Dear Readers,

With this issue of *Deaf Devo* we continue our study through the Bible during 2018 and 2019. The theme for this book is “God’s Church.” All of the devotions in this book are based on verses from the book of Acts in the New Testament. We will learn how God established His church in Jerusalem and how Christianity spread throughout the world. We will also see how God used Christians such as Peter, Stephen, Paul, Barnabas, Aquila and Priscilla to spread the Good News about Jesus.

As you read through the book of Acts you will learn about awesome miracles, times of persecution, rescues from prison, riots, a shipwreck and even a sheet full of animals! But most of all, you will learn how those things worked together in God’s plan to offer salvation to all people.

I hope you enjoy studying Acts. As you read the suggested Bible verses and the devotions, be sure to ask God to help your faith to grow so that He can use you to tell someone about Jesus.

In Christ,

Jo Krueger
The stories we read in Acts happened soon after the events of the four Gospel books of Matthew, Mark, Luke and John. Let’s review what happened in those books.

Jesus is God’s Son. Jesus came to earth in human form and was born as a baby. He grew up and began His ministry among Jewish people. Jesus chose twelve men to be His apostles. For three years, Jesus taught and healed people.

But some Jewish people did not believe that Jesus was God’s Son. Those people wanted to get rid of Him. Finally they arrested Jesus and killed Him on a cross. But three days later, He arose from the dead. Soon after that, Jesus left the earth to be with His Father in heaven. All these things happened because they were part of God’s wonderful plan.

After Jesus left the earth, Peter spoke to a large group of Jews about Him. Acts 2:36 tells us what Peter said to those people. “So all the people of Israel should know this for certain: God has made Jesus to be Lord and Messiah. He is the man you nailed to the cross!”

Jesus died so that all people can have their sins forgiven and live forever with God. Thank God today for Jesus and His plan of salvation!

– Jo Krueger

Suggested Bible Reading
Acts 2:36-39


Acts is a very important book for Christians to read and study. This book shows us how people became Christians and how the church grew. Learning about these early Christians will help us know what God wants us to do today.

The book of Acts begins by telling us that Jesus was with His followers for forty days after His resurrection. During that time He told them about God’s kingdom. Acts 1:4 tells us the news that Jesus shared with His followers. “One time when Jesus was eating with them, he told them not to leave Jerusalem. He said, ‘Wait here until you receive what the Father promised to send. Remember, I told you about it before.’”

What did Jesus promise to send? He promised to send God’s Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit led Jesus’ followers as they shared the Good News with the world.

That promise is for us, too. The Holy Spirit is our helper, comforter and encourager. Praise God for this wonderful promise!

– Jo Krueger

Suggested Bible Reading
Acts 1:1-11
**Luke**

The book of Acts was written by a man named Luke. Here is how Luke begins this book in Acts 1:1-2. *Dear Theophilus, The first book I wrote was about everything Jesus did and taught from the beginning until the day he was carried up into heaven. Before he went, he talked to the apostles he had chosen. With the help of the Holy Spirit, he told them what they should do.*


Colossians 1:4 tells us that Luke was a doctor. He was also Paul’s good friend. Luke traveled with Paul as he preached around the world. In some sections of the book of Acts, Luke uses the word “we.” This shows us that Luke was with Paul when those events occurred. That means that we have Luke’s eyewitness account of what happened to Paul.

Luke served God by helping Paul in his travels. God gives each one of us opportunities to serve Him, too. Maybe our service for God will not be as exciting as Luke’s journey with Paul, but God will bless us no matter how we serve Him.

– Jo Krueger

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**The Big Picture**

Many of Jesus’ followers thought that He had come to free Israel from being ruled by the Romans and to set up His own kingdom on earth. Jesus explained to them many times that His kingdom was not on earth. But even His closest followers did not understand that.

We have learned that Jesus stayed on earth after His resurrection and continued to teach His followers. Acts 1:6 tells us something that happened right before Jesus left the earth. *The apostles were all together. They asked Jesus, Lord, is this the time for you to give the people of Israel their kingdom again?* Jesus explained that God would send the Holy Spirit to give them power. Then they would share the Good News about Him with the whole world.

Jesus’ followers did not see the “big picture.” They were only thinking about their desire to be free from the Romans. But that was not God’s plan. God’s “big picture” was for them to remain under Roman rule while they established His church and helped it to grow.

Sometimes we may not see the “big picture” that God has planned for us. But we need to keep trusting Him and His plan for our lives. Live for God today and depend on Him!

– Jo Krueger

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*Suggested Bible Reading*

Acts 1:1-11

*Suggested Bible Reading*

Acts 1:1-11
Return to Heaven

One time after Jesus’ resurrection, He was with the eleven apostles. Jesus shared God’s plan for taking the Gospel to all people on the earth. After that, Jesus was lifted up into the sky. The apostles watched as Jesus went into a cloud. They could not see Him any more.

As the apostles were staring into the sky, two men wearing white clothes suddenly appeared beside them. Acts 1:11 tells us what these men said. “They said, ‘Men of Galilee, why are you standing here looking into the sky? You saw Jesus carried away from you into heaven. He will come back in the same way you saw him go.”

That promise was not only for Jesus’ followers at that time. The promise is for every person who obeys and follows Jesus. Jesus is alive today. He is at God’s right side. Jesus defeated death and the power of the devil. When Jesus comes back some day, He will take all believers to live forever with Him. That will be a wonderful day!

Are you ready for Jesus to come back? Only God knows when Jesus will return. Don’t wait to follow Jesus. Obey and serve Him today. Then you can look forward to His return.

– Jolynn Stinehagen

Suggested Bible Reading
Acts 1:1-11

Special Women

The book of Acts tells us about women who were part of the church. Some of these women had important roles in starting the church. Other women are only mentioned briefly. But all these women can teach us something about loving and serving God.

One of the first women mentioned in Acts is Mary, the mother of Jesus. Acts 1:14 tells us about Mary and some other women. “The apostles were all together. They were constantly praying with the same purpose. Some women, Mary the mother of Jesus, and his brothers were there with the apostles.” Why did these women meet with the apostles? They met to pray!

It must have been exciting to be part of that prayer group. Maybe they were not sure they could do God’s work without Jesus. Perhaps they wondered how they could share the Good News with so many other people in the world.

Mary believed that Jesus was God’s Son. And she served Him through the church. You can serve God through your local church, too. Look for ways God can use you to share His message of salvation with people in your community.

– Jennifer Forrester

Suggested Bible Reading
Acts 1:12-14
A New Apostle

Jesus chose twelve men to be His apostles. But one apostle, Judas Iscariot, killed himself. So Peter told the group of believers that they must choose another man to replace Judas.

In Acts 1:21-22, Peter listed the qualifications for the man who would replace Judas. “So now another man must join us and be a witness to Jesus’ resurrection. He must be one of those men who were part of our group during all the time the Lord Jesus was with us. He must have been with us from the time John was baptizing people until the day when Jesus was carried up from us into heaven.”

Two men were chosen from the group — Joseph Barsabbas, also called Justus, and Matthias. The group prayed and asked God to show them which of the two men should take Judas’ place. Then they threw lots to choose one of the men. Lots were stones, sticks or bones used like dice for making decisions. God directed the lots to show that Matthias should become an apostle.

It is important to notice that this group of believers depended on God to help them make the right decision. Whenever we need to make an important decision, we should pray and ask God for His guidance. Depend on God to give you wisdom to make right decisions today.

– Jo Krueger

Birth of the Church

On the day of Pentecost, Jewish people brought the first part of their harvest and offered it to God. Acts, chapter 2, tells us that many people were gathered in Jerusalem for this festival. Suddenly some strange things happened — noise, wind and flames of fire. Acts 2:4 tells us what happened next. “They were all filled with the Holy Spirit, and they began to speak different languages. The Holy Spirit was giving them the power to do this.” This was the birth of God’s church.

The people in the crowd were surprised. Why? Because the apostles were speaking, but everyone heard them in their own language. They could not understand how this was possible. People from many foreign countries heard the message in their own language. They were happy they could understand the great things Peter was saying about God.

Some people in the crowd were amazed at what was happening. Others were confused. But God was performing a wonderful miracle so that everyone there could understand His message of salvation.

We will learn about many more miracles that are recorded in the book of Acts. Thank God today for His great power!

– Gayle Thorn

Suggested Bible Reading

Acts 1:12-26

Suggested Bible Reading

Acts 2:1-13
**Bold Witness**

On the day of Pentecost, God sent His Holy Spirit to live in people who obeyed and followed Him. These people became bold witnesses for Jesus. They used the skills God gave them to share the Gospel message.

We can be like the people who believed in Jesus on the day of Pentecost. We can be brave and use our skills to share the Good News. First, we need to not be afraid that people will become angry or reject us. We learned yesterday that while the apostles were speaking, everyone in the crowd heard the message in his own language. Acts 2:13 tells us how some people reacted to this. *"But others were laughing at the apostles, saying they were drunk from too much wine."* Did the apostles give up when this happened? No! They continued to boldly speak about Jesus.

Second, we need to trust God if we want to be like those bold Christians. God will work through us to touch other people and cause them to want to follow Jesus. Because God is with us, we don’t need to worry or be afraid.

Maybe someone will make fun of you today because you are a Christian. Or maybe they will tell you to stop talking about Jesus. Don’t give up! Be a bold witness for Jesus!

– Gayle Thorn

**From Every Country**

When Peter preached in Jerusalem on the day of Pentecost, the people in the audience were from many different places. Acts 2:5 tells us about these people. *"There were some godly Jews in Jerusalem at this time. They were from every country in the world."*

It is interesting to think about all those people from different countries. Probably they had their own customs, just like people from different countries today. For example, people all over the world have their own customs for the way they eat.

People in many Asian countries use chopsticks. They may eat rice with their hands or with a big spoon. In some places in Africa, people eat with their fingers. They use bread or meat as their spoon. And in other countries, they keep a knife in their hand at all times.

There are many different ways to eat, but all people need to eat food. In the same way, all people need to know about God and His Word. Just as the apostles taught the people in Jerusalem, we need to teach people around the world about Jesus.

Maybe you can be a missionary to a foreign country. Or maybe you can pray for people in a certain country. Find a way to serve God today!

– Debbie Klahn

**Suggested Bible Reading**

*Acts 2:1-13*

**Suggested Bible Reading**

*Acts 2:5-13*
Peter’s Message (1)

Peter stood up and spoke to the large group of Jewish people gathered in Jerusalem. He quoted Old Testament verses from the book of Joel. Those verses talked about the miraculous things that were happening on that day in Jerusalem.

Then Peter talked about Jesus. Many of the people in the crowd had seen Jesus teach and do miracles while He was on earth. In Acts 2:22 Peter reminded the people of the things Jesus had done. “My fellow Israelites, listen to these words: Jesus from Nazareth was a very special man. God clearly showed this to you. He proved it by the miracles, wonders, and miraculous signs he did through Jesus. You all saw these things, so you know this is true.”

Some of the people there had witnessed Jesus’ miracles and teaching, but they did not believe that He was God’s Son. They refused to accept the things Jesus did that proved He was God’s Son. In his message, Peter tried to show the people that Jesus truly was the Messiah, the Chosen One.

We cannot see Jesus doing miracles like those people did. But we can read about those miracles in the Bible. Then we can believe that those things really happened and that Jesus’ power came from God. Tell someone today that you believe Jesus is God’s Son.

– Jennifer Forrester

Suggested Bible Reading
Acts 2:1-39

Peter’s Message (2)

Peter continued talking to the crowd about Jesus. He reminded them that Jesus was arrested and given over to some Jews. The Jews chose to sentence Jesus to death. Peter told the people in the crowd that they had nailed Jesus to the cross!

Then Peter said God knew that all those things would happen. It was part of the plan He had made a long time ago. Peter explained part of God’s plan in Acts 2:24. “Jesus suffered the pain of death, but God made him free. He raised him from death. There was no way for death to hold him.”

Some of the people Peter spoke to probably followed the beliefs of the Sadducees. The Sadducees did not believe in resurrection. So it may have been hard for some of those people to believe that Jesus truly rose from the dead. Peter talked about King David who died and was buried. Then he reminded the people that he and others had seen Jesus alive. They were witnesses of His resurrection.

It is very important for us to believe that Jesus died and came alive again. The resurrection is the center of our Christian faith. And because Jesus rose from the dead, we can also experience resurrection when Jesus comes again. Praise God that Jesus overcame death!

– Jennifer Forrester

Suggested Bible Reading
Acts 2:1-39
Peter’s Message (3)

Peter quoted verses from the Old Testament, and he shared some of his personal experiences with Jesus. Then He told the Jews that they had killed Jesus! How did they react to this? Many of the people felt very, very sorry. They asked Peter what they should do.

Peter gave his response in Acts 2:38. “Peter said to them, Change your hearts and lives and be baptized, each one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ. Then God will forgive your sins, and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.” Peter told the people in the crowd to do two things: 1) change their hearts and lives, and 2) be baptized.

Changing our hearts and lives is called repentance. It is not easy to change and repent. And it certainly was very hard for those Jewish people to give up their old way of living and follow Jesus. Baptism is a beautiful picture of Jesus’ death, burial and resurrection. When we are baptized, we die to our old sinful way of living. We are buried under the water, and we rise out of the water as a new person who looks forward to living forever with God.

Have you changed your life and been baptized? Obey Peter’s message and start your new life today!

– Jennifer Forrester

Suggested Bible Reading
Acts 2:1-39

Peter’s Message (4)

We have learned about Peter’s message for several days now. His message touched the hearts of the people, and many people changed their lives. That was the perfect message to start the church. Those people were willing to give their lives to Jesus and follow Him forever.

You and I were not in Jerusalem on the Day of Pentecost. We did not see Peter preach. But His message is still for us today. Peter talked about that in Acts 2:39. “This promise is for you. It is also for your children and for the people who are far away. It is for everyone the Lord our God calls to himself.”

Peter told the people to repent and be baptized. Then he said that God would forgive their sins and give them the Holy Spirit. That promise of forgiveness and the Holy Spirit is for us, too! When our sins are forgiven, we have a new relationship with God. He is our Father, and we are His children. The Holy Spirit encourages us and shows us how to live for God every day.

Praise God for Peter’s message! Share that message with someone who needs to know Jesus as their Lord and Savior.

– Jennifer Forrester

Suggested Bible Reading
Acts 2:1-39
Peter (1)

Peter was one of Jesus’ twelve apostles. He lived and worked with Jesus for about three years. Sometimes Peter was very bold. Other times he was weak and afraid. But Peter learned how to follow Jesus and stay close to Him. Today and for the next few days, we will learn more about Peter, what he did in the book of Acts and what we can learn from his life.

Acts 2:14 tells us about Peter’s message on the day of Pentecost. “Then Peter stood up with the other eleven apostles. He spoke loudly so that all the people could hear. He said, ‘My Jewish brothers and all of you who live in Jerusalem, listen to me. I will tell you something you need to know. Listen carefully.’” Then Peter quoted verses from the Old Testament. He also talked about Jesus dying on the cross and coming back to life. Finally, Peter challenged the people to repent and be baptized.

Peter had studied the Old Testament and knew God’s Word. He depended on this message to help him serve God better every day. You can do the same thing. Today we have both the Old Testament and the New Testament. Study them and learn God’s Word. Then you will be prepared to preach or teach God’s message to others. And when you have opportunities to share, depend on Bible verses to guide you.

– Chad Entinger

Suggested Bible Reading

Acts 2:14-42

Peter (2)

One day Peter and John were on their way to the Temple. They saw a man there who had been crippled all his life. Some friends had brought the man to the Beautiful Gate of the Temple to beg. The man asked Peter and John for money.

Peter and John could have ignored the man. What did they do? Did they stop and give the man some money? Peter and John did stop and help the man. But they didn’t give him money. Instead, they gave the man something even better than money!

With the power of Jesus, Peter lifted the man up. Immediately the man’s feet and legs became strong. In Acts 3:8 we learn what the man did. “He jumped up, stood on his feet, and began to walk. He went into the Temple area with them. He was walking and jumping and praising God.” The people who saw this were amazed and did not understand how this could happen.

Look for opportunities to help people in need today. If they ask you for help, give them something better — give them the Good News about Jesus. Share with them that Jesus died on the cross and rose from the dead. Encourage them to follow and obey Jesus. Take time to praise God, too!

– Chad Entinger

Suggested Bible Reading

Acts 3:1-10
Peter (3)

Do you remember yesterday’s devotion? With the power of Jesus, Peter healed a man who had been crippled all his life. The people at the Temple who saw this were amazed. They wondered how Peter could make the man walk.

Peter stood in an area on the east side of the Temple called Solomon’s Porch. He talked about Jesus and how God had raised Him from death. Then in Acts 3:16, Peter explained that it was Jesus’ power that made the man walk. “This crippled man was healed because we trusted in Jesus. It was Jesus’ power that made him well. You can see this man, and you know him. He was made completely well because of faith in Jesus. You all saw it happen!”

The crippled man was healed a long time ago. Maybe you wonder if Jesus is still powerful today. Yes, He is! And you can experience Jesus’ power every day.

Continue to believe in Jesus and trust in Him. Keep your faith in Him. When you see God’s power in your life or another person’s life, give Him praise and honor. And tell others about Jesus’ great power.

– Chad Entinger

Suggested Bible Reading
Acts 3:11-26

Peter (4)

Some Jewish people were upset with Peter and John. They did not like Peter and John telling them about Jesus and that people would rise from the dead. So Peter and John were arrested and put in jail.

The next day, the Jewish leaders questioned Peter and John in front of many people. Peter was filled with the Holy Spirit. He was ready to be bold and answer their questions. The leaders knew that Peter and John had no special education or training. They also saw that Peter and John were not afraid to speak. The leaders were amazed and realized that Peter and John had been with Jesus.

The Jewish leaders told Peter and John not to say anything or to teach in the name of Jesus. We can see Peter’s response in Acts 4:19-20. “But Peter and John answered them, What do you think is right? What would God want? Should we obey you or God? We cannot be quiet. We must tell people about what we have seen and heard.”

You do not need to have special training to share Jesus with others. How can you show people that you know Jesus? Spend time in prayer. Read and study the Bible. Then you will not be afraid to tell others about Jesus.

– Chad Entinger

Suggested Bible Reading
Acts 4:1-22
Sunday, May 19

Peter (5)

Maybe you remember from yesterday’s devotion that Peter and John were arrested and questioned by the Jewish leaders. These leaders could not find a way to punish the apostles. Why? Because the people were praising God because the crippled man had been healed. So the Jewish leaders warned the apostles again not to talk about Jesus. Then they let them go free.

Peter and John left the Jewish leaders and met with some other believers. They shared what had happened and how the crippled man had been healed. Then these believers prayed to God. They thanked God for His plan of salvation. Then they asked God to help them speak without fear. They also asked God to perform more miracles so the people would believe.

Acts 4:31 tells us what happened after the believers prayed. “After the believers prayed, the place where they were meeting shook. They were all filled with the Holy Spirit, and they continued to speak God’s message without fear.”

Does God still want us to pray today? Yes! Does God still answer prayers today? Yes! Are prayers still effective and powerful? Yes! Spend time in prayer today. Depend on God and His power. Ask Him to give you courage to share His message without fear.

– Chad Entinger

Suggested Bible Reading
Acts 4:23-31

Monday, May 20

Peter (6)

The believers in the new church did not say that the things they had were their own. Instead, they shared everything. Many people sold their houses and property and shared that money with people who were in need.

Acts, chapter 5, tells us that a man named Ananias had money from land he had sold. But he only gave part of the money to the apostles. He kept some of the money for himself, but he told Peter that he was giving the church all of the money. Peter caught Ananias and rebuked him for lying to God. Immediately, Ananias died.

Three hours later, Ananias’ wife, Sapphira, lied to Peter about the money. Peter rebuked her, too, and she died. Both Ananias and Sapphira thought they could get away with lying. But they were wrong. Acts 5:11 tells us that this was an important lesson for the other people in the church. “The whole church and all the other people who heard about this were filled with fear.”

If you tell the truth, other people will know that they can trust you. But if you tell a lie, it will come back to hurt you. That’s what happened to Ananias and Sapphira. They both died after they lied.

So be careful what you sign or say to others, and be sure to always tell the truth!

– Chad Entinger

Suggested Bible Reading
Acts 5:1-11
Acts, chapter 12, reminds us that praying is a powerful thing to do and that God answers prayers! Peter was arrested and put in jail again. He was bound with two chains and heavily guarded. Two soldiers were next to Peter while he was sleeping, and other soldiers guarded the jail door. It seems like it would be impossible for Peter to escape from jail.

At the same time Peter was in jail, some Christians were praying for Peter. God answered their prayers by sending an angel to lead Peter out of jail. God rescued Peter from the bad things the Jewish leaders were planning to do to him.

Then Peter went to the home of Mary, the mother of John. The Christians there were amazed at how God had answered their prayers. Acts 12:17 tells us what Peter did when he arrived at the house. “Peter made a sign with his hand to tell them to be quiet. He explained to them how the Lord led him out of the jail. He said, ‘Tell James and the other brothers what has happened.’ Then he left and went to another place.”

Praying is a powerful thing to do. And remember that God always answers your prayers! When God answers your prayers, be sure to tell others what God has done for you.

– Chad Entinger

If you purchase an expensive item, the store may allow you to pay a small amount of money each month until the full amount has been paid. When the final payment is made, someone from the store may write “Paid in Full” on your receipt. That means you don’t owe anything more for that item.

God has said in the Bible that people will be punished for their sins. That punishment is spiritual death — eternal separation from God. But when Jesus died on the cross, He took all our sins upon Himself. Jesus accepted our punishment. And because He arose from the dead, we can know that our debt to God was paid in full forever.

Peter talked about Jesus’ death on the day of Pentecost. In Acts 2:32, he reminded the Jews about what had happened to Jesus. “So Jesus is the one God raised from death. We are all witnesses of this. We saw him.” Then Peter told the people how they could be forgiven and escape God’s punishment.

When we obey Jesus and ask Him to be our Lord and Savior, we can know that our sins are forgiven. Because Jesus arose, we can live forever with Him. Hallelujah! Jesus is alive and we are forgiven!

– Bob LaForge
Good News

Today when something happens in the world, we can know about it almost immediately. With cell phones, the Internet and television, news spreads very fast around the world. But when the church first began, the only way to share the Good News about Jesus was by one person telling another person.

The Good News about Jesus was first proclaimed in the city of Jerusalem. Thousands of people were gathered there to celebrate the day of Pentecost. Acts 2:1 tells us that some of the people there were followers of Jesus. “When the day of Pentecost came, they were all together in one place.” Peter preached to the large crowd and told them how they could have their sins forgiven.

More than 3000 people were added to the group of believers on that day. When they traveled home or to another city, they shared the news about Jesus with other people. That is how Christianity spread from the city of Jerusalem to all parts of the Roman Empire.

Wherever you go today, you will have opportunities to communicate about Jesus. Find someone who needs Jesus and share the wonderful news of salvation with them!

– Jo Krueger

Suggested Bible Reading
Acts 2:1-4

Early Church (1)

Sometimes people ask, “How can I be like Jesus?” These people need to study the group of people who became Christians soon after Jesus died. We call these people the “early church.” If we want to be like Jesus, we will do the same things the early church did. Today and for the next four days, we will learn about the early church in Jerusalem and how they served God and each other.

Acts 2:44 tells us one thing the early church did. “All the believers stayed together and shared everything.” Christians in the early church in Jerusalem met together every day — not just one time a week. They stayed together, shared with each other and helped one another.

We should follow the example of the early church. We need to meet together often with other Christians. We need to worship God with other Christians. We need to be involved in Bible studies and times of fellowship. And we need to be devoted to loving and helping each other.

Do you want to be like Jesus? Then do what the early Christians did. Spend time with your Christian friends today!

– Chad Entinger

Suggested Bible Reading
Acts 2:40-47
Yesterday we learned that Christians in the early church met together every day. They were dedicated Christians!

Acts 2:42 tells us more about these people. "The believers spent their time listening to the teaching of the apostles. They shared everything with each other. They ate together and prayed together." The apostles were the men Jesus chose to be His special helpers. The believers paid attention to the apostles. They learned from the teaching of the apostles. The believers respected the apostles.

Today there are many pastors and teachers in our churches. These people use their time to teach us about God. We should use our time to learn from these pastors and teachers. We should pay attention to what they show us in God’s Word. And we should respect these people. Why? Because they work hard to teach us the truth.

I am thankful for the pastors and teachers who have taught me about Jesus. I am a Christian today because of their teaching. You should be thankful, too. Be like the Christians in the early church. Pay attention to those who guide and lead you.

– Chad Entinger

Today we will continue learning about the early church. Christians in the early church stayed together and used their time to learn from the twelve apostles.

Acts 2:45 tells us something very interesting that the early church did. “They sold their land and the things they owned. Then they divided the money and gave it to those who needed it.” Christians in the early church truly shared with each other. They gave up their land and the things they owned to help others.

As Christians, we should share our money and possessions with our brothers and sisters in Christ. If someone needs food, we should share some of our food with them. If parents need someone to babysit their children, we should share our time and babysit for them. If elderly Christians need help with their yard, we should help them.

There are many things we can do for other Christians today. I know about a Christian family whose car broke down. A woman in their church let them borrow her car until their car was fixed.

Christians in the early church shared. Sharing is a wonderful way to live as a Christian.

– Chad Entinger
Early Church (4)

Christians in the early church spent time together, used their time to pay attention to their teachers and shared their money and possessions. Today we will learn one more thing these people did.

Acts 2:46 teaches us more about the early church. “The believers shared a common purpose, and every day they spent much of their time together in the Temple area. They also ate in their homes. They were happy to share their food and ate with joyful hearts.” These people praised God by eating and praying together.

Before Jesus died on the cross, He told His followers to remember Him by eating the Lord’s Supper. Acts 20:7 tells us that Christians did this on the first day of every week. Christians in the early church shared their food and ate meals together.

Those believers also prayed together. We can pray for others when we are alone at home. Or we can pray with others at a church prayer meeting. Times of prayer bring Christians closer together and strengthen them.

We should eat the Lord’s Supper to remember Jesus’ death on the cross. We should eat and share our food with others. When we share our food, we have fellowship with other people. And we should spend time praying with other Christians.

– Chad Entinger

Suggested Bible Reading
Acts 2:40-47

Early Church (5)

We have learned a lot about the early church in Jerusalem. Those people met together, learned from their teachers, shared their money and possessions and ate and prayed together.

God wants us today to follow the example of those Christians in Jerusalem. Why? Because exciting things happen when we live like those people lived.

Acts 2:47 tells us what happens when people follow the example of the early church. “The believers praised God and were respected by all the people. More and more people were being saved every day, and the Lord was adding them to their group.” If we live like the Christians in the early church, more and more people will become Christians. And we will praise God for this.

There are many people in the world today who do not know about God’s plan of salvation. We need to share the Good News about Jesus with them. Then they will become Christians and tell their friends and family about Jesus, too.

Live like the Christians in the early church. And watch the church grow and grow!

– Chad Entinger

Suggested Bible Reading
Acts 2:40-47
Snowflakes

One little snowflake is very weak and fragile. It will melt very easily. But if enough snowflakes fall on the ground, they can shut down an entire city for many days.

Being a Christian is a lot like a snowflake. When we are alone, it is easy to give up when we face a difficult situation or a problem. The pressures of this sinful world can make us depressed so that we want to give up. But when we are with other Christians, they can encourage us and help us stay away from bad things.

The Christians in the early church depended on each other. They shared their possessions and encouraged one another. One Christian alone might have felt weak. But they learned that if they stood together, they could make a greater impact on the world. Acts 2:43 tells us about the impact these Christians had on other people. “Many wonders and miraculous signs were happening through the apostles, and everyone felt great respect for God.”

Find opportunities to be with other Christians today. Pray and learn together so you will be stronger. Then God will show you how you can make a big difference in the lives of people around you.

– Bob La Forge

Suggested Bible Reading
Acts 2:40-47

Sin

Some people live in places that have high temperatures and humidity. The temperature and humidity may make them feel uncomfortable. So they find ways to cool off and feel comfortable. One way is to stay inside a building that has an air conditioner.

We don’t like to feel uncomfortable. But when we sin, the Holy Spirit makes us feel uncomfortable. He wants us to confess our sins to God and turn back to Him. In Acts, chapter 3, Peter talked with a crowd of people. These people had arrested and crucified Jesus. In Acts 3:19-20 Peter told the people what they should do because of their sin. “So you must change your hearts and lives. Come back to God, and he will forgive your sins. Then the Lord will give you times of spiritual rest. He will send you Jesus, the one he chose to be the Messiah.”

When it is hot and humid, an air conditioner makes us feel cool and comfortable. In the same way, when we confess our sins and ask God to forgive us, we feel refreshed and comfortable again.

Talk to God today about the sin in your life. Thank Him for Jesus, and ask Him to forgive you. Then you will experience His love, peace and rest!

– Pam Davis

Suggested Bible Reading
Acts 3:1-23

Wednesday, May 29

Thursday, May 30
**Group of Believers**

We have seen that Peter and John loved God. They were not afraid to tell the Good News about Jesus. Acts, chapter 4, tells us that Peter and John spoke to a group of people. In this group of people were Jewish leaders, Sadducees and the captain of the soldiers that guarded the Temple.

These people became upset with Peter and John. Why? Because they were teaching that people who follow Jesus will rise from death and live with Him forever. So the leaders arrested Peter and John and put them in jail until the next day. Maybe this seems like a big problem. But remember that God can make good things happen when we face bad situations!

Acts 4:4 tells us what happened because Peter and John were in jail. “But many of the people who heard the apostles believed what they said. There were now about 5000 men in the group of believers.” God convicted and converted many people to believe in Jesus and follow Him.

God is still convicting and converting sinners today. If He has convicted you to follow Jesus, then obey Him! If you are already following Jesus, then share the Good News with another person today.

– Chad Entinger

**Famous Person**

Recently a famous person died. Probably most of the people in the world recognized this man’s name. Thousands of people gathered to mourn his death and remember his life. Even people who had never met this man spent lots of money to travel and attend his memorial service.

We cannot judge this man’s life. We do not know whether he will spend eternity with God or be punished in hell. But we do know that being famous will not save him. And knowing many people or making lots of money will not save him either. The only way a person can be saved from the punishment for their sins is to accept Jesus as their Lord and Savior.

The Jewish council questioned Peter and John about the crippled man who had been healed. Peter told them that the man was healed by Jesus’ power. Then in Acts 4:12, Peter talked about the only way to be saved. “Jesus is the only one who can save people. His name is the only power in the world that has been given to save anyone. We must be saved through him!”

Think about your life today. Have you accepted Jesus as your Savior and made Him the Lord of your life? Will you live forever with Him?

– Jo Krueger

**Suggested Bible Reading**

*Acts 4:1-4*

**Suggested Bible Reading**

*Acts 4:1-12*
Empty Gas Tank

You probably know people who were traveling and ran out of gas. They forgot to fill their gas tank or they didn’t realize that their gas tank was almost empty.

Maybe you have never run out of gas with your car. But what would happen if you did run out of gas? You might be stranded on the side of the road, many miles from a gas station. Running out of gas is never fun. It may require hard work and lots of time to get more gas. And you may arrive late at your destination.

Sometimes we “run out of gas” in our spiritual lives. God is our fuel. We get this fuel by praying, reading the Bible and fellowshipping with other Christians. We have learned that the early Christians in Jerusalem got their spiritual fuel by learning Jesus’ teachings, sharing with each other and praying together. Peter talked about that in Acts 4:32. “The whole group of believers was united in their thinking and in what they wanted. None of them said that the things they had were their own. Instead, they shared everything.”

Keep your life filled with God’s love and commands. Share what you have with others. Don’t have an empty spiritual tank!

– Anonymous

Barnabas

We have learned about the believers in the church in Jerusalem. They shared everything they had with each other. Acts 4:36-37 tells us about one of those believers. “One of the believers was named Joseph. The apostles called him Barnabas, a name that means ‘one who encourages others.’ He was a Levite born in Cyprus. Joseph sold a field he owned. He brought the money and gave it to the apostles.”

The book of Acts tells us other things that Barnabas did. In Acts, chapter 9, we learn that Barnabas helped Paul be accepted as a true believer. And in Acts, chapters 11 through 13, Barnabas traveled with Paul and preached about Jesus.

Barnabas is a wonderful example of someone who helped and encouraged other Christians. That is what we should do, too. When our brothers and sisters in Christ need food, money or a place to live, we should help them. And we should always be willing to encourage them to pray, read the Bible and fellowship with other believers.

Look for opportunities today to share and encourage the people that you meet. And ask God to give you wisdom to use those opportunities for Him!

– Jo Krueger

Suggested Bible Reading
Acts 4:32-37
More Believers

Over the past few weeks we have learned something very amazing — thousands of people became followers of Jesus. Not just one person or a few people, but thousands! God convicted those people to change their hearts and lives, leave their old lives of sin, believe in Jesus, be baptized in Him and fellowship with other believers.

Do you think you have been amazed enough? Well, let’s look at Acts 5:14. “More and more people believed in the Lord, and many men and women were added to the group of believers.” Wow! More and more people believed in Jesus! We have only studied 5 of the 28 chapters in the book of Acts, and we are amazed again. So many conversions — how exciting!

The book of Acts shows us that God truly wants to save all people. He doesn’t want any person to be separated from Him forever. God wants all people to change their hearts and stop sinning. God sent His Son, Jesus, into the world to die and then rise from the dead. Why? So our sins will be forgiven.

Thank God today for His plan of salvation through Jesus!

– Chad Entinger

Apostles in Jail

Many Jewish people believed in Jesus and obeyed Peter’s message. This made the high priest and other Jewish leaders very jealous. They did not want people to pay attention to the apostles. So some of the Jewish leaders grabbed the apostles and put them in jail.

But God had another plan for the apostles. Acts 5:19 tells us about this plan. “But during the night, an angel of the Lord opened the doors of the jail. The angel led the apostles outside and said, Go and stand in the Temple area. Tell the people everything about this new life.”

Wow! That must have been an exciting adventure for the apostles. They obeyed the angel and went to the Temple area and began to teach again. Meanwhile, the Jewish leaders sent some men to get the apostles from jail. These men found the jail doors open, and no one was in the jail!

God was with the apostles. He wanted them to continue teaching about Jesus. It is the same with us today. God wants us to share the Good News about Jesus with people that we meet. He will be with us, even if we face some difficult situations. And God will give us opportunities to tell others about His Son. Remember that He will be with you today!

– Anonymous

Suggested Bible Reading

Acts 5:12-16

Suggested Bible Reading

Acts 5:17-26
Obedience

Many people love dogs because they are obedient. A dog must learn that when he obeys his master, the master is happy. And he must learn that when he does not obey, the master is not happy.

An obedient dog is also a valuable dog. Some people are willing to pay thousands of dollars for a dog who will obey without hesitation. A dog who does not obey his master’s commands is worthless.

It is very important for Christians to be obedient to God. The apostles are good examples of people who were obedient to God. The Jewish leaders arrested them and told them to stop teaching about Jesus. Did the apostles stop teaching? No!

After God freed the apostles from jail, the soldiers took them to the Jewish council. The high priest reminded the apostles that he had told them to stop teaching about Jesus. Acts 5:29-30 tells us their reply. “Peter and the other apostles answered, ‘We must obey God, not you! You killed Jesus by nailing him to a cross. But God, the same God our fathers had, raised Jesus up from death.’”

Some people in the world today want us to stop teaching about Jesus. Will you obey them or will you be like the apostles and obey God?

– Anonymous

Gamaliel

We have learned that many Jewish people did not believe that Jesus was God’s Son. While Jesus was on earth, these people made fun of Him, told lies about Him and tried to trick Him into doing something wrong. But we have also learned that when Peter and the other apostles preached on the Day of Pentecost, many Jewish people believed in Jesus and became Christians.

Acts, chapter 5, tells us about a Jewish man named Gamaliel. This man was a Pharisee and teacher of the law. When Peter and the other apostles were teaching about Jesus, some Jewish leaders wanted to kill them. Gamaliel stood up and told the council to be careful about what they were planning to do. Acts 5:38-39 tells us what Gamaliel said, “And so now I tell you, stay away from these men. Leave them alone. If their plan is something they have thought up, it will fail. But if it is from God, you will not be able to stop them. You might even be fighting against God himself!”

Gamaliel prevented the Jewish leaders from hurting Peter and the other apostles. In this way, he served God and helped the church grow in Jerusalem. Sometimes God uses us to help His church to grow. We may not even realize that God is using us. Be obedient and let God speak through you today.

– Donna Valverde-Hummel

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Thursday, June 6

Friday, June 7
Important Jobs

Acts, chapter 6, tells us that there was a problem in the early church in Jerusalem. The Greek-speaking followers complained that their widows were not getting enough food. So the apostles met together to decide what to do. They thought that it would not be good for them to give up teaching about Jesus so they could help those widows.

Acts 6:3 tells us what the apostles decided to do. "So, brothers and sisters, choose seven of your men who have a good reputation. They must be full of wisdom and the Spirit. We will give them this work to do." The apostles gave these seven men the job of feeding the widows.

People did many different jobs in the early church. Some prayed and taught God’s Word. Others helped the widows. And some prepared the meals that they shared together. All of these jobs were important and helped the church to grow.

It is the same with God’s church today. Some people preach or teach. Others help in the church nursery. And some help people who are sick or in prison. All of these jobs are important for God’s kingdom.

Every Christian needs to have a job in their local church. Ask God to fill you with His wisdom and show you how you can serve others.

– Steve Husting

More Christians

Acts 2:41 tells us that more than 3000 people were added to the group of believers on the Day of Pentecost. Acts 4:4 says that soon this group grew to more than 5000 men. And in Acts, chapter 6, we continue to learn more about God’s wonderful story of conversions and growth in the early church. More and more people believed that Jesus was God’s Son and became His followers.

Acts 6:7 tells us about these people who became Christians. The word of God was reaching more and more people. The group of followers in Jerusalem became larger and larger. Even a big group of Jewish priests believed and obeyed.” It is amazing that even some of the Jewish leaders believed and followed Jesus!

How did these people become Jesus’ followers? The Word of God (Bible) convicted them of their sins and converted them. They responded by believing and obeying Jesus.

If you are not a follower of Jesus, I encourage you to believe in Him. Obey Him by repenting of your sins, being baptized in Him and faithfully living for Jesus every day.

Are you following Jesus today?

– Chad Entinger

Suggested Bible Reading

Acts 6:1-7
Stephen (1)

Stephen was a leader in the church in Jerusalem. Acts, chapter 6, tells us that Stephen was one of the seven men chosen to make sure the Greek-speaking widows had enough food to eat. Stephen and the other men were full of wisdom and God’s Spirit.

Acts 6:8 tells us more about Stephen. “Stephen received a great blessing. God gave him power to do great wonders and miraculous signs among the people.” However, some Jews did not agree with Stephen. They started complaining about him. The Holy Spirit was with Stephen, and his words were so strong that the Jews could not argue with him. But then the men accused Stephen of saying bad things against Moses and God. They became so angry that they grabbed Stephen and took him before the high council.

The Jews brought in men to tell lies about Stephen. But Stephen remained calm. Luke tells us in Acts 6:15 that Stephen’s face looked like the face of an angel. For the next few days we will talk about Stephen’s speech before the high council.

Stephen depended on God and His Spirit to comfort and help him. Maybe today you will meet people who falsely accuse you and want to hurt you. Rely on God to show you how you can stand strong for Him.

– Eileen Wood

Stephen (2)

The high priest of the Jewish council asked Stephen if he was saying things against the temple and the Law of Moses. Acts 7:2 tells us how Stephen began to answer that question. “Stephen answered, ‘My Jewish fathers and brothers, listen to me. Our great and glorious God appeared to Abraham, our ancestor, when he was in Mesopotamia. This was before he lived in Haran.’”

Stephen was talking about the promise God made to Abraham. This promise was that Abraham would have many descendants who would live in the land of Canaan and worship there. Stephen continued this history lesson by talking about Isaac, Jacob and Joseph.

Why did Stephen talk about these great men from the past? Because the Jewish men of the high council considered Abraham to be their father. They all knew about Abraham, Isaac, Jacob and Joseph. Stephen told them that he also realized the importance of these Jewish ancestors. Later, Stephen used this information as the foundation for teaching them about Jesus.

Perhaps you will meet someone today who does not believe in God or follow Jesus. It might be best to be like Stephen and first talk about things you can agree on. Then you can continue to share the Good News about Jesus with them.

– Jo Krueger

Suggested Bible Reading

Acts 6:8-15

Suggested Bible Reading

Acts 7:1-16
Stephen (3)

Stephen continued his history lesson before the Jewish high council. He talked about how the Israelites grew in Egypt and became slaves to serve the Pharaoh. Then Moses was born. Moses was raised by Pharaoh’s daughter. But when Moses was 40 years old, he killed an Egyptian, and he ran away to Midian.

Forty years later, God spoke to Moses. He told Moses that He was sending him back to Egypt to free the Israelites from slavery. God helped Moses do many great miracles to convince the people that he was the one God had chosen to lead them. Moses led the Israelites out of Egypt and into the desert.

Then in Acts 7:39 Stephen reminded the council what happened next. “But our ancestors did not want to obey Moses. They rejected him. They wanted to go back to Egypt again.” So the Israelites made an idol and worshiped it. The Israelites did not want to follow Moses, the man God had chosen to lead them. Later in his speech, Stephen told the council members that they had rejected Jesus, just like the Israelites refused to follow Moses.

God chose Jesus to be our Savior and Lord. Are you refusing to follow Him? Or are you obeying and worshiping Him every day?

— Jo Krueger

Suggested Bible Reading
Acts 7:17-43

Stephen (4)

Finally, Stephen talked about the Holy Tent where the Israelites worshiped until King Solomon built the Temple in Jerusalem. He reminded them that God does not live in houses built by humans. Stephen quoted verses from Isaiah where God said that heaven is His throne and the earth is where He rests His feet.

Stephen summed up his speech by telling the Jewish leaders that they were stubborn, refused to listen to God and were against the Holy Spirit. We find Stephen’s last words in Acts 7:52-53. “They persecuted every prophet who ever lived. They even killed those who long ago said that the Righteous One would come. And now you have turned against that Righteous One and killed him. You are the people who received God’s law, which he gave you through His angels. But you don’t obey it!”

Who is the Righteous One that Stephen talked about? Jesus! The Jews in the council had seen Jesus’ miracles and heard Him preach, but they did not believe that He was God’s Son. So they sentenced Him to die on the cross.

Do you believe that God sent Jesus to save you? Be bold today and share this Good News with someone who needs God’s wonderful gift of salvation.

— Jo Krueger

Suggested Bible Reading
Acts 7:44-53
Stephen (5)

When Stephen accused the Jewish council of being stubborn and not listening to God, the men became very angry. They became so angry that they were grinding their teeth! Stephen looked toward heaven and saw Jesus standing at God’s right side. The people shouted loudly, ran toward Stephen and took him out of the city. Then they started throwing stones at him. Acts 7:59-60 tells us what Stephen did. “As they were throwing the stones at him, Stephen was praying. He said, ‘Lord Jesus, receive my spirit!’ He fell on his knees and shouted, ‘Lord, don’t blame them for this sin!’ These were his last words before he died.”

Stephen’s response was amazing. Instead of becoming angry with the Jewish leaders, he prayed to God. He even asked God to forgive them for throwing stones at him and killing him! That reminds me of Jesus when He was hanging on the cross. He asked God to forgive the people who were killing Him.

When someone is angry with you, how do you respond? Do you become angry with them, too? Instead of becoming angry, be like Stephen. Pray and ask God to forgive the person who is angry with you. Then try to make peace with that person instead of arguing or fighting.

– Chad Entinger

Everywhere You Go

Stephen was dead! Some followers of Jesus buried Stephen and mourned for him. Acts, chapter 8, tells us that this was the beginning of the persecution of the church in Jerusalem. The Jews wanted to destroy the church. They took men and women who followed Jesus and put them in jail. They even threatened to kill the people who followed Jesus.

This persecution was terrible. But the result of this persecution was amazing! In fact, this persecution was part of God’s wonderful plan. We first learned about this plan when we studied Acts, chapter 1. Jesus said that His followers would be His witnesses in Jerusalem, in the rest of Judea, in Samaria and in every part of the world.

When this persecution happened, what did Jesus’ followers do? Acts, chapter 8, tells us that all the believers, except for the apostles, left Jerusalem. They went to live in different parts of Judea and Samaria. And Acts 8:4 tells us the exciting thing that these followers did. “They were scattered everywhere, and in every place they went, they told people the Good News.”

Because of this persecution, many more people learned about Jesus! That is a wonderful example for us. No matter where we are, we can tell someone about Jesus. Who will you tell about Jesus today?

– Jo Krueger

Suggested Bible Reading
Acts 7:54-8:1a

Suggested Bible Reading
Acts 8:1b-8
Change Your Heart

Acts, chapter 8, tells us about a man named Simon. He was a man who practiced magic and sorcery. Simon saw that Peter and John gave God’s special power to followers of Jesus in Samaria. Simon wanted to have that same power. So he offered money to Peter and John to buy God’s power.

Simon did not understand about God’s power. Peter told him that he would not be part of God’s work because he did not have the right relationship with God. Then in Acts 8:22-23, Peter told Simon what he should do. “Change your heart! Turn away from these evil thoughts and pray to the Lord. Maybe he will forgive you. I see that you are full of bitter jealousy and cannot stop yourself from doing wrong.”

Maybe you are struggling with some sin in your life today. Maybe you realize that you have become a slave to that sin. Don’t give up! Follow Peter’s advice — change your heart and turn away from your sin.

You can rely on God to help you change your heart today. Be humble and let God mold you into a person who obeys and serves Him. God will remove your sin and help you stand strong for Him!

— Donna Howard

Suggested Bible Reading
Acts 8:9-25

The Holy Spirit

We have learned that some of Jesus’ followers from Jerusalem moved to other towns in Judea and Samaria. They shared the Good News about Jesus with people that they met. Acts 8:14 tells us what happened next. The apostles in Jerusalem heard that the people in Samaria had accepted the word of God. So they sent Peter and John to the people in Samaria.”

When Peter and John arrived in Samaria, they prayed that the believers would receive special power from the Holy Spirit. This special power would help the Samaritans convince other people that their message about Jesus was true. Peter and John laid hands on these people, and they received the Holy Spirit.

Acts 2:38 tells us that God forgives our sins when we are baptized into Jesus. Then we receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit comes to live in us and give us understanding, encouragement and strength. As we grow spiritually, the Holy Spirit shows us how to obey God every day and to share His message with other people.

Thank God today for giving you the Holy Spirit to live within you. Rely on God’s Spirit to encourage you and give you strength so you can share His message with others.

— Steve Husting

Suggested Bible Reading
Acts 8:14-17
Man from Ethiopia

An angel told Philip to go to the road that led to Jerusalem. There Philip saw a man who was an important official to Candace, the queen of Ethiopia. The man had been to Jerusalem to worship God. He was on his way back to Ethiopia and was sitting in his chariot, reading from the book of Isaiah.

The man asked Philip to help him understand what he was reading. Philip told the man that the verses from Isaiah were talking about Jesus. Then Philip taught the man the Good News about Jesus and God’s plan of salvation.

While the Ethiopian official and Philip were traveling down the road, they saw some water. The man said to Philip, “Here is some water. Why can’t I be baptized?” Acts 8:38 tells us what happened next. “Then the official ordered the chariot to stop. Both Philip and the official went down into the water, and Philip baptized him.” The official continued on his way home, and he was very happy.

How about you? Have you been baptized? If not, don’t wait another day! Decide to be baptized and allow God to forgive your sins and give you the gift of His Holy Spirit. Then you will be happy — just like the man from Ethiopia.

– Chad Entinger

Suggested Bible Reading
Acts 8:26-40

Persecution

Saul was a Jewish man who did not believe that Jesus was God’s Son. So Saul did bad things to Christians. This is called persecution. Later, God showed Saul that he was wrong. Saul was baptized and became a great preacher and missionary for Jesus.

Acts 9:1-2 tells us about Saul before he became a Christian. “In Jerusalem Saul was still trying to scare the followers of the Lord, even saying he would kill them. He went to the high priest and asked him to write letters to the synagogues in the city of Damascus. Saul wanted the high priest to give him the authority to find people in Damascus who were followers of the Way. If he found any believers there, men and women, he would arrest them and bring them back to Jerusalem.”

Saul didn’t just persecute Christian men. He persecuted Christian women, too! Saul thought that he was obeying God, but he was really disobeying God.

Many people in the world today are persecuted - both men and women. You should be ready to experience bad things because you are a Christian. Maybe someone will say bad things about you, hurt you or threaten to kill you because you follow Jesus. Will you stand strong for God and His Word today?

– Jennifer Forrester

Suggested Bible Reading
Acts 9:1-2
God Can Use You

A elderly man stopped his car at a red light, and a beat-up old pickup truck stopped beside him. The man in the pickup lowered his window, so the man in the car lowered his window, too. He saw that the man in the pickup was young and had a long ponytail, some body piercing and tattoos.

The man in the pickup said, “Sir, do you believe that God speaks to people today?” The elderly man told him that he did. Then the young man said, “When I saw you, God told me that you are a Christian.” The two men talked for a few seconds about how God communicates with His people. Then the light changed green and the two men drove off.

That was a wonderful experience for the elderly man. God used the young man to remind him that He chooses all kinds of people to serve Him. Many people probably thought that Saul would not become a Christian and obey God. Acts 9:15 tells us what Jesus said about Saul. “But the Lord Jesus said to Ananias, ‘Go! I have chosen Saul for an important work. I want him to tell other nations, their rulers, and the people of Israel about me.’”

God can use all people to serve and honor Him. And He wants you to serve Him. Look for ways today to show God’s love to other people.

– Ray Gilbert

Suggested Bible Reading
Acts 9:1-19a

Damascus

Damascus was a city about 150 miles from Jerusalem. Some people there became Christians and followed Jesus. Saul went to Damascus to arrest some of those Christians and bring them back to Jerusalem.

While Saul was traveling to Damascus, a bright light shined around him, and he became blind. Jesus spoke to Saul. He told Saul to go into Damascus where someone would tell him what to do. The men who were traveling with Saul took him into the city of Damascus.

In Damascus there was a Christian man named Ananias. Jesus sent him to meet Saul. When Ananias saw Saul, he laid his hands on him. Acts 9:18 tells us what happened next. *Immediately, something that looked like fish scales fell off Saul’s eyes. He was able to see! Then he got up and was baptized.*

Saul became a new man. He left his old life of sin and persecution and started living for Jesus. Later Saul traveled to many places and told people about Jesus.

God had a plan for Saul’s life, and He has a plan for your life, too. God will lead you and show you how you can serve Him. Will you give Him your life and depend on Him today?

– Jo Krueger

Suggested Bible Reading
Acts 9:1-19a
Jesus is God's Son

We have learned that Saul persecuted Christians and wanted to arrest them. Then he changed and started following Jesus. After Saul became a Christian, he stayed with some Christians in Damascus for a few days.

Acts 9:20 tells us what Saul did while he was in Damascus. “Soon he began to go to the synagogues and tell people about Jesus. He told the people, ‘Jesus is the Son of God!’” The people who heard Saul speak were amazed. They knew that Saul had tried to destroy Christians. They were surprised that Saul had become a Christian, too. Saul became more and more powerful in showing people that Jesus is God’s Son. Even the Jews in Damascus could not argue with him.

The rest of the book of Acts tells us about Saul’s ministry. Even though he was beaten and put in prison, he continued to tell people about Jesus. Why did Saul do this? Because he was convinced that Jesus was God’s Son and the only way to God.

Saul knew that God sent Jesus to die for his sins. Do you believe that Jesus died for your sins, too? Then be like Saul — share God’s message of hope and salvation with people you meet today.

– Steve Husting

Suggested Bible Reading
Acts 9:19b-22

Saul Escapes

You probably have a favorite TV show or movie where the hero always escapes from danger at the last minute. Maybe a helicopter swoops down and picks him up while the enemy is shooting at him. Or just as the hero is about to fall off a steep cliff, someone throws him a rope.

In Acts, chapter 9, we learned about how Saul became a Christian. His life was completely changed and God used him in a powerful way to show other people that Jesus is God’s Son. But some Jews were upset by Saul’s conversion. So they decided to kill him. The city of Damascus was surrounded by a high wall with gates. These Jewish men watched the gates day and night because they wanted to catch Saul and kill him.

But Saul found out about the plan to kill him. Acts 9:25 tells us what happened next. “One night some followers that Saul had taught helped him leave the city. They put him in a basket and lowered it down through a hole in the city wall.” Saul was safe. He left Damascus and went to Jerusalem.

God protected Saul, and Saul was able to continue his work of sharing the Good News about Jesus. God will be with you today, too. He will protect you as you lead others to Him.

– Jo Krueger

Suggested Bible Reading
Acts 9:23-25
In the city of Joppa there was a very special Christian woman. Acts 9:36 tells us more about her. 

In the city of Joppa there was a follower of Jesus named Tabitha. Her Greek name, Dorcas, means 'a deer.' She was always doing good things for people and giving money to those in need.”

While Peter was in Joppa, Tabitha died. The Christians there were very sad. They asked Peter to come to the room where they had put Tabitha’s body. Many people were in the room. They cried and showed Peter the clothes that Tabitha had made for them. Peter sent all the people out of the room. Then he knelt down and prayed. Peter told Tabitha to stand up. She opened her eyes and sat up! Tabitha was a true servant. She helped other Christians by giving them clothes and money.

Maybe you think that your job in God’s family is not very important. But God needs all kinds of servants in His kingdom — teachers, nursery workers, preachers, musicians, cooks, maintenance people and many more.

Take time today to think about the ways that you can serve God. Thank Him for giving you a place of service in His kingdom. Will you be a true servant like Tabitha?

– Jennifer Forrester

Suggested Bible Reading
Acts 9:36-43

Gentiles

Peter grew up worshiping God and following Jewish laws. Even though Peter became a Christian, he still followed the rules about food which said that the Jews could only eat certain kinds of meat.

Gentiles are people who are not Jews. Cornelius was a Gentile who worshiped and prayed to God and helped poor people. One day Cornelius had a vision. God’s angel told Cornelius to send some men to Joppa to invite Peter to his house.

Cornelius sent some men to Joppa where Peter was staying. While these men were traveling, Peter had a vision, too. He saw a big sheet coming down through the sky. In the sheet were all kinds of animals. Some of the animals were those that God had told the Jews not to eat. A voice told Peter that he could kill any of the animals and eat them. Acts 10:14 tells us Peter’s response to this. “But Peter said, I can’t do that, Lord! I have never eaten anything that is not pure or fit to be used for food.” Three times the voice repeated the same message to Peter.

God used this vision to teach Peter that the Good News about Jesus was for Gentiles, too. It was probably very hard for Peter to change. But he obeyed God and began sharing the Gospel with Gentile people. Will you obey God today?

– Jo Krueger

Suggested Bible Reading
Acts 10:1-23a
God Loves Everyone

Yesterday we learned that both Cornelius and Peter had visions from God. While Peter was wondering what his vision meant, the men Cornelius had sent arrived at the house where Peter was staying.

Peter went with the men to the city of Caesarea to Cornelius’ house. A large group of people were gathered there. Acts 10:28 tells us what Peter told these people. “Peter said to the people, ‘You understand that it is against our law for a Jew to associate with or visit anyone who is not a Jew. But God has shown me that I should not consider anyone unfit or say they are not pure.’”

Cornelius told Peter and the people about his vision from God. Then Peter told them about Jesus and God’s plan of salvation for all people. Cornelius and his friends and relatives were baptized in the name of Jesus.

Every day we meet people who are different from us. Maybe they don’t dress like we do or have the same language. They may even hate Christians or worship a false god. But we need to remember that God loves them and wants them to follow Jesus, too.

Who will you meet today that needs Jesus?
– Donna Howard

Suggested Bible Reading
Acts 10:1-33

Honor and Serve God

In many marriages, the husband and the wife have certain jobs they do. The husband may take care of the car or climb a ladder and clean out the gutters on the roof. The wife may take care of the laundry, make the beds and run errands. Some of the jobs they do are very important, and some jobs are not as important.

It is the same in the church. Some people have important jobs like preaching or teaching. And some people serve God by sweeping the floors or taking care of babies in the nursery. God does not think some people are better than others because they have more important jobs. God loves and accepts everyone who wants to serve Him.

When Peter spoke to Cornelius and his friends, he wanted them to know that God loved and accepted them, too. Peter talked about this in Acts 10:34-35. “Peter began to speak: ‘I really understand now that God does not consider some people to be better than others. He accepts anyone who worships him and does what is right. It is not important what nation they come from.’”

God loves you and wants you to worship Him and do what is right. And He wants you to do things that honor Him. How will you serve Him today?
– Suzanne Austin-Hill

Suggested Bible Reading
Acts 10:34-48

Wednesday, June 26

Thursday, June 27
Law or Grace?

Before Jesus died, the Jews lived under God’s law. But after Jesus’ death and resurrection, God had a different plan. This new plan was that people would be saved by God’s grace, not by obeying laws.

It was hard for some Jewish Christians to understand being saved by God’s grace. It was also hard for them to know that God’s plan was for all people, not just for the Jews. Some Jewish Christians in Jerusalem heard that Peter had shared God’s message with non-Jewish people. They were upset and argued with Peter.

Peter explained the whole story to these men. He told about his vision and how God showed him that salvation was for all people. In Acts 11:18 we learn how these people reacted to Peter’s explanation. “When the Jewish believers heard this, they stopped arguing. They praised God and said, ‘So God is also allowing even those who are not Jews to change their hearts so that they can have the life he gives!’”

Sometimes we can be like those Jewish Christians. We forget about God’s grace and think we must obey certain laws in order to be saved. But we need to remember that we are saved by God’s grace through Jesus’ sacrifice on the cross. Praise God for His wonderful gift of salvation!

– Steve Husting

Help from God

We have learned that the persecution of Christians in Jerusalem caused many Christians to leave and move to other places. This was part of God’s plan to spread the news about Jesus to the whole world.

Acts, chapter 11, tells us that some of these Christians moved as far away as Phoenicia, Cyprus and Antioch. They told the Good News about Jesus to both Jews and non-Jews. Acts 11:21 tells us what happened when these people shared the Gospel. “The Lord was helping these men, and a large number of people believed and decided to follow the Lord.”

As Christians, our job is to tell people about Jesus. Sometimes when we do, people reject us or make fun of us. But sometimes people pay attention to God’s Word and decide to change their hearts and lives. That doesn’t happen because we are super-Christians or because we are smarter than other people. People change their lives and start to follow Jesus because God helps us share His message with them.

Maybe you will have opportunities to talk to someone about Jesus today, but you are scared or shy. Ask God to give you courage and wisdom. He will bless you as you lead people to Him!

– Jennifer Forrester

Suggested Bible Reading

Acts 11:1-18

Suggested Bible Reading

Acts 11:19-20
**Faithfulness**

The church was growing! Many more non-Jewish people started following Jesus. One place this happened was in the city of Antioch. The church in Jerusalem heard about this growth. So they sent Barnabas to Antioch to help.

Acts 11:23-24 tells us more about Barnabas. "Barnabas was a good man, full of the Holy Spirit and faith. When he went to Antioch and saw how God had blessed the believers there, he was very happy. He encouraged them all, saying, ‘Always be faithful to the Lord. Serve him with all your heart.’ Many more people became followers of the Lord.”

Barnabas encouraged and strengthened the church in Antioch. He was happy that God had blessed them and helped them to grow. Because of Barnabas' help, the church in Antioch grew even more.

We should always encourage and serve other Christians. When something good happens to them, we should share in their happiness. When they are discouraged, we should encourage them and remind them about God's love.

Are you like Barnabas? Are you helping your church to grow and share the Good News about Jesus with people in your community?

— Jennifer Forrester

**Christians**

Have you ever wondered about the name “Christian”? Christ is another name for Jesus. So the name “Christian” is used to describe someone who follows Jesus. A “Christian” is a “Christ-follower.”

In Acts, chapter 11, we learn that the name Christian was first used in the city of Antioch. Acts 11:25-26 tells us about this. “Then Barnabas went to the city of Tarsus to look for Saul. When he found him, he brought him to Antioch. They stayed there a whole year. Every time the church came together, Barnabas and Saul met with them and taught many people. It was in Antioch that the followers of the Lord Jesus were called ‘Christ-followers’ for the first time.”

Sometimes people give themselves a name based on a person who they want to be like. Saul and Barnabas helped the people in Antioch. These people could have called themselves “Saul-followers” or “Barnabas-followers.” But humans sin and are not perfect. We should not try to be like any person on earth. Instead, we should try to be like Jesus who was perfect and sinless.

Are you a Christian? Do you want other people to know that you follow Jesus? Be bold when you meet people today. Tell them that you follow Jesus, God’s only Son!

— Jennifer Forrester

**Suggested Bible Reading**

Acts 11:22-30
Rhoda

Acts, chapter 12, tells us that King Herod put Peter in jail because he was preaching about Jesus. When Peter was in jail, God sent an angel to lead him out of jail. Acts 12:11 tells us more about this. *Peter realized then what had happened. He thought, ‘Now I know that the Lord sent his angel to me. He rescued me from Herod and from everything those Jews thought would happen to me.’* After Peter left the jail, he went to the home of Mary, where some Christians were meeting to pray. The Bible doesn’t tell us what they were praying about, but they were probably praying for Peter.

Peter knocked on the door of the house. A servant girl named Rhoda came to answer it. Rhoda saw Peter standing outside the door, and she became very excited. She was so excited that she forgot to open the door. She ran inside and told the other people that Peter was there. But some people did not believe that it was really Peter. They thought it was Peter’s angel. Peter continued to knock, and the believers finally opened the door and saw that God had truly freed Peter from jail.

Rhoda was excited because she knew God had answered their prayers. When God answers your prayers and does something wonderful in your life, be sure to thank Him. Be excited that God loves you and takes care of you!

– Jo Krueger

Worship Only God

Yesterday we learned that King Herod put Peter in jail because he was telling people about Jesus. Later, Herod met with some people from Tyre and Sidon. He wore a beautiful royal robe. Herod sat on his throne and made a fancy speech to the people. The people started saying that Herod was a god and not just a man.

Acts 12:23 tells us what happened next. *“Herod did not give the glory to God. So an angel of the Lord caused him to get sick. He was eaten by worms inside him, and he died.”* That would be a terrible way to die!

King Herod’s grandfather was the king who tried to kill baby Jesus. His uncle killed John the Baptizer. Herod was just as evil as the rest of his family. He also did some very bad things to Christians. King Herod worshiped himself instead of worshiping God. So God punished him.

Maybe we don’t worship ourselves like Herod did, but sometimes we make other things more important than God. Maybe we make our house or our money or our family more important than God. That is wrong. God should be most important in our lives.

Think about your life and your priorities today. Be sure that God is most important and that you worship only Him.

– Anonymous
The Right Message

There was a clock in the window of a jewelry store. Every day people passed by and looked at the clock to see what time it was.

But one day the clock stopped. Children on their way to school looked at the clock. They thought they had plenty of time to play before school started. People who were going to work also looked at the clock. They stopped to talk with their friends instead of hurrying to work. But all of these people were late. Why? Because the time on the clock was wrong. The clock gave the wrong message to the people.

We have been learning how the early Christians shared God’s message of salvation. Acts 12:24 tells us the effect of this message. *The message of God was spreading, reaching more and more people.* These Christians did not share their opinions or things that they had made up. They reached out to people with the right message. So God blessed them and the church grew and grew.

We need to share the right message with other people, too. The only place to find the right message is in the Bible. We need to study and learn about God’s message of salvation so that we can talk with people we meet. Share the Good News about Jesus with someone today.

– Betty Henry

Obey God

Colleen was walking home one day. Suddenly, it seemed like she heard a voice say, “Go visit Bertha.”

Colleen ignored the voice and kept on walking. But then she heard the voice again. Finally she realized that God was speaking to her through His Holy Spirit.

Colleen obeyed and went to visit Bertha. Bertha was very lonely. She talked a long time with Colleen. The next week Bertha was in a car accident. Her brain was damaged, and she could not talk any more. Bertha spent the rest of her life in a nursing home. Colleen was so happy that she had obeyed God and visited Bertha.

In Acts, chapter 13, we learn that the Holy Spirit spoke to the leaders of the church in Antioch. Acts 13:2 tells us what the Holy Spirit said. *These men were all serving the Lord and fasting when the Holy Spirit said to them, ‘Appoint Barnabas and Saul to do a special work for me. They are the ones I have chosen to do it.’* After that, the church in Antioch sent Barnabas and Saul to share God’s message wherever they went.

God’s Holy Spirit gave Barnabas and Saul a special job to do. God has a plan for how He wants you to serve Him. Be sure to pay attention to the Holy Spirit and obey God today.

– Norma Mezoe

Suggested Bible Reading

*Acts 12:20-25*

Suggested Bible Reading

*Acts 13:1-8*
Paul

Acts, chapter 13, tells us that while Saul and Barnabas were on the island of Cyprus, they met a man named Elymas. He was a false prophet and did magic. Elymas spoke against Saul and Barnabas and tried to stop the governor of Cyprus from believing in Jesus. To punish Elymas, God made him blind for a short time. When that happened, the governor was amazed and started believing in Jesus.

Acts 13:9-10 tells us something interesting about Saul. "But Saul (also known as Paul), filled with the Holy Spirit, looked hard at Elymas and said, You son of the devil, full of lies and all kinds of tricks. You are an enemy of everything that is right. Will you never stop trying to change the Lord’s truths into lies?"

It was common at that time for Jewish people to have two names — a Jewish name and a Roman name. Saul was a Jewish man. His Roman name was Paul. From this point on, Luke used the name Paul in the book of Acts instead of Saul. Paul traveled throughout the Roman Empire telling people about Jesus. Using his Roman name probably helped Paul as he witnessed to non-Jewish people.

It doesn’t matter what your name is. The important thing is that you follow and obey Jesus. Then other people will want to follow Jesus, too.

– Jo Krueger

The Old Testament

Paul spoke to people in the city of Antioch which was near the city of Pisidia. He talked about the time when the Israelites traveled from Egypt to Canaan. Paul also talked about people from the Old Testament — Samuel, King Saul and King David. Paul shared these things with the people and then told them about Jesus.

Acts 13:32-33 shows us that Paul connected these Old Testament people with Jesus. "We tell you the Good News about the promise God made to our ancestors. We are their descendants, and God has made this promise come true for us. God did this by raising Jesus from death. We also read about this in Psalm 2: You are my Son. Today I have become your Father."

We can read the New Testament and learn about Jesus and God’s plan of salvation. But when we also read and study the Old Testament, we learn that it is the foundation for the New Testament. Reading the prophecies in the Old Testament helps us know more about Jesus and His sacrifice for us.

Some people only read the New Testament, but I encourage you to read and study the Old Testament, too. Share the Old Testament stories with others so they can learn about God’s plan for their lives.

– Steve Husting

Suggested Bible Reading

Acts 13:1-12

Suggested Bible Reading

Acts 13:13-41
Some Jews in the city of Antioch did not believe that Jesus was God’s Son. So they did not want Paul and Barnabas to preach about Jesus. They shouted insults and argued with everything Paul said. Paul reminded these Jews that he had told them first about Jesus, but they refused to listen.

Acts 13:50-51 tells us more about this situation in Antioch. “But the Jews there caused some of the important religious women and the leaders of the city to be angry and turn against Paul and Barnabas and throw them out of town. So Paul and Barnabas shook the dust off their feet. Then they went to the city of Iconium.” Why did Paul and Barnabas shake the dust off their feet? This was a warning to the people that they were finished talking with them.

Maybe we will tell a friend or family member about Jesus and they will become angry and refuse to listen. That is a situation where you may need to be like Paul and Barnabas and “shake the dust off our feet” and stop talking to them about Jesus. But we can always continue to pray that someday that person will change his mind and open his heart to Jesus.

If someone becomes angry with you today for talking about Jesus, don’t be discouraged. Continue to share the Good News with people who are excited to know about Him.

– Jo Krueger

Paul and Barnabas moved on to the city of Iconium. They spoke in the Jewish synagogue there. Many people believed their message. But some Jews did not believe what Paul and Barnabas preached. These people told lies about Paul and Barnabas. Did Paul and Barnabas give up and leave? No! They stayed in Iconium a long time and continued to speak bravely about Jesus. God helped them do miracles so that people would know that Jesus is the Son of God.

Even though Paul and Barnabas continued to preach, the city was divided — some people believed and some people didn’t. Acts 14:5 tells what happened next. “Some of the Jews there, as well as their leaders and some of the non-Jewish people, were determined to hurt Paul and Barnabas. They wanted to stone them to death.” So Paul and Barnabas left Iconium and traveled to other cities.

Sometimes we may work a long time to finish a job. Maybe we have to move a big pile of dirt, and we only have a small shovel. It will take a long time to move the dirt, but finally we will finish moving it. Paul and Barnabas faced many difficult situations in Iconium, but they kept on telling people about Jesus.

Don’t give up today. Keep on sharing about Jesus with others!

– Eileen Wood

Suggested Bible Reading

Acts 13:44-52

Suggested Bible Reading

Acts 14:1-7
Lystra

The people in the city of Lystra worshiped false gods. When Paul and Barnabas came to Lystra, Paul healed a man who was crippled. When the people in the city saw that miracle, they thought Paul and Barnabas were gods. The priest of the temple wanted to bring an offering and worship Paul and Barnabas.

When Paul and Barnabas understood what was happening, they were very upset and tore their clothes. Acts 14:15 tells us what Paul and Barnabas shouted to the people. “Men, why are you doing this? We are not gods. We are human just like you. We came to tell you the Good News. We are telling you to turn away from these worthless things. Turn to the true living God, the one who made the sky, the earth, the sea, and everything that is in them.”

Many people in the world today do not worship the one, true living God. Instead, they worship false gods. Some people worship the sun, moon or trees. And other people may worship their money and possessions. We need to be like Paul and Barnabas. We need to tell the world that the true God sends rain, gives us food and fills our hearts with joy.

Maybe you know people who do not worship God. Tell them that God loves them and wants them to be His children.

– Eileen Wood

Suggested Bible Reading
Acts 14:8-20

Share the Gospel

Many people today have opportunities to travel to a foreign country and tell the Good News about Jesus. If you have gone on a missionary trip, you probably had a wonderful experience. But you may also know that some people may not welcome you to their country.

Before you enter a foreign country, you must first go through customs. This is where officials look into your luggage. Some customs officials are very nice and make you feel welcome in their country. They are careful not to break anything in your luggage. But some customs officials are not nice. They break things or try to find something wrong with your luggage.

In Acts 14:19 we learn that while Paul was in Lystra, he met some Jewish people who wanted to hurt him. “Then some Jews came from Antioch and Iconium and persuaded the people to turn against Paul. So they threw stones at him and dragged him out of town. They thought they had killed him.” But Paul was not dead. God protected him, and he went back into town.

Continue to share the Gospel message about Jesus wherever you go today. God will be with you to guide and protect you.

– Debbie Klahn

Suggested Bible Reading
Acts 14:8-20
Paul and Barnabas left Lystra and traveled to other cities. They went back to several churches they had visited before. Acts 14:22 tells us why they went back to these churches. "In those cities they helped the followers grow stronger in their faith and encouraged them to continue trusting God. They told them, ‘We must suffer many things on our way into God’s kingdom.’"

Paul and Barnabas told these people that they would face suffering because they followed Jesus. Sometimes people think that when they become Christians, everything will be fine and they will not face hard times. But if we are truly following Jesus, we will face suffering and persecution.

When God blesses us with good times, our faith in Him continues to grow. But when we face times of suffering and persecution, we learn to trust Him more and to depend on Him every moment of our lives. Paul and Barnabas learned this as they traveled and shared the Good News about Jesus. They faced both good times and times of suffering.

Don’t be surprised if you experience suffering in your Christian life. Use those times of suffering to make your faith grow stronger and to depend on God more.

– Steve Husting

When Paul and Barnabas were in Antioch, some people began teaching that people had to obey Jewish laws in order to be saved. Paul and Barnabas were against this teaching, and they argued about it. So Paul and Barnabas decided to return to Jerusalem and talk more about this with the apostles and elders in the church.

The whole church in Jerusalem welcomed Paul and Barnabas. Peter stood up and told how God had taught him that salvation was for non-Jewish people, too. He said that God saves all people through His grace, not by requiring them to obey Jewish laws.

Acts 15:12 tells us that Paul and Barnabas shared about the things that happened on their travels. "Then the whole group became quiet. They listened while Paul and Barnabas told about all the miraculous signs and wonders that God had done through them among the non-Jewish people."

You can be like Paul and Barnabas. You can tell people your story. Your story may include how you became a Christian and how your life is different now. You can even write down your story and share it with others.

When you tell other people your story, it helps them learn about salvation through Jesus. Share your story with someone today!

– Gayle Thorn

Suggested Bible Reading
Acts 14:21-28

Suggested Bible Reading
Acts 15:3-14
Disagreements

Paul and Barnabas were good friends. They worked together to tell people about Jesus. But we learn in Acts, chapter 15, that one time they had a disagreement.

Paul and Barnabas had taken a man named Mark on their first trip. But Mark gave up and did not finish the trip. Now Barnabas wanted to take Mark on another trip. But Paul did not want to do that. Acts 15:39 tells what happened next. “Paul and Barnabas had a big argument about this. It was so bad that they separated and went different ways. Barnabas went to Cyprus and took Mark with him.” Paul took Silas and they traveled and helped other churches to grow stronger.

We all have times when we disagree with other people. But the Bible tells us how we can work through these disagreements. When we disagree with someone, we should first try to understand what the other person is feeling and thinking. Then we should remember to be humble and honor other people. Finally, we should not become angry.

Paul and Barnabas chose to separate and work with other people. And God blessed both of them as they traveled to share the Good News about Jesus. If you have a disagreement today, don’t give up or run away. Ask God to help you find a solution.

– Gayle Thorn

Encouragement

Yesterday we learned that Paul and Barnabas had a disagreement. Acts 15:37-38 shows us how this disagreement started. “Barnabas wanted to bring John Mark with them too. But on their first trip John Mark did not continue with them in the work. He had left them at Pamphylia. So Paul did not think it was a good idea to take him this time.”

Recently we also learned that Barnabas’ name meant “son of encouragement.” After Paul and Barnabas separated, Barnabas encouraged Mark to go with him and not give up. In Paul’s writings in the New Testament, we learn that later Mark helped Paul in his ministry. Mark kept on working for Jesus!

Have you been discouraged in your Christian life? Have you made mistakes that are hard to forget? Don’t give up and quit. God will forgive you and help you. Don’t let your past mistakes stop you from serving God in the future. Ask other Christian friends to encourage and support you.

Do you know people who are discouraged because of their mistakes? Tell them that Jesus loves them. Tell them about Mark and how God used him in wonderful ways. Be like Barnabas and encourage others to keep on serving God.

– Karan Riley

Suggested Bible Reading

Acts 15:36-41

Suggested Bible Reading

Acts 15:36-41
Timothy

Timothy was a young man who loved and followed Jesus. Acts, chapter 16, tells us that Timothy’s father was a Greek. But Timothy’s mother was a Jew who believed in God. After Timothy became a Christian, he traveled and told people about Jesus. Sometimes Timothy traveled with Paul.

2 Timothy in the New Testament is a letter that Paul wrote to Timothy. Why did Paul write to Timothy? He wanted to encourage and strengthen him in his ministry. Paul reminded Timothy about the faith of his grandmother, Lois, and his mother, Eunice. Paul said that he knew Timothy had the same faith.

Lois and Eunice believed in God, and they taught Timothy to love God, too. That was the foundation for Timothy to learn about Jesus and to believe that He is God’s Son. Because of that, Timothy was a good worker with Paul. In Acts 16:5 we learn the result of the work that Paul and Timothy did. “So the churches were becoming stronger in their faith, and the number of believers was growing every day.”

It is very important for us to teach our children and grandchildren about Jesus. Is there a child you can teach about Jesus today?

– Jo Krueger

Suggested Bible Reading
Acts 16:1-5

Reach Out to Others

Yesterday we learned about a young man named Timothy. Paul wanted Timothy to travel with him to tell Jewish people about Jesus. But Paul was worried that some Jews might be upset because Timothy had never been circumcised according to the Jewish law.

Paul did not want this to be a problem that would keep the Jewish people from learning about Jesus. Acts 16:3 tells us how Paul solved this problem. “Paul wanted Timothy to travel with him, but all the Jews living in that area knew that his father was a Greek. So Paul circumcised Timothy to please the Jews.”

Sometimes we may share the Good News about Jesus in places where people dress differently and have customs that are different from ours. We may need to change the way we dress or the way we eat so that we can fit in with those people. Then when we fit in with the people, they will pay attention to our message and want to follow Jesus.

Today you may have opportunities to tell people about Jesus. Ask God to show you the best way to reach out to these people with His message of love and salvation.

– Steve Husting

Suggested Bible Reading
Acts 16:1-5
Change of Plans

A woman was planning to visit her friend, Carol, who was going through cancer treatment. But at the last minute, the woman felt God was saying, “Visit Gladys instead.”

So the lady changed her plans and went to visit Gladys at the hospital. Gladys’ husband was very ill and not expected to live. The woman hugged and encouraged Gladys and told her that she was praying for them. The next morning, Gladys’ husband died. The woman was so thankful that she had paid attention to God and changed her plans.

Paul and the other Christians traveling with him planned on going into Asia to tell the people there about Jesus. Acts 16:7-8 tells us about their change of plans. “When they reached the border of Mysia, they tried to go on into Bithynia, but the Spirit of Jesus did not let them go there. So they passed by Mysia and went to the city of Troas.” That same night Paul saw a vision of a man from Macedonia. Then Paul knew that God wanted him to change his plans and go to Macedonia instead.

Pay attention to God’s plan for your life. Obey Him and be willing to change your own plans so that others will know about Jesus.

— Norma Mezoe

Lydia

Paul traveled to the city of Philippi. There he met a woman named Lydia. She was from the city of Thyatira, and she was a person who sold purple cloth.

Lydia believed in God and gathered with some women near the river on the Sabbath to pray. Paul preached to the women about Jesus. God opened Lydia’s heart, and she accepted Paul’s message about Jesus. Acts 16:15 tells us what happened next. “She and all the people in her house were baptized. Then she invited us into her home. She said, ‘If you think I am a true believer in the Lord Jesus, come stay in my house.’ She persuaded us to stay with her.”

Lydia gave Paul and his friends a place to stay and food to eat while they were in Philippi. This is called hospitality. Throughout the New Testament we see many examples of Christians who opened their homes and shared their food with other people.

Look for ways that you can show hospitality to other Christians. Ask a family to come to your home for a meal. Invite a visiting missionary to stay in your home. Take a meal to an elderly person or someone who is sick. Love and encourage your brothers and sisters in Christ today!

— Jennifer Forrester

Suggested Bible Reading
Acts 16:6-10

Suggested Bible Reading
Acts 16:11-15
Servant Girl

While Paul was in Philippi, he and his friends met a servant girl. This girl had a spirit from the devil that gave her power to tell what would happen in the future. Some men owned this girl and made lots of money when she told people about the future.

Acts 16:17 tells us more about this servant girl. "She started following Paul and the rest of us around. She kept shouting, These men are servants of the Most High God! They are telling you how you can be saved!" The girl did this for many days.

Finally Paul commanded the evil spirit to come out of the girl. Immediately the spirit came out. The men who owned the girl were upset because they couldn’t use the girl to make money any more. So, they had Paul and his friend, Silas, thrown into jail.

We don’t know what happened to the servant girl after this. She must have been very happy to be free from the evil spirit. Maybe she learned about Jesus and became a Christian.

There are many people in the world who are following the devil. Those people need to know about Jesus and His free gift of salvation. Will you tell them about Jesus today?

– Jo Krueger

In Jail

Yesterday we learned that Paul and Silas were put in jail. How did they feel? Were they sad and discouraged? Acts 16:25 describes Paul and Silas in jail. “About midnight Paul and Silas were praying and singing songs to God. The other prisoners were listening to them.” Even though they were in jail, Paul and Silas prayed and sang songs!

While Paul and Silas were praying and singing, there was an earthquake. This caused the doors of the jail to open and the chains on the prisoners to fall off! The jailer woke up and saw that the doors were open. He thought all the prisoners had escaped. The jailer was ready to kill himself because he knew that the Roman government killed jailers who let their prisoners escape. Paul told the jailer that the prisoners were still there.

The jailer asked Paul and Silas what he should do to be saved. Paul told him to believe in Jesus. The jailer and all his people were baptized that same night. Even though Paul and Silas were in jail, God used them to lead the jailer and his family to salvation through Jesus.

God can use you, too. Share God’s Word with people you meet. Encourage them to change their lives and be baptized in the name of Jesus.

– Chad Entinger

Suggested Bible Reading
Acts 16:16-28

Suggested Bible Reading
Acts 16:16-33
Do you know what to do if your house is on fire? Do you have an escape route planned for you and your family? We all know the importance of planning a way to escape if there is a fire. We know that if we don’t have a way to escape a burning building, we will probably die.

Living forever separated from God will be much worse than being trapped in a fire. Without God, we are trapped in our sin, and we will not be able to escape eternal punishment in hell.

But God has planned an escape route for us! Paul and Silas shared that escape route with the jailer in Philippi. In Acts 16:31-32 we read what Paul and Silas told the jailer. “They said to him, Believe in the Lord Jesus and you will be saved — you and all who live in your house.’ So Paul and Silas told the message of the Lord to the jailer and all the people who lived in his house.” That same night, the jailer and the people in his house were baptized.

Remember that God loves us so much that He sent Jesus to die on the cross and accept the punishment for our sins. God sent Jesus to make an escape route for us so we can live with Him forever. Have you accepted God’s gift of salvation?

– Gayle Thorn

Paul and Silas traveled to the city of Thessalonica. They went to the synagogue there and started telling the Jews that God sent Jesus to be their Savior. Paul explained some Old Testament verses that talked about Jesus. Acts 17:4 tells us what happened because of Paul’s preaching. “Some of the Jews there believed Paul and Silas and decided to join them. Also, a large number of Greeks who were worshipers of the true God and many important women joined them.”

Often we see on the news that there has been a riot in a big city. People who are upset about something start gathering and causing trouble. They may hurt innocent people or cause damage to buildings and property. That is what happened in Thessalonica after Paul preached. The Jews who did not believe in Jesus were jealous so they got some bad men to start making trouble. They formed a mob and caused a riot. Some believers were taken to the city leaders. These leaders forced the believers to deposit money to guarantee that there would be no more trouble.

When Paul preached about Jesus, some people believed and others caused trouble. When you tell people about Jesus, they will probably not start a riot. But they may become upset with you or make fun of you. Be like Paul. Don’t give up! Continue to follow Jesus.

– Ed Martin

Suggested Bible Reading
Acts 16:16-33

Suggested Bible Reading
Acts 17:1-9
Search God’s Word

Maybe you have seen someone searching through a desk or dresser or under some furniture. You ask them, “What are you looking for?” They may answer that they are looking for some important papers or their phone, car keys or eyeglasses.

Today when we have questions, we may use a search engine on the Internet to find the answers to our questions. But I wonder if you have searched God’s Word to help you understand God’s plan for your life. We should not believe everything we see on the Internet, but we can always trust God’s Word, the Bible.

Paul and Silas traveled to the city of Berea. Acts 17:11 tells us about the people in Berea. “The people in Berea were more open-minded than those in Thessalonica. They were so glad to hear the message Paul told them. They studied the Scriptures every day to make sure that what they heard was really true.”

How much time do you spend searching the Bible? Do you read God’s Word every day? There are many false teachers in the world today. When someone talks about Jesus, we need to be sure that what they say is true. The only way to know for sure is to read and study the Bible. That is the only place to find God’s truth!

– Pam Davis

Suggested Bible Reading

Acts 17:10-15

Some Believed

Paul was in the city of Athens. He saw many idols there. Paul noticed that the people worshiped an unknown god. He explained to the people that this unknown god was really the one true and living God.

Paul continued to teach about Jesus. When some of the people heard about Jesus raising from the dead, they laughed. But some people were curious and wanted to learn more. The result of Paul’s teaching is found in Acts 17:34. “But some of the people joined with Paul and became believers. Among these were Dionysius, a member of the Areopagus council, and a woman named Damaris, and some others.”

When Paul preached, the people responded in three ways. Some people laughed at him. Others said that they might want to learn more about Jesus later. And, some people believed and started following Jesus. Notice that when some people laughed at Paul, he did not stop preaching. Paul continued to tell other people about Jesus.

Sometimes when I tell people about Jesus, they laugh and walk away. I feel like giving up. But I should be like Paul. I need to remember that some people I tell about Jesus will decide to follow Him. Don’t be discouraged. Keep on telling the Good News!

– Jo Krueger

Suggested Bible Reading

Acts 17:16-34
Who God Is

Many churches today become involved in programs and activities. They get so busy that they forget to teach people basic information about God. When Paul talked to the people in Athens, he shared with them who God really is.

Acts 17:25-26 tells us what Paul shared with the people about God. “He is the one who gives people life, breath, and everything else they need. He does not need any help from them. He has everything he needs. God began by making one man, and from him he made all the different people who live everywhere in the world. He decided exactly when and where they would live.”

Paul continued to tell the people that God wants all people to search for Him and find Him. Paul also told these people that God is not made from gold, silver or stone like the idols they worshiped. Then Paul explained that God wants everyone to repent and follow Jesus.

Paul showed the people in Athens that God loved them and wanted to save them. And God is the answer for people today who are hurting, confused and overwhelmed by the world’s ideas. Don’t forget that God is the One who made you and everything in the world!

– Bonnie Hall

Suggested Bible Reading
Acts 17:22-34

Not Far From Us

My friend, Doris, hadn’t slept well, and she woke up with a headache. She thought about the day ahead and remembered that she had many things to do that day. She also remembered that her doctor was supposed to call her that day and tell her the results of some medical tests.

Doris sat down and reached for her Bible. She was worried, and she didn’t know how she could face the things that might happen that day. Doris opened her Bible to Acts, chapter 17. Here is what God showed her in Acts 17:27. “God wanted people to look for him, and perhaps in searching all around for him, they would find him. But he is not far from any of us.”

That verse comforted Doris and helped her remember that God was always close to her. Then she knew she could face the things that might happen during that day. When Doris finished reading the Bible, she thanked God for His words of encouragement. She felt peace instead of worry.

God is not far from you. No matter what may happen to you today, God will take care of you. Give Him your worries and allow His Word to comfort and strengthen you.

– Bonnie Hall

Suggested Bible Reading
Acts 17:22-28
Christian Friends

It is very important for Christians to fellowship with one another. We learned from Acts, chapter 2, that the Christians in Jerusalem spent time with each other every day. They learned from the apostles, they shared their possessions, and they prayed and ate together.

You probably have many Christian friends. And some of those friends may have the same interests as you have. Paul traveled to the city of Corinth. There he met Aquila and his wife, Priscilla. In Acts 18:3 we learn that Paul and Aquila and Priscilla had something in common. “They were tentmakers, the same as Paul, so he stayed with them and worked with them.”

Paul stayed in Corinth for a year and a half and worked with Aquila and Priscilla. They worked making tents and also telling people about Jesus. In Romans 16:3 Paul said that Aquila and Priscilla risked their own lives for him. Wow - they must have been really good friends!

Think about your Christian friends. Do you share with each other and help each other grow closer to God? Pray for your Christian friends today. Spend time with them and work together for God’s kingdom.

– Jo Krueger

Don't Give Up!

It is fun to read and learn about the many conversions in the book of Acts. In Acts, chapter 18, we read another exciting story about God convicting people to believe and follow Him.

Yesterday we learned that Paul was staying in the city of Corinth. While he was there, Paul made tents with Aquila and Priscilla. Acts 18:4 tells us what else Paul did in Corinth. “Every Sabbath day Paul went to the synagogue and talked with both Jews and Greeks, trying to persuade them to believe in Jesus.” But many of the people in the synagogue disagreed with Paul, and they started insulting him.

What did Paul do then? Did he give up? No! Paul knew that he had done all he could to convince them about Jesus. So Paul went to another place to teach. He continued to share the Good News about Jesus. Crispus, a leader of another synagogue, and all the people living in his house believed in Jesus. There were also many other people in Corinth who listened to Paul. They believed and were baptized, too!

Maybe you will share Jesus with someone today, and maybe they will disagree with you. Remember that Paul didn’t give up. Be like Paul. Continue to encourage people to believe in Jesus and be baptized in Him.

– Chad Entinger

Suggested Bible Reading

Acts 18:1-3

Suggested Bible Reading

Acts 18:1-8
Focus on Jesus

In our world today, many people think they know how we can be happy and satisfied. Some say that we should be good-looking or famous or make lots of money. Some people encourage us to do what we want to do and not what God wants.

Acts, chapter 18, introduces us to a man named Apollos. Apollos was a very bold speaker and was excited to tell people about Jesus. Aquila and Priscilla helped Apollos understand more about God’s plan of salvation.

Apollos wanted to go to Achaia to share the Good News about Jesus. When he arrived there, he helped the people who believed in Jesus. Acts 18:28 tells us more that Apollos did while he was in Achaia. “He argued very strongly against the Jews before all the people. He clearly proved that the Jews were wrong. He used the Scriptures and showed that Jesus is the Messiah.” Apollo knew that the secret to true happiness and satisfaction came from knowing Jesus as his Lord and Savior.

If we are searching for beauty, fame and money, we are not focusing on the right things. We need to focus on Jesus and what He did for us. Only then will we be truly happy and satisfied!

– Steve Husting

Keep On!

A Christian woman married a man who was not a Christian. She was very patient with her husband, and she tried to live for Jesus every day. The woman prayed for her husband and encouraged him to come to church with her and join her in Bible study. But the husband always refused.

Through 47 years of marriage, that woman faithfully prayed every day for her husband to become a Christian. Some people told her to give up, but she never gave up hope that her husband would accept Jesus as His Savior. One Sunday the woman asked her husband if he wanted to go to church with her. To the woman’s surprise, her husband said that he wanted to go. He paid attention to the preacher’s sermon. At the end of the service, the husband walked forward and announced that he wanted Jesus to be His Lord and Savior!

That story reminds me of Paul. He traveled many places and boldly told thousands of people about Jesus. Often people did not accept his message, but Paul did not stop preaching. Acts 19:10 tells us about Paul’s work in Ephesus. “He did this for two years. Because of this work, everyone in Asia, Jews and Greeks, heard the word of the Lord.”

Be bold like Paul. Keep on telling people about Jesus today!

– Jo Krueger

Suggested Bible Reading
Acts 18:18-28

Suggested Bible Reading
Acts 19:1-10
Miracles

While Paul was traveling, God gave him the power to do some very special miracles. Often Paul healed people who were sick or had an evil spirit from the devil. Acts 19:12 tells us more about those miracles. “Some people carried away handkerchiefs and clothes that Paul had used and put them on those who were sick. The sick people were healed, and evil spirits left them.”

Because of these miracles, many people had great respect for God. Some of those people practiced magic. When they saw the miracles, they burned their magic books to show that they had stopped doing magic and were following God. Many people saw this and believed God’s message about salvation through Jesus.

Today we can know God’s message by reading and studying the Bible. The Bible teaches us that we need to stop sinning. Maybe you have some sin in your life that is hard to stop — like lying or stealing, jealousy or swearing. The magicians in Ephesus gave up the wrong things they were doing. With God’s help, you, too, can stop sinning and you can live for Jesus every day.

Spend time today praying and asking God to forgive you. Then study the Bible and rely on Him to help you resist temptation today.

– Jennifer Forrester

Paul’s Goals

Paul was a hard worker, and he suffered many bad things so he could share the Good News about Jesus throughout the Roman Empire. Paul’s main goal was to tell as many people as possible about God’s plan of salvation.

But Paul also had another goal. We can learn about this goal in Acts 19:21. “After this, Paul made plans to go to Jerusalem. He planned to go through the regions of Macedonia and Achaia, and then go to Jerusalem. He thought, ‘After I visit Jerusalem, I must also visit Rome.’”

Paul knew that God wanted him to be a witness in Rome. Rome was a very important city and the center of the Roman Empire. Many times throughout Acts, we see that God guided Paul and his circumstances so that he would eventually be able to travel to Rome.

If you are a Christian, you should have the goal of telling people about Jesus. But maybe you have another important goal that you feel God has given to you. Maybe you want to become a missionary in a foreign country or read through the Bible every year or teach children how to follow Jesus.

Don’t give up on your goals. Focus on God and His Word every day. God will bless you and help you achieve your goals.

– Jo Krueger

Suggested Bible Reading
Acts 19:11-20

Suggested Bible Reading
Acts 19:21-22
Trouble in Ephesus

In the city of Ephesus, there was a man named Demetrius who worked with silver. Demetrius and other silversmiths made little models that looked like the temple to the false goddess Artemis. These men made lots of money selling their models.

Acts 19:26 tells us that Demetrius was upset because Paul was preaching about Jesus. “But look at what this man Paul is doing. Listen to what he is saying. He has convinced many people in Ephesus and all over Asia to change their religion. He says the gods that people make by hand are not real.”

Demetrius and the other silversmiths were afraid they would lose money. They became angry and started praising Artemis. The whole city was in an uproar. Finally, the city clerk reminded the crowd that Paul had not said anything bad about Artemis or stolen anything. He encouraged the people to stop arguing and go home.

There are many people in the world today who want to hurt Christians. Sometimes they tell lies about them or falsely accuse them. These people hope that Christians will stop following Jesus. You may face times of persecution today, but God will always be with you to strengthen and encourage you.

– Ed Martin

Suggested Bible Reading
Acts 19:23-41

Encourage Others

The book of Acts shows us that almost everywhere Paul went, there was trouble. In Acts, chapter 20, we learn that once again some Jews were planning to do something bad to Paul. So Paul’s companions continued their journey, and Paul traveled another way. It must have been hard for Paul to know that some people wanted to hurt him or even kill him.

But Paul trusted God to lead him and take care of him. Because of Paul’s faith, he was able to stay strong and encourage other Christians. Acts 20:1–2 tells us more about that. “When the trouble stopped, Paul invited the Lord’s followers to come visit him. After encouraging them, he told them goodbye and left for Macedonia. On his way through Macedonia he had many words of encouragement for the followers in various places. Then he went to Greece.”

No matter where Paul went, he encouraged other Christians. He is a wonderful example for us today. Paul prayed for those Christians and reminded them how much God loved them. He always looked for opportunities to strengthen the people he met on his travels.

You can be an encourager like Paul. Find someone who is depressed or confused or needs to know about Jesus. Love them and help them obey God’s Word.

– Ed Martin

Suggested Bible Reading
Acts 20:1-6
Eutychus

Acts, chapter 20, tells us about a miracle that Paul did when he was in the city of Troas. On a Sunday, Paul met together with some Christians. They ate the Lord’s Supper together, and Paul preached to them. Paul was planning to leave the next day, so Paul preached until about midnight.

In Acts 20:9 we learn that something terrible happened. “There was a young man named Eutychus sitting in the window. Paul continued talking, and Eutychus became very, very sleepy. Finally, he fell asleep and fell out of the window. He fell to the ground from the third floor. When the people went down and lifted him up, he was dead.”

Paul knelt down beside Eutychus and put his arms around him. God gave Paul the power to raise Eutychus from the dead. Paul continued to preach until the early morning. The followers were very happy that Eutychus was alive again.

This miracle was just one of the many miracles we read about in the book of Acts. Why did God give His people the power to do these miracles? God wanted to bless people and to help non-Christians be convinced that the message about Jesus was true.

Thank God for His great power and love today!
– Jo Krueger

Suggested Bible Reading
Acts 20:7-12

Think of Others First

Parents of young children work hard to teach them to share and not be selfish. Children often think only of themselves. Their parents want them to learn to think about other people first.

Paul is a very good example of someone who thought about other people first. When he met with the elders from the church in Ephesus, he reminded them of the ways he had suffered. Here’s what Paul told them in Acts 20:19-20. “The Jews planned things against me, and this gave me much trouble. But you know that I always served the Lord, sometimes with tears. I never thought about myself first. I always did what was best for you. I told you the Good News about Jesus in public before the people and also taught in their homes.”

Paul did not think about himself and the hardships he was facing. Instead, he thought about what was best for others. God took care of Paul and blessed his life and work.

Maybe today you will see something on TV or read something on Facebook that encourages you to be selfish and focus on yourself. Ask God to show you how you can focus on other people and help them to grow in Jesus.

– Jennifer Forrester

Suggested Bible Reading
Acts 20:13-24
Tell the Good News

Yesterday we learned that Paul met with the elders from the church in Ephesus. As we continue to read about this meeting in Acts, chapter 20, we see that it was an emotional meeting. Why? Because Paul was going to Jerusalem. The Holy Spirit had told Paul that he would face trouble there. Paul knew that he would never see these Christians again.

Paul did not know exactly what would happen to him in Jerusalem. But Acts 20:24 tells us that Paul did know one thing. “I don’t care about my own life. The most important thing is that I finish my work. I want to finish the work that the Lord Jesus gave me to do — to tell people the Good News about God’s grace.”

We all probably have a daily routine of things we do and places we go. We know that as we go through our day, we may face troubles. But we should remember that the most important thing we can do all day is to share about Jesus with other people.

Tell God that you want to love and serve others today. Then He will give you opportunities to share the Good News with people that you meet. God will also give you boldness and wisdom as you talk about Jesus.

– Steve Husting

Suggested Bible Reading
Acts 20:17-31

Greater Blessing

Paul loved the Christians in the church in Ephesus. He had spent a long time with them, teaching and serving them. Paul knew that he would not see them again, so he wanted to share some important last words with the elders.

Paul warned the elders to stay away from false teachers. He also thanked them for all they had done for him. Paul finished speaking with them in Acts 20:35. “I always showed you that you should work just as I did and help people who are weak. I taught you to remember the words of the Lord Jesus: You will have a greater blessing when you give than when you receive.”

Children love to receive presents for their birthday or Christmas. They have fun looking at a brightly wrapped package and trying to imagine what is inside. But as they grow older, they realize that it is even more fun to give a present to someone. It is a wonderful experience to pick out a special gift for someone and then watch them open your gift. That is what Paul was talking about. The people in Ephesus had taken care of Paul. God blessed them with great blessings because they helped Paul.

Do you want to have a greater blessing? Look for ways to share with other people today.

– Jo Krueger

Suggested Bible Reading
Acts 20:32-38
**Pray for Others**

Paul met many people on his travels. Some of those people developed a very close relationship with Paul. Sometimes Paul stayed in a city for several years, and he got to know the people well. So it was hard for Paul to say goodbye and leave an area.

We have been learning about Paul’s final meeting with the elders from Ephesus. Paul knew that it was God’s plan for him to go to Rome and perhaps die there. Acts 21:5-6 tells us about another time on Paul’s journey that he said goodbye to some Christian friends. *But when our time there was up, we returned to the ship to continue our trip. All the followers, even the men and women and children, came with us to the seashore. We all knelt down on the beach, prayed, and said goodbye. Then we got on the ship, and the followers went home.*

God often calls Christians to move to a different city or a foreign country so they can teach others about Him. When that happens, those people must say goodbye to friends and family members. That is never easy. But God will continue to be with them and comfort them when they miss the people they left behind. Think about a missionary you know who is far from home. Pray for them and ask God to comfort them.

– Ed Martin

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**God is With You**

Ron and his wife, Sue, are Christians. Recently they found out that Ron has terminal cancer. Then they learned that the farm they had rented for forty years was to be sold. Ron and Sue knew they would have to find another place to live and that Ron might be forced to retire early. But through these trials, Ron and Sue remained strong in their faith.

Acts, chapter 21, tells us that Paul and his friends left Tyre and continued on their journey to Jerusalem. They stayed several days with Philip, one of the seven helpers from the church in Jerusalem. A prophet named Agabus came from Judea. He told Paul and his friends that Paul would be bound and arrested in Jerusalem.

Paul’s friends were very upset. They begged Paul to not go to Jerusalem. Paul answered them in Acts 21:13. *But he said, Why are you crying and making me feel so sad? I am willing to be put in jail in Jerusalem. I am even ready to die for the name of the Lord Jesus!*”

Ron and Sue faced bad times, and Paul did, too. But they all knew that God will be with them in every situation. God is with you today. Trust Him and His plan for your life.

– Norma Mezoe

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**Suggested Bible Reading**

*Acts 21:1-6*  

**Suggested Bible Reading**

*Acts 21:7-16*
Paul is Arrested

Acts, chapter 21, tells us that Paul was arrested when he was in Jerusalem. Some Jews thought that Paul had taken a Gentile into the holy area of the Temple. Soon the whole city became upset, and they tried to kill him. A commander ran into the crowd and stopped the people who were beating Paul.

Acts 21:33 tells us what happened next. "The commander went over to Paul and arrested him. He told his soldiers to tie him up with two chains. Then he asked, ‘Who is this man? What has he done wrong?’" People began shouting but the commander could not figure out what had happened. So he took Paul to an army building where Paul was allowed to speak to the people.

Paul’s arrest was probably not a pleasant experience. But it was a very important part of God’s plan for spreading the Good News about Jesus. Because of Paul’s arrest, he was eventually able to travel to Rome where he met many new people and shared the Gospel with them.

You may be going through some unpleasant experiences today. Maybe you are wondering why God would allow these things to happen to you. Trust God and His plan for your life. He was always with Paul, and He will never let you down!

– Ed Martin

“The Way”

Yesterday we learned that Paul was arrested in Jerusalem. The commander allowed Paul to speak to the people in the crowd. Paul told them about his background — where he was born, where he grew up and who taught him about the Jewish laws. Paul said that he was very serious about serving God. In Acts 22:4 Paul shared more about his past. “I persecuted the people who followed the Way. Some of them were killed because of me. I arrested men and women and put them in jail.”

Paul said that he had persecuted people who followed “the Way.” What was Paul talking about? “The Way” was a term used at that time to describe Christians. Right before Jesus died, He told His disciples that He was going away. Thomas said that they didn’t know where Jesus was going or the way to get there. Jesus went on to explain that He was the only way to God. That is why the early Christians were described as following “the Way.”

Being a Christian is not just a decision to follow Jesus. It is a way of living each day. If you want to be a true Christian, you need to follow Jesus in every part of your life. Going to church and giving money to God are important, but a Christian should have a close relationship with God and live for Him every day. Are you following “the Way”?

– Ed Martin

Suggested Bible Reading

Acts 21:25-39

We may learn about something that has happened from TV, the Internet or a newspaper. But it is always better to learn about the event from a person who gives his personal testimony. Then the facts will be more accurate.

When Paul was arrested, the commander told him that he would speak to the crowd that gathered. Paul told them about his background and how Jesus had appeared to him as he was traveling to Damascus.

Then Paul shared the things that Ananias told him. In Acts 22:14-15 we learn some important things that Ananias said to Paul. “Ananias told me, The God of our fathers chose you long ago to know his plan. He chose you to see the Righteous One and to hear words from him. You will be my witness to all people. You will tell them what you have seen and heard.”

God wanted Paul to share about Jesus with other people. He also wanted Paul to tell people how God had saved him and worked in his life. We have a testimony that we can share with other people, too. We can tell how we first learned about Jesus, how other Christians taught us and how God is now using us to serve His kingdom.

Share your Christian testimony with someone today!

— Gayle Thorn

This morning there were dark clouds in the east. The sun was just beginning to rise, but ugly, jagged clouds hid the sunrise. About 20 minutes later, the dark clouds moved away, and there was a beautiful sunrise. The white clouds surrounding the sun were edged with pink, blue, orange and purple. It was awesome!

God changed an ugly sky into a beautiful one. Only He can do that! And only God can change an ugly life of sin into a beautiful life of Christian love and service.

There was a time when Paul’s life was ugly. He did not believe that Jesus was God’s Son. He tried to destroy the church. Paul talked about this in Acts 22:19-20. “I said, ‘But, Lord, the people know that I was the one who put the believers in jail and beat them. I went through all the synagogues to find and arrest the people who believe in you. The people also know that I was there when Stephen, your witness, was killed. I stood there and agreed that they should kill him. I even held the coats of the men who were killing him!’”

Maybe you think that your life is ugly and filled with sin. God can change you — just like He changed Paul. He can forgive your sins and make you one of His children. Ask God to make you a beautiful new person in Christ!

— Jennifer Forrester

Suggested Bible Reading
Acts 22:6-23
Roman Citizen

Paul was arrested and allowed to speak to the people. When Paul said that God had sent him to preach to non-Jewish people, the crowd stopped listening and shouted, “Get rid of this man.”

Paul was taken into the army building and beaten. He asked the soldiers if they had the right to beat a person who was a Roman citizen. The commander asked Paul if he was really a Roman citizen. Paul said that he was born a Roman citizen. Acts 22:29 tells us what the soldiers did then. “The men who were preparing to question Paul moved away from him immediately. The commander was afraid because he had already put Paul in chains, and he was a Roman citizen.”

Roman citizens had the right to vote, to make legal contracts and to own property. Also they could not be tortured or whipped, and they had the right to request that the emperor of the Roman Empire hear their court case. Because of Paul’s Roman citizenship, he was not beaten by the soldiers. And later, Paul asked that Caesar hear the case against him. So that is how Paul was able to go to Rome.

God used the circumstances in Paul’s life to help him and to prepare the way for more people to know about Jesus. God can use you today to show someone the way to Jesus.

– Ed Martin

Suggested Bible Reading

Acts 22:24-29

Plot to Kill Paul

Yesterday we learned that Paul was arrested. He spoke to the Jewish council, but they argued with each other and became upset. The commander was afraid that they would kill Paul, so Paul was taken back to the army building. In Acts 23:11 we learn what happened the next night. “The next night the Lord Jesus came and stood by Paul. He said, ‘Be brave! You have told people in Jerusalem about me. You must do the same in Rome.’” Jesus encouraged Paul and assured him that he would go to Rome.

The next morning a group of 40 Jews made a promise to themselves. They agreed that they would not eat or drink anything until they had killed Paul. But Paul’s nephew heard about the plan and told Paul. Paul sent his nephew to tell the commander. The commander gathered 70 soldiers on horses and 200 men with spears to take Paul to Governor Felix. The soldiers and Paul left for Caesarea that same night.

Once again, God took care of Paul. Paul was safely escorted to Governor Felix in Caesarea. God’s plan was for Paul to go to Rome, and nothing could stop that plan.

You may not realize it, but God is working in your life, too. Thank Him today for His guidance and protection.

– Ed Martin

Suggested Bible Reading

Acts 23:6-22
Troublemaker

Some older Jewish leaders and a lawyer named Tertullus went to Caesarea to make charges against Paul before the governor. Tertullus started the meeting by telling the governor why he and other Jews were upset with Paul. Acts 24:5 tells us what Tertullus said. "This man is a troublemaker. He causes trouble with the Jews everywhere in the world. He is a leader of the Nazarene group."

Who was Tertullus talking about? He was talking about Paul. Many people did not accept Paul’s message that Jesus was God’s Son. These people became angry and called Paul a troublemaker. But Paul was just telling the truth about God’s plan of salvation. Paul said that he always tried to do what he believed was right before God and everyone.

As Christians, we should always do what is right. But sometimes people do not agree with us. They may become upset and call us names. We may even have bad things happen to us because we follow Jesus. But we should never be ashamed to admit that we follow and obey Jesus.

Stand strong today for Jesus. And remember to always do what is right. God will be with you and give you strength and wisdom.

– Gayle Thorn

Don’t Wait

Many people use their time wisely. They set aside time for Bible study, going to church and helping other people. But some people do not use their time wisely. Instead, they delay making a decision to follow God or delay using their time to serve Him.

Paul spoke before the Roman governor, Felix. He told about his background and why he was teaching about Jesus. Paul defended himself, saying that he had done nothing wrong. Felix already understood many things about Christians. So a few days later Felix came with his wife, and they listened to Paul speak.

Acts 24:25 tells us how Felix felt about Paul’s message. "But Felix became afraid when Paul spoke about things like doing right, self-control, and the judgment that will come in the future. He said, ‘Go away now. When I have more time, I will call you.’" The Bible does not tell us if Felix ever decided to follow God.

Maybe you know that you need to follow God. Don’t wait — give your life to Him today. Or maybe you know that you need to give up some sin in your life so you can serve God better. Don’t wait — ask for forgiveness and start doing what is right today!

– Alice Thomas

Suggested Bible Reading
Acts 24:1-9

Suggested Bible Reading
Acts 24:17-27
Festus and Agrippa

Festus became governor after Felix. Acts, chapter 25, tells us that Paul spoke before Festus and then King Agrippa. Festus went to Jerusalem to find out why the Jews had arrested Paul. When he returned to Caesarea, he asked that Paul be brought before him. Paul said that he had done nothing wrong against the Jewish law, the Temple or Caesar. Festus asked Paul if he wanted to go back to Jerusalem and face his accusers.

In Acts 25:11-12 we find Paul’s response to Festus’ question. “If I have done something wrong and the law says I must die, then I agree that I should die. I don’t ask to be saved from death. But if these charges are not true, then no one can hand me over to these people. No, I want Caesar to hear my case!” Festus talked with his advisors. Then he said, “You have asked to see Caesar, so you will go to Caesar!”

A few days later, King Agrippa came to Caesarea. Festus told him about Paul. Then he asked Agrippa to listen to Paul and decide what charges should be made against him.

Paul appeared before some very important officials. Every time he was allowed to speak, he spoke very boldly. But Paul was not worried about his life. His goal was to tell people about Jesus. Will you be like Paul and boldly tell someone about Jesus today?

— Ed Martin

Tell More People

If you want to improve your Christian life, you can read the Bible and pray more. You can also tell more people about Jesus and what God has done for you.

When you meet people, there are two ways you can help them know more about Jesus. First, you can encourage them to read about Jesus and salvation in the Bible. Show them specific verses that will help them understand God’s plan. Second, you can tell them your story — tell them how much you love Jesus and how He has changed your life.

King Agrippa allowed Paul to speak in his own defense. Paul said that he was very happy to share his story with the king. He explained how he had been against God and the church. Then Paul talked about seeing Jesus. In Acts 26:18, Paul shared what God had said to him. “You will make them able to understand the truth. They will turn away from darkness to the light. They will turn away from the power of Satan, and they will turn to God. Then their sins can be forgiven, and they can be given a place among God’s people — those who have been made holy by believing in me.”

Be like Paul today. God will be with you as you tell people how to study His Word and become His children.

— Jo Krueger

Suggested Bible Reading
Acts 25:1-17

Suggested Bible Reading
Acts 26:1-23
God Provides

Every person in the world needs food, a place to live, clothes to wear and someone to love them. These things help us live a healthy life.

God has promised to provide for us. But He may not just give us what we need. Sometimes God gives us the ability to meet our own needs. For example, we work at a job so we can earn money to buy food, pay for our house and buy clothes.

And often God works through other people to provide for our needs. That is how God provided for Paul while he was traveling to Rome. Julius was an officer who served in the emperor’s special army. He was put in charge of guarding Paul. Acts 27:3 tells us how Julius provided for Paul. “The next day we came to the city of Sidon. Julius was very good to Paul and gave him freedom to go visit his friends there, who gave him whatever he needed.” God blessed Paul and took care of him through this army officer.

God will provide for you today. He may expect you to work hard for what you need. But He may also use other people to provide for you. Tell God today that you want Him to be most important in your life. Then thank Him for the many ways He blesses and cares for you.

– Gayle Thorn

Suggested Bible Reading
Acts 27:1-6

Paul’s Trip to Rome (1)

Finally, Paul was on a ship and on his way to Rome. At this time, Luke was traveling with Paul. Would you have liked to travel with Paul and Luke? Ships at that time were not like the luxury ocean liners that we have today. Often passengers were cold and wet and hungry as they traveled.

Also, ships at that time often encountered difficulties on the sea. If the winds were not blowing, they traveled very slowly. And during certain times of the year, there were many storms that came up. Paul was concerned about the weather as they sailed to Rome. In Acts 27:10-11 he warned the sailors about continuing their journey. “Men, I can see that there is a lot of trouble on this trip. The ship, everything in it, and even our lives may be lost!’ But the captain and the owner of the ship did not agree with Paul. So the army officer accepted what they said instead of believing Paul.”

Paul tried to warn the men on the ship, but they refused to listen. This probably discouraged Paul, and he may have been worried about what they would encounter on the sea. But Paul didn’t stop trusting God.

You may face difficulties today, too. People may ignore you. You may wonder what will happen to you. Keep trusting God — you can always depend on Him.

– Ed Martin

Suggested Bible Reading
Acts 27:1-12
Paul’s Trip to Rome (2)

A terrible flood happened in a big city. Volunteers came from many other places to load up some furniture and help the people save a few things from their houses. But most people lost their homes, all their belongings and their cars.

Some of the volunteers who came to help were shocked by the damaged homes and the horrible smell from the floodwater. It was hard for them to understand how this terrible flood could happen. But often they were encouraged by the victims of the flood when they said, “I am so glad my family and I are safe. God has saved us from this disaster.”

As Paul was sailing to Rome, he experienced a terrible storm. The storm was so bad that the men threw things overboard to lighten the ship. The people on the ship thought for sure they would die. But Paul encouraged the passengers and crew on the ship. He told them that an angel had spoken to him and told him that no one on the ship would die. Acts 27:25 tells us something else that Paul told the men on the ship. “So men, there is nothing to worry about. I trust God, and I am sure everything will happen just as the angel told me.”

We may not understand the terrible things that happen in life, but we can trust God to always be with us!

– Anonymous

Suggested Bible Reading
Acts 27:13-32

Friday, August 23

Paul’s Trip to Rome (3)

Yesterday we learned that a terrible storm happened while Paul was sailing to Rome. But God told him that he and the other passengers would be safe and not die.

We have probably never experienced a storm as bad as this storm. The wind blew very hard. The people on the ship did not see the sun or the stars for many days. Paul continued to encourage the passengers and crew, and he thanked God for taking care of them.

Acts 27:41 tells us what finally happened to the ship. “But the ship hit a sandbank. The front of the ship stuck there and could not move. Then the big waves began to break the back of the ship to pieces.” All the men on the ship swam or floated safely to land.

This storm was just another part of Paul’s great adventure of serving Jesus. He faced many terrible things such as beatings, prison and going without food. But through it all, God was with Paul and gave him courage to stay strong.

Probably you will not have to experience the terrible things that Paul faced. But you may meet people who will hate you and persecute you. Just remember that God will always be with you to help and encourage you as you serve Him!

– Jo Krueger

Suggested Bible Reading
Acts 27:13-44

Saturday, August 24
Rome

Rome was a very large city and the center of the Roman Empire. Because the city was filled with many people who did not know about Jesus, Paul wanted to go there and share the Gospel with them.

Paul arrived in Rome. He probably was very glad to finally be there. Paul had known for a long time that God wanted him to be there. Paul was under arrest and in chains, but God gave him many opportunities to preach in Rome. While Paul was there, he told people he met about Jesus. Sometimes he spoke to them all day long. Paul talked to the Jews about the Law of Moses and the writings of the prophets to help them believe in Jesus.

Acts 28:30-31 sums up Paul’s experience in Rome. “Paul stayed two full years in his own rented house. He welcomed all people who came and visited him. He told them about God’s kingdom and taught them about the Lord Jesus Christ. He was very bold, and no one tried to stop him from speaking.” Paul was a prisoner, but that did not stop him from preaching about Jesus.

Sometimes we may think that our circumstances prevent us from sharing the Gospel. But no matter what happens to us or where we are, we should continue teaching about Jesus. Will you be like Paul today?

— Ed Martin

Good from Bad (1)

Every day bad things happen in the world. But God can use those bad things to make good things happen for His kingdom. Today and tomorrow we will look at how God brought good things from bad situations in Paul’s life.

For many years Paul wanted to go to Rome and share the Good News about Jesus. How did Paul arrive in Rome? He was a prisoner in chains! God used that bad situation of being a prisoner to bring good things to Paul and to people who needed to know about Jesus.

After the ship that Paul was sailing on was shipwrecked, he stayed in the home of a Roman official. This official’s father was very sick, and Paul healed him. Acts 28:9 tells us what happened next. “After this happened, all the other sick people on the island came to Paul, and he healed them.” When Paul healed these people, I am sure that he told them about Jesus, too. Once again, God brought good things out of this bad situation.

Even as a prisoner, Paul was able to serve God and do good things. Ask God to use you today — even in the bad situations that might happen to you. And don’t forget to praise God for His plan for your life!

— Jennifer Forrester

Suggested Bible Reading

Acts 28:11-31

Suggested Bible Reading

Acts 28:1-10
Good from Bad (2)

Yesterday we talked about Paul and how God used his bad situation to make good things happen while He was traveling to Rome. God continued to be with Paul after he arrived in Rome. God’s plan was to use Paul in Rome to reach many more people with the Good News about Jesus.

Paul was allowed to live alone, but a soldier stayed with him to guard him. Paul did not sit around and do nothing. Right away he got busy telling people about Jesus. Acts 28:23 tells us what Paul did. “Paul and the Jews chose a day for a meeting. On that day many more of these Jews met with Paul at his house. He spoke to them all day long, explaining God’s kingdom to them. He used the Law of Moses and the writings of the prophets to persuade them to believe in Jesus.”

God’s Plan (1)

We have spent the last four months learning about God’s wonderful plan in the book of Acts. Part of God’s plan was to establish His church. The church began in Jerusalem, and it was made up of people who loved God and believed that Jesus was His Son.

Jesus shared God’s plan for spreading the Gospel in Acts 1:8. “But the Holy Spirit will come on you and give you power. You will be my witnesses. You will tell people everywhere about me—in Jerusalem, in the rest of Judea, in Samaria, and in every part of the world.”

God’s plan for the church started in the city of Jerusalem. When Peter preached on the day of Pentecost, more than 3000 people became Christians. From that time on, the church continued to grow and grow and to spread out to new areas.

God wants you to be a witness and tell other people about Jesus, too. Where should you start? You probably do not live in Jerusalem, but you may live in a small town or a large city. Start with the people who live around you. Look for an opportunity today to share God’s love with a neighbor or a friend.

– Jo Krueger

Suggested Bible Reading

Acts 28:16-31

Acts 1:6-11
When we studied the beginning of the church, we learned about Stephen. Do you remember what happened to Stephen? He preached about Jesus, but some people did not accept his message. These people became so angry with Stephen that they stoned him to death.

Acts 8:1-3 tells us what happened after Stephen was killed. "Saul agreed that the killing of Stephen was a good thing. Some godly men buried Stephen and cried loudly for him. On that day the Jews began to persecute the church in Jerusalem, making them suffer very much. Saul was also trying to destroy the group. He went into their houses, dragged out men and women, and put them in jail. All the believers left Jerusalem. Only the apostles stayed. The believers went to different places in Judea and Samaria. They were scattered everywhere, and in every place they went, they told people the Good News."

Judea was the area surrounding Jerusalem. When this persecution started, many Christians moved out of Jerusalem to other places in Judea. This is the way the church spread outside Jerusalem.

Maybe you can share Jesus with people outside the town where you live. Ask God to lead you to someone who needs to know about His love and His gift of salvation.

– Jo Krueger

God’s Plan (3)

Yesterday we learned that the persecution in Jerusalem caused the church to spread from Jerusalem throughout Judea. As more Christians moved to other places, they began to share Jesus with people in Samaria. Samaria was the area north of Judea.

Philip went to Samaria to tell people about Jesus. Acts 8:12 tells us what happened when Philip shared the Gospel there. "But Philip told the people the Good News about God’s Kingdom and the power of Jesus Christ. Men and women believed Philip and were baptized." When the apostles in Jerusalem learned what Philip was doing, they sent Peter and John to Samaria to help him.

Wherever Philip, Peter and John went in Samaria, they witnessed about Jesus. Then more people became Christians, and the church grew. You, too, can reach outside the area where you live with God’s message. Share about Jesus with people you meet when you travel. Send a text message or e-mail to a friend or relative who lives in another city. Tell them what Jesus has done for you.

You can be like Philip, Peter and John today. Don’t be afraid to spread the Good News about Jesus wherever you go!

– Jo Krueger

Suggested Bible Reading
Acts 8:1-8

Suggested Bible Reading
Acts 8:4-25
God’s Plan (4)

The last part of God’s plan for His church was that His message spread to every part of the world. As we studied the book of Acts we saw how the twelve apostles and Paul spread the Good News throughout the world.

Acts 1:9 tells us what happened after Jesus shared God’s plan with His followers. “After Jesus said this, he was lifted up into the sky. While they were watching, he went into a cloud, and they could not see him.” Jesus left the earth and returned to heaven. But He gave the responsibility of sharing God’s plan to His followers and to all the people who have become Christians down through the years.

We have a responsibility to share Jesus with the whole world. But maybe you are thinking, “I can’t travel to other countries around the world. So how can I share Jesus?” One way is for you to help missionaries who are serving God in other countries. You can pray for them and financially support them.

Or maybe you can go on a short-term mission trip to another country or visit a mission in your own country. Let God help you be part of His plan to save the whole world.

— Jo Krueger

Cities in Acts

Unscramble the names of cities mentioned in the devotions in the book of Acts. If you need help, look at the devotion for the date that is listed. (The answers are at the bottom of page 64.)

1. MEOR (August 9) __________________
2. OHATICN (June 30) __________________
3. STAOR (July 18) __________________
4. REEBA (July 24) __________________
5. TYARLS (July 10) __________________
6. SLMJRAEEU (May 10) __________________
7. TORINHC (July 28) __________________
8. STEAHN (July 25) __________________
9. SPUHEES (July 31) __________________
10. ILIIPHPP (July 19) __________________
11. CSUMADAS (June 19) __________________
12. POJAP (June 24) __________________

Suggested Bible Reading

Acts 1:6-11
Authors

Thanks to these people who wrote devotions for this issue.

Alice Thomas—Conroe, TX
Betty Henry—Clinton, IA
Bob La Forge—Freehold, NJ
Bonnie Hall—Hartford City, IN
Chad Entinger—Deaf Missions Staff
Debbie Klahn—Kissimmee, FL
Donna Howard—Orfordville, WI
Donna Valverde-Hummel—Austin, TX
Ed Martin—Cheyenne, WY
Eileen Wood—Loganville, GA
Gayle Thorn—Wayne, OH
Jennifer Forrester—Los Angeles, CA
Jo Krueger—Deaf Missions Staff
Jolynn Stinehagen—Lexington, NE
Karan Riley—Deceased
Norma Mezoe—Sandborn, IN
Pam Davis—Epps, LA
Ray Gilbert—Vancouver, WA
Steve Husting—Fountain Valley, CA
Suzanne Austin-Hill—Ruskin, FL
