

2021

# Life Group Lessons



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1/1/2021



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## Sunday January 10<sup>th</sup> – Acts 1:1-5

*Opening Prayer: Father, as we begin this study in Acts give us insight and wisdom to understand the meaning of each passage. As our understanding increases give us the courage and boldness to live out the gospel message to the world around us.*

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Read Acts 1:1-5

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1) The number forty occurs many times in scripture – forty days of the flood, the Israelites wandered for forty years in the desert, Jesus was forty days in the wilderness and here in Acts 1 we see that Jesus was forty days with the disciples following His resurrection.

A period of forty years or days in the bible represents a time of transition. The period preceding the 'forty' has ended and the period that is to come is pending.

What are the preceding and pending periods in:

- 1) The exodus (slavery – freedom)
  - 2) The flood (sinfulness and corruption – a new start)
  - 3) The post resurrection period (The announcement of the good news – the coming of the Holy Spirit and the spread of the gospel)
- 2) Reflect upon the teaching of this past Sunday. Recall what points were made. What is their significance? How are we to apply these truths in our everyday lives?
- 3) Read: Matthew 3:11; Mark 1:8; Luke 3:16; John 1:33

What is the 'baptism of the Holy Spirit? Why is it mentioned in all four gospels and in Acts 1:5?

4) What then is the pending period in Acts?

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Check in with each other. Pray for each other.



## Sunday January 17<sup>th</sup> – Acts 1:6-11 (part 1)

*Opening Prayer: Lord, while we await your glorious return we need your Holy Spirit to empower and guide us to the Kingdom work to which you have called each of us. For when we have been slack in our work we ask for forgiveness. For the work ahead we ask for courage, patience and wisdom.*

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Read Luke 24:50-51; Acts 1: 6-11

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- 1) Read Exodus 24. Moses ascends the mountain, the elders were told to wait until Moses returned (Exod. 24:14). How is this a foreshadowing of Acts 6:1-11?
- 2) Compare Acts 1 vs.3 and vs.6. The disciples had witnessed the life, ministry, teaching, death and resurrection of Jesus and had spent the past forty days with Him and listening to Him. What is uppermost in Jesus mind? (vs.3) What is uppermost in the disciples' minds right now? (vs.6) Why are they different?
- 3) The disciples were challenged to refocus their thinking. How might we, with all of life's challenges, revise our thinking about God's divine program and perfect timing?
- 4) What, then, is the significance for us of the ascension of Christ as High Priest and sacrifice into the presence of God?
- 5) When the power of the Holy Spirit was promised it was for a purpose. What is that purpose in your life? (vss.7,8) Be specific, what ministry have *you* been called to?
- 6) There has been a gap of two thousand years between the beginning of vs.11 and the closing phrase...Jesus is coming back...are we '*standing around staring at the sky*'? Or are we each fully engaged in our Holy Spirit empowered calling?
- 7) There is much Kingdom work yet to do...let us pray for a fresh understanding of our calling as witnesses and kingdom workers and pray that we will be diligent in it.

Read the following passages from Hebrews. Discuss their interpretation of the Ascension of Christ:

Hebrews 4:14-16; 7:23-26; 8:1-2; 9:11; 9:24; 12:18-21.

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Check in with each other. Pray for each other.



## Sunday January 24<sup>th</sup> – Acts 1:6-11 (part 2)

*Note: We are in the same text of Acts as last week, Acts 1:6-11. The focus this week is on Christ as ascended King.*

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*Opening Prayer: Lord, we are reminded during difficult times that you are sovereign King over all your creation. Let us be encouraged and be an encouragement to others that you are King of Kings and Lord of Lords. There is nothing in all creation that can separates us from your love.*

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Read Luke 24:50-51; Acts 1:6-11

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Read the following passages. Discuss their contexts and how they interpret the Ascension of Jesus:

Acts 2:36; Acts 5:31; Ephesians 1:19-21; Philippians 2:9-11; Colossians 3:1-4; Hebrews 1:3

Discuss the significance for us of the Ascension of Christ as King into the presence of God.

What is the practical importance of this for the life and mission of the church?

What encouragement should the believer draw from these teachings?

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Check in with each other. Pray for each other.

Pray that our political leaders will lead with Godly wisdom. Pray specifically for our Prime Minister and our Premier – that they would come to know Christ as saviour and lead our country and province accordingly.



## Sunday January 31<sup>st</sup> – Acts 2:1-13

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*Opening Prayer: Come Holy Spirit! Fill our hearts and lives with your power. Give us the power and the courage to spread the Good News of hope and salvation through Jesus Christ alone.*

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Read Acts 2:1-13, Genesis 11:1-11, Luke 11:11-13

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Acts 2:1-13.

What was the meaning of the day of Pentecost? Why was this an appropriate day for the outpouring of the Spirit?

Discuss the significance of wind and the tongues of fire in the context of the crowd which had gathered.

Genesis 11:1-9. Discuss the context and how it sheds light on the story of the outpouring of the Spirit on the day of Pentecost. What is the significance of the miracle of languages?

How do the events of the day of Pentecost relate to the Kingdom of God and the mission of the gospel?

Luke 11:11-13. What does this teach regarding God's desire to give the Holy Spirit? Our attitude to the Spirit?

Going Deeper:

What has been your personal experience of the Holy Spirit? How have you and the Holy Spirit's empowerment advanced the commission of the church?

God desires to give you His Holy Spirit. What does that mean for you?

If the Holy Spirit is given to empower our witness, what difference should that make in your life?

How can we encourage each other to allow the Holy Spirit more control of our lives and ministry?





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Check in with each other. Pray for each other.

Prayer focus: That the Holy Spirit will renew our call to be witnesses to the Truth found only in Jesus Christ. In a world that has no compass we are the “*salt of the earth and the light of the world*” Matthew 5:13-14. What is your answer to, “Whom shall I send?” Isaiah 6:8.

## Sunday February 7<sup>th</sup> – Acts 2:14-41

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*Opening Prayer: Lord, renew our hearts. Fill us again with your Holy Spirit. Make us bold witnesses to this darkened and hostile world. Give us opportunity and courage to declare the gospel truth even in the face of ridicule and hostility.*

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Read Acts 2:14-41

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# The First Sermon

## What does it mean to be a Christian?

### 1. A New Understanding

*“Then Peter stood up with the Eleven, raised his voice and addressed the crowd: ‘Fellow Jews and all of you who live in Jerusalem, let me explain this to you; listen carefully to what I say.’”*  
Acts 2:14 (NIV)

Peter, filled with the Holy Spirit (Acts 2:4) stood in the midst of a hostile, mocking crowd and gave a bold testimony. Read 1 Peter 3:15. We are called to be witnesses, to give our testimony. Discuss the opportunities you have had to be a bold witness. When have you experienced ridicule or hostility for your faith?

### 2. A New Vision of Jesus

*“Therefore let all Israel be assured of this: God has made this Jesus, whom you crucified, both Lord and **Messiah**.”* Acts 2:36 (NIV)

Jesus asked His disciples, “Who do people say that I am?” (Matthew 16:13-20). What does Peter say in Acts 2:36 – what does this mean? What are people (in our culture) saying today about Jesus? What do you say?





### 3. A New Heart

*"When the people heard this, they were cut to the heart and said to Peter and the other apostles, 'Brothers, what shall we do?'" Acts 2:37 (NIV)*

Read Ezekiel 11:19 & 36:26. What has been God's intention since the Fall of Adam & Eve? How is God accomplishing this? What has been your experience of this 'new heart'?

### 4. A New Allegiance

<sup>37</sup> *When the people heard this, they were cut to the heart and said to Peter and the other apostles, "Brothers, what shall we do?"*

<sup>38</sup> *Peter replied, "Repent and be baptized, every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins. And you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. <sup>39</sup> The promise is for you and your children and for all who are far off—for all whom the Lord our God will call."*

<sup>40</sup> *With many other words he warned them; and he pleaded with them, "Save yourselves from this corrupt generation." <sup>41</sup> Those who accepted his message were baptized, and about three thousand were added to their number that day. Acts 2:37-41 (NIV)*

The day you received Him (John 1:12) you became a new creation (2 Corinthians 5:17). Your old ways and beliefs are changed once you have the new heart. What 'old beliefs' did you let go of when you were saved? Where is your trust and hope today?

Read Ephesians 4:16-17. Now that your thinking has changed, no longer 'futile', what is your part in "the Body" – the church – where are you advancing the Kingdom?



Sunday February 21<sup>st</sup> – Acts 2:42-47

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*Opening Prayer: Lord, draw us into close fellowship with you and with each other. Sustain our fellowship by the Holy Spirit, Guide our study and our life together.*

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Read: Acts 2:42-47, 4:32–35; 5:12–16.

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## The New Community

Acts 2:42-47

### The Devotion of the First Church

As the early church came to life in Acts 2, there were four 'pillars' that gave it life and structure. These pillars remain to this day. The heart of the church, that body of people worldwide and in every tribe and tongue who confess Jesus as Lord, has always been – the reading, studying and sharing of scriptures, gathering together in fellowship, sharing the Lord's supper and praying together. Wherever followers of Jesus are found, these four essentials will be found among them. These pillars are given to us in Acts 2:42.

*They devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching  
and to the fellowship,  
to the breaking of bread  
and to prayer. (Acts 2:42 NIV)*

### They Devoted Themselves....

***...to the apostles' teaching...***

"Everyone was filled with awe at the many wonders and signs performed by the apostles." (v. 43)

*"The actual call of Jesus and the response of single-minded obedience have an irrevocable significance. [Jesus] knows that it is only through actual obedience that a man can become liberated to believe. The elimination of single-minded obedience on principle is but another instance of the perversion of the costly grace of the call of Jesus into the cheap grace of self-justification." (Dietrich Bonhoeffer, The Cost of Discipleship)*

This first pillar is central to our continued understanding of what God has called us to. Without our regular reading and studying of scripture – "*the apostles teaching*", and sharing life with our fellow believers, we cannot grow in the understanding and practice of our faith.



*Describe your practice and habits of scripture study? How do you compare with the "noble Bereans" (Acts 17:11)?*

**...to the Fellowship...**

To be in fellowship is to share life together. The abandon meeting together or to stay away is to separate oneself from the family of God (Hebrews 10:25). It is in fellowship that we "bear one another's burdens (Galatians 6:2).

While there may be times when meeting together is difficult, our regular practice should be to be together in prayer and worship.

*What is your 'habit' regarding sharing life together in the fellowship?*

**...to the Breaking of Bread...**

*"Every day they continued to meet together in the temple courts.  
They broke bread in their homes and ate together with glad  
and sincere hearts" (vv. 46-47)*

When Jesus met with His disciples before His crucifixion, He broke bread with them. He gave them the instruction to, "do this in remembrance of me." (Luke 22:19). While this is a command of our Lord and saviour, it is also an invitation to share in close fellowship with your brothers and sisters in Christ.

*What is your sense of belonging when we gather at the Lord's table?*

When we share the Lord's supper it is both a memorial of the Last Supper as commanded by Jesus, and it is a foretaste of the banquet that awaits. Rev 19:7-9

*How are you looking forward and preparing for that great and glorious day?*

**...to the Prayers...**

Our prayers come in many forms. It is through prayer that we connect with God, converse with Him and enter into His fellowship. Our private prayer life is essential to our growth in Christlikeness. Our times of fellowship prayer together give us opportunity to lift up each other to our God for healing, comfort and restoration.

*Paul urged us to, "pray without ceasing" (1 Thessalonians 5:17 KJV). How do you accomplish this? How would you describe your prayer life?*



*Jesus' practice was to rise early to go to prayer (Mark 1:35). Why do you think rising early for prayer might be beneficial for us?*

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What was the result of this close fellowship within the early church?

Read Acts 4:32-35. Discuss how our church fellowship is modelled after this?

Read Acts 5:12-16 Discuss how our church fellowship is like this...or not?

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Check in with each other – ask for prayer – pray for one another.

Sunday February 28<sup>th</sup> – Acts 3:1-10

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*Opening Prayer: Lord of heaven and earth, all authority is in your hands. We pray for healing in our lives and in the lives of all our community.*

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Read: Acts 3:1-10

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## The First Miracle

Acts 3:1-10

<sup>1</sup> One day Peter and John were going up to the temple at the time of prayer—at three in the afternoon. <sup>2</sup> Now a man who was lame from birth was being carried to the temple gate called Beautiful, where he was put every day to beg from those going into the temple courts. <sup>3</sup> When he saw Peter and John about to enter, he asked them for money. <sup>4</sup> Peter looked straight at him, as did John. Then Peter said, “Look at us!” <sup>5</sup> So the man gave them his attention, expecting to get something from them.

<sup>6</sup> Then Peter said, “Silver or gold I do not have, but what I do have I give you. In the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, walk.” <sup>7</sup> Taking him by the right hand, he helped him up, and instantly the man’s feet and ankles became strong. <sup>8</sup> He jumped to his feet and began to walk. Then he went with them into the temple courts, walking and jumping, and praising God. <sup>9</sup> When all the people saw him walking and praising God, <sup>10</sup> they recognized him as the same man who used to sit begging at the temple gate called Beautiful, and they were filled with wonder



*and amazement at what had happened to him.*

Read Luke 5:17-36. What does this passage teach about miracles? healing? authority?

How does this assist our understanding of what is happening in Acts 3:1-10?

The man in Acts 3 was not looking for healing. He was looking for financial support to help him in his present 'unalterable' condition. What was it that Peter was offering that mere money could not possibly provide?

Read Isaiah 35:5-6. What four conditions are listed here? (blind, deaf, lame, mute)

Read Matthew 9:33; 12:22; 15:30-31, Mark 7:37

What should the Jewish leaders and followers have understood from Isaiah about Jesus' healing miracles? (Isaiah is called "the Great prophet" in Judaism)

Matthew 11:1-5 – What is Jesus saying here? Who is He talking about?

Mark 7:32,37; 9:25,26; Matthew 15:31 – How did all these incapacitated people get to Jesus to be healed? What do we learn from that?

What is the nature and purpose of miracles?

How do miracles operate in our lives today?

How should John 15:16 shape our life, ministry and witness?

Read John 9. The two men, born blind (John 9) and born lame (Acts 3) were 'born that way.' There was no remedy available to their condition. They were destined to spend their lives without hope or healing.

In these two passages the presence of Jesus – even the Name of Jesus - brought healing, restoration, and joy into their lives. What does this say about any human condition today?

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Take time to check in and pray for each other



## Sunday March 7<sup>th</sup> – Acts 4:1-22

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*Opening Prayer: Lord, forgive us for those times we have avoided speaking boldly in Your Name. Give us courage to be proclaimers of the truth that is found in no other Name.*

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Read: Acts 4:1-22

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Read Acts 4:1-22.

What is the main message of the Apostles?

Why are the Sadducees threatened by this?

What is Peter's response?

Compare Luke 20:9-19 with today's passage.

What parallels do you see?

What is the consequence of rejecting the Son?

Read Psalm 118.

How does the whole Psalm speak to the significance of this event in Acts 4?

Compare Daniel 3:6-18 with today's passage.

What parallels do you see?

What can we learn from Acts 4:1-22 about how we should respond in the face of opposition?

What has been your experience when witnessing to your faith in Jesus? What has been the response when you introduce the name of Jesus in a conversation?

How would you rate your "boldness" in faith discussions with people who are not believers in Jesus?

How do you respond to other worldviews, to people who believe in "another name?"



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Take time to check in with each other and – pray for one another.

## Sunday March 14<sup>th</sup> – Acts 4:21-31

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*Opening Prayer: Give us boldness to proclaim Your Truth in every situation. Give us courage to confront errors and falsehoods – Let the Name of Jesus be on our lips as we advance Your Kingdom purposes.*

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Read: Acts 4:23-31

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Read Acts 4:21-22

Why could the religious leaders not punish Peter and John?

Where else have we read of a person born with a permanent disability being healed?

Why were Peter and John threatened?

Analyze and discuss the prayer:

Verse 24b

Verse 25b – 26

What is the connection between v27 and 24b-26?

Did God know that His followers would be arrested and persecuted? V 28.

Why does God not stop this?

If you or a friend were arrested for being a follower of Jesus, how would you pray?

How did the disciples pray? What did they pray for?





How did God respond to their prayer?

How does God respond to your prayers?

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Take time to check in with each other and – pray for one another.

Sunday March 21<sup>st</sup> – Acts 4:32-5:16

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*Opening Prayer: Lord, may we too be 'one in heart and mind' as were these first disciples. May you Holy Spirit guide and teach us and may we again see signs and wonders as we boldly speak the truth of the gospel of Jesus Christ.*

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Read: Acts 4:32 - 5:16

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Three Lessons:

**1. Life Together – 4:32-37**

First century life for the common person would have been quite different than life today in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. Our society is affluent – indeed from a global perspective we are the wealthiest of all people. So how then can we model the level of 'community' sharing that prevailed on these early disciples? How do we make sure there are 'no needy persons among us'?

Do we still see this kind of generosity in our time – selling of lands and homes to make sure others are well looked after?

Read Ephesians 4:1-3. Are we living 'a life worthy of the calling'?

Are we continuing on the 'boldness' that we have from the Holy Spirit – to proclaim the Truth of Jesus Christ in our society?

**2. Sinning Against the Holy Spirit – 5:1-11**

Chapter 5:1-11 is a very fearsome story. Following on from 4:36-37 where Joseph (Barnabas) sold property and gave the proceeds to the Apostles, what are the common elements and where are the differences in the Ananias and Sapphira story?

How does Peter know they were being deceptive? See 1 Corinthians 12:8.



The instant death of two deceivers in front of their friends and community would be terrifying for the witnesses. Why did God cause their deaths? What does this teach us about honesty and integrity in the church?

Compare this event with Joshua 7:1-26. What is the price of deception before God?

### **3. Signs & Wonders – 5:12-16**

If miraculous signs were being performed (5:12) why, then, were people afraid to join them? (5:13)

If we look ahead to 5:17 we see the Sadducees 'filled with jealousy.' Why would this be?

Do you see how Luke is showing the momentum growing as this new movement takes hold?

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Take time to check in with each other and – pray for one another.

## **Sunday April 4<sup>th</sup> – Acts 5:17-42**

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*Opening Prayer: Lord, we praise you for this day – Resurrection Day. Your hope and joy are increased as we contemplate your resurrection from the dead, inviting us to new life in You.*

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Read: Acts 5:17-42

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### **In His Steps**

This passage from Acts 5 has some remarkable parallels from the gospels. The way in which Jesus was arrested and mistreated and the empty tomb is mirrored here as the disciples are mistreated by the same people.



Acts 5:17-25	Compare these verses
17 Then the high priest and all his associates, who were members of the party of the Sadducees, were filled with jealousy	Matthew 27:18
18 They arrested the apostles and put them in the public jail.	Mark 14:46 John 18:12
19 But during the night an angel of the Lord opened the doors of the jail and brought them out.	Matthew 28:2
20 "Go, stand in the temple courts," he said, "and tell the people the full message of this new life."	Matthew 28:18-20 Mark 16:15
22 But on arriving at the jail, the officers did not find them there. So they went back and reported,	Matt 28:6-10
23 "We found the jail securely locked, with the guards standing at the doors; but when we opened them, we found no one inside."	Matthew 27:65-66
24 On hearing this report, the captain of the temple guard and the chief priests were puzzled, wondering what would come of this.	Matthew 28:11
25 Then someone came and said, "Look! The men you put in jail are standing in the temple courts teaching the people."	John 20:18

In 1 Peter 2:21 we read, *"To this you were called, because Christ suffered for you, leaving you an example, that you should follow in his steps."*

The scripture in Acts 5 shows that the disciples did in fact follow in Jesus' steps. How willing are we to speak God's truth boldly to the point of arrest and imprisonment?

## Inverted Trial

Again, there is a gospel parallel here in Acts 5:27-32. Compare that with John 21:24-27. Who is putting whom on trial?

## Unstoppable Kingdom

Read Acts 5:33-42

The disciples had turned their trial into a trial of the Sanhedrin.

What was the Sanhedrin's response? v.33



What was the disciples' response? v.41

What happened to the Good News? v.42

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Take time to check in with each other and – pray for one another.

Sunday April 11<sup>th</sup> – Acts 6:1-7

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*Opening Prayer: Lord, as you have called us to 'good works' that you have prepared for us, give us the sense of call and a willing response to fully enter into Kingdom service.*

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Read: Acts 6:1-7

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Check back with Acts 2:41; 4:4; 5:14, now reread 6:1 and 6:7. What message is Luke wanting to affirm?

What is the main focus of Acts 6:1-7? Why is this important?

What can we learn about church governance from this text?

Leadership: \_\_\_\_\_

Decision Making: \_\_\_\_\_

Ministry Focus: \_\_\_\_\_

Serving: \_\_\_\_\_

What qualifications are needed for service? See also 1 Timothy 3:8-13

What is the result when a church is governed well and service is a key part of that church's ministry?

Since we are (Eph. 2:10) ...God's workmanship, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do....what is your ministry of service?

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Take time to check in with each other and – pray for one another.



## Sunday April 25<sup>th</sup> – Acts 6:8-8:1

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*Opening Prayer: Lord give each of us the courage to stand up for Jesus and the Truth. Give us opportunity to be bold and fearless as Stephen was.*

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Read: Acts 6:8 – 8:1

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1. From the following references what do we learn about Stephen?

Acts 6:5 \_\_\_\_\_

6:8 \_\_\_\_\_

6:10 \_\_\_\_\_

6:15 \_\_\_\_\_

7:55-56 \_\_\_\_\_

7:59-60 \_\_\_\_\_

2. Stephen gave a long 'speech' to the Sanhedrin. Was it rehearsed?

How would you handle yourself if arrested for being a follower of Jesus?

Read Matthew 10:19-20 and Luke 12:11-12

How would you prepare to be put on trial for your faith?

3. What were the charges against Stephen?
  4. What gave Stephen such courage to face the Sanhedrin?
  5. How do you handle false accusations?
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Take time to check in with each other and – pray for one another.



Sunday May 2<sup>nd</sup> – Acts 8:2-31

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Opening Prayer: *Lord, give us listening ears to hear the prompting of the Holy Spirit to share the gospel truth with even strangers.*

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Read: Acts 8:2-31

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**As the Word of God Moves the World has Two Responses.**

Stephen had spoken the truth to the Sanhedrin – and he spoke it from their own ‘bible’ (Acts 7) yet they rejected him and his message. Stephen was martyred. When people hear the Truth, they often reject the message and the messenger.

When have you tried to share the gospel and been personally attacked (physically or verbally)?

When this persecution began, the people were scattered throughout Judea and Samaria (Acts 8:1).

What is the significance of the Christians going into Samaria? (John 4:9)

What happened to the spread of the gospel? (Acts 8:4)

Have you met anyone who has come to Canada to escape persecution? Can you share their story?

What is the result of preaching the Truth where it is received? (Acts 8:6)

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Can the church expect to be protected from persecution? Read John 15:18-20

What are we being called to in times of persecution? Read Matthew 10:38-39

Should we try to avoid persecution? Read Matthew 5:10-12

What are the two responses to the gospel?

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What is happening in the world today regarding the gospel?

Are you prepared for persecution?

What did Jesus say can never happen? Matthew 16:18

### **Simon the Sorcerer (Acts 8:9-13; 18-24)**

What words are used to describe Simon the Sorcerer? Acts 8:9-11.

What does Simon not understand? (Acts 8:18-19)

What is the correct understanding? (1 Cor. 12:11; 28-30; Romans 12:6)

What is/are your Spiritual Gifts?

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### **Philip & The Ethiopian (Acts 8:26-31)**

How would you describe the two-part instructions the Spirit gave Philip? Acts 8:26 & 29.

What was the result of this encounter? (Acts 8:36)

Samaria is north of Jerusalem,

Gaza is south-west of Jerusalem.

and Ethiopia is on another continent.

Where is the gospel going?

Are you listening to the Spirit when you are prompted to “go here...or there”?

Do you ever ‘feel’ prompted to start a conversation with a stranger?

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Take time to check in with each other and – pray for one another.

Sunday May 16<sup>th</sup> – Acts 9:1-31

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Opening Prayer: *Lord, as we read of Sauls conversion from persecutor to preacher of Your Truth...let us be reminded that we too are called into Your Kingdom service as*





*witnesses to that same Truth – “There is no other name by which men can be saved”*  
*Acts 4:12.*

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Read: Acts 9:1-31

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### **From Persecuting to Preaching**

What do we know of Saul of Tarsus?

Read Philippians 3:4-6: How did Paul list his justification under the law?

How did Paul preach justification: Romans 3:28; Romans 5:1; Romans 10:10;  
Galatians 3:11; Galatians 3:24; Galatians 5:4

How did the Lord get Saul's attention: Acts 9:3-6?

How dramatic was the occasion when the Lord got your attention?

God had work for Saul to do...He also has work for a man named Ananias to do.

Bonus study: How many Ananiases are mentioned in the NT? What did they each do?

This Ananias, in Acts 9...Why did God choose Him to reach out to Saul in Damascus?  
Read Acts 22:12.

What is happening in Acts 9:13-14? Compare that with Exodus 3:11, 13; 4:1, 10, 13?

Why do we make excuses when we hear the clear call of God to “Go!”

How was Saul able to switch so quickly from persecutor to preacher? Acts 9:20

Once again, we see the two responses to God's truth Acts 9:23 & 29 and 9:31

Compare Acts 9:26-28 with Galatians 1:11-24 Can you resolve the timeline for  
Saul/Paul's ministry?

Note again that when the church is persecuted – it grows! Read and memorize Matthew  
16:18.

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Take time to check in with each other and – pray for one another.



## Sunday May 23<sup>rd</sup> – Acts 10:1-48

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Opening Prayer: *Lord, give us eyes to see the 'other' in our midst as a brother. Forgive us for thinking less of any other person created in Your image. Make our hearts open to receive all as fellow sinners seeking God's grace and forgiveness.*

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Read: Acts 10:1-48

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1. In what way is God at work in the nations even before the Gospel is preached?  
Read Ecclesiastes 3:11; Psalm 19:1-4; Romans 1:20
2. What is the meaning of Peter's vision and what is its significance for us today?  
Acts 10:15. What is Peter's answer in 10:28?  
Do we/you look on any people or people groups with any sense of their being lesser people?
3. What are some reasons the event described in Acts 10 can be called "the Gentile Pentecost" even though it did not occur during the Jewish celebration of Pentecost?  
Compare Acts 10:44 and Acts 2:4-12  
Who were astonished/amazed in Acts 2? Who were astonished/amazed in Acts 10?
4. What might be the relevance or implication for us of Peter's words "They have received the Holy Spirit just as we have"?  
Read Joel 2:28; Acts 2:17
5. Do people in our church have negative feelings about other cultures which the Lord needs to confront? Read Colossians 3:11; Acts 1:8

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Take time to check in with each other and – pray for one another.



## Sunday May 30<sup>th</sup> – Acts 11:19-26

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Opening Prayer: *Lord, let us be gracious as we receive encouragement and give us grace to be encouragers.*

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Read: Acts 11:19-26

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What kind of a man was Barnabas? V24

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What was the result of his goodness? \_\_\_\_\_

What kind of encouragement did Moses receive in Exodus 17:8–16.

How was Elizabeth an encouragement to Mary in Luke 1:42–45.

How was Barnabas an encouragement to Saul/Paul in Acts 9:27?

From these examples, what does encouragement mean? How can we practice encouragement?

Who is/was a source of encouragement/inspirational model for you?

How has your life and Christian walk been affected by that?

Read 1 Thessalonians 5:11

Is there someone you could call today and be an encouragement to them?

Will you call them?

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Take time to check in with each other and – pray for one another.



## Sunday June 6<sup>th</sup> – Acts 12:1-24

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Opening Prayer: *Lord, teach us to be a people of prayer. While our world is spinning out of control, remind us that You are sovereign – in complete control – and that we have nothing to fear – for you are God Almighty.*

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Read: Acts 12:1-24

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From the time of Jesus' ministry there was conspiracy against the Truth. Mark 15:12-15 – Pilate surrenders his authority to the will of the crowd – (incited by the Jewish leaders - Matthew 27:20). When, in the Jewish calendar, did this take place?

What do we see in In Acts 4:27? Who is conspiring here?

Now in Acts 12:1-3 - when in the Jewish calendar did this take place?

Why was James killed? What did Herod intend for Peter?

How was Peter delivered? Acts 12:6-10

Where before have we seen Angels minister in times of need?

Daniel 3:21-27; Genesis 19:15-17; 1 Kings 19:7; Exodus 14:19; Isaiah 37:36

Read Psalm 34:7

While the world conspires against the church – what is the church doing?

Fighting Back? Protesting? Praying? –

What is our 'first response' when we feel the world closing in on our faith?

What does Acts 12 teach us about prayer? God's eternal purposes? God's sovereign power?

Acts 12:12-17 – Are we 'astonished' when prayers are answered? Why?

Perhaps the answer is found in Matthew 8:23-26 and Matthew 14:25-32

What happens when the world does not get its way? Acts 12:18-19a.

What happens when someone attempts to take God's glory? Acts 12:19b-23

Read Isaiah 42:8

Once again, when the church is persecuted, what is God's response? Acts 12:24



Confirm your complete trust in the Lord as you persist in His Word:

Matthew 16:18; Isaiah 55:8-11; Jeremiah 1:12; Acts 1:8

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Take time to check in with each other and – pray for one another.

Sunday June 27<sup>th</sup> – Acts 13:1-52

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Opening Prayer: *Lord, as the Apostles are our example, let us with boldness, carry your truth into the world that all who hear may believe and be saved.*

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Read: Acts 13:1-52

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Principles of Christian Mission

**Who is sent?**

Who – what kind of people – are sent? V2.

Who does the sending? V4.

How are they sent? V2.

What mission have you been called to?

**How do we carry out the mission?**

Where did Paul & Barnabas go to preach? vv 5, 14– Were they welcomed there?

Read Matthew 7:6 and 1 Peter 3:15 – what do we learn from these two verses?

What is the purpose of the mission? vs 32-33

How is the mission accomplished? vv48, 49

**It is not easy.**

Some accept, some reject, some object....

Acts 13:27; Acts 13:8; Acts 13:48-49; Acts 13:50; Acts 17:11



## What is the end result?

Read Isaiah 55:8-11

What happens when we faithfully carry God's truth to the world? Acts 13:52

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Take time to check in with each other and – pray for one another.

## Sunday September 5<sup>th</sup> – Acts 14:1-28

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Opening Prayer: *Lord, as you have given us the mission to bring your truth to the world, open our eyes to the 'Greeks' among us who need to hear of your saving grace.*

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Read: Acts 14:1-28

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Paul and Barnabas are continuing on their mission. Here, in Chapter 14, they are in Iconium (Turkey), far from home. Their message was delivered "effectively" (v.1), many believed, some refused (a familiar tale throughout Acts).

1. When we speak of the Lord and His salvation to others and opposition is strong – do we retreat or continue with greater boldness? v.3
2. Wherever the Truth is preached there will be division and opposition - Acts 14:4-5. But Jesus had already spoken of this in Matthew 10:34-40. What is your experience when you have been discussing your faith in Jesus?
3. The preaching of the Word came with authenticating signs, v.8-10. (See also Acts 3:1-10). But there is always present a spirit of deception v.11-13. (See also Matthew 12:22-28). What did the crowd get right and what did they get wrong in v. 11. Where did the error lead them?
4. Paul and Barnabas spoke to the crowd of the "worthless things" they had been worshipping. What "worthless things" have become objects of worship in our day?
5. Read Romans 1:20. God has made His almighty, sovereign power known to the world. There really is no excuse for not believing in God. All other beliefs fail under close scrutiny. What other



beliefs have you heard about that you reject because of the evidence of the True God and creator?

6. Paul suffered greatly for his persistence in preaching this 'new' truth – to both ignorant pagans and to Jews who should have known (v. 19-20). Yet he continued on in his journey. Do you have this kind of faith?

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Take time to check in with each other and – pray for one another. Pray for opportunity to share the gospel AND the boldness to hold your ground against opposition and persecution.

## Sunday September 12<sup>th</sup> – Acts 15:1-35

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Opening Prayer: *Lord, open our eyes to 'legalism' in our faith walk. Make us ready to receive those who we may deem to be 'outsiders'. Grow us in wisdom and faith.*

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Read: Acts 15:1-35

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1. Compare vs.1 & 5 with Ephesians 2:8-11 and Romans 3:28. What is the challenge the church is facing here?
2. Reading vs. 2-4, how are disputes being handled in the early church? What have we to learn from this?
3. In Verses 8 and 12, what **three** evidences does Peter present to the church in Jerusalem that God had accepted the Gentiles and they were saved without circumcision?
4. The Pharisees clearly held on to "law" in their faith walk and teaching; but they overlooked the prophets – Amos 9:11-12 – who told them this was in God's plan. (Isaiah 2:2; 11:10\*; 42:6; 49:6, 22.

*[There are too many OT references to list here, but you get the idea – God's plan was for the redemption of ALL creation through the nation of Israel – the Jews of Jesus time did not get this – in spite of their own scriptures telling them over and over.] Acts 15:16-17*

\* Who is the "Root of Jesse" in Isaiah 11:10?





5. Vs. 20-21...Is this a compromise or a resolution? Discuss.

6. Vs.22-29...Was this a voted/majority decision (v25)? How does this compare with church decision making today? Are **we** doing it right? Is there a better way?

In light of Acts 15, discuss church conflict resolution in the wider church today. What can we do better?

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## Sunday October 3<sup>rd</sup> – Acts 16: 1-40

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Opening Prayer: *Lord, as we continue in faith, living our lives according to your word, give us courage to speak your truth without fear. We know you are sovereign over all things including cultures and kings. Let us walk a life of fearless faith.*

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Read: Acts 16:1-40

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1) Vs. 1-5 - Timothy joins Paul

Why did Paul go against the Jerusalem council (Acts 15) and circumcise Timothy (v.3)..yet, gave the decision of the Jerusalem council to the people they preached to?

2) Vs. 6-10 - A Spirit Led Mission

The Holy Spirit blocks our way as well as open our way...vs.6-7 and v.9.

Have you ever experienced closed doors? How did you respond/react?

What should our response be when our plans are delayed or thwarted?

3) Vs. 11-15 - The Spirit goes before us to the people we witness to.

How had the Holy Spirit prepared Lydia to hear and receive Paul's message?

What was Lydia's response to the message?



What was your response the first time you heard and received the gospel message?

4) Vs. 16-40 – Missionary work can be dangerous and painful.

Vs. 16-18 – Who is our greatest opposition in our mission? (Ephesians 6:12)

What is our response to spiritual opposition? How do you 'take authority' over spiritual opposition?

Vs. 19-24 – Slander, floggings, prison – are you ready for this? Have you resolved to keep the faith (1 Tim. 6:12; 2 Tim. 4:7)

Vs. 25-28 – Who has ultimate authority? How confident are you in this?

Vs. 29-34 – Mission accomplished? What is the outcome of Paul's and Silas' suffering?

Vs. 35-40 – Even in Roman times there were civil laws in place (see. Acts 22:25). How would you use civil law today to protect your right to practice and preach your faith?

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Take time to check in with each other and – pray for one another. Pray for opportunity to share the gospel AND the boldness to hold your ground against opposition and persecution.

## Sunday October 10<sup>th</sup> – Acts 17:1-34

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Opening Prayer: *Lord, as your witnesses, teach us the right way to reach each person we encounter. May our faith be evident and our witness be faithful.*

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Read: Acts 17:1-34

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1) Acts 17:1-9 – Who Is Lord?

What 'scripture' was Paul using to reason with the Jews in Thessalonica?

Paul started where they were in their understanding and persuaded some of them. Jesus did the same (John 4 – woman at the well). What can we learn from this method of reaching people with the gospel?



Is the phrase 'Jesus is Lord' a theological statement or a political one (Acts 17:7)? What are the implications for the church today?

## 2) Acts 17:10-15 – What is Truth?

Is it our words or the power of the scripture that persuades people's hearts and minds? How does this change how we engage people in a faith discussion? (*Hint: It's not by quoting scripture verses!*)

Wherever Paul went opposition followed (vs. 13). How prepared are you to face opposition constantly in your faith journey?

## 3) Acts 17:16-34 – Where is the Proof?

How are the 'philosophers' (v.18) different from the 'noble Bereans' (v.11)? Have you met both types? How do you engage each type?

Paul spoke to the Athenians recognising their polytheism (vs. 22-23). Read 2 Corinthians 4:4. Is it different today than it was in Paul's time?

What is the responsibility of every human (vs. 27-28, 30). How do we bring this truth to the non-believer?

Paul states one single proof for what he is preaching (vs 31). How effective is making this statement today? How can we reach people with this message?

What are the two responses to Paul's 'proof statement' (Vs. 32). Do you encounter the same responses?

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Take time to check in with each other and – pray for one another. Pray for opportunity to share the gospel AND the boldness to hold your ground against opposition and persecution.



Sunday October 17<sup>th</sup> – Acts 20:17-38

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Opening Prayer: *Lord, as you have called each of us to your Kingdom work and service, give us the grace and abilities needed to fulfill your call on our lives.*

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Read Acts 20:17-38

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### **Characteristics of a Faithful Minister of the Gospel**

1) In Acts 20:19, Paul describes his situation in the province of Asia; What four characteristics are mentioned? Could you minister alongside Paul in his situation?

2) In Acts 20:20, what are four elements of Paul's preaching & teaching ministry?

3) In Acts 20:22-24 what is most important to Paul – what is least important?

What is most important to you? What is of least importance?

4) Read Colossians 3:23-24; Philippians 2:3-4; Ephesians 4:2; 1 Timothy 4:13;  
2 Timothy 4:2

What additional characteristics does Paul ask of a follower of Jesus?

How many of these characteristics do you possess?

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Pray for YOUR ministry, pray for each others ministry, pray that we may all have these qualities that Paul is addressing

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Take time to check in with each other and – pray for one another. Pray for opportunity to share the gospel AND the boldness to hold your ground against opposition and persecution.

## Sunday October 24<sup>th</sup> – Acts 21:7-40

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Opening Prayer: *Lord, teach us to use any means to reach the unsaved – even sacrificing our comfort and practices to show God's love to the unsaved.*

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Read Acts 21:7-40

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### **Called to Suffering**

Acts 21:7-11 Would this act involving Paul's belt be a surprise to him?  
(Check: Acts 9:15-16)

Acts 21:12-16

There was no hesitation in Paul's determination to go to Jerusalem – regardless of what might happen there. What degree of suffering are you prepared for?

### **Called To Follow God**

Read Acts 21:17-26. What is going on here between the Jewish believers' leadership in Jerusalem and Paul's mission to the Gentiles?

Compare Paul's words and actions here with Galatians 2:3-9; 1 Corinthians 9:19-23; Acts 18:18; Romans 14

When do we compromise/adjust our actions/practices for the sake of truth?

When do we compromise truth?

### **We Are Called To Honour God**

Acts 21:27-36

In what way were the Jews in Jerusalem trying to honor God? What key word in this text was a major error in their thinking?



In what way was Paul honoring God?

What are we prepared to risk for the sake of the Kingdom?

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Take time to check in with each other and – pray for one another. Pray for opportunity to share the gospel AND the boldness to hold your ground against opposition and persecution.

## Sunday October 31<sup>st</sup> – Acts 22:1-22

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Opening Prayer: *Lord, we were saved to serve; to serve in your redemption plan for the world. Open our eyes to see those who need us to come alongside and lead to faith in Jesus.*

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Read Acts 22:1-22

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Read Acts 22:1-5

### My Past Life

Paul is recounting his past life. Would you each share (briefly) your story of your 'life before Christ.'

What was your opinion/view of Christians before you became one?

Read Acts 22:6-11

### My Damascus Experience (or otherwise)

Paul tells of his confrontation with Jesus. Share your first encounter with Jesus?

Who initiated your encounter with Jesus?

Read Acts 22:12-16

### Encouraging Friends

Paul speaks of the one, Ananias, who, through the instruction of the Holy Spirit - Acts 9:10-19, came alongside to lead him and give him direction.

Who came alongside you and led you in your first steps with the Lord?

Paul had been a very learned Jew, a leader who knew the scripture. When his 'eyes were opened', all that he knew, intellectually, became crystal clear, spiritually. What do you remember of the first 'Truths' you came to understand. How were your eyes opened?



Read Acts 22:17-22

Saved to Serve

Read Ephesians 4:16; Luke 12:35; 1 Corinthians 12:4-6

Paul was saved to serve - we are all saved to serve. What has been your 'service calling' since you received your salvation? How has that been working in your life?

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Take time to check in with each other and – pray for one another. Pray for opportunity to share the gospel AND the boldness to hold your ground against opposition and persecution.

## Sunday November 7<sup>th</sup> – Acts 26:4-8; 19-32

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Opening Prayer: *Lord, give us the grace and courage to stand before judges and give a clear testimony of our faith in the risen Lord Jesus Christ.*

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Read Acts 26:4-8; 19-32

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Acts 26:4-8

Paul is giving his testimony. He recounts his 'Judaism', claiming a conformity to the strictest sect of Judaism. He even declares he was a Pharisee.

Paul's knowledge of scripture gave him great insight to the meaning of all the prophecies regarding the Jew's hope in a future messiah. Now, having met the Messiah, Jesus, personally, all these prophecies came into clear focus and Paul's hope is now fulfilled in the person of Jesus.

- 1) Why are the Jews opposing and accusing Paul? (v. 7)
- 2) If you have experienced opposition for your faith in Jesus, how do you explain YOUR hope?
- 3) How far back in Jewish thought and practice does Paul's hope come from?

Acts 26:19-32

- 4) What is the central teaching from "...the prophets and Moses (v. 22)..." that has gripped Paul and his ministry?
- 5) Why did Festus start 'name calling' on Paul? (see v.26) Have you experienced name calling for your faith?





- 6) Why is Jesus' death and resurrection still the central teaching in the Christian faith?
- 7) How do you explain your faith based on Jesus' death and resurrection?
- 8) Who does Paul "pray to God" for? What is Paul's prayer?

Paul put his hope in the death and resurrection of Jesus. Where are you putting your hope?  
How can you explain this hope to an unbeliever?

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Pray that those in your family and community will come to faith in the risen Lord Jesus.  
Pray for courage and strength when the name calling starts.  
Pray that our hard-won freedoms will not be taken from us.

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Take time to check in with each other and – pray for one another. Pray for opportunity to share the gospel  
AND the boldness to hold your ground against opposition and persecution.

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## Sunday November 14<sup>th</sup> – Acts 27:13-26

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Opening Prayer: *Lord, teach us to recognize that the storms and challenges we face are opportunities for us to redirect our thoughts and actions towards your purposes. Give us the grace to accept and submit to your guiding and correcting hand in our lives.*

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Read Acts 27:1-26 (verses 1-12 set the scene)

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### 1) God Ordains the Storms of Life

There are several scripture stories that are centered around storms.

Read Job 37:1-7; Job 38:1-3 & 40:6-7; Jonah 1:4-15; Exodus 9:22-35

2) In these texts we see God sending storms into people's lives. What was God's purpose in each of these storms?

3) Why does God allow storms in our lives?

Read Job 38:8-11. Who is in complete control of the storm and its limits?



4) Can you share a time of a great storm in your life? What was God doing? How long did it take you to recognise that God was trying to get your attention? Was God's purpose to punish you or to guide you?

5) In our passage from Acts 27:1-26, what is God doing here? How are God's purposes being served by this storm? How does the story end?

6) God was directing Paul's life but there were other people caught up in the storm with Paul (see Jonah ch.1 – how were the others on board feeling?). What happens to those around us when God tries to get our attention?

7) Compare Acts 27:15 and 2 Peter 1:21 – We can be “driven or carried along” by the storms in our lives and by the Spirit of God. Sometimes it takes a storm to get us back under the guidance of the Spirit.

8) How do the storms in our lives serve God's purposes?

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Take time to share any current storms someone in your group is experiencing. Pray for their strength, pray for wisdom and courage as they lean on God for direction.

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Take time to check in with each other and – pray for one another. Pray for opportunity to share the gospel AND the boldness to hold your ground against opposition and persecution.

## Sunday November 21<sup>st</sup> – Acts 28

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Opening Prayer: *Lord, give us the courage and boldness to proclaim your message of hope and love to the world. Let us not shrink back from our ministry callings even in difficult situations.*

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Read Acts 28

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1) In vs. 1-10, list the 'divine' interventions in these verses.

2) How can the Holy Spirit still drive you forward in spite of difficult circumstances.



- 3) How was it that Paul, a prisoner, was allowed to spend a week with friends in Puteoli (vs. 13-14)?
- 4) Paul was allowed to live in his own rented accommodation – under guard (v.16). How is this possible? Was the guard to keep him from escaping or the keep him from being kidnapped and killed? Who orchestrated this?
- 5) In vs. 17-27 - Paul settles in Rome, tells the locals of his trials. Locals have heard nothing bad about Paul. Large gatherings hear the good news – some are convinced – others reject. Discuss the blindness that you had before coming to faith in Jesus. How would you present the gospel in a convicting manner? Would you be more successful than Paul?
- 6) Who is behind Paul's "captive freedom" for two years to continue his mission in letters?
- 7) What difficult situation are you in that stops you from continuing in your calling to ministry? Is it more challenging than Paul's?

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Take time to check in with each other and – pray for one another. Pray for opportunity to share the gospel AND the boldness to hold your ground against opposition and persecution.