveal ways you could help others with your God-given skills.

DAY 2 : ACTS 10:1-33

Read Acts 10:1-8.

Describe Cornelius from these verses.

Read Acts 10:9-23.

Meanwhile, what vision did Peter have? Why do you think God decided to speak directly to Peter at this time?

*'Do not call something unclean
if God has made it clean.'*

SMALL GROUP DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

Read Acts 10:24-33. Which verse shows Peter understood that his vision was about more than just animals and food?

Cornelius' heart was receptive to the Lord's message. He was ready and willing to listen. How receptive do you feel your heart is to God's message?

Do you think prayer is an important part of having an open heart and mind before God? If so, why do you think prayer makes a difference?

God's appointment for change had come, the invitation was made by divine messengers, the time was set for the hour of prayer, the place-Caesarea by the Sea. Neither Peter nor Cornelius sent their regrets, but both came at once, bringing witnesses with them. The result-the Church and World would never be the same.

PRAYER

Praise God as the God of all nations. Thank Him for offering you a place in His family of believers. Pray that you would be receptive to what He wants to teach you in this season.

SMALL GROUP DISCUSSION QUESTION

Read Acts 10:34-43.

List the details that Peter included in sharing the Good News about Jesus. How could these verses help you share the Good News with others?

Read Acts 10:44-48.

What happened as Peter was speaking?

What surprised the Jewish believers?

SMALL GROUP DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

Read Acts 11:1-18. What did Cornelius need to learn from Peter?

What did Peter need to learn from Cornelius?

*The Good News of Peace through
Jesus Christ, who is Lord of all!*

PRAYER

Praise the Lord for being the righteous judge of all. Thank Him that anyone who believes in Him receives forgiveness of sins. Ask that we would be a unified church family and be an example to our community.

DAY 4 : ACTS 11:19-30

Read Acts 11:19-24.

The Gospel was continuing to spread to Jews and Gentiles as far as Phoenicia, Cyprus, and Antioch. The Church in Jerusalem sent Barnabas who, true to his name, encouraged the new believers. How was Barnabas described in these verses?

Read Acts 11:25-30.

When Barnabas saw how many people were turning to the Lord, what did he do?

How long did Barnabas and Paul stay in Antioch?

SMALL GROUP DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

Why was it important for Barnabas and Paul to stay and teach the Christians in Antioch?

What can we learn about the needs of new believers from these verses?

*The disciples were called
Christians first at Antioch.*

PRAYER

Praise the Lord as the head of the Church. Thank Him that the Gospel continues to spread around the world today. Prayerfully ask the Holy Spirit to show you a new Christian who you could encourage this week.

DAY 5 : ACTS 12:1-25

Read Acts 12:1-10.

Herod Agrippa was appointed by Rome to be the King over Judea and Samaria. What two things did he do in these verses to gain the approval of the Jews?

What happened to Peter the night before his trial?

Read Acts 12:11-19.

What did Peter do when he realized this was not a vision?

But the church was praying.

Read Acts 12:20-25. The book of Acts has no lack of drama. This week we have read about the paralyzed walking, a dead woman coming back to life, visions and a visit from an angel, the Holy Spirit falling on Gentiles, and Peter being freed from chains and walking out past four sets of guards through a gate that opened by itself.

Finally, we read about a man who did not give glory to God and was eaten by worms and died. This book is a page turner! And from it we learn that the growth of the church was dynamic and volatile. Persecution continued which led to further scattering, and the Gospel spread, just as God intended.

What event from this week's reading was most meaningful to you and why?

"So we say with confidence, 'The Lord is my helper; I will not be afraid. What can mere mortals do to me?'"
Hebrews 13:6 NIV

PRAYER

Praise God as the Eternal God, mighty in power, and sovereignly in control of His universe. Thank him that he graciously included Gentiles into His family of faith. Ask that you will see opportunities to scatter the seeds of faith to those who cross your path this week.

This week we see that Paul and Barnabas are back in Antioch after taking a relief fund to Jerusalem, bringing Barnabas' cousin, John Mark, with them.

The Holy Spirit guided the church to send the three man team on a missionary expedition, which began by sailing to Cyprus. Barnabas was from Cyprus (Acts 4:36), and he was probably glad to take the Good News of Christ to his home country. Cyprus was an island of rugged terrain which made foot travel difficult, but we read that after landing in Salamis, the group traveled across the whole island until they came to the city of Paphos. This was a hundred mile journey.

WEEK SIX

Led by the Spirit Acts 13-16

“God knows people’s hearts,
and He confirmed that He
accepts Gentiles by giving
them the Holy Spirit, just as He
did to us. He made no
distinction between us and
them, for He cleansed their
hearts through faith.”
Acts 15:8-9 NLT



Paul's First Missionary Journey

Read Acts 13:1-12. Which two verses in this passage describe the guidance of the Holy Spirit?

Who did Paul and Barnabas meet first in Paphos? How was this man described? In contrast, how was the governor described?

Elymas seemed threatened by the governor's interest in "the word of God," and Paul directly called him out for his false motives, and then temporarily blinded him. No doubt, Paul saw value in a period of blindness to cause a person to see the truth. How did these events help change the governor's interest into saving faith?

*The Holy Spirit calls,
enables, and sends forth.*

Read Acts 13:13-41. Sailing to Galatia (modern day Turkey), the group arrived in Perga, where John Mark left and returned home to Jerusalem. Travel continued to be hard. Pisidian-Antioch was 3,600 feet above sea level, and it is thought that Paul became ill with a tropical disease, maybe even malaria, at this time. (See Gal. 4:13) Only through the strength of the Holy Spirit would Paul have been able to make the trip, and to stand in the synagogue and deliver the powerful message that he did.

Why was it important that the people understand that Jesus Christ was the promised descendant of King David?

SMALL GROUP DISCUSSION QUESTION

Read Acts 13:42-52. What a person believes about Jesus defines their eternal destiny. What do you believe about Jesus Christ?

PRAYER

Praise God as the Holy One of Israel, the Light to the Gentiles, and the One who brings salvation to the ends of the earth. Thank Him for keeping His promises. Ask the Holy Spirit to give you peace and joy in your salvation.

DAY 2 : ACTS 14:1-28

Read Acts 14:1-7. When Paul and Barnabas went to a new city, what was their usual practice?

In increasing numbers, who was there?

How did the Lord help prove their message was true?
What results occurred?

Read Acts 14:8-20. When the people saw Paul heal the lame man, who did they think Paul and Barnabas were?

Since these pagan people did not know the Jewish scriptures, how did Paul describe God to them?

What happened to Paul?

SMALL GROUP DISCUSSION QUESTION

Read Acts 14:21-28.

On the way home, Paul and Barnabas retraced their steps to strengthen and encourage the new believers. Why would it be important for us to follow up with new believers that we know?

“For since the creation of the world, God’s invisible qualities-his eternal power and divine nature-have been clearly seen, being understood from what has been made, so that people are without excuse.”

Romans 1:20 NIV

PRAYER

Praise God as Maker of heaven and earth. Thank Him for opening the door of faith to the Gentiles. Ask the Holy Spirit to show you ways to strengthen new believers in their faith.

DAY 3 : ACTS 15:1-35

Read Acts 15:1-12.

The nature of salvation is an extremely important topic. What was the question that was brought before the church council?

Verse 11 records the last time we hear from the Apostle Peter in the book of Acts. What eternal truth about salvation does he leave with us?

Read Acts 15:13-21.

How did James, the brother of the Lord Jesus, prove that it was God's plan from long ago to include the Gentiles in the family of faith?

*Salvation is by grace alone,
through faith alone, in Christ alone.*

SMALL GROUP DISCUSSION QUESTION

Read Acts 15:22-35.

Even though the Jerusalem council agreed that circumcision was not necessary to become a follower of Christ, why do you think they suggested these four abstentions?

“For it seemed good to the Holy Spirit and to us to lay no greater burden on you than these few requirements: You must abstain from eating the food offered to idols, from consuming blood or the meat of strangled animals, and from sexual immorality. If you do this, you will do well. Farewell.”
Acts 15:28-29 NLT

PRAYER

Praise God as the purifier of hearts. Thank Him for His free gift of salvation. Pray for unity in our church family.

Paul's Second Missionary Journey

Read Acts 15:36-41. Why did Paul and Barnabas argue?

What was the result?

Looking back at Acts 15:22 and 32, who was Silas?

Read Acts 16:1-5 and 2 Timothy 1:5; 3:14-15. What do we learn about Timothy from these verses?

'So the churches were strengthened in the faith and grew daily in numbers.'

Read Acts 16:6-15. Who does the “we” refer to in verse 10?

Describe the divinely appointed meeting of the missionaries with Lydia.

What happened when the Lord opened Lydia’s heart to Paul’s message?

Ancient Mediterranean cultures used the secretions of the Murex Sea Snail to dye fabric purple. The dye was gathered drop by drop, and was therefore very expensive.

PRAYER

Praise God as the Maker of Heaven and Earth. Thank Him for the height and depth and length and breadth of His love for each one of us. Pray that the Holy Spirit would open the hearts of your family and friends to receive the Good News about Jesus Christ.

SMALL GROUP DISCUSSION QUESTION

Read Acts 16:16-21 and James 2:19.

Are you surprised that the evil spirit inside of the slave girl shouted the truth about God? Why or why not?

SMALL GROUP DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

Read Acts 16:22-34. How do you think it was possible for the beaten men to sing hymns in prison?

Looking back at the difficult times in your life, would you say there were moments when you knew you were being held in God's grace?

Because the men did not try to escape when their chains fell off, what miracle occurred in the jailer's life?

SMALL GROUP DISCUSSION QUESTION

Read Acts 16:35-40. It is amazing that the team was not anxious to leave Philippi after they were released from prison. Describe how you think they felt, and how they had the courage and patience to stay and meet with the new believers once again.

*These men are the servants of the
most High God, and they have come to
tell you how to be saved.*

PRAYER

“Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ! In His great mercy he has given us new birth into a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, and into an inheritance that can never perish, spoil or fade.” (1 Peter 1:3-4 NIV)

This week we will follow Paul into the fray. No doubt, there were places where he was treated worse on his missionary journeys, but these cities were difficult because they were major centers of cult religions. We are all familiar with the Acropolis in Athens and the worship of mythological gods during Paul's day. We read in Acts 17 that Paul "was greatly distressed to see that the city was full of idols."

Corinth also had a major Temple for Apollo, and was the center of worship for Aphrodite, the goddess of fertility. Temple prostitution was a major part of the worship of Aphrodite, causing the city of Corinth as well as the Corinthians to be known for their sexual immorality.

Ephesus was the center for the worship of Artemis, also called Diana, the goddess of the hunt. Her temple was one of the ancient wonders of the world. The Ephesians felt their temple image of Artemis had been thrown down to earth by her father Zeus. When the silversmiths who made silver shrines of Artemis were threatened by Paul's message, and feared the loss of their livelihoods, they started a riot in the city. All the citizens rushed into the 25,000 seat amphitheater, where they shouted in unison, "Great is Artemis of the Ephesians," for two hours. Still, the Lord blessed Paul with his efforts, and we read that all the Jews and Gentiles in the province of Asia heard the Word of the Lord while Paul was there. God also blessed him with some of his most dear companions: Silas, Timothy, Dr. Luke, and Aquila and Priscilla. Even though this journey was difficult, Paul spent over three years in the region convincing many to turn to the Lord, performing amazing miracles, and encouraging and strengthening new believers.

WEEK SEVEN

Into the Fray Acts 17-19

“Now the Berean Jews were of more noble character than those in Thessalonica, for they received the message with great eagerness and examined the Scriptures every day to see if what Paul said was true.”

Acts 17:11 NIV



SMALL GROUP DISCUSSION QUESTION

Read Acts 17:1-4; Isaiah 53:4-6; Psalm 22:1 and Psalm 22:14-18. How did Paul prove that Jesus was the Messiah?

Read Acts 17:5-9. What accusations did the jealous Jews bring against Paul and Silas? Why were they angry with Jason?

*'This Jesus I am telling you
about is the Messiah.'*

SMALL GROUP DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

Read Acts 17:10-15. How were the Berean Jews described in these verses?

What good example did they set for believers today?

“For we know, brothers and sisters loved by God,
that He has chosen you, because our Gospel
came to you not simply with words, but also with
power, with the Holy Spirit, and deep conviction.”
1 Thessalonians 1:4-5 NIV

PRAYER

Praise Jesus Christ as the promised Messiah. Thank the Lord for the Gospel. Ask the Holy Spirit to show you truth as you study the Bible.

Read Acts 17:16-21. How were Athens and the Athenian philosophers described in these verses?

SMALL GROUP DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

Read Acts 17:22-28. Though Paul never changed His message about Jesus Christ and the resurrection, he did change his approach to fit his audience. How did he find common ground with the Athenians?

From verses 26-27, why does God choose our time in history and the place we are to live?

The Areopagus is known as Mars Hill in Athens today, near the Acropolis.

SMALL GROUP DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

Read Acts 17:29-34. Paul was well prepared to speak to the Athenian philosophers. He was from Tarsus which was a Roman educational center, and he studied to become a rabbi under Gamaliel, a top scholar of his day. Paul had studied the Scriptures and knew how to present his beliefs clearly and persuasively. Yet, how did the Athenians respond to his message?

When you speak up as a witness for the Lord, who is responsible for the results?

*In Him we live and
move and have our being.*

PRAYER

Praise God as the Maker of the whole world and everything in it. Thank Him for choosing your exact time and place to live. Ask the Holy Spirit to help you remember to reach out to the Lord in your daily walk with Him.

DAY 3 : ACTS 18:1-23

Aquila and Priscilla were a husband and wife team who worked together as tentmakers as well as in ministry. They are always mentioned together in the Bible, and are a great example of how to use the hospitality of one's home to further God's kingdom.

Read Acts 18:1-11. Why had Aquila and Priscilla moved from Italy to Corinth?

How was Paul treated at the synagogue?

How did God encourage Paul in a vision?

Read Acts 18:12-17. How did God use a non-believing proconsul to protect Paul?

"Greet Priscilla and Aquila, my co-workers in Christ Jesus. They risked their lives for me. Not only I, but all the churches of the Gentiles are grateful to them."

Romans 16:3-4 NIV

Read Acts 18:18-23.

How did Paul conclude his second missionary journey?

Nazarite Vow, a temporary period of consecration to God, during which one abstained from wine and hair cutting. At the end of the vow, the hair was cut and taken to the Temple in Jerusalem and offered to God.

PRAYER

Praise God as the Maker of the whole world and everything in it. Thank Him for choosing your exact time and place to live. Ask the Holy Spirit to help you remember to reach out to the Lord in your daily walk with Him.

SMALL GROUP DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

Read Acts 18:24-28. What did you learn about Apollos from these verses?

What do you think Aquila and Priscilla explained to Apollos? What was the result?

Paul's Third Missionary Journey

Read Acts 19:1-7. What was John's baptism? What was the result of being baptized in the Name of the Lord Jesus?

"The churches in the province of Asia send you greetings. Aquila and Priscilla greet you warmly in the Lord, and so does the church that meets at their house."

1 Corinthians 16:19 NIV

“This went on for two years, so that all the Jews and Greeks who lived in the province of Asia heard the word of the Lord.”

Acts 19:10 NIV

Read Acts 19:8-22. What miracles did God do through Paul?

How did the seven sons of Sceva try to counterfeit Paul's miracles? What happened?

What were those who had practiced sorcery convicted to do?

PRAYER

Praise the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us with every spiritual blessing. Thank Him for adopting you into His family as a son or daughter. Ask that His grace and peace will fill your life this week. (Ephesians 1)

DAY 5 : ACTS 19:23-20:1

Read Acts 19:23-27.

What trouble did Demetrius stir up?

Read Acts 19:28-41.

What was the city clerk afraid might happen?

Read Acts 20:1.

Why do you think Paul left Ephesus at that time?

Let's conclude this week's study with the beautiful words of Paul to the Ephesians:

“For this reason, I kneel before the Father, from whom every family in heaven and on earth derives its name. I pray that out of His glorious riches, He may strengthen you with power through his Spirit in your inner being, so that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith. And I pray that you, being rooted and established in love, may have power, together with all the Lord's holy people, to grasp how wide and long and high and deep is the love of Christ, and to know this love that surpasses all knowledge- that you may be filled to the measure of all the fullness of God. Now to Him who is able to do immeasurably more than all we ask or imagine, according to His power that is at work within us, to Him be glory in the church and in Christ Jesus throughout all generations, forever and ever! Amen.”

Ephesians 3:14-21 NLT

With the sounds of the Ephesian riot still ringing in our ears, we see that Paul encouraged the disciples of Ephesus, and then promptly left for the region of Macedonia. The Lord blessed Paul with an eight-man traveling party which included Dr. Luke, the author of Acts. Wherever Paul went he “spoke words of encouragement” to the believers. The word encouragement does not just mean affirmation, but also instruction, warning, and correction. We have this type of encouragement available today in the Bible. We read in 2 Timothy 3:16 that, “All Scripture is God-breathed and useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting, and training, so that the servant of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work.”

This week we will also see a passing comment in Chapter 20, that when it was time to leave Troas, Paul sent the others ahead by sea to Assos, because he wanted to make the 30-mile journey by foot alone. There is no mention of why he did this. No doubt, he needed some time alone to rest, to pray, and to seek the Lord’s guidance. When he met the ship in Assos and came on board, Paul had a new unswerving desire to go to Jerusalem. Here we see shadows of the time the Lord Jesus prayed alone in the Garden of Gethsemane on the night of His betrayal. After speaking with His Father, Jesus found the resolve he needed, and was able to say to his disciples, “Rise, let us go” on to Jerusalem.

WEEK EIGHT

On To Jerusalem Acts 20-22

“My only aim is to finish the race and complete the task the Lord Jesus has given me—the task of testifying to the Good News of God’s grace.”
Acts 20:24 NIV



SMALL GROUP DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

Read Acts 20:1-6. The men who accompanied Paul were representatives from churches he started in Asia. Which cities were represented?

Do you think they were an encouragement to Paul?
How?

Read Acts 20:7-12. What happened to Eutychus? What was Paul able to do?

*Paul wrote the letter to the Romans
while he was in Greece.*

SMALL GROUP DISCUSSION QUESTION

What do you think was included in Paul's encouragement?

Encouragement in these verses meant telling the new believers everything that God wanted them to know.

PRAYER

Praise God as the great encourager. Thank Him that through the Holy Spirit, His Word, and witness of other believers, you can be equipped with everything you need to know to live as a Christian. Ask that the Holy Spirit will show you someone that needs encouragement this week.

Read Acts 20:13-27.

Where was Paul in a hurry to go and by when?

What had he been told awaited him there?

SMALL GROUP DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

Read Acts 20:28-31. What type of leaders did Paul encourage the Ephesian elders to be? What warning did he give them?

*'Be shepherds of the Church of God,
which He bought with His own blood.'*

SMALL GROUP DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

Read Acts 20:32-38. What example did Paul want believers to follow?

How can you be actively involved in helping the needy in your community?

*'It is more blessed to
give than to receive.'*

PRAYER

Praise God as the One who builds us up through grace. Thank Him that He is preparing a future in heaven for you. Ask that you will have eyes to see the needy in your community, and to know how you can help them.

Read Acts 21:1-9. What did Paul hear from the disciples in Tyre?

Who did the group stay with in Caesarea?

What do you remember about him from Acts Chapters 6 and 8?

SMALL GROUP DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

Read Acts 21:10-16 and Acts 23:11. Again, what did Paul hear from the Prophet Agabus?

After all these warnings, do you think Paul was in God's will when he was determined to go to Jerusalem? Why or why not?

'The Lord's will be done.'

SMALL GROUP DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

Read Acts 21:17-26. What was the rumor the Jerusalem Jews had heard about Paul?

What was the suggestion James and the elders made to him?

Did he take their suggestion? Why?

The elders did not insist the Gentiles live like Jews, nor did they expect the Jews to live like Gentiles. Conformity was not a requirement for salvation, nor was it a requirement for unity within the church.

PRAYER

Praise God as the Creator of Nations. Thank Him for the blessing of diverse cultures. Pray for the unity of common faith in your church family.

DAY 4 : ACTS 21:27-39

Read Acts 21:27-32. It did not take long for the Holy Spirit's warning to come true.

What was Paul accused of in this scene?

What was the result?

Read Acts 21:33-36. How violent was the crowd?

Read Acts 21:37-39. Who did the commander think Paul was?

What request did Paul make to the commander?

PRAYER

Praise God as our Mighty Fortress. Thank Him for His daily protection. Ask that when you are falsely accused, the Holy Spirit will help you know how to respond.

SMALL GROUP DISCUSSION QUESTION

Read Acts 21:40-22:5. How did Paul prove that he understood the crowd's anger?

SMALL GROUP DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

Read Acts 22:6-21. How did Paul use his testimony of conversion to convince the Jews that Jesus was the Son of God?

What did Paul claim to have heard and seen?

How could your personal testimony help you tell others the Good News about Jesus?

Read Acts 22:22-29. What did the crowd do the minute Paul said the word Gentiles?

What trump card did Paul use to keep from being flogged?

A personal testimony is a powerful tool when witnessing for Christ.

PRAYER

Praise the Lord as the Righteous One who washes away sin for all who call on His Name. Thank the Lord for personally giving you a testimony of how He has worked in your life. Pray that when you are called on to share your testimony, you will be ready and willing to share.

After Paul was falsely accused in the Temple in Jerusalem, attacked, and then arrested, he was asked to stand and defend himself five times. First, he addressed the crowd that wanted to kill him, then he stood before the Sanhedrin, Governor Felix, Governor Festus, and finally before King Herod Agrippa II. Paul carefully refuted his charges, but also gave the good confession about Jesus Christ.

We see that Paul instructed Timothy to do the same thing in 1 Timothy 6:12-14. He said, *“Fight the good fight of faith. Take hold of the eternal life to which you were called when you made your good confession in the presence of many witnesses. In the sight of God, who gives life to everything, and of Christ Jesus, who while testifying before Pontius Pilate made the good confession, I charge you to keep this command without spot or blame until the appearing of our Lord Jesus Christ.”* (NIV) So, what is the good confession? In Greek, the word confession is *homologeō* which means “to speak the same as.” Christ confessed before Pilate that He was the King of the Jews, the King of Truth (John 18). The Jews understood from this statement that He was claiming to be the descendant of David, the Messiah, the Son of God. Therefore, when we make the good confession before others, we are to speak the same as Christ did.

The Good Confession by Ethan Longhenry

WEEK NINE

The Good Confession Acts 23-26

“I am saying nothing beyond what the prophets and Moses said would happen—that the Messiah would suffer and, as the first to rise from the dead, would bring the message of light to his own people (the Jews) and to the Gentiles.”
Acts 26:22-23 NIV



DAY 1 : ACTS 22:30-23:22

Read Acts 22:30-23:5. What did the High Priest do when Paul claimed to have a clear conscience? How did Paul respond?

Read Acts 23:6-11. Paul knew how to strike the match of controversy.

What did he say to the assembly?

What was the result?

'My brothers, I have fulfilled my duty to God in all good conscience to this day.'

SMALL GROUP DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

Read Acts 23:12-22. What plot did the group of 40 Jews cook up to try to kill Paul?

Who heard of the plot and warned the commander?

As believers we can trust that God is completely in control of every situation. How does this comfort you today?

“For God is not a God of disorder but of peace-as
in all the congregations of the Lord’s people.”
1 Corinthians 14:33 NIV

PRAYER

Praise God as a God of peace. Thank the Lord for the hope of resurrection. Ask that the Holy Spirit will give you the faith to trust that God is in control of every situation in your life, even the ones which feel out of control.

Read Acts 23:23-35.

Because of the plot to kill Paul, what did the commander decide to do?

Read Acts 24:1-21.

What three charges did the Jews make against Paul?

How did Paul respectfully refute each one?

Felix was the Governor of Judea, the same position Pontius Pilot had held earlier. He was an ex-slave who had been freed, and because his brother was a friend of the emperor, Felix quickly climbed the political ladder. The Jewish historian, Tacitus, said Felix was known to be an immoral man who used his power like a king, but with the character of a slave.

Point of reference: Drusilla was Felix's third wife, whom he had taken from her husband, the King of Syria.

Felix's first wife was the granddaughter of Mark Anthony and Cleopatra; his second wife was a princess, and after divorcing both, he married Drusilla.

Drusilla was the daughter of the Herod who had killed James, the niece of the Herod who had beheaded John the Baptist, and the great-granddaughter of the Herod who ordered the children to be killed around the time of Jesus' birth.

SMALL GROUP DISCUSSION QUESTION

Read Acts 24:22-26. As usual, Paul told Felix about his faith in Christ, but why do you think Felix became uncomfortable with the discussion?

PRAYER

Praise God that He is patient, not wanting anyone to perish, but that everyone will come to Him. Thank Him for the opportunity He freely gives you to get to know Him. Ask that when you are called to give *the good confession*, the Holy Spirit will guide you with the exact words that are needed at the time.

Read Acts 24:27.

God's Classroom of Waiting:

God uses seasons of waiting to teach believers important characteristics such as patience, endurance, and trust.

Paul, who had come from a busy life and ministry, had now been waiting in a Roman prison in Caesarea for over two years. No doubt he had shared the Gospel with every prisoner, jailer, and family member who had passed through. He most likely spent a lot of time writing as well, but hadn't God told him he was to go to Rome? Why was he still there? Added to which, now Felix was gone, and Festus, who was an unknown, was in charge. The uncertainties of that time must have been very difficult.

SMALL GROUP DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

Can you describe a time in your life when you were forced to wait for God's answer or resolution to a problem? Perhaps you are in a season of waiting now.

Would you say God used this season for good in your life? In what ways?

Read Acts 25:1-12. How did Paul use his rights as a Roman citizen to his advantage in these verses?

Jerusalem was the center of the Jewish government, while Caesarea was the local headquarters for the Roman government.

Read Acts 25:13-27.

Who had assembled to hear Paul's defense?

How was God using this trial to spread the Gospel?

They had some points of dispute with him about a dead man named Jesus who Paul claimed was alive.

PRAYER

Praise God as the living God who sees us. Thank the Lord for His care for you in the good times as well as the difficult. Ask that you would be able to understand His purpose for the season you are in now.

SMALL GROUP DISCUSSION QUESTION

Read Acts 26:1-11. Why did Paul say he was on trial?

SMALL GROUP DISCUSSION QUESTION

Read Acts 26:12-18 and Acts 9:3-6. During this trial, Paul told more about what God had said to him on the Road to Damascus than what we read in the first account.

What new information did you learn in these verses?

King Agrippa II was the last of the Herodian dynasty of kings. All were appointed by Rome to govern Palestine. Bernice was his sister, and some thought his mistress as well.

Read Acts 26:19-23.

To whom did Paul believe God wanted him to tell the Good News about Christ?

Was Paul faithful to his call?

*I stand here to testify to
small and great alike.*

PRAYER

Praise the Lord as the Light of the World. Thank Him for the hope that you have for guidance, blessing, and protection in this life, and the promise of eternity with Him. Thank Him that He is the God of the small and the great. Ask that the Holy Spirit will give you joy in your relationship with Christ.

DAY 5 : ACTS 26:24-32

Read Acts 26:24-29.

What reaction did Paul's testimony elicit from Festus?

How did Paul respond?

What do you think was Agrippa's tone when he responded to Paul?

How did Paul respond?

I pray to God that both you and everyone here in this audience might become the same as I am.

SMALL GROUP DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

Read Acts 26:30-32. Why couldn't Festus release Paul?

What do you think would have happened to Paul if he was released at that time?

PRAYER

Praise God as the God of truth. Thank Him that He will continue to draw people to himself until He returns. Pray for anyone you know today that has a hard heart towards God.

Sometimes God saved Paul from the storm or trial or beating, and sometimes He saved Paul through them. In Acts 9 during Paul's conversion, the Lord told Ananias that Paul would suffer for His Name, and suffer he did. In 2 Corinthians 11 we see a catalogue of Paul's great suffering during his ministry. Suffering changed Paul, and it changes us. Suffering can make us bitter, fearful, depressed, and lonely. Or when placed in the Lord's hands, suffering can develop our godly character with humility, perseverance, and even hope. Seasons of suffering can be times of nearness to God like no other. Suffering can be used for good in our lives or it can be wasted.

Paul was blessed with incredible access to God. He saw heaven, had visions, and heard God's voice. He was given miraculous powers to confirm his message. Paul healed the sick, cast out demons, and even raised the dead, but suffering kept him humble. Through it all, he never lost sight of where this power came from, and he never stopped talking about God's grace. Suffering was part of Paul's journey, and as Christians we can learn a lot from him on how to suffer well.

WEEK TEN

Through the Storm Acts 27-28

“For two whole years Paul stayed in his own rented house and welcomed all who came to see him. He proclaimed the Kingdom of God and taught about the Lord Jesus Christ-with all boldness and without hindrance!”
Acts 28:30-31 NIV



DAY 1 : ACTS 27:1-12

Read Acts 27:1-2.

Who accompanied Paul onboard?

Read Acts 27:3-8.

In what way did the centurion, Julius, show Paul kindness?

'With difficulty, they came to a place called Fair Havens.'

SMALL GROUP DISCUSSION QUESTION

Read Acts 27:9-12 and 2 Corinthians 11:25.

What knowledge do you think Paul had that led him to warn the crew?

The Day of Atonement was a major Jewish festival held in October. This would have been the end of the sailing season. Paul's trip to Rome occurred in A.D. 59.

PRAYER

Praise God as the Maker of heaven and earth, the sea and everything in them. Thank Him for remaining faithful forever. (Psalm 146:6) Ask that you will have the ability to recognize any warnings the Holy Spirit gives, and the ability to respond in the right way.

DAY 2 : ACTS 27:13-26

Read Acts 27:13-20.

What measures did the crew take to secure the ship?

Read Acts 27:21-26.

What promise did an angel of God make to Paul?

'When neither sun nor stars appeared for many days, and the storm continued raging, we finally gave up all hope of being saved.'

SMALL GROUP DISCUSSION QUESTION

What characteristic would you say helped Paul endure the terrible storm?

'Go take courage! For I believe God!'

PRAYER

Praise God who is mighty to save. Thank Him for being with you on the highest mountain and the lowest valley. Ask to sense His presence in whatever you are facing this week.

DAY 3 : ACTS 27:27-44

Midnight, the 14th night of the storm, being driven across the Adriatic Sea, the sailors sensed approaching land, took soundings, the water was 120 feet deep, then 90 feet, they feared they would crash into the rocks, so they dropped four anchors off the stern and prayed for daylight.

Read Acts 27:27-32.

What did Paul say must happen for everyone to live?

276 souls onboard

SMALL GROUP DISCUSSION QUESTION

Read Acts 27:33-38. Do you think Paul's calmness in this situation would cause those onboard to consider his God? Why or why not?

Read Acts 27:39-44.

Consider the terrifying details of this scene...

"And of this Gospel I, Paul, was appointed a herald and an apostle and a teacher. That is why I am suffering as I am.

Yet this is no cause for shame, because I know whom I have believed, and am convinced that He is able to guard what I have entrusted to Him until that day."

2 Timothy 1:11-12 NIV

PRAYER

Praise God as your blessed hope. Thank Him for His love and mercy. Ask that He will guide and protect you this week.

DAY 4 : ACTS 28:1-16

Read Acts 28:1-10.

What did God provide for Paul and the ship-wreck survivors on the island of Malta?

How did God continue to give Paul miraculous powers to help substantiate his message?

The bay on the north side of Malta is named the Bay of St. Paul. When Paul was ship-wrecked there and stayed three months, the islanders were converted to Christianity. The Island of Malta continues to be Christian today.

SMALL GROUP DISCUSSION QUESTION

Read Acts 28:11-16.

After such a hard journey, how was God gracious to Paul when he finally reached Rome?

PRAYER

Praise God as the giver of every good and perfect gift. Thank Him for being a shelter in the storms of life. Ask that you will have words of encouragement for anyone you meet that is in distress.

SMALL GROUP DISCUSSION QUESTION

Read Acts 28:17-20.

What was the “hope of Israel?”

Read Acts 27:21-28. What did the local Jewish leaders want to hear about?

What did Paul tell them?

How did Paul see their reactions as a fulfillment of Scripture?

“For I am not ashamed of the Gospel, because it is the power of God that brings salvation to everyone who believes: first to the Jew, then to the Gentile. For in the Gospel, the righteousness of God is revealed- a righteousness that is by faith from first to last, just as it is written, ‘The righteous will live by faith.’ ”

Romans 1:16-17 NIV

SMALL GROUP DISCUSSION QUESTION

Read Acts 27:30-31. How did Paul spend his two years under house arrest in Rome?

*He also wrote the 'Prison Epistles':
Ephesians, Philippians, Colossians,
and Philemon during this time.*

PRAYER

Praise God as the Author and Perfector of our faith. Thank Him for the power of the Gospel to erase sin, and to change lives. Thank Him for the opportunity to study the Acts of the Apostles. Pray that the Holy Spirit will continue to remind you of lessons you have learned in this study.

EPILOGUE

Come Before Winter

The curtain closed on the Book of Acts with Paul, alive and well, freely teaching anyone who would listen about the Good News of Jesus Christ. It is interesting that we never hear of a trial before Caesar. Dr. Luke, a meticulous historian, certainly would have mentioned it if such a trial had taken place. It is thought that Paul was released without a trial because there was no substantiated evidence against him. There are hints from his letters that he was released and traveled teaching and preaching, maybe even on a fourth Missionary journey. It appears that Paul was later imprisoned again in Rome, but this time not in a home but in a cold, harsh cell. In the final letter of his life, Paul wrote to Timothy, and we read his personal remarks in 2 Timothy 4:9-22. From these verses we see that, even in terrible conditions and knowing that his life was drawing to an end, he asked for the strength to fully proclaim the message of Jesus. Tradition has it that Paul was killed under Nero around A.D. 64-67.

As we mentioned at the beginning of this study, the Acts of the Apostles continues. The book was left incomplete, and it is our turn to join the ranks of believers who, through the ages, have witnessed the truth of the Risen Lord. This is our mission, our goal, and our calling until Christ Himself returns. We want to be able to say with Paul, as he said in 2 Timothy 4:7-8, 22, "I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith. Now there is in store for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, will reward to me on that day-and not only to me, but also to all who have longed for His appearing."

"The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with your spirit, Brothers and Sisters. Amen."

THE BRANCH

By Janet Fulmer

The Branch-
Fulfillment of God's covenant to David.
A promise that his house, and his kingdom,
And his throne would endure.

The Branch-
That rose up from the stump of Jesse.
A stump that was all that was left of Israel's tree,
After God's wrathful ax was finished.

The Branch-
The long-awaited Messiah,
Who came to bring peace to all those
Who believe in Him.
Who will rule one day in
Righteousness and justice.

A Branch-
Each New Testament believer who
Remains in Him,
Pruned to bear good fruit, and united with
Others to glorify God with one voice.
Encouraged and empowered to hope in the
Righteous Branch,
Our Savior and Lord.



