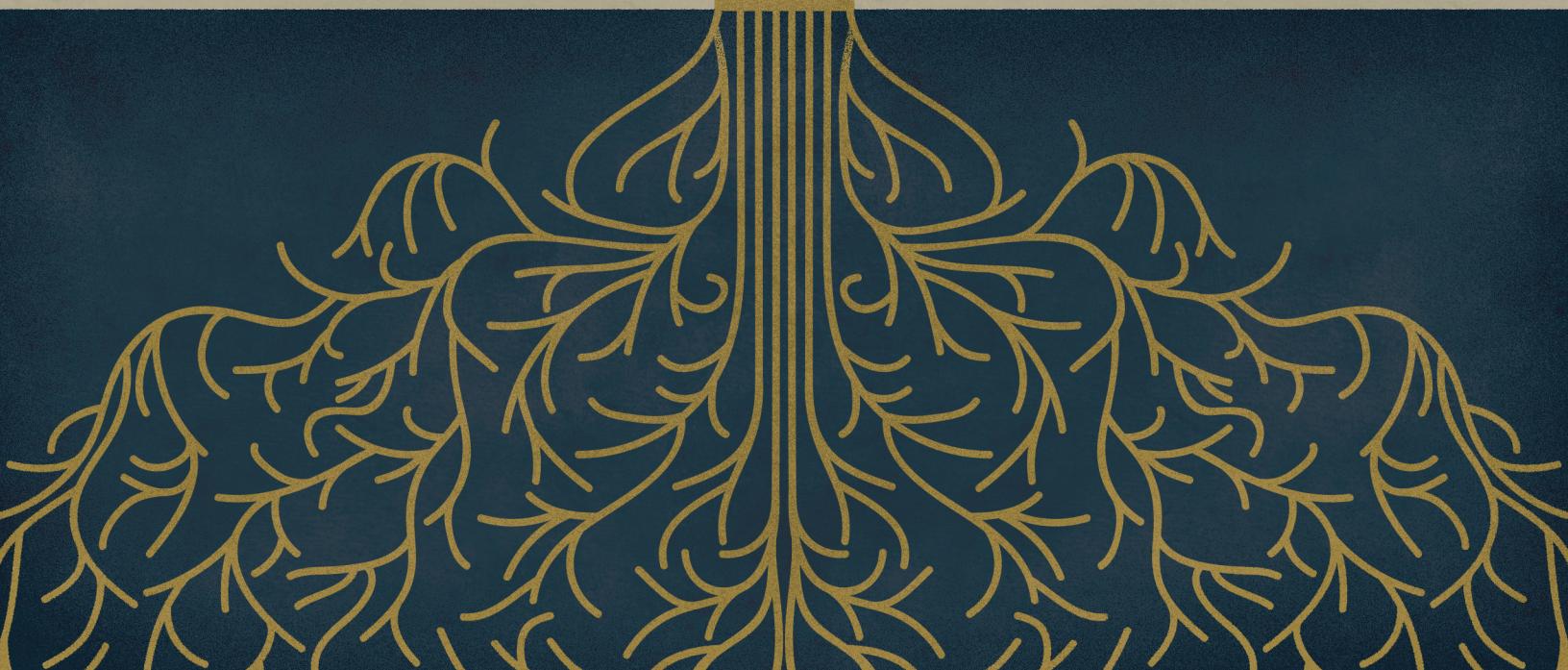




A Devotional Resource *for* Families

ACTS

JESUS BUILDS HIS CHURCH





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SECOND PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

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HOW TO USE THIS BOOK

The book you now have in your hands has been a labor of love. It began with a realization that no matter how excellent and effective our teaching may be, it cannot compete with the influence of you as parents. God has called you specifically and gifted you uniquely to lead your kids "in the nurture and admonition of the Lord." Plainly said, you are the greatest spiritual influence in the lives of your kids. To some of you that is a very intimidating and overwhelming thought (I know I feel that way).

Therefore, we as the church want to help encourage and equip you in your role as the primary discipler of your children, and that is why this book exists. Our goal is to set you up in the best way that we can to have spiritual conversations as a family. Our hope is that you will have opportunities on Sundays, perhaps at lunch after Sunday school, as well as a couple of times a week with the Family Devotionals provided, to talk about God and His importance in our everyday lives.

To help accomplish this, we have standardized the Sunday school curriculum so that everyone from JK-12th grade will be learning the same things each week (age appropriately, of course). This allows you as parents to know exactly what all of your kids are learning without having to keep track of multiple e-mails or schedules. Below you will find exactly what is included and how best to use it.

OUTLINE

We provide you with the main points that your students will be learning each week. We do this so you can be best prepared to discuss what they learned and answer any questions that might come up. We also have included a lengthy section of context for each lesson. We believe it is important for all of us to see how each story in the Bible does not stand alone, but instead fits into the larger drama that God has unfolded.

FOLLOW-UP QUESTIONS

The point of these questions is to be conversation starters for you as a family. They are not exhaustive as to the content of what your children have learned that Sunday, but should just get things started for your family. Our hope is that your children will come to expect a conversation about what they learned in Sunday school for two main reasons. First, we want them to see spiritual conversations as a normal and important part of life and second, we hope this expectation will make them more attentive to what they are learning.

FAMILY DEVOS

We have provided two days worth of Family Devotionals for you to do as a family at home. We chose this number so as to not overwhelm families or discourage them for not being able to live up to expectations. Our hope is that the two provided will be a springboard for even more times of family worship during the week. The two we have included will help build a foundation for the Bible character that they will study on Sunday. You will also see a page on "How to Do Family Devotions" which is there only as a resource for you and not a concrete model that must be followed. In the end, the most important thing is for families to spend time together focused on God's Word and prayer; how that is accomplished is secondary.

Andrew Keasling

TEACHING SCHEDULE

This curriculum is designed to be used during the "school year" over 39 weeks. The following dates apply to the 2016-17 school year, excluding the weeks of Christmas, the World Missions Conference, and Easter.

WEEK	SUNDAY	SCRIPTURE	WEEK	SUNDAY	SCRIPTURE
Week 1	August 14	Acts 1:1-26	Week 21	January 8	Acts 15:1-35
Week 2	August 21	Acts 2:1-13	Week 22	January 15	Acts 15:36-41
Week 3	August 28	Acts 2:14-47	Week 23	January 22	Acts 16:1-10
Week 4	September 4	Acts 3:1-4:4	Week 24	January 29	Acts 16:11-40
Week 5	September 11	Acts 4:5-31	Week 25	February 5	Acts 17:1-15
Week 6	September 18	Acts 4:32-5:11	Week 26	February 12	Acts 17:16-34
Week 7	September 25	Acts 5:12-42	Week 27	February 19	Acts 18:1-23
Week 8	October 2	Acts 6:1-15	Week 28	March 5	Acts 18:24-19:20
Week 9	October 9	Acts 7:1-8:3	Week 29	March 12	Acts 19:21-41
Week 10	October 16	Acts 8:4-25	Week 30	March 19	Acts 20:1-38
Week 11	October 23	Acts 8:26-40	Week 31	March 26	Acts 21:1-26
Week 12	October 30	Acts 9:1-19	Week 32	April 2	Acts 21:27-22:29
Week 13	November 6	Acts 9:20-31	Week 33	April 9	Acts 22:30-23:22
Week 14	November 13	Acts 9:32-43	Week 34	April 23	Acts 23:23-24:27
Week 15	November 20	Acts 10:1-48	Week 35	April 30	Acts 25:1-12
Week 16	November 27	Acts 11:1-30	Week 36	May 7	Acts 25:13-26:32
Week 17	December 4	Acts 12:1-25	Week 37	May 14	Acts 27:1-44
Week 18	December 11	Acts 13:1-12	Week 38	May 21	Acts 28:1-10
Week 19	December 18	Acts 13:13-52	Week 39	May 28	Acts 28:11-30
Week 20	January 1	Acts 14:1-28			

HOW TO DO FAMILY DEVOTIONS

When discussing family devotions, the first thing you must know is that there is not just one correct way to do them. Each family is made up of distinct individuals, each with a different personality. Therefore, trying to create a "one-size-fits-all" approach to family devotions is foolish. Below are some helpful hints and guidelines as you lead your devotions. Some of them will be very helpful, while some you will realize do not work for your family. In the end, the point is for you as a family to take time together, reading God's Word and praying together. However you accomplish this is truly a secondary concern.

PLACE MATTERS

- It will be important to find a consistent place where you always do family devotions. Changing the location can drastically change the dynamics.
- Everyone should be at the same eye level. You don't want some on the floor and some in chairs or on the couch. This will encourage participation by all members because they will feel as if they are a part of the group.
- Minimize the distractions. Honestly, doing family devotions is hard enough! Only you know what might distract your kids so be sure you eliminate as many interruptions as possible.

PRAYER MATTERS

- It is important for your children to see the importance of prayer. Therefore, be sure that you pray to begin and end your time together. Often it works best to choose one family member to open the time in prayer (which also helps settle busy hearts). At the end is an opportunity to let everyone pray.
- Give your children a role in prayer. One of the things that my family does that has been successful is that we have four prayer categories: 1- Zachary's class, 2- Bryson's Class, 3- Our extended family and friends, and 4- Missions. Each time we give someone in the house one of these prayer categories. To minimize the "I want..." of our children, we rotate who assigns who to prayer. That way, everyone gets a chance to decide who prays for what. It has saved a lot of disagreements. For our missions category, we alternate between a Mission Memphis partner and a World Missions partner and it has been such a blessing to watch and hear our kids pick up on and pray for those ministries. We also switch it up some nights and just have a time of confession or adoration or thanksgiving so they don't think of God as just someone from whom you ask things.

THE WORD MATTERS

- God's Word is the only thing He promises will bear fruit. It is so important to not only expose them to God's Word but also to teach them how to think about it. One of the best ways to start doing this is to continually remind them that these stories are REAL - Isaiah 55:11.
- Get them to interact with the Bible for themselves. It is a huge temptation to just provide the answers for them (since we know everything) but they will get so much more out of it if they think about it for themselves. The hardest part for me in this is that I lose the control. I have to constantly remind myself that I want them to get something out of God's Word and not get frustrated when they don't get out what I want them to.

- Encourage every little step. It will be very important to encourage every interaction they have with God's Word. They will be more willing to share when they know it is a safe place for them to come with their thoughts. At times, that will mean you are going to go down some rabbit trails, but it will be worth the journey. As a part of that, you need to make sure that they get the truth; this means gently correcting when their theology gets out of whack.

TIME MATTERS

- One of the most important things you are teaching your children is that being together is very important. Just the simple act of carving out time every week that does not involve the TV or a meal out will bear fruit. The intentional act of studying the Word and prayer together will bear fruit even if it is down the line.
- Have fun! I know it sounds silly but if your kids have fun doing family devotions, they will want to keep doing them. For us, that is a short game or a role playing moment at the beginning but for you, it can be whatever. Sometimes I think we are afraid that we will be irreverent when we attempt to have fun, but we must remember that God created fun and laughter, so participating in those activities pleases Him.

D6 DRIVING VALUES

At Second, we believe in three guiding principles, known as the D6 Driving Values. We hope that as you and your family go through these devotions together, you will be further encouraged in your relationship with the Lord, your church community, and in your Kingdom mission.

THE LORD IS MY PRIMARY DEVOTION

- Confronted by the holiness of Christ, I seek Him in daily worship, prayer, and repentance. *Isaiah 6:1-8*
- Compelled by the love of Christ, I strive to be obedient to Him in my thoughts, words, and deeds. *II Corinthians 5:14*
- Created new in Christ, my identity is no longer in the things of this world. *II Corinthians 5:17*
- Confident of the eternity secured for me in Christ, I have peace in the midst of the troubles of this life. *Phillipians 4:6-7*

THE CHURCH IS MY PRIMARY COMMUNITY

- Knowing that the Gospel liberates me from idols, I cannot imagine not joyfully worshipping God every week with my brothers and sisters in Christ. *Thessalonians 1:9b*
- Knowing that the Church is called to be a holy nation, set apart from the things of the world, I will embrace this calling by seeking to be Christ-like in all aspects of my life. *I Peter 2:9-12*
- Knowing that I am a steward of my resources and not an owner, I cheerfully release my resources to build His Kingdom and not my own. *Matthew 25:14-30*
- Knowing that the Body of Christ is essential to my sanctification, I actively seek relationship and accountability within the church in order to grow in Christ. *Ephesians 4:11-16*
- Knowing that God has given me spiritual gifts to use in the church, I willingly serve. *I Corinthians 12:4-7*
- Knowing that Jesus is present where two or more are gathered in His name, I happily pray with and for my brothers and sisters in Christ. *Matthew 18:20*

BUILDING CHRIST'S KINGDOM IS MY PRIMARY MISSION

- Belonging to Christ's Kingdom causes us to live as a distinct people who are called to be about applying Christ's work of redemption as far as the curse is found as we eagerly await His imminent return and the renewal of all things. *Romans 8:19-21*
- Building Christ's Kingdom in all of life is an act of worship, and the reason I am alive is to multiply worshippers and redeem culture. *II Corinthians 5:16-21*
- Building Christ's Kingdom begins in multiplying worshippers of Christ in my own household. *Joshua 24:15*
- Building Christ's Kingdom is the lens through which I filter every decision as I further the work of redemption. *Romans 12:1-2*
- Building Christ's Kingdom prioritizes Christ's work of redemption to the extent of intentionally sacrificing our time, money, and talents in furthering the application of the redemption of Christ. *I Corinthians 10:31-33*

OVERVIEW OF ACTS

But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you, and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth. – Acts 1:8

For most of His life and ministry Jesus talked about the Kingdom of God. He gave them pictures and parables to help them to understand it and continually mentioned how He was bringing this Kingdom in. He not only taught it but represented it with His miracles and His heart for the poor and marginalized. The disciples were excited to be a part of something so great and at times got overly focused on the Kingdom and their place in it, even arguing about who would receive the places of honor. Just when it seemed that Jesus' popularity and thus their ministry was reaching more and more people, something strange happened: Jesus was arrested and killed.

The disciples' immediate responses were disappointment and dismay. They wondered to themselves how they got it all so wrong. Didn't Jesus say He was the Messiah? Didn't He read the scroll from Isaiah and tell them that it was fulfilled in their hearing that day? Didn't He call Himself the Son of Man and the Lamb of God? It was in the midst of this confusion that the Lord gave them hope as Mary came and told them that the Lord had risen. Thus began a whirlwind of action and emotion as Jesus appeared to them to show that He had been raised and reminded them of what He came to do: save sinners and preach the Kingdom.

The disciples were filled with awe and joy but didn't really get their role in all of this. They rejoiced that Jesus was back, as surely a resurrected Jesus would convince anyone who doubted previously. They seem to have forgotten that Jesus had sent them out into ministry and had spoken about the fact that they would go to authorities and be persecuted for His Name. They even went back to their old lives and went fishing, seeming to think that the whole thing was over. Again, Jesus shook them up. He told them that He was leaving and that it was now their job to continue His work. As Jesus went and taught and healed and loved, so now they were to go as His witnesses. Jesus also made them a couple of promises. First, they would not have to do this in their own power. They would receive the promised Helper, the Holy Spirit who would give them all they needed to fulfill their mission. Second, He would return and when He did He would bring the full Kingdom of God with Him.

As Jesus ascended to heaven, the disciples watched and waited, even having to be moved by the angels to go and await the Spirit. Once the Spirit came upon them everything changed. The same disciples who once cowered behind locked doors for fear of the Jews after Jesus' death would now find themselves openly proclaiming Jesus at the temple before the religious leaders. God made them into something that was so much greater than they could be as individuals; a church. God would use the disciples to bring thousands to follow Jesus from Jerusalem to around the world, giving them a place of hope and refuge while also giving them a glorious mission: to make disciples of all nations through the power of the Holy Spirit.

As we study Acts, we will get to see God's powerful hand at work through normal people like us and how they transformed the world to the point that we still see their effects today. We get to see the origin story of our church and every church by watching how God used a group of "unschooled, ordinary men" to change the world.

WEEK

1

INTRODUCTION & ACTS 1:1-26

PURPOSE

Continuing the ministry of Jesus by the power of the Holy Spirit

WEEKLY FOCUS

The church gets direction from Jesus and prepares itself for ministry

INTRODUCTION & ACTS 1:1-26

CONTEXT

- Jesus has died on the cross and risen again
- He had appeared to His disciples, proof He had arisen
- He had been telling them that He would be returning to the Father
- The disciples are excited and confused

OUTLINE

- I. General Information about the book of Acts
 - A. Written by Luke
 1. A continuation of his Gospel account
 2. His Gospel records Jesus' ministry in His physical body
 - a. All that Jesus began to do and teach
 3. Acts records Jesus' ministry in His "spiritual body" – the church
 - B. Written for building up of the early church
- II. Jesus' final days on Earth
 - A. Presented Himself alive to the apostles
 - B. Appeared to them over 40 days
 - a. Taught them about the Kingdom of God
 - b. Preparing them for when He would leave
- III. Jesus' ascension
 - A. The disciples want answers
 1. Will you now restore your Kingdom?
 2. Hoped that Jesus would set all things right now
 3. Not realizing that He would hand His ministry over to them
 4. Jesus tells them it's not for them to know

B. Jesus gives them their purpose

1. Be His witnesses

a. Progressively—outline of book of Acts

- In Jerusalem—city where they are (Chps. 1-7)
- In all Judea—area around Jerusalem (Chps. 8-12)
- In Samaria—area past Judea (Chps. 8-12)
- To the ends of the Earth (Chps. 13-28)

2. Through the power of the Holy Spirit

a. Which God had already promised them

3. Jesus returns to heaven

a. As they watched Him

b. As He had predicted

- John 16:7

c. Angels speak to the disciples

- Don't just stand there

- He will return as you saw Him leave

IV. The disciples prepare for ministry

1. Were devoted to prayer—verse 14

2. Decided to choose another disciple

a. To fulfill scripture—Psalm 109:8

b. Recounted what happened to Judas

c. Wanted someone who had been with Jesus since the beginning

- From baptism to ascension

d. Chose two men and prayed for the Lord to decide on one

- Cast lots

- Matthias was chosen as the 12th apostle

V. SO WHAT??!!

1. Jesus has called us to be His witnesses wherever we are

2. Jesus promises to give us the Holy Spirit in order to do ministry

FOLLOW-UP QUESTIONS FOR PARENTS

- What do you remember from the lesson this morning?
- What did the passage tell you about the early church?
- What are ways in which you can be a witness for Jesus?
- Where are places you can do that?

SMALL GROUP DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- What stuck out to you from the talk?
- Where is your Jerusalem? Judea? Samaria?
- What are things that keep you from being a witness for Jesus? Why?
- Why is the Holy Spirit so important?

FAMILY DEVOTION

OPEN IN PRAYER (choose 1 person to pray)

OPENING QUESTION/ACTIVITY

- If you could describe the purpose of your life in a sentence what would it be?

READ MATTHEW 28:16-20

QUESTIONS FOR JK-3RD

- Where were the disciples? Why were they there?
- Where is a place where you can be near Jesus?
- What did Jesus say to the disciples?
- As they go, what are they supposed to do? What does that mean?
- Who does Jesus say will be with them?
- Who is with us always?
- What do you learn about God in all of this?

QUESTIONS FOR 4TH-8TH

- What does it mean to worship Jesus?
- What are some ways that they did it? What are some ways that you worship Him?
- What did it say about some of the disciples? What are ways that you sometimes doubt?
- How can we make disciples for Jesus?
- What do you learn about God in all of this?

QUESTIONS FOR 9TH-12TH

- What sticks out to you from this passage? Why?
- What are some of the doubts you have been wrestling with lately?
- Who can you talk to about your doubts?
- How are you making disciples in your life? How can you do this?
- What do you learn about God in all of this?

CLOSE IN PRAYER (everyone participates)

FAMILY DEVOTION

OPEN IN PRAYER (choose 1 person to pray)

OPENING QUESTION/ACTIVITY

- If you could have anyone in the world over for dinner who would it be and why?

READ LUKE 24:36-49

QUESTIONS FOR JK-3RD

- Who shows up to the disciples? How did they respond?
- What did Jesus say to them?
- What did He do to help them not be afraid?
- What does Jesus call them in verse 48? What does it mean to be a witness?
- How can you be a witness for Him?
- What do you learn about God in all of this?

QUESTIONS FOR 4TH-8TH

- Why was it important that Jesus ate in front of them? What did it show?
- What did Jesus do for them in regards to the Scriptures? Why was that important?
- What is one way you can be a witness for Jesus at school this week?
- What do you learn about God in all of this?

QUESTIONS FOR 9TH-12TH

- What sticks out to you from the passage? Why?
- What are the things that Jesus tells them (and us) to proclaim? How do you do that in your life?
- What is one way you can be a witness for Jesus at school this week?
- What do you learn about God in all of this?

CLOSE IN PRAYER (everyone participates)

WEEK

2

ACTS 2:1-13

PURPOSE

Continuing the ministry of Jesus by the power of the Holy Spirit

WEEKLY FOCUS

God gives His people the Holy Spirit

ACTS 2:1-13

CONTEXT

- Jesus had spent time teaching the disciples after the Resurrection
- Jesus then ascended into heaven before their eyes
- Before He left, He told them to wait in Jerusalem on the power of God, the Holy Spirit

OUTLINE

I. Feast of Pentecost

- A. Pentecost meant "fiftieth" because it was the 50th day after Passover
- B. Commemorated God giving Law to Moses on Mount Sinai
- C. It was a day of feasting and celebration

II. Coming of Holy Spirit

- A. Was a new thing
 1. Spirit had been at work in Old Testament
 - a. Genesis 1:1-2, Judges 6:34, 1 Samuel 16:13, etc.
 2. Spirit had been at work in and through Jesus
 - a. Luke 1:30-37, Luke 4:1, 14, etc.
 3. Spirit would no longer fall on people but dwell within them permanently
 - a. John 14:16-17
- B. All of the followers of Jesus were together in one place
 1. 120- Acts 1:15
 2. Celebrating Pentecost
- C. Presence of the Holy Spirit
 1. Sounded like a mighty wind filled the room
 - a. Came from heaven
 2. Looked like tongues of fire
 - a. Came and rested on each of them

III. Effect of the Holy Spirit

- A. They were filled by the Holy Spirit—more than just a little
- B. They were able to speak in tongues
 - 1. Languages that they didn't know before
 - 2. Were able to speak about mighty works of God to all of the crowd
 - a. People heard it in their own language
 - b. Languages that they shouldn't know
 - 3. Reverse of the curse of the Tower of Babel
 - a. Holy Spirit is bringing people back together
- C. The response of the crowds
 - 1. They were amazed—something they had never seen before
 - 2. They were perplexed—confused because they didn't understand how this could be
 - 3. Some were skeptical
 - a. Believed that the disciples were drunk
 - b. Discounted the work of the Lord
- D. Fulfillment of God's promise to Abraham
 - 1. Blessed to be a blessing to the nations
 - 2. Genesis 12:3

IV. SO WHAT??!!

- A. The same power that Jesus had and the disciples receive is for us as well
 - 1. We are temples of Holy Spirit—1 Cor. 6:19
- B. We need to see that the Gospel is for the whole world
 - 1. All peoples and languages
 - 2. Importance of missions
 - a. Sending people to share the Gospel in all languages

FOLLOW-UP QUESTIONS FOR PARENTS

- What do you remember from the lesson this morning?
- What did the passage tell you about the early church?
- What did the Holy Spirit do for the church?
- What can the Holy Spirit do for you?

SMALL GROUP DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- What stuck out to you from the talk?
- How would you feel if you were in the room with the disciples? Why?
- What difference did the Holy Spirit make in them?
- What difference should the Holy Spirit make in your life?

FAMILY DEVOTION

OPEN IN PRAYER (choose 1 person to pray)

OPENING QUESTION/ACTIVITY

- What are ways that you show love to the people in your family?

READ JOHN 14:12-27

QUESTIONS FOR JK-3RD

- What does Jesus say we can do in verses 13-14?
- What does He say we will do if we love Him?
- What are His commandments?
- What does Jesus say He will give them? Who is that?
- What do you learn about God in all of this?

QUESTIONS FOR 4TH-8TH

- How can we do greater works than Jesus?
- What commandments does Jesus want you to keep?
- What does Jesus say here about the Holy Spirit?
- What does Jesus say are the ways that we show that we love Him?
- What will the Holy Spirit do for us in verse 26?
- What do you learn about God in all of this?

QUESTIONS FOR 9TH-12TH

- What sticks out to you from this passage? Why?
- Which commandments are easiest for you to obey and which are hardest to obey? Why?
- Jesus said that if we love Him, we would obey Him – how does that make you feel?
- How have you seen the Holy Spirit at work in your life?
- What do you learn about God in all of this?

CLOSE IN PRAYER (everyone participates)

FAMILY DEVOTION

OPEN IN PRAYER (choose 1 person to pray)

OPENING QUESTION/ACTIVITY

- What are ways in which you help each other as a family? In what ways do you help the most?

READ 2 TIMOTHY 1:6-14

QUESTIONS FOR JK-3RD

- What does Paul say about the Spirit in us?
- What are things that make you afraid? How can the Spirit help?
- What does "ashamed" mean? What are we not to be ashamed of?
- How is the Spirit like a deposit for us?
- What do you learn about God in all of this?

QUESTIONS FOR 4TH-8TH

- How does the Holy Spirit take away fear?
- What are ways in which you have been ashamed of Jesus?
- Why does Paul say he is not ashamed?
- What does Paul say we need to guard?
- What do you learn about God in all of this?

QUESTIONS FOR 9TH-12TH

- What sticks out to you from the passage? Why?
- What does Paul say is the reason Jesus has called us?
- What are ways you are following the "sound words that you have heard"?
- What do you learn about God in all of this?

CLOSE IN PRAYER (everyone participates)

WEEK

3

ACTS 2:14-47

PURPOSE

Continuing the ministry of Jesus by the power of the Holy Spirit

WEEKLY FOCUS

God calls us to witness with our words and our lives

ACTS 2:14-47

CONTEXT

- Jesus had ascended into heaven but left the disciples with a promise
- Jesus told them that the Holy Spirit would come and give them power
- With that power they are to be His witnesses everywhere
- The Holy Spirit falls on the believers and they are able to speak in the languages of all the people who are assembled for the Feast

OUTLINE

- I. Peter witnesses to the crowd through his words
 - A. Points them to the prophecy that predicted this moment
 1. Joel 2:28-32
 2. God will pour out His Spirit on all flesh
 3. The people will prophesy
 4. Everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved
 5. Shows God is at work for salvation for the nations
 - B. Points them to Jesus
 1. Talks about His works
 2. Talks about His death
 - a. Accuses them of killing Jesus
 - You handed Him over
 - You crucified
 - b. Would have been very controversial
 3. Talks about His resurrection
 - a. Death could not hold Him—verse 24
 - b. Points them to David's words about Jesus
 - Psalm 16:8-11
 - Psalm 110:1
 - c. Jesus was raised up and they were witnesses

- d. He is exalted at right hand of God
 - e. He has poured out the Holy Spirit
- C. Response of the crowd
- 1. They were cut to the heart
 - 2. Asked Peter what they needed to do—wanted to respond
 - a. Peter tells them to repent and be baptized
 - 3. They were baptized
 - 4. About 3,000 souls were added to the church

II. The church witnesses to the people by their lives

- A. They lived lives that were devoted
 - 1. THE Apostles' Teaching—Jesus' life and ministry
 - 2. THE Fellowship—shared life
 - a. Were together and had all things in common
 - b. Sold their possessions to take care of any who had need
 - 3. THE breaking of bread
 - a. Celebrating communion together
 - 4. THE prayers
 - a. Praying together as Jesus had taught them
 - 5. Worshiped together daily
 - 6. Ate together daily
- B. Response of the crowds
 - a. Had favor with all the people
 - b. Lord added to their number daily those who were being saved

III. SO WHAT??!!

- A. We too are called to share verbally what we believe about Jesus with others
 - 1. Reason for your hope – 1 Peter 3:15
- B. Our lives are also a testimony about what we truly believe about Jesus
 - 1. 1 Peter 2:12
 - 2. John 13:35

FOLLOW-UP QUESTIONS FOR PARENTS

- What do you remember from the lesson this morning?
- What did the passage tell you about the early church?
- Who are people you need to talk about Jesus with? Why?
- How can your life look more like the lives of people in the early church?
- What is one thing you want to be more devoted to this year?

SMALL GROUP DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- What stuck out to you from the talk?
- Who are people in your life who need to hear more about Jesus?
- What are ways in which your life looks like the lives of those in the early church? How is it different?
- What are the things in your life you are most devoted to?
- What is one thing you would like to be more devoted to this year?

FAMILY DEVOTION

OPEN IN PRAYER (choose 1 person to pray)

OPENING QUESTION/ACTIVITY

- If you could have any job what would it be and why?

READ LUKE 18:9-14

QUESTIONS FOR JK-3RD

- What is a parable?
- What did the two men do?
- What did the Pharisee pray? Why?
- What did the tax collector pray? Why?
- What do you learn about God in all of this?

QUESTIONS FOR 4TH-8TH

- Who was Jesus teaching this parable to?
- What does it mean to see yourself as righteous and treat others with contempt? Do you do that?
- Who are the people that you think you are better than? Why?
- What did the tax collector think made him right before God?
- What are things you think make you right before God?
- Which of the two people who prayed do you most identify with? Why?
- What do you learn about God in all of this?

QUESTIONS FOR 9TH-12TH

- What sticks out to you from this passage? Why?
- What kind of people would you be likely to thank God that you are not? Why?
- What are ways that you are tempted to be proud instead of humble?
- What do you learn about God in all of this?

CLOSE IN PRAYER (everyone participates)

FAMILY DEVOTION

OPEN IN PRAYER (choose 1 person to pray)

OPENING QUESTION/ACTIVITY

- Parents need to prep a little for this one. Go into the darkest room in your house and as a whole family turn out the lights and sit in the dark for a few minutes. Ask everyone what they are feeling and thinking about being in the dark. Then strike a single match and talk about how even a little light can overcome the darkness.

READ I JOHN 1:5-10

QUESTIONS FOR JK-3RD

- What does John say about God here?
- What is sin? Who all has sinned?
- What are we to do with our sin?
- What do you learn about God in all of this?

QUESTIONS FOR 4TH-8TH

- What does John say about walking in the dark and walking in the light?
- How do we walk in the darkness? How do we walk in the light?
- Do you ever believe that you have gone a whole day without sinning?
- When is the last time you really confessed your sins to the Lord?
- What do you learn about God in all of this?

QUESTIONS FOR 9TH-12TH

- What sticks out to you from the passage? Why?
- What are ways that you know that you walk in darkness?
- Do you actually believe that Jesus needed to die for you or do you think you are a pretty good person? Why?
- Is confession part of your daily walk with Jesus? Why or why not?
- What do you learn about God in all of this?

CLOSE IN PRAYER (everyone participates)

WEEK

4

ACTS 3:1 - 4:4

PURPOSE

Continuing the ministry of Jesus by the power of the Holy Spirit

WEEKLY FOCUS

The power of Jesus' Name

ACTS 3:1-4:4

CONTEXT

- Jesus had ascended into heaven but left the disciples with a promise
- Jesus told them that the Holy Spirit would come and give them power
- The Holy Spirit comes upon the people to empower them to witness
- Peter preaches to the people gathered and thousands respond
- The church lives in harmony and community, which attracts folks to join them

OUTLINE

- I. Peter and John are going to the temple to pray
 - A. Was a daily activity
 - B. 9th hour–3pm
- II. A lame beggar was also at the temple
 - A. Was lame from birth–never been able to walk
 - B. Was placed there each day in order to beg for money from people entering the temple
 - C. Was often just ignored and passed by
 - D. Asked Peter and John for money
- III. Peter and John interact with the beggar
 - A. Peter tells the beggar to look at him
 1. Beggars would be asking the whole crowd as they went by
 2. Peter wanted his attention so he didn't miss what would happen
 3. Beggar expected to receive money
 - B. They heal the man
 1. Tell him that they don't have money
 2. Instead they want to give him what they do have–Jesus
 3. Tell him to rise up and walk in Jesus' Name
 4. Took him by the hand and helped him up

- C. Response of the beggar
 - 1. Leaped and walked and went into the temple
 - 2. Praising God
 - 3. People recognized him as the beggar and came over to see what had happened

IV. Peter talks to the crowd

- A. He noticed that a crowd had gathered because of the healing
- B. Told them about Jesus
 - 1. Healing was by His Power
 - 2. Came from God of their fathers
 - 3. Glorified by God
- C. Told them about themselves
 - 1. You delivered and denied Him
 - 2. You killed Him
 - 3. You acted in ignorance
- D. Told them what to do
 - 1. Repent and turn away from your sins
 - 2. Remember what the prophets said and believe
 - a. Remember the covenant God made with you, His people

V. Response of the religious leaders

- A. Priests came to see what was going on
- B. Annoyed at Peter's teaching
 - 1. Proclaiming about Jesus
 - 2. Talking about His Resurrection
- C. Arrested Peter and John for sharing their faith

VI. Response of the crowds

- A. They heard and believed
- B. About 5,000 joined them that day

VII. SO WHAT??!!

- A. We also have access to Jesus' powerful name
 - 1. Called to pray in His Name
 - 2. Means praying with His authority
- B. Called to proclaim His Name to others
- C. We will face hardship and persecution for our faith

FOLLOW-UP QUESTIONS FOR PARENTS

- What do you remember from the lesson this morning?
- What did the passage tell you about the early church?
- What was amazing about what Peter did? How did he do it?
- What did he tell the crowd that was hanging around?
- What are reasons that it might be hard to share our faith about Jesus?

SMALL GROUP DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- What stuck out to you from the talk?
- Who are the people in your life that need your attention that you most often just pass by?
- What are ways that you can share like Peter did? What stops you?
- What ways might you be persecuted for what you believe?

FAMILY DEVOTION

OPEN IN PRAYER (choose 1 person to pray)

OPENING QUESTION/ACTIVITY

- If you could change your name to anything else what would you pick to and why?

READ PHILIPPIANS 2:5-11

QUESTIONS FOR JK-3RD

- What kind of mind does Paul say we should have?
- How can we think like Jesus does?
- How did Jesus make Himself nothing?
- What does Paul say about Jesus' Name?
- What do you learn about God in all of this?

QUESTIONS FOR 4TH-8TH

- What does it mean that Jesus didn't count equality with God something to be grasped?
- What are ways that we can serve others as Jesus did?
- How did Jesus show His humility?
- How do you show humility in your life?
- What happens at the Name of Jesus?
- What do you learn about God in all of this?

QUESTIONS FOR 9TH-12TH

- What sticks out to you from this passage? Why?
- What are ways that you are seeking to be a servant in your everyday life?
- How are you bowing your knees and confessing with your tongue that Jesus is Lord?
- What do you learn about God in all of this?

CLOSE IN PRAYER (everyone participates)

FAMILY DEVOTION

OPEN IN PRAYER (choose 1 person to pray)

OPENING QUESTION/ACTIVITY

- If you had to tell someone about Jesus, what would you say?

READ ROMANS 10:8-15

QUESTIONS FOR JK-3RD

- Where does it say that the word is?
- What does it say we need to confess?
- What happens when we do?
- How are people supposed to hear about Jesus to confess Him?
- What do you learn about God in all of this?

QUESTIONS FOR 4TH-8TH

- What does it mean that Jesus is Lord?
- How is Jesus Lord in your life?
- What does it mean that there is no difference between Jew and Gentile in Jesus?
- What does it say about one who preaches the Good News about Jesus?
- What do you learn about God in all of this?

QUESTIONS FOR 9TH-12TH

- What sticks out to you from the passage? Why?
- What are the main ways we see people as different today?
- What would it look like if we really treated all people the same in Christ regardless of how they are different?
- What do you learn about God in all of this?

CLOSE IN PRAYER (everyone participates)

WEEK

5

ACTS 4:5-31

PURPOSE

Continuing the ministry of Jesus by the power of the Holy Spirit

WEEKLY FOCUS

The boldness that comes from the Holy Spirit

ACTS 4:5-31

CONTEXT

- Jesus had ascended into heaven but left the disciples with a promise
- Jesus told them that the Holy Spirit would come and give them power
- The Holy Spirit comes upon the people to empower them to witness
- The church lives in harmony and community, which attracts folks to join them
- Peter and John heal a lame man in Jesus' Name, which attracts a crowd
- Peter preaches to the crowd and thousands believe
- Peter and John are arrested by the religious leaders

OUTLINE

- I. Peter and John before the religious leaders
 - A. Spent the night in jail
 - B. Were brought before the religious leaders
 1. High Priest and family
 2. Asked by what power and name they could do this
 - C. Peter's response
 1. Was filled with the Holy Spirit
 2. We did this good deed in the power of Jesus' name
 - a. You crucified Him but God raised Him from the dead
 - b. He is the one spoken about
 - Stone the builders rejected
 - Psalm 118:22
 3. There is no salvation apart from believing in His Name

- D. Response of the religious leaders
 - 1. Saw their courage and boldness
 - 2. Noticed that they were unschooled, ordinary men
 - 3. Took note that they had been with Jesus
 - 4. Had nothing to say because the man was healed
 - 5. Told Peter and John to no longer speak in the Name of Jesus

- E. Peter and John's response
 - 1. Should we listen to you or to God
 - 2. We have to speak about what we have seen and heard

II. The people respond to their boldness

- A. They were praising God for what they had seen and heard
- B. When they heard about what happened they prayed to the Lord
 - 1. Saw that this was prophesied to happen—Psalm 2:1-2
 - 2. Saw all that had gathered against them
 - 3. Prayed that God would give them boldness in the face of opposition
- C. God answered their prayer
 - 1. Filled the room with the Holy Spirit
 - 2. The people were filled with boldness
 - 3. They continued to speak the Word of God

III. SO WHAT??!!

- A. We will be persecuted for our faith
 - 1. God promises to be with us
 - 2. Will give us the words to say—Luke 12:11-12
- B. We are called to be bold with our faith
 - 1. We are His ambassadors – 2 Corinthians 5:20
 - 2. Because of our hope – 2 Corinthians 3:12
- C. We need to pray for that strength and boldness

FOLLOW-UP QUESTIONS FOR PARENTS

- What do you remember from the lesson this morning?
- What did the passage tell you about the early church?
- Can people tell that you have been with Jesus? How?
- What does it look like to be bold about Jesus? Are you doing that?
- When is the last time you prayed to be bold in your faith?

SMALL GROUP DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- What stuck out to you from the talk?
- How would people notice that you have been with Jesus?
- In what ways have you been bold about Jesus lately?
- What persecutions are you afraid of when it comes to sharing your faith?
- What would it look like to truly be bold with your faith?

FAMILY DEVOTION

OPEN IN PRAYER (choose 1 person to pray)

OPENING QUESTION/ACTIVITY

- When is a time you saw someone in your family be really brave? What did they do?

READ EPHESIANS 3:1-13

QUESTIONS FOR JK-3RD

- What did Paul call himself?
- Why was he a prisoner?
- What does it mean that we are God's children?
- How should we act according to verse 12?
- What do you learn about God in all of this?

QUESTIONS FOR 4TH-8TH

- What does it mean to be an heir?
- How are you an heir to God?
- What does Paul say about himself in verse 8? What do you think he means by that?
- What was God's plan to make Himself known according to verse 10? How are you doing that?
- What are ways that you can be bold for Jesus?
- What do you learn about God in all of this?

QUESTIONS FOR 9TH-12TH

- What sticks out to you from this passage? Why?
- What should your response be as an heir of God? How are you living that out?
- How are you living boldly and confidently?
- What do you learn about God in all of this?

CLOSE IN PRAYER (everyone participates)

FAMILY DEVOTION

OPEN IN PRAYER (choose 1 person to pray)

OPENING QUESTION/ACTIVITY

- If you could only take one person with you on an adventure to a scary place who would you take and why?

READ JOSHUA 1:1-9

QUESTIONS FOR JK-3RD

- What had just happened?
- How do you think the people felt about that?
- What does God tell them to do?
- What does God say about the book of the Law? What is that?
- What does He tell them to do in verse 9?
- What do you learn about God in all of this?

QUESTIONS FOR 4TH-8TH

- How do you think that Joshua felt about having to follow Moses' leadership? What would be hard about that?
- What promises does God give to the people?
- What does He tell the people to do in verse 7?
- How do we make sure God's Word doesn't depart from our mouths?
- What do you learn about God in all of this?
- How are you being strong and courageous for Jesus?

QUESTIONS FOR 9TH-12TH

- What sticks out to you from the passage? Why?
- What are ways in which you are obeying God's commands?
- How are you meditating daily on God's Word?
- What do you learn about God in all of this?

CLOSE IN PRAYER (everyone participates)

WEEK

6

ACTS 4:32-5:11

PURPOSE

Continuing the ministry of Jesus by the power of the Holy Spirit

WEEKLY FOCUS

The True Christian Life vs. the Hypocritical Christian Life

ACTS 4:32-5:11

CONTEXT

- Jesus had ascended into heaven but left the disciples with a promise
- Jesus told them that the Holy Spirit would come and give them power
- The Holy Spirit comes upon the people to empower them to witness
- The church lives in harmony and community, which attracts folks to join them
- Peter and John heal a lame man in Jesus' Name, which attracts a crowd
- Peter preaches to the crowd and thousands believe
- Peter and John are arrested by the religious leaders and shared boldly about Jesus

OUTLINE

- I. Characteristics of the early church
 - A. They were of one heart and mind
 1. Unified in everything
 2. Answer to the Lord's prayer—John 17:21
 - B. They had everything in common
 1. Believed that their possessions belonged to all the church and not just them
 2. There were no needy people among them
 - a. Sold lands and houses and gave the money to the apostles
 - b. It was distributed among the poor and needy
 3. Act of Barnabas
 - a. Name was Joseph but called Barnabas
 - b. Meant "Son of Encouragement"
 - c. Sold a field and gave all the money to the apostles
 - C. Spoke with great power
 - a. Testimony about the Resurrection
 - b. Full of grace

II. Hypocrisy in the church

- A. Hypocrisy—literally wearing a mask or playing a part
 - 1. Pretending to be someone we are not
- B. Ananias and Sapphira
 - 1. Sold a piece of property
 - 2. Kept part of the proceeds for himself with his wife's knowledge
 - a. What's the big deal? It belonged to him
 - b. He brought it to the apostles as if it were all the money
 - Wanted to look as righteous and generous as others
 - 3. Peter's response
 - a. You have not lied to men but to God
 - b. Why has Satan filled your heart?
 - 4. Ananias died and was carried out and buried
 - 5. Sapphira came not knowing what had happened
 - a. Peter asked her about it to give her a chance to be honest
 - b. She lied and also died and was buried
- C. Response of the church
 - 1. Great fear came upon the church
 - 2. People talked about what happened

III. SO WHAT??!!

- A. God is holy
 - 1. Can't be around sin
 - 2. Death is what our sins deserve
- B. God seems to judge sin more severely at new periods in salvation history
 - 1. The Israelites who made the golden calf—Exodus 32
 - 2. Nadab and Abihu making false fire after Tabernacle was erected—Leviticus 10
 - 3. Achan keeping back some of plunder of Jericho for himself—Joshua 7
- C. The church as a representative of Christ must not engage in outward and obvious sin without repentance
- D. We are all hypocrites in need of the saving work of Jesus Christ

FOLLOW-UP QUESTIONS FOR PARENTS

- What do you remember from the lesson this morning?
- What did the passage tell you about the early church?
- What are ways that you share what you have with those in need?
- What are ways that you pretend to be more than you are?

SMALL GROUP DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- What stuck out to you from the talk?
- How do you share with those in need?
- What are some ways in which you act like a hypocrite?
- How does the church function as your main community? How should it?

FAMILY DEVOTION

OPEN IN PRAYER (choose 1 person to pray)

OPENING QUESTION/ACTIVITY

- When is a time someone told you to do something that they weren't doing themselves?
What did you do?

READ MATTHEW 23:1-12

QUESTIONS FOR JK-3RD

- What does Jesus say about the Pharisees?
- What did the Pharisees do in verses 4-5?
- What did Jesus say about them in verses 6-7?
- How should we act when it comes to other people?
- What do you learn about God in all of this?

QUESTIONS FOR 4TH-8TH

- Who are people you know who don't practice what they preach? Why is that important?
- Why does Jesus say that the Pharisees do their deeds?
- Has there ever been a time when you did something just so others would notice?
- What are ways you seek to exalt yourself?
- What do you learn about God in all of this?

QUESTIONS FOR 9TH-12TH

- What sticks out to you from this passage? Why?
- What are ways that you preach but do not practice?
- How do you act like the Pharisees at times?
- What do you learn about God in all of this?

CLOSE IN PRAYER (everyone participates)

FAMILY DEVOTION

OPEN IN PRAYER (choose 1 person to pray)

OPENING QUESTION/ACTIVITY

- What is your favorite costume that you have ever worn?

READ MATTHEW 6:1-6

QUESTIONS FOR JK-3RD

- What does Jesus tell them to beware of? What does that mean?
- What does Jesus say the reward is for that?
- How does Jesus say we should pray?
- What do you learn about God in all of this?

QUESTIONS FOR 4TH-8TH

- How do we practice our righteousness before the people?
- Why do you think we do that?
- How does Jesus say we should give to the needy?
- How do you give to the needy? How do you pray?
- How are you being strong and courageous for Jesus?

QUESTIONS FOR 9TH-12TH

- What sticks out to you from the passage? Why?
- What does your serving and praying look like?
- Why are we tempted to make shows out of our obedience to God?
- What do you learn about God in all of this?

CLOSE IN PRAYER (everyone participates)

WEEK

7

ACTS 5:12-42

PURPOSE

Continuing the ministry of Jesus by the power of the Holy Spirit

WEEKLY FOCUS

The disciples trust God in the midst of persecution

ACTS 5:12-42

CONTEXT

- Jesus had ascended into heaven but left the disciples with a promise
- Jesus told them that the Holy Spirit would come and give them power
- The Holy Spirit comes upon the people to empower them to witness
- The church lives in harmony and community, which attracts folks to join them
- The apostles gain favor with the people and the church grows but at the same time they face persecution from the religious leaders who have arrested them, beaten them and told them, not to speak about Jesus
- The church is then dealing with a new issue, those who say they are followers of Christ but whose lives do not seem to reflect Him

OUTLINE

- I. The Lord continues to grow the church
 - A. The apostles were doing miracles among the people
 1. Healing the sick
 2. Even people in Peter's shadow were healed
 - B. Multitudes believed in Jesus daily
 1. Men and women
- II. The religious leaders rise up against the apostles
 - A. They were filled with jealousy
 - B. They didn't like that crowds flocked to apostles instead of the temple
- III. Arrest #1
 - A. The religious leaders and high priest arrested them
 - B. Angel of the Lord appears to them at night
 1. Opened the doors and brought them out
 2. Gave them instructions
 - a. Go and stand in the temple
 - b. Speak to the people the words of Life
 - C. The apostles trust God and obey
 1. Easy to make excuses because just got arrested
 2. Saw God's hand and then obeyed His command

- D. The next day the religious leaders wanted the apostles brought before them to speak to them
 - 1. Guards found prison locked but no apostles
 - 2. No explanation for what happened
 - 3. Someone told them that the apostles were in temple teaching again

IV. Arrest #2

- A. Guards went to bring them back to the temple
- B. Didn't use force for fear of the crowds around them

V. The apostles before the religious leaders

- A. High Priest asks them why they are disobeying
 - 1. We told you not to teach in this name
 - 2. You are accusing us of his killing
 - 3. You are filling Jerusalem with your teaching
- B. The apostles' response
 - 1. We must obey God rather than man
 - a. A very bold thing to say to the religious leaders
 - b. The people believed that the religious leaders spoke for God to them and now Peter says they don't speak for God
 - 2. We are witnesses so must share what we saw
 - a. You killed Jesus
 - b. God exalted Him
 - c. He gave us the Holy Spirit
- C. The religious leaders wanted to kill them
 - 1. God uses one of the religious leaders to save the apostles
 - 2. Gamaliel speaks up
 - a. Sends the apostles out
 - b. Speaks wisdom to the religious leaders
 - Many have claimed to be the Messiah and after awhile it dies down
 - We need to stay away from these men
 - If it is of man it will fail
 - If it is of God you won't be able to stop them
- D. The judgment
 - 1. They had the apostles beaten for disobeying their orders
 - 2. Told them not to speak in the name of Jesus anymore
 - 3. Let them go

- E. Response of the apostles
 - 1. They rejoiced as they left
 - a. That they were counted worthy to suffer for Jesus
 - b. Suffered as Jesus did and told them they would
 - 2. They continued to preach about Jesus
 - a. Every day
 - b. In temple and from house to house
- I. SO WHAT??!!
 - A. You will face difficulty and opposition as you follow Jesus
 - 1. Jesus told us that they will hate us because they hated Him
 - B. God will be with you through it all
 - 1. Hard things will happen
 - 2. God gives us courage and hope to stand up under it
 - 3. We can trust Him

FOLLOW-UP QUESTIONS FOR PARENTS

- What do you remember from the lesson this morning?
- What did the passage tell you about the early church?
- What happened to the apostles simply for teaching about Jesus?
- How would you respond in this situation?
- How can you trust God even in hard times?

SMALL GROUP DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- What stuck out to you from the talk?
- What are ways you have been mistreated for following Jesus?
- What can we learn from how the apostles handled it?
- Why do you think they rejoiced after being mistreated?
- Can you imagine having that kind of attitude? Why or why not?
- How should this affect how you follow Jesus?

FAMILY DEVOTION

OPEN IN PRAYER (choose 1 person to pray)

OPENING QUESTION/ACTIVITY

- When is a time you had to completely trust someone else? What did you do?

READ DANIEL 6:1-28

QUESTIONS FOR JK-3RD

- What did the king do for Daniel?
- How did the other leaders feel about this?
- What did they try to do to Daniel? How did they plan to do this?
- What did they get the king to do?
- How did Daniel respond?
- What happened to Daniel and how did God save Him?
- What impact did this all have on the king?
- What do you learn about God in all of this?

QUESTIONS FOR 4TH-8TH

- What was said about Daniel? Would anyone say that about you?
- Why would Daniel continue to pray knowing the consequences?
- How did God reward Daniel's faith in Him?
- What did the king say about God because of Daniel?
- What do you learn about God in all of this?

QUESTIONS FOR 9TH-12TH

- What sticks out to you from this passage? Why?
- How would your life look different if you couldn't pray for a month? Would it make a difference?
- How are you standing up for your faith in your everyday life?
- What do you learn about God in all of this?

CLOSE IN PRAYER (everyone participates)

FAMILY DEVOTION

OPEN IN PRAYER (choose 1 person to pray)

OPENING QUESTION/ACTIVITY

- Who in your life do you trust the most? Who do you trust the least? Why for both?

READ PROVERBS 3:5-8

QUESTIONS FOR JK-3RD

- What are we told to do?
- What are we not to lean on?
- What will God do for us as we trust Him?
- What do you learn about God in all of this?

QUESTIONS FOR 4TH-8TH

- How do you trust God with your whole heart?
- What are some specific ways that you are trusting God?
- How are you tempted to lean on your own understanding?
- How have you seen God make straight your paths?
- How are you being strong and courageous for Jesus?

QUESTIONS FOR 9TH-12TH

- What sticks out to you from the passage? Why?
- What are areas of your life in which you are trusting yourself and not God?
- What would it look like to trust God with all your heart?
- What do you learn about God in all of this?

CLOSE IN PRAYER (everyone participates)

WEEK

8

ACTS 6:1 - 15

PURPOSE

Continuing the ministry of Jesus by the power of the Holy Spirit

WEEKLY FOCUS

As the church grew it needed to expand its leadership

ACTS 6:1-15

CONTEXT

- Jesus had ascended into heaven but left the disciples with a promise
- Jesus told them that the Holy Spirit would come and give them power
- The Holy Spirit comes upon the people to empower them to witness
- The church lives in harmony and community, which attracts folks to join them
- The apostles gain favor with the people and the church grows but at the same time they face persecution from the religious leaders who have arrested them, beaten them and told them not to speak about Jesus

OUTLINE

- I. The increase in leadership of the church
 - A. Issues came up because of growth of the church
 1. Some were being missed when food and provisions were given out
 2. Specifically those Jews who spoke mainly Greek–Hellenists
 - B. The apostles gathered the leaders together to discuss
 1. The apostles needed to continue to preach the Word
 2. Others would be needed to step up and serve the people
 - a. 7 men who were full of Spirit and wisdom and had a good reputation among the people
 - b. Men were chosen and were prayed for by the apostles
 - C. The church continued to grow
 1. Number of disciples multiplied greatly
 2. Many of the priests even believed

II. The persecution of the leaders

- A. Stephen was doing great wonders and signs among the people
- B. Members of the synagogue of the Freedmen rose up against him
 - 1. Tried to argue against him
 - 2. They could not withstand Stephen's wisdom
 - a. Because he was speaking with the Holy Spirit
 - 3. They got some men to lie about him
 - a. Said he had said blasphemy against God and Moses
 - 4. They got the crowd against him and arrested him
 - a. Brought him before the council
 - b. Set up false witnesses against him
 - 5. When looking at him the council said he had the face of an angel

III. SO WHAT??!!

- A. The church needs all of its people to use their gifts
 - 1. Help meet the needs of all the people
 - 2. All of us have a part to play
- B. Leaders are often held more accountable
 - 1. Higher standard for them
 - 2. More people against them
- C. God never leaves His people alone

FOLLOW-UP QUESTIONS FOR PARENTS

- What do you remember from the lesson this morning?
- What did the passage tell you about the early church?
- What was the church's main problem at this time? What was the solution?
- What are ways that you can be serving the church as an individual? As a family?
- What are ways you can be serving the city as an individual? As a family?

SMALL GROUP DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- What stuck out to you from the talk?
- How is 2PC like this early church? How is it not like it?
- What are ways that you can be actively involved at the church?
- What gifts do you have that can be used in the church?

FAMILY DEVOTION

OPEN IN PRAYER (choose 1 person to pray)

OPENING QUESTION/ACTIVITY

- When is a time you had to work together in a group of people? How did it go? How did it make things easier? How did it make things harder?

READ MATTHEW 9:35-10:4

QUESTIONS FOR JK-3RD

- Where was Jesus going?
- What was Jesus doing?
- How did He feel about the crowds He saw? Why?
- Who did Jesus get to help Him do ministry?
- What names do you recognize and which don't you?
- What do you learn about God in all of this?

QUESTIONS FOR 4TH-8TH

- Why did Jesus have such compassion on the crowds?
- What did Jesus mean in verse 37?
- How are you being a laborer for Him?
- What authority did Jesus give His disciples?
- What do you learn about God in all of this?

QUESTIONS FOR 9TH-12TH

- What sticks out to you from this passage? Why?
- Who are the people you need to have more compassion on?
- How are you praying for more folks to hear the Gospel?
- What do you learn about God in all of this?

CLOSE IN PRAYER (everyone participates)

FAMILY DEVOTION

OPEN IN PRAYER (choose 1 person to pray)

OPENING QUESTION/ACTIVITY

- Who are the leaders at our church? Go to <http://www.2pc.org/about-us/officers/> and print the list so that you can pray for them each time you do family devotions.

READ I TIMOTHY 3:1-13

QUESTIONS FOR JK-3RD

- What are the qualifications for an overseer?
- What words don't you understand?
- What are the qualifications for a deacon?
- What words there don't you understand?
- What do you learn about God in all of this?

QUESTIONS FOR 4TH-8TH

- Why do you think it is important for an elder to be hospitable? Not a lover of money?
To manage his household well?
- What does it mean to be above reproach?
- Why do you think it mentions the spouses of deacons?
- How are you being strong and courageous for Jesus?

QUESTIONS FOR 9TH-12TH

- What sticks out to you from the passage? Why?
- As you look through the qualifications for elder and deacon, which apply to you?
- Why do you think we have officers at the church?
- Why do you think it is hard to become an officer?
- What do you learn about God in all of this?

CLOSE IN PRAYER (everyone participates)

WEEK

9

ACTS 7:1-8:3

PURPOSE

Continuing the ministry of Jesus by the power of the Holy Spirit

WEEKLY FOCUS

God uses all things for His glory and His purposes

ACTS 7:1-8:3

CONTEXT

- Jesus had ascended into heaven but left the disciples with a promise
- Jesus told them that the Holy Spirit would come and give them power
- The Holy Spirit comes upon the people to empower them to witness
- The church lives in harmony and community, which attracts folks to join them
- The apostles gain favor with the people and the church grows but at the same time they face persecution from the religious leaders who have arrested them, beaten them and told them not to speak about Jesus
- As the church grows they appoint leaders to take care of all the people; Stephen is one selected as a leader and is also arrested for speaking about Jesus

OUTLINE

- I. Stephen's boldness before the religious leaders
 - A. These were same people who helped put Jesus to death
 1. Very powerful and influential
 2. Most people would be very scared and careful of what they said
 - B. Stephen is asked to defend the charges against him and he speaks boldly to them
 1. He reminds them of God's work
 - a. God appeared at Abraham and promised a land and offspring
 - Promised deliverance for His people
 - Gave them sign of circumcision
 2. He tells them of rejected leaders
 - a. Joseph
 - Sold into slavery by brothers out of jealousy
 - God used Joseph to save His people including those who sold him
 - b. Moses
 - Came when God's people were persecuted as slaves
 - Moses was sent by God to save His people
 - Even to those who had rejected him
 - "Who made you judge and ruler..."
 - God used Moses to deliver and guide His people as they got closer to the fulfillment of God's promise to Abraham

3. He tells them about worship
 - a. Tabernacle with Joshua
 - b. Temple that was dreamed by David and built by Solomon
4. He rebukes them
 - a. Straight from the Old Testament
 - b. You are a stiff-necked people
- Exodus 33:3, 5; 34:9, Deut. 9:6, 13
 - c. Uncircumcised in heart and ears
- Leviticus 26:41, Deut. 10:16, Jeremiah 4:4, Ezekiel 44:7
 - d. You always resist the Holy Spirit
- Isaiah 63:10
 - e. As your fathers have killed God's prophets, so do you

II. Response of the religious leaders

- A. Full of anger and ground their teeth at him
- B. Stephen was full of Holy Spirit
 1. Gazed into heaven and saw Glory of God
 2. Saw Jesus in heaven with God
 3. Told the people what he saw
- C. They cried out and covered their ears and ran at Stephen
- D. Took him outside the city and stoned him to death
 1. The execution was approved by a man named Saul
- E. Stephen prayed as he was being stoned
 1. Lord do not hold this sin against them
 2. Lord Jesus receive my spirit

III. Persecution increases

- A. Great persecution against church in Jerusalem
- B. The church was scattered out of Jerusalem
 1. Into Judea and Samaria

- C. Saul was leading the charge against the church
 - 1. Would enter houses and arrest people

IV. God's plan for Stephen's death

- A. Was a witness to those around him
 - 1. Saw his face
 - 2. Heard his prayer for forgiveness for them
- B. Helped the church fulfill the Great Commission
 - 1. Were called to spread the Gospel out but as of yet were still only in Jerusalem
 - 2. Spread the Word out to Judea and Samaria as God had commanded them

V. SO WHAT??!!

- A. The Lord will give us what to say when faced with difficult circumstances like this
- B. We are called to be faithful witnesses wherever we are
 - 1. God used Stephen's faithfulness to show Himself
- C. God uses even the very hard things for His ultimate purposes
 - 1. Stephen's death was used to spread the Gospel further

FOLLOW-UP QUESTIONS FOR PARENTS

- What do you remember from the lesson this morning?
- What did the passage tell you about the early church?
- What was so bold about what Stephen did?
- Who is someone you need to forgive like he did?

SMALL GROUP DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- What stuck out to you from the talk?
- Who are the people that you need to be that bold with?
- Who are the people that you need to forgive like he did?
- How did God use Stephen's death?
- How else does God use hard things for His glory?

FAMILY DEVOTION

OPEN IN PRAYER (choose 1 person to pray)

OPENING QUESTION/ACTIVITY

- When is a time something really hard or sad happened to you? How did you feel about God at that time?

READ ROMANS 5:1-5

QUESTIONS FOR JK-3RD

- What does verse 1 tell us we have with God?
- What does it mean to suffer? Why is it hard to do that?
- What does hope do for us?
- What has been poured into us?
- What do you learn about God in all of this?

QUESTIONS FOR 4TH-8TH

- What does justified mean?
- What are we called to rejoice in?
- What does Paul say about suffering? What does it produce?
- What do you usually think about the way that God uses hard things in your life?
- What part does the Holy Spirit play in all this?
- What do you learn about God in all of this?

QUESTIONS FOR 9TH-12TH

- What sticks out to you from this passage? Why?
- How are you seeing the hard things in your life?
- How are you trusting God with those hard things?
- What do you learn about God in all of this?

CLOSE IN PRAYER (everyone participates)

FAMILY DEVOTION

OPEN IN PRAYER (choose 1 person to pray)

OPENING QUESTION/ACTIVITY

- When is a time that you really wanted to give up but didn't? What made you finish strong?

READ JAMES 1:2-8

QUESTIONS FOR JK-3RD

- What are trials?
- What are we supposed to think about our trials?
- What are we supposed to do if we don't have wisdom? Why?
- What do you learn about God in all of this?

QUESTIONS FOR 4TH-8TH

- What are some trials you have gone through this year?
- How do you count those as joy?
- What do trials produce in us? How?
- What picture does James give for someone who prays without faith? How does that picture describe it?
- How are you being strong and courageous for Jesus?

QUESTIONS FOR 9TH-12TH

- What sticks out to you from the passage? Why?
- How are you viewing the trials the Lord has given you this year?
- When are times that you have prayed but not with faith? Why?
- What do you learn about God in all of this?

CLOSE IN PRAYER (everyone participates)

WEEK

10

ACTS 8:4-25

PURPOSE

Continuing the ministry of Jesus by the power of the Holy Spirit

WEEKLY FOCUS

The Gospel begins to go out from Jerusalem
and the church grows outward into Samaria

ACTS 8:4-25

CONTEXT

- Jesus had ascended into heaven but left the disciples with a promise
- Jesus told them that the Holy Spirit would come and give them power
- The Holy Spirit comes upon the people to empower them to witness
- The church lives in harmony and community, which attracts folks to join them
- The apostles gain favor with the people and the church grows but at the same time they face persecution from the religious leaders who have arrested them, beaten them and told them not to speak about Jesus
- Stephen is chosen to be a leader and is also arrested for speaking about Jesus
- Stephen is killed by the religious leaders, which starts a large persecution of the church
- The persecution scatters the church out to where God had called them to go—Judea and Samaria

OUTLINE

- I. Philip's ministry
 - A. Went to Samaria to preach the Gospel
 - B. The crowds paid attention to his teaching and signs
 1. Casting out unclean spirits
 2. Healing people with diseases
 3. Much joy in the city
 - C. To Simon the magician
 1. Practiced magic and amazed the city
 2. Was well thought of in the city
 - a. Even called great

3. He believed the Gospel and was baptized like the others in the city
4. The apostles heard about what had happened and sent Peter and John to them so they would pray for them to receive the Holy Spirit
 - a. As they laid hands people received the Holy Spirit
5. Simon also wanted this power so offered to pay the apostles for this ability
 - a. Peter's response
 - May your silver perish with you
 - You can't obtain gift of God with money
 - Your heart isn't right before God
 - Repent and pray to the Lord for forgiveness
 - b. Simon repented and asked Peter to pray for him as well

- D. They preached to many villages in Samaria on their way back to Jerusalem

II. SO WHAT??!!

- A. God has placed you where you are for a reason
 1. To share the Gospel
 2. You are in your neighborhood, on your teams, and in your classes for a reason
 3. God will use you for His glory
- B. We need to not envy the gifts that God has given others
 1. God has given us all different gifts to use
 2. As Body of Christ, all of our different gifts are important and valuable

FOLLOW-UP QUESTIONS FOR PARENTS

- What do you remember from the lesson this morning?
- What did the passage tell you about the early church?
- Who are people in your school God wants you to share Him with?
- In your neighborhood?
- In your activities?
- What are ways you can begin to do that?

SMALL GROUP DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- What stuck out to you from the talk?
- Who are people in your school God wants you to share Him with?
- In your neighborhood?
- In your activities?
- What are ways you can begin to do that?

FAMILY DEVOTION

OPEN IN PRAYER (choose 1 person to pray)

OPENING QUESTION/ACTIVITY

- What are ways that we can show Jesus to people not like us?

READ JOHN 4:1-15

QUESTIONS FOR JK-3RD

- Where was Jesus going and where did He pass through?
- How was Jesus feeling after His journey?
- Who came out to where Jesus was?
- What did Jesus ask her?
- How did the woman respond?
- What does Jesus say to her?
- What do you learn about God in all of this?

QUESTIONS FOR 4TH-8TH

- Did Jesus “have to” go through Samaria? Why did He then?
- What does verse 9 say about the Jews and Samaritans?
- Why do you think the Jews didn’t deal with them?
- Why is what Jesus offers her as a Samaritan important?
- What do you learn about God in all of this?

QUESTIONS FOR 9TH-12TH

- What sticks out to you from this passage? Why?
- Who are people that you don’t associate with because they are different than you?
- What are ways you can love others not like you?
- What do you learn about God in all of this?

CLOSE IN PRAYER (everyone participates)

FAMILY DEVOTION

OPEN IN PRAYER (choose 1 person to pray)

OPENING QUESTION/ACTIVITY

- Which neighbors around you do you know the best and which ones do you know the least? Come up with some way to give a gift or do something nice for your neighbors this week.

READ LUKE 10:25-37

QUESTIONS FOR JK-3RD

- What question was asked of Jesus?
- What did the Law say?
- What question did the man ask?
- What story does Jesus tell?
- What do you learn about God in all of this?

QUESTIONS FOR 4TH-8TH

- What are ways you try to earn eternal life? Can you?
- Who were the people who passed by? Why is that ironic?
- Who helped the man? How would the Jewish audience have responded to that?
- How can you show mercy to your “neighbors” this week?
- What do you learn about God on all of this?

QUESTIONS FOR 9TH-12TH

- What sticks out to you from the passage? Why?
- How are you loving your “neighbors”? How should you be?
- What do you learn about God in all of this?

CLOSE IN PRAYER (everyone participates)

WEEK

11

ACTS 8:26-40

PURPOSE

Continuing the ministry of Jesus by the power of the Holy Spirit

WEEKLY FOCUS

The Gospel begins to go out even further through unlikely people

ACTS 8:26-40

CONTEXT

- Jesus had ascended into heaven but left the disciples with a promise
- Jesus told them that the Holy Spirit would come and give them power
- The Holy Spirit comes upon the people to empower them to witness
- The church lives in harmony and community, which attracts folks to join them
- The apostles gain favor with the people and the church grows but at the same time they face persecution from the religious leaders who have arrested them, beaten them and told them not to speak about Jesus
- Stephen is chosen to be a leader and is also arrested for speaking about Jesus
- Stephen is killed by the religious leaders, which starts a large persecution of the church
- The persecution scatters the church out to where God had called them to go—Judea and Samaria
- Philip takes the Gospel to Samaria and many believe

OUTLINE

- I. Philip's ministry – Part II (Part I was last week)
 - A. God calls him to go to a certain road
 1. Road from Jerusalem to Gaza
 2. In the desert
 3. Philip immediately arose and went
 - B. Philip meets an Ethiopian
 1. Was a court official of the Queen—Candace
 2. Was in charge of her treasure
 3. Was a very high and important position
 4. He had come to Jerusalem to worship and was on his way back

C. Philip helps the Ethiopian

1. He was reading Isaiah to himself
 - a. Isaiah 53:7-8
2. Philip was instructed by the Lord to go and speak to him and he did
 - a. Asks him, "Do you understand what you are reading?"
 - b. He says "no" and invites Philip into the chariot
3. Ethiopian asks, "Who is this talking about?"
 - a. Philip used the passage to tell him about Jesus
 - b. All of the Bible points to Him
4. Ethiopian wished to be baptized and Philip did
 - a. Philip was taken away by Spirit of the Lord
 - b. Ethiopian went on his way rejoicing

D. Result of Philip's ministry

1. The man believed and now was a Christ follower
2. There is now a witness for Jesus going to Ethiopia
 - a. A man in an important position
 - b. With an amazing story to tell about God and His Word
3. The Gospel would begin to go out to the ends of the Earth

II. SO WHAT??!!

- A. God longs to use us for His glory and our growth
 1. Will set us up to share
 2. Not about being successful but faithful
 3. Will lead us to places where we can make a difference
- B. We have no idea the impact we may have
 1. Even if they don't believe at first
 2. God allows us to plant seeds with our words and actions that He will use later in that person's life

FOLLOW-UP QUESTIONS FOR PARENTS

- What do you remember from the lesson this morning?
- What did the passage tell you about the early church?
- How did Philip show His love for Jesus?
- What are some ways in which you have a hard time obeying God? Why?

SMALL GROUP DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- What stuck out to you from the talk?
- What is something that God had called you to that didn't make sense at the time? What did you do?
- When God calls, how quickly do you obey?
- What difference did Philip make?
- What difference do you think you are making?

FAMILY DEVOTION

OPEN IN PRAYER (choose 1 person to pray)

OPENING QUESTION/ACTIVITY

- When is a time you were really embarrassed? What happened?

READ ROMANS 1:14-17

QUESTIONS FOR JK-3RD

- What does Paul say in verse 14?
- What does “under obligation” mean?
- Who does Paul mention?
- What does it mean to be ashamed?
- What do you learn about God in all of this?

QUESTIONS FOR 4TH-8TH

- Who are you “under obligation” to share with?
- What is interesting about the groups that Paul mentions?
- If you could use one word to describe you and sharing the Gospel what would it be?
- Are there times you are ashamed of the Gospel? Why or why not?
- What power does the Gospel have?
- What do you learn about God in all of this?

QUESTIONS FOR 9TH-12TH

- What sticks out to you from this passage? Why?
- What are ways you could be more eager to share the Gospel?
- What are ways that you are ashamed of the Gospel?
- What do you learn about God in all of this?

CLOSE IN PRAYER (everyone participates)

FAMILY DEVOTION

OPEN IN PRAYER (choose 1 person to pray)

OPENING QUESTION/ACTIVITY

- Go outside and observe creation around you. Talk about what you see.

READ PSALM 19:1-6

QUESTIONS FOR JK-3RD

- What does the psalmist say about the heavens?
- What does “handiwork” mean?
- How do things in creation show God?
- What do you learn about God in all of this?

QUESTIONS FOR 4TH-8TH

- How do you declare the glory of God with your life?
- How does creation speak for God and His power?
- What does it mean that there is no speech where their voice isn’t heard?
- How are you being strong and courageous for Jesus?

QUESTIONS FOR 9TH-12TH

- What sticks out to you from the passage? Why?
- Why is creation such an effective tool to proclaim God?
- How can you use creation to share the Gospel with others?
- What do you learn about God in all of this?

CLOSE IN PRAYER (everyone participates)

WEEK

12

ACTS 9:1 - 19

PURPOSE

Continuing the ministry of Jesus by the power of the Holy Spirit

WEEKLY FOCUS

The power of the Gospel to change lives

ACTS 9:1-19

CONTEXT

- Jesus had ascended into heaven but left the disciples with a promise
- Jesus told them that the Holy Spirit would come and give them power
- The Holy Spirit comes upon the people to empower them to witness
- The church lives in harmony and community, which attracts folks to join them
- The apostles gain favor with the people and the church grows but at the same time they face persecution from the religious leaders who have arrested them, beaten them and told them not to speak about Jesus
- Stephen is chosen to be a leader and is also arrested for speaking about Jesus
- Stephen is killed by the religious leaders, which starts a large persecution of the church led by a man named Saul
- The persecution scatters the church out to where God had called them to go—Judea and Samaria
- Even as the church is growing there is still much opposition

OUTLINE

- I. Saul's persecution of the church
 - A. Was threatening the disciples with arrest and death
 - B. Got permission from High Priest to arrest anyone belonging to "the Way" and bring them back to Jerusalem
 - C. Would go even to Damascus to find followers of Christ
- II. Saul's encounter with Jesus
 - A. On road to Damascus to arrest people
 - B. Light from heaven flashed around him and voice said "Saul, Saul, why are you persecuting me?"
 1. Jesus called Saul by name
 2. Jesus said that when you persecute my people you are persecuting me

- C. Jesus reveals his identity to Saul
 - 1. Tells Saul what to do
 - a. Rise and go into the city
 - b. Then you will be told what to do
- D. Saul arose but was blind
 - 1. Went into the city as instructed
 - 2. Was blind and fasted for 3 days

III. Saul's encounter with Ananias

- A. God spoke to Ananias and told him to go to Saul to restore his sight
- B. Ananias was very concerned
 - 1. Knew the evil that Saul had done
 - 2. Knew why he has come into the city
- C. God's answer to Ananias
 - 1. He is my chosen instrument
 - 2. To take my Name to the Gentiles
 - 3. He will suffer much for my Name
- D. Ananias went to Saul
 - 1. Laid hands on him
 - 2. Saul was filled with the Holy Spirit
 - a. He could see
 - b. Got up and was baptized

IV. SO WHAT??!!

- A. God can use anyone for His glory – even His enemies
- B. God encounters everyone differently as they need
- C. God cares for and protects His people
 - 1. Says that hurting them is as if it were done to Him
 - 2. Works for their good
 - 3. Calls us to trust Him

FOLLOW-UP QUESTIONS FOR PARENTS

- What do you remember from the lesson this morning?
- What did the passage tell you about the early church?
- What is one way that God has changed your life?
- Who is someone you have seen a dramatic change like this because of Jesus?

SMALL GROUP DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- What stuck out to you from the talk?
- What was amazing about what happened to Saul?
- How have you seen God at work in your life?
- When is a time you were scared to obey like Ananias?
- How does it make you feel that God sees those persecuting His people as the same as persecuting Him?

FAMILY DEVOTION

OPEN IN PRAYER (choose 1 person to pray)

OPENING QUESTION/ACTIVITY

- If you had Jesus over for dinner, what food would you make and what would you do afterwards? Why?

READ LUKE 19:1-10

QUESTIONS FOR JK-3RD

- Where did Jesus go?
- Who was there and what was said about him?
- What did Jesus say to Zacchaeus? Why was that cool?
- What did Zacchaeus do while Jesus was there?
- What do you learn about God in all of this?

QUESTIONS FOR 4TH-8TH

- What did Zacchaeus do to see Jesus?
- What would you be willing to do to see Jesus?
- Why would most people think that Jesus shouldn't go to Zacchaeus' house?
- If Jesus showed up today, what would you need to ask forgiveness for?
- What do you learn about God in all of this?

QUESTIONS FOR 9TH-12TH

- What sticks out to you from this passage? Why?
- How would you live differently if you realized that Jesus really is with you wherever you go?
- What are ways you can show that Jesus is your Lord?
- What do you learn about God in all of this?

CLOSE IN PRAYER (everyone participates)

FAMILY DEVOTION

OPEN IN PRAYER (choose 1 person to pray)

OPENING QUESTION/ACTIVITY

- Who is someone you would love to see Jesus do a miracle for? Why? Spend some time praying for those people.

READ MARK 5:1-20

QUESTIONS FOR JK-3RD

- What did Jesus and the disciples find once they crossed the lake?
- What was said about him?
- What happened to the man? How did the people respond?
- What do you learn about God in all of this?

QUESTIONS FOR 4TH-8TH

- What did the people think about this man? What had they done with him? Why?
- What did the man say to Jesus?
- What was wrong with the man and what did Jesus do about it?
- What did they ask Jesus to do? Why?
- How did Jesus change this man's life?
- What do you learn about God in all of this?

QUESTIONS FOR 9TH-12TH

- What sticks out to you from the passage? Why?
- Who are people in your life who really need Jesus?
- Who is someone that you have seen Jesus change in a radical way?
- What do you learn about God in all of this?

CLOSE IN PRAYER (everyone participates)

WEEK

13

ACTS 9:20-31

PURPOSE

Continuing the ministry of Jesus by the power of the Holy Spirit

WEEKLY FOCUS

The response of a life changed by Jesus

ACTS 9:20-31

CONTEXT

- Jesus had ascended into heaven but left the disciples with a promise
- Jesus told them that the Holy Spirit would come and give them power
- The Holy Spirit comes upon the people to empower them to witness
- The church lives in harmony and community, which attracts folks to join them
- The apostles gain favor with the people and the church grows but at the same time they face persecution from the religious leaders who have arrested them, beaten them and told them not to speak about Jesus
- There is great persecution that scatters the church out to where God had called them to go—Judea and Samaria—led by a man named Saul
- Jesus meets Saul and Saul believes in Jesus and is baptized

OUTLINE

- I. Saul's initial ministry
 - A. Stayed with disciples in Damascus
 - B. Began to proclaim Jesus as the Son of God in the synagogues
 1. Amazed all that heard him
 2. Knew who he was before
 3. Knew he had come to Damascus to arrest those who spoke of Jesus
 4. Made his testimony that much more powerful
 5. Confounded the Jews by proving that Jesus was the Christ
- II. Response to his ministry
 - A. The Jews plotted to kill him
 1. So people wouldn't believe in Jesus
 2. Saul found out about it

- B. The disciples in Damascus sought to save Saul
 - 1. The city gates were watched day and night
 - 2. They lowered him down the wall in a basket
- C. The disciples in Jerusalem were afraid of him
 - 1. He tried to join them but was not allowed
 - 2. They didn't believe he had actually been changed
 - 3. Barnabas brought him in
 - a. Told them how he had preached boldly in Damascus
 - b. Told them how he had seen the Lord on the road

III. Saul's continued ministry

- A. Went throughout Jerusalem proclaiming Jesus boldly
- B. Disputed with Hellenists about Jesus
 - 1. Wanted to kill him
 - 2. Disciples sent him to Tarsus

IV. Church was growing

- A. Was at peace
- B. Had multiplied into Jerusalem, Judea and Samaria
- C. Walked in fear of Lord and in comfort of Holy Spirit

V. SO WHAT??!!

- A. We are called to share about Jesus wherever we are
- B. We are called to share about Jesus to whoever is there
- C. We are called to share about Jesus whatever the cost

FOLLOW-UP QUESTIONS FOR PARENTS

- What do you remember from the lesson this morning?
- What did the passage tell you about the early church?
- What stuck out about Saul's ministry?
- How did God protect Saul?
- Who are the people who are helping you live for and share Jesus as the disciples did for Saul?

SMALL GROUP DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- What stuck out to you from the talk?
- What was Paul's response to what Jesus had done?
- How are you responding to what Jesus has done for you?
- Who are the people who are helping you live for and share Jesus as the disciples did for Saul?

FAMILY DEVOTION

OPEN IN PRAYER (choose 1 person to pray)

OPENING QUESTION/ACTIVITY

- Which of Jesus' miracles would you most like to have witnessed? Why?

READ LUKE 5:1-11

QUESTIONS FOR JK-3RD

- Where was Jesus and what was the crowd doing?
- What does Jesus do in response to this?
- Whose boat did He get in?
- What does Jesus tell Peter to do and how does he respond?
- What does Jesus do for Peter?
- What do you learn about God in all of this?

QUESTIONS FOR 4TH-8TH

- When is a time that you sensed Jesus was asking you to do something that you didn't want to?
- What was amazing about what happened with Peter?
- What was Peter's response to Jesus' miracle? Why?
- What does Jesus ask Peter to do?
- How was his life different from then on because of Jesus?
- What do you learn about God in all of this?

QUESTIONS FOR 9TH-12TH

- What sticks out to you from this passage? Why?
- How have you seen Jesus at work in your life lately?
- How often do you think about how sinful you really are and yet how gracious Jesus is to you?
- What do you learn about God in all of this?

CLOSE IN PRAYER (everyone participates)

FAMILY DEVOTION

OPEN IN PRAYER (choose 1 person to pray)

OPENING QUESTION/ACTIVITY

- If you had to give up everything you owned, what would be the hardest thing to give away? Why?

READ MATTHEW 9:9-13

QUESTIONS FOR JK-3RD

- What does Jesus do as He passes by the booth?
- What does Jesus tell Matthew to do?
- What does Matthew do next?
- How did the Pharisees respond? Why?
- What do you learn about God in all of this?

QUESTIONS FOR 4TH-8TH

- Why would it be hard for Matthew to obey Jesus?
- What would he lose by following Jesus?
- Who are people that you see as sinners?
- What does Jesus say to the Pharisees? What does it mean?
- How was Matthew's life changed forever because of Jesus?
- What do you learn about God in all of this?

QUESTIONS FOR 9TH-12TH

- What sticks out to you from the passage? Why?
- What are things in your life that are making it harder for you to follow Jesus? Why?
- Who are people in your life that you think aren't worthy enough for you to tell about Jesus?
- What do you learn about God in all of this?

CLOSE IN PRAYER (everyone participates)

WEEK

14

ACTS 9:32-43

PURPOSE

Continuing the ministry of Jesus by the power of the Holy Spirit

WEEKLY FOCUS

God uses physical needs to meet spiritual needs

ACTS 9:32-43

CONTEXT

- Jesus had ascended into heaven but left the disciples with a promise
- Jesus told them that the Holy Spirit would come and give them power
- The Holy Spirit comes upon the people to empower them to witness
- The church lives in harmony and community, which attracts folks to join them
- The apostles gain favor with the people and the church grows but at the same time they face persecution from the religious leaders who have arrested them, beaten them and told them not to speak about Jesus
- There is great persecution that scatters the church out to where God had called them to go—Judea and Samaria—led by a man named Saul
- Jesus meets Saul and Saul believes in Jesus, is baptized, and begins to do ministry

OUTLINE

- I. Peter's ministry outside of Jerusalem
 - A. Went to Lydda
 1. Was important city in Judea
 2. On the way to Joppa
 3. Was among the believers there
 4. Met a man named Aeneas
 - a. Was bedridden for 8 years
 - b. Was paralyzed
 - c. Heals him
 - Told him to rise
 - Told him that Jesus heals him

5. ALL the residents of Lydda and Sharon saw and turned to the Lord
 - a. Sharon was the coastal plain between Lydda and Joppa
 - b. The news spread quickly
- B. Went to Joppa
 1. There was a disciple named Tabitha (Dorcas)
 - a. Full of good works and acts of charity
 - b. Became ill and died
 - c. People sent for Peter in Lydda
 2. Peter went to Joppa and went to her bed and prayed
 - a. Told her to arise
 - b. She opened her eyes and sat up
 - c. Showed the people that she was alive
 3. It was told all over Joppa
 - a. Many believed in the Lord
 - b. He stayed there for many days telling people about Jesus
- I. SO WHAT??!!
 - A. Like Peter, our lives are a testimonies for Jesus
 - B. We too can offer hope to people who need it
 - C. God wants us to meet the physical needs of people in order to tell them about Jesus

FOLLOW-UP QUESTIONS FOR PARENTS

- What do you remember from the lesson this morning?
- What did the passage tell you about the early church?
- Who did Peter go to in these cities?
- Who are the needy people that you know?

SMALL GROUP DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- What stuck out to you from the talk?
- What was interesting about what Peter did?
- What power did Peter use?
- What are ways that you can help people in need?
How are you doing that currently?

FAMILY DEVOTION

OPEN IN PRAYER (choose 1 person to pray)

OPENING QUESTION/ACTIVITY

- When is a time you can remember eating so much that you felt sick?

READ MARK 6:30-44

QUESTIONS FOR JK-3RD

- Where were Jesus and the disciples?
- What were the crowds doing?
- What was the problem that came up?
- What did Jesus do? How was it a miracle?
- How many people ate?
- What do you learn about God in all of this?

QUESTIONS FOR 4TH-8TH

- How did Jesus see the needy crowds? How do you see needy people?
- How did Jesus tell the disciples to feed them?
- What does Jesus do to the loaves and fish and what happens?
- How did this miracle help reinforce what Jesus was teaching?
- What do you learn about God in all of this?

QUESTIONS FOR 9TH-12TH

- What sticks out to you from this passage? Why?
- What was left over and do you think there was any significance to it?
- How does Jesus use the food to help meet a spiritual need for the crowd?
- What do you learn about God in all of this?

CLOSE IN PRAYER (everyone participates)

FAMILY DEVOTION

OPEN IN PRAYER (choose 1 person to pray)

OPENING QUESTION/ACTIVITY

- As a family, make a plan to help take care of the physical needs of someone this week.

READ JAMES 2:14-17

QUESTIONS FOR JK-3RD

- What is faith? What are works?
- What does James say we are supposed to do for the needy person in verses 15-16?
- Why should we do that for them?
- What do you learn about God in all of this?

QUESTIONS FOR 4TH-8TH

- How do faith and works fit together?
- Why is it important to take care of people's physical needs?
- How does it show them Jesus?
- What do you learn about God in all of this?

QUESTIONS FOR 9TH-12TH

- What sticks out to you from the passage? Why?
- Have you ever told someone you would pray for them but didn't?
- Have you ever seen someone in need that you didn't help?
- How does James say that spiritual and physical needs are connected?
- What do you learn about God in all of this?

CLOSE IN PRAYER (everyone participates)

WEEK

15

ACTS 10:1-48

PURPOSE

Continuing the ministry of Jesus by the power of the Holy Spirit

WEEKLY FOCUS

God makes all things new

ACTS 10:1-48

CONTEXT

- Jesus had ascended into heaven but left the disciples with a promise
- Jesus told them that the Holy Spirit would come and give them power
- The Holy Spirit comes upon the people to empower them to witness
- The church lives in harmony and community, which attracts folks to join them
- The apostles gain favor with the people and the church grows but at the same time they face persecution from the religious leaders who have arrested them, beaten them and told them not to speak about Jesus
- There is great persecution that scatters the church out to where God had called them to go—Judea and Samaria—led by a man named Saul
- Jesus meets Saul and Saul believes in Jesus, is baptized, and begins to do ministry
- The disciples, including Peter, are now taking the Gospel outside of Jerusalem and even to the Gentiles

OUTLINE

- I. Cornelius
 - A. Was a centurion (commander of troops) in Caesarea
 - B. Devout man who feared God, he and his household
 - C. Gave alms to those in need
 - D. Prayed continually to God
 - E. God speaks to him
 1. Told him that God had seen all that he had done
 2. Told him to send for Peter in Joppa
 3. He did as God told him
- II. Peter and Cornelius
 - A. God spoke to Peter in a vision
 1. Showed him all kinds of animals
 2. Told him to kill and eat

3. Confusing to Peter because many of these animals had been unclean—Leviticus 11:2-47
 4. God said to Peter—What I have called clean don't call unclean
 5. Happened 3 times and then disappeared
- B. Peter was confused about what he saw
- C. At this time, Cornelius' servants came to get Peter
 1. Explained who they were
 2. Invited Peter to come to Cornelius' house
 3. Peter went with them
- D. This would have been an unusual sight
 1. Jews saw all Gentiles as unclean
 2. They did not associate with them
 3. They especially didn't go in their houses and eat their food because they would become unclean and not be able to worship
- E. Peter acknowledges how God had prepared him for this moment
 1. Told them about his vision
 2. Not only did it pertain to foods but also to people
 3. God was telling Peter that the Gentiles are not to be avoided but are participants in the Gospel
- F. Peter shared the Gospel with Cornelius and his family
 1. God shows no partiality – is for all people
 - a. People from all nations shall fear Him and do what is right
 2. Told them about Jesus' work
 3. Told them about forgiveness through His Name
- G. Holy Spirit falls on Gentiles
 1. This was the first time this happened
 2. Before now it was on Jews in different places
 3. The Jews were amazed at this
 - a. Had previously thought the promise was only for the Jews
 4. The Gentiles began to speak in tongues and praise God
 5. Peter baptized them and stayed with them for many days

III. SO WHAT??!!

- A. The Gospel is for all people
 - 1. Even those we might not want to share it with
- B. God will change our perceptions and expectations
 - 1. His desire is for people to be saved
 - 2. He will use things and people we didn't think imaginable
- C. God knows those who are faithful to Him
 - 1. Sees the things that they say and do

FOLLOW-UP QUESTIONS FOR PARENTS

- What do you remember from the lesson this morning?
- What did the passage tell you about the early church?
- How did God prepare Peter for what He was going to ask him to do?
- What excuses do you have to not share the Gospel with others?

SMALL GROUP DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- What stuck out to you from the talk?
- What excuses might Peter have had to not go where God wanted him?
- What excuses do you have to not do what God asks you to?
- What were we told about Cornelius? What would people say about you?

FAMILY DEVOTION

OPEN IN PRAYER (choose 1 person to pray)

OPENING QUESTION/ACTIVITY

- What is your favorite article of clothing? Why?

READ COLOSSIANS 3:1-11

QUESTIONS FOR JK-3RD

- What does Paul say we should seek? How do we do that?
- What are we to put on? How do we do that?
- What do you learn about God in all of this?

QUESTIONS FOR 4TH-8TH

- What are we to put to death? How do we do that?
- What are we to put off?
- What are we to put on?
- What does Paul say in verse 11? What does that mean?
- How does God make us new?
- What do you learn about God in all of this?

QUESTIONS FOR 9TH-12TH

- What sticks out to you from this passage? Why?
- What are ways we make distinctions as Christians that Jesus never meant for us to make?
- Why do we do that?
- What are ways that Jesus is making you new?
- What do you learn about God in all of this?

CLOSE IN PRAYER (everyone participates)

FAMILY DEVOTION

OPEN IN PRAYER (choose 1 person to pray)

OPENING QUESTION/ACTIVITY

- What book or movie do you like because it has a great ending?
What about the ending do you like the most?

READ REVELATION 21:1-5

QUESTIONS FOR JK-3RD

- When does this take place?
- What does John see?
- What did the voice say in verse 3?
- What will God do in heaven for us? How does that make you feel?
- What do you learn about God in all of this?

QUESTIONS FOR 4TH-8TH

- Why did the old earth and heaven pass away?
- What picture does John give us in verse 2?
- What does it mean that God dwells with His people?
- How do we see Jesus' heart for His people?
- What does the voice say in verse 6?
- How has Jesus made you new?
- What do you learn about God in all of this?

QUESTIONS FOR 9TH-12TH

- What sticks out to you from the passage? Why?
- Why should we study what will happen in heaven? When is the last time you thought about it?
- What do you learn about God in all of this?

CLOSE IN PRAYER (everyone participates)

WEEK

16

ACTS 11:1-30

PURPOSE

Continuing the ministry of Jesus by the power of the Holy Spirit

WEEKLY FOCUS

The spread of the Gospel was surprising even to the church

ACTS 11:1-30

CONTEXT

- Jesus had ascended into heaven but left the disciples with a promise
- Jesus told them that the Holy Spirit would come and give them power
- The Holy Spirit comes upon the people to empower them to witness
- The church lives in harmony and community, which attracts folks to join them
- The apostles gain favor with the people and the church grows but at the same time they face persecution from the religious leaders who have arrested them, beaten them and told them not to speak about Jesus
- There is great persecution that scatters the church out to where God had called them to go—Judea and Samaria—led by a man named Saul
- Jesus meets Saul and Saul believes in Jesus, is baptized, and begins to do ministry
- The disciples, including Peter, are now taking the Gospel outside of Jerusalem and even to the Gentiles

OUTLINE

- I. The church's first controversy
 - A. Word of the Gentiles receiving the Holy Spirit got to the apostles and the brothers
 - B. Peter went to talk about it with the church
 - C. The "circumcision party" criticized Peter when they heard
 1. Was a group of strict Jewish Christians
 2. Thought that before someone could become a Christian they had to become a Jew first – be circumcised
 - D. Peter explained to them what happened with him and Cornelius
 1. Told them what the Lord had said to him
 2. Explained that the Lord had said that they were not unclean
 3. The Spirit said there was no distinction
 4. Holy Spirit fell on them as he was speaking
 - a. Just like it did on the apostles
 - b. Connected it to Jesus' own words—Matthew 3:11

5. Who was I to stand in their way
 - a. If God gave the same Spirit to them that He gave to us
 - E. Response of the people
 1. They fell silent
 2. Glorified God
 - a. God has granted repentance even to the Gentiles
- II. The Gospel continues to spread**
- A. The disciples who had been scattered have made it to Phoenicia (Lebanon today), Cyprus (island in Mediterranean Sea) and Antioch (in what is Syria today)
 - B. Had been speaking to only Jews
 - C. They began to speak to Hellenists (Greek speakers who were Gentiles) and many believed
 - D. The church sent Barnabas to see what was happening
 1. Saw the grace of God at work
 2. Encouraged them to stay faithful
 - E. Barnabas went to Tarsus and got Saul
 1. They stayed in Antioch for a year
 2. Teaching the new disciples and others
 - F. The church in Jerusalem cares for their brothers and sisters
 1. Provided for them during famine
 2. Sent by elders through Paul and Barnabas
- III. SO WHAT??!!**
- A. Even the church sometimes disagrees
 1. Need to expect that God will do bigger things than we think
 - a. He is about saving the world
 2. We need to seek unity
 - a. Our greatest witness is our love for each other
 - B. The church should be for all people
 1. Everyone needs Jesus
 2. People will respond
 3. Need to seek God's agenda and not our own

FOLLOW-UP QUESTIONS FOR PARENTS

- What do you remember from the lesson this morning?
- What did the passage tell you about the early church?
- Who are people you would never invite to church? Why?
- How did the early church handle its disagreement?

SMALL GROUP DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- What stuck out to you from the talk?
- Who are people you are convinced would never respond to the Gospel? Why?
- How do you handle disagreements with your brothers and sisters in Christ?

FAMILY DEVOTION

OPEN IN PRAYER (choose 1 person to pray)

OPENING QUESTION/ACTIVITY

- If you could be king for a day, what would you do?

READ JOHN 6:11-15

QUESTIONS FOR JK-3RD

- What did Jesus do for the people?
- Why did they need food?
- How did the people respond to the miracle?
- What were they going to try to do with Jesus?
- What do you learn about God in all of this?

QUESTIONS FOR 4TH-8TH

- Why was it important for Jesus to take care of the crowds?
- How did the crowds interpret what Jesus was doing?
- Why were they going to try and make Him king?
- When do you try and get Jesus to follow your plan instead of you following His?
- How did Jesus respond? Why wouldn't He just let them?
- What do you learn about God in all of this?

QUESTIONS FOR 9TH-12TH

- What sticks out to you from this passage? Why?
- When have you allowed God to use you like He did the disciples here?
- What is your response when Jesus does something amazing in your life?
- What would it look like for you to make Jesus king of your life?
- What do you learn about God in all of this?

CLOSE IN PRAYER (everyone participates)

FAMILY DEVOTION

OPEN IN PRAYER (choose 1 person to pray)

OPENING QUESTION/ACTIVITY

- Who is the most famous person you have ever seen in person? How did people act around them? How did you act?

READ JOHN 12:12-19

QUESTIONS FOR JK-3RD

- What had the crowd heard?
- What did they do in response?
- What did they say? What does that mean?
- Why was the crowd going out to meet Him?
- How did the Pharisees respond?
- What do you learn about God in all of this?

QUESTIONS FOR 4TH-8TH

- Why is it important that Jesus fulfilled the prophecy?
- How do you think that the disciples missed what Jesus was doing here?
- Why were the people there to see Jesus?
- Why were the Pharisees so bothered by Jesus?
- How are you being strong and courageous for Jesus?

QUESTIONS FOR 9TH-12TH

- What sticks out to you from the passage? Why?
- When is the last time you worshiped Jesus like this?
- What are ways you can proclaim Jesus as Hosanna in your life?
- What do you learn about God in all of this?

CLOSE IN PRAYER (everyone participates)

WEEK

17

ACTS 12:1-25

PURPOSE

Continuing the ministry of Jesus by the power of the Holy Spirit

WEEKLY FOCUS

God is aware and at work amongst His people
even when we don't see or understand it

ACTS 12:1-25

CONTEXT

- Jesus had ascended into heaven but left the disciples with a promise
- Jesus told them that the Holy Spirit would come and give them power
- The Holy Spirit comes upon the people to empower them to witness
- The church lives in harmony and community, which attracts folks to join them
- The apostles gain favor with the people and the church grows but at the same time they face persecution from the religious leaders who have arrested them, beaten them and told them not to speak about Jesus
- There is great persecution that scatters the church out to where God had called them to go—Judea and Samaria—led by a man named Saul
- Jesus meets Saul and Saul believes in Jesus, is baptized, and begins to do ministry
- The disciples, including Peter, are now taking the Gospel outside of Jerusalem and even to the Gentiles, which was a surprise to the leaders

OUTLINE

- I. Persecution increases
 - A. King Herod was also arresting those who were from the church
 1. Herod Agrippa I—not to be confused with Herod from Matthew 2—this was his grandson
 - B. Herod arrests and kills James
 1. Brother of John and son of Zebedee
 2. First disciple to be killed for following Jesus
 3. Saw that it pleased the Jews
 - C. Herod arrests Peter as well
 1. During the days of Unleavened Bread
 - a. 7 days after Passover
 2. Guards him with 4 squads of soldiers
 3. Was going to kill him after Passover season was complete

II. God is faithful to His people

- A. The church was praying earnestly for Peter
- B. Peter's rescue
 - 1. On the night he was to be brought out to the people
 - 2. Peter was chained to two guards
 - 3. Angel of the Lord appeared
 - a. Woke Peter up and took off his chains
 - b. Told him to get up and get dressed and follow
 - c. Peter thought this was a vision and wasn't real
 - d. Angel led Peter through the guards and the gate into the city and then angel left
 - 4. Peter then realized that it was real and he was free

C. A lesson in faithful prayers

- 1. Peter went to house of Mark's mom (writer of Gospel of Mark) where they were praying for him
- 2. As he knocked, the servant girl recognized him and told them he was there
- 3. They didn't believe her even though she insisted
 - a. Instead they thought it was his angel because he had been killed
- 4. They finally opened the door and saw Peter
 - a. They were amazed
- 5. Peter told them what had happened to him
- 6. Herod and the soldiers looked for Peter and could not find him
 - a. Herod ordered that the guards be killed for allowing him to escape

III. God will deal justly with those who persecute His people

- A. Herod was angry and vain king
- B. He was mad at the people of Tyre and Sidon
 - 1. They needed food from Herod to survive
 - 2. Came to him to beg for peace
- C. He put on his robes and spoke to the people
 - 1. They called him god and not a man

- D. Angel of the Lord struck him down
 - 1. For accepting worship that belonged to God alone
 - a. Didn't give God glory
 - 2. For his persecution of God's people
- E. Word of God increased and multiplied

IV. SO WHAT??!!

- A. We can expect trouble as we follow Jesus
 - 1. Jesus told us that we would but that He would overcome the world—John 16:33
- B. God has already secured the victory for us all so we do not need to be afraid
 - 1. May kill the body but can't touch our souls
- C. God listens to the prayers of His people
 - 1. Even when we don't think so
 - 2. Uses our prayers to accomplish His purposes
- D. God will deal with those who are against Him and His people
 - 1. In the end it will all serve the ultimate purpose
 - a. More and more people follow Jesus

FOLLOW-UP QUESTIONS FOR PARENTS

- What do you remember from the lesson this morning?
- What did the passage tell you about the early church?
- What is something that has happened that makes you forget that God is in charge?
- When is a time that you prayed but really didn't think God would answer? What happened?
- How did God protect His people here?

SMALL GROUP DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- What stuck out to you from the talk?
- What happened to James? Peter?
- How did God show Himself faithful to His people through all this?
- When was a time that you knew you should pray but didn't?
- When is a time you prayed but didn't really believe?
- How did God deal with Herod? How does that make you feel?

FAMILY DEVOTION

OPEN IN PRAYER (choose 1 person to pray)

OPENING QUESTION/ACTIVITY

- Who is your favorite super hero and why?

READ ROMANS 8:26-39

QUESTIONS FOR JK-3RD

- What does the Spirit help us in?
- What does God do for those who love Him?
- What does verse 31 say?
- What can separate us from God's love?
- What do you learn about God in all of this?

QUESTIONS FOR 4TH-8TH

- What does the Spirit help us to do?
- Does verse 28 say that God will only do good things for those who love Him? What does it say He will do?
- What is Jesus doing for us right now? What does that mean?
- What do you think sometimes separates you from God? Why?
- What do you learn about God in all of this?

QUESTIONS FOR 9TH-12TH

- What sticks out to you from this passage? Why?
- What are ways that God has been at work in things that you thought were hard or difficult?
- How have you seen God use hard things for your good?
- How are you living out that you are more than a conqueror?
- What do you learn about God in all of this?

CLOSE IN PRAYER (everyone participates)

FAMILY DEVOTION

OPEN IN PRAYER (choose 1 person to pray)

OPENING QUESTION/ACTIVITY

- When is a time that you were really scared? What did you do?

READ I KINGS 19:1-18

QUESTIONS FOR JK-3RD

- What happens to Elijah and what does he do?
- Where does Elijah go?
- What does God say to him?
- How does God appear to Elijah?
- What do you learn about God in all of this?

QUESTIONS FOR 4TH-8TH

- What had Elijah just done in the last chapter? Why shouldn't he be afraid?
- Why is it important that God came in a gentle whisper?
- What questions does God ask Elijah?
- What is Elijah's response?
- How do we know that Elijah is wrong and that God had been at work the whole time, even when Elijah didn't see it?—verse 18
- What do you learn about God in all of this?

QUESTIONS FOR 9TH-12TH

- What sticks out to you from the passage? Why?
- When is a time that you ran away when you didn't need to?
- How do you think God responds to you when you run away?
- How often do you feel alone as a Christian? Why?
- What do you learn about God in all of this?

CLOSE IN PRAYER (everyone participates)

WEEK

18

ACTS 13:1-12

PURPOSE

Continuing the ministry of Jesus by the power of the Holy Spirit

WEEKLY FOCUS

God sends out His people to spread the Gospel with His power

ACTS 13:1-12

CONTEXT

- Jesus had ascended into heaven but left the disciples with a promise
- Jesus told them that the Holy Spirit would come and give them power
- The Holy Spirit comes upon the people to empower them to witness
- The church lives in harmony and community, which attracts folks to join them
- The apostles gain favor with the people and the church grows but at the same time they face persecution from the religious leaders who have arrested them, beaten them and told them not to speak about Jesus
- There is great persecution that scatters the church out to where God had called them to go—Judea and Samaria—led by a man named Saul
- Jesus meets Saul and Saul believes in Jesus, is baptized, and begins to do ministry
- The disciples, including Peter, are now taking the Gospel outside of Jerusalem and even to the Gentiles, which was a surprise to the leaders

OUTLINE

- I. The church's first missionaries
 - A. The church has a new home base—Antioch
 1. The church had been centered in Jerusalem
 2. Now that Gentiles were being saved, Antioch became the hub—in Syria
 3. Had great leaders
 - a. Barnabas, Saul, Simeon, Lucius and Manaean
 - B. God calls them to send
 1. While they were worshiping Him and fasting
 2. Spoke to them through Holy Spirit
 - a. Set apart Barnabas and Saul
 - b. To the work I have called them to
 3. The church laid hands on them and sent them out
 4. Would have been hard for the church
 - a. Losing two gifted leaders

- b. Easy to want them to stay so that church in Antioch would be better
- c. Understood their call was to make more churches, not just build up their own

II. The missionaries' first ministry

- A. Led by Holy Spirit to Cyprus
 - 1. Island outside of Greece
- B. They first went to the synagogue
 - 1. Proclaimed God's Word to the Jews
 - 2. Understanding that Jesus' design was to save Jews and Gentiles
- C. Went throughout the whole island proclaiming Jesus
 - 1. Didn't pick and choose where they wanted to go
 - 2. Spread the Gospel everywhere
- D. Teaching accompanied with power
 - 1. Met opposition
 - a. A false prophet names Bar-Jesus (also Elymas)
 - He was a magician
 - Pulled people towards himself instead of God
 - b. He was with the proconsul of the island
 - We would call him Governor
 - Was a very smart man
 - Called to hear from Saul and Barnabas
 - Their work had reached his ears
 - 2. Saul's response to the magician
 - a. He was filled with the Holy Spirit
 - b. Looked intently at him
 - Had all of his focus and attention
 - c. Rebuked him harshly
 - Son of the devil
 - Calling him a liar
 - Calling him someone who wanted to destroy
 - Enemy of all righteousness
 - Steeped in sin
 - Opposed those who did what was right
 - Full of deceit and villainy
 - Making crooked the paths the Lord had made straight
 - Making it harder for people to believe in Jesus

- d. Showed God's power
- e. Hand of the Lord was upon him
 - His power and wrath
 - To come against his sin
- f. Told him he would be blind and he was
 - Needed to have people lead him by the hand
- 3. Effect of this
 - a. The proconsul believed in Jesus
 - b. Because of the teaching of the Lord
 - Its message
 - Its power

III. SO WHAT??!!

- A. We all are called to be on mission for Jesus
 - 1. He has placed you as a witness where you are
 - a. Neighborhood, school, activities, etc.
 - 2. He promises to tell you what to say
- B. He sends us with His power on mission
 - 1. We have the Holy Spirit in us
 - 2. Same Spirit that raised Jesus from the dead
- C. If we are faithful, God will use us to save people
 - 1. Living for Him in word and deed

FOLLOW-UP QUESTIONS FOR PARENTS

- What do you remember from the lesson this morning?
- What did the passage tell you about the early church?
- What did the early church decide to do? Why would that be hard?
- What did Paul and Barnabas do in Cyprus?
- Where is your mission field?

SMALL GROUP DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- What stuck out to you from the talk?
- Why would Antioch send two of its main leaders away to other people?
- What did Paul and Barnabas do in Cyprus?
- Why are you in the places God has placed you?

FAMILY DEVOTION

OPEN IN PRAYER (choose 1 person to pray)

OPENING QUESTION/ACTIVITY

- Where is somewhere you would really like to go on vacation sometime? Why?

READ MATTHEW 10:5-15

QUESTIONS FOR JK-3RD

- What is Jesus doing to His disciples? Why?
- Where does He tell them to go and not go? Why?
- What do you learn about God in all of this?

QUESTIONS FOR 4TH-8TH

- What does Jesus tell them to do?
- What does He tell them to bring and not to bring? Why?
- What are ways that you see God sending you out to serve others?
- Why is it important that Jesus sent the disciples out?
- What are some excuses you have for not going out to serve and share with others?
- What do you learn about God in all of this?

QUESTIONS FOR 9TH-12TH

- What sticks out to you from this passage? Why?
- Where do you know the Lord wants you to go and serve?
- What are ways you can show Jesus at your school this week?
- Where is a place that you do not want to go? Why?
- What do you learn about God in all of this?

CLOSE IN PRAYER (everyone participates)

FAMILY DEVOTION

OPEN IN PRAYER (choose 1 person to pray)

OPENING QUESTION/ACTIVITY

- If you were to leave to go on a trip right now what would you pack? What would you want to bring but know that you couldn't?

READ LUKE 10:1-12

QUESTIONS FOR JK-3RD

- Who does Jesus send out here?
- What does Jesus tell them?
- How is Jesus sending them? Does that sound good to you?
- What does He call them to do in verse 2?
- What do you learn about God in all of this?

QUESTIONS FOR 4TH-8TH

- Where is the harvest plentiful in your life right now?
- Why do you think there are so few people willing to live for Jesus?
- What instructions does Jesus give the 72? Why were these so important?
- Who are laborers you can be praying for?
- What do you learn about God in all of this?

QUESTIONS FOR 9TH-12TH

- What sticks out to you from this passage? Why?
- Where are you not willing to be a laborer for God?
- Who is your partner in sharing the Gospel? Why is that important?
- What do you learn about God in all of this?

CLOSE IN PRAYER (everyone participates)

WEEK

19

ACTS 13:13-52

PURPOSE

Continuing the ministry of Jesus by the power of the Holy Spirit

WEEKLY FOCUS

God instructs the church to reach out

ACTS 13:13-52

CONTEXT

- Jesus had ascended into heaven but left the disciples with a promise
- Jesus told them that the Holy Spirit would come and give them power
- The Holy Spirit comes upon the people to empower them to witness
- The church lives in harmony and community, which attracts folks to join them
- The apostles gain favor with the people and the church grows but at the same time they face persecution from the religious leaders who have arrested them, beaten them and told them not to speak about Jesus
- There is great persecution that scatters the church out to where God had called them to go—Judea and Samaria—led by a man named Saul
- Jesus meets Saul and Saul believes in Jesus, is baptized, and begins to do ministry
- The disciples, including Peter, are now taking the Gospel outside of Jerusalem and even to the Gentiles, which was a surprise to the leaders
- Now that the Gentiles believe, the church begins to send out missionaries in order to spread the Gospel further

OUTLINE

- I. Paul and Barnabas go to Antioch in Pisidia
 - A. Not the same Antioch which sent them out
 - B. Was in Galatia—in country of Turkey today
 - C. As always they first went to the Jews
 1. Went into the synagogue on the Sabbath
 2. Just sat down to listen
 - a. Weren't pushing their own way or rude about sharing
 3. The rulers of the synagogue asked them to speak
 - a. Word of encouragement for the people
 - D. Paul spoke to the people
 1. Recalled the history of God's people
 - a. Passover
 - b. Promised Land
 - c. Saul and David

2. Coming of Jesus
 - a. Message of salvation
 - b. Death
 - c. Resurrection
 - d. Fulfillment of Scripture
 - Psalm 2:7, Isaiah 55:3, Psalm 16:10, Habakkuk 1:5
- E. Reaction of the people
 1. Begged that Paul would tell them again on the next Sabbath
 2. Many devout Jews began to follow Paul and Barnabas
 3. The next Sabbath almost the whole city gathered to hear the word of the Lord
 - a. Jews saw crowds and were jealous
 - b. Began to contradict Paul
 4. Paul preached also to the Gentiles
 - a. Because of the unbelief of some Jews
 - b. Called to go out with the Gospel
 - c. They rejoiced and believed
 - d. Word began to spread throughout whole region
 5. Jews stirred up persecution against Paul and Barnabas and drove them out of the city

II. SO WHAT??!!

- A. We need to start within the church with the Gospel
 1. Plenty of people who come to church don't know Jesus
 - a. Don't fully grasp the Gospel
 - b. Don't trust alone in Jesus' grace and mercy
 2. Paul always went to synagogues first
 - a. Be amongst those who worshipped God
- B. We need to then go as the church to the nations
 1. Take what we are learning out
 2. Not just hold on to the privilege of knowing God for ourselves
 3. Seek out those amongst us who need Jesus

FOLLOW-UP QUESTIONS FOR PARENTS

- What do you remember from the lesson this morning?
- What did the passage tell you about the early church?
- What did Paul do first when he entered a town? Why was that important?
- Who are people in the church you need to talk to about Jesus?
- Who are people outside of the church that you need to talk to about Jesus?
- Why are both of those important?

SMALL GROUP DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- What stuck out to you from the talk?
- Where did Paul always go first when he entered a town? Why?
- Why was his teaching important for those who already worshipped God?
- Why was his teaching important for those who didn't know God?
- Where is the first place you need to be going with the Gospel?

FAMILY DEVOTION

OPEN IN PRAYER (choose 1 person to pray)

OPENING QUESTION/ACTIVITY

- When is a time that you remember feeling really sick? What helped you feel better?

READ MATTHEW 25:31-46

QUESTIONS FOR JK-3RD

- Who will come and who will be before Him?
- What will He do with the people?
- What does Jesus tell the people on his right?
- What does Jesus tell the people on his left?
- What do you learn about God in all of this?

QUESTIONS FOR 4TH-8TH

- What does Jesus say will be the reason He separates the people from each other?
- What were the things that they did?
- How did the people respond to Jesus?
- What do you learn about God in all of this?

QUESTIONS FOR 9TH-12TH

- What sticks out to you from this passage? Why?
- When are times you have loved the least of these like you would Jesus?
- When are times that you saw those in need and didn't help them? Why?
- What do you learn about God in all of this?

CLOSE IN PRAYER (everyone participates)

FAMILY DEVOTION

OPEN IN PRAYER (choose 1 person to pray)

OPENING QUESTION/ACTIVITY

- What are some of the gifts that God has given you? How can you use them to serve Him?

READ I PETER 4:8-11

QUESTIONS FOR JK-3RD

- What does Paul say to do above all?
- What does “hospitality” mean?
- What should we do in everything?—verse 11
- What do you learn about God in all of this?

QUESTIONS FOR 4TH-8TH

- How does love cover a multitude of sins?
- How are ways that you can show hospitality to others?
- What are ways in which you have used the gifts that God has given you to serve others?
- What does it mean to be a steward?
- How should we speak and serve?
- What do you learn about God in all of this?

QUESTIONS FOR 9TH-12TH

- What sticks out to you from this passage? Why?
- How are you being a good steward of God’s grace?
- How are you using your gifts to serve the Lord?
- What do you learn about God in all of this?

CLOSE IN PRAYER (everyone participates)

WEEK

20

ACTS 14:1-28

PURPOSE

Continuing the ministry of Jesus by the power of the Holy Spirit

WEEKLY FOCUS

Truly following Jesus will be hard at times

ACTS 14:1-28

CONTEXT

- Jesus had ascended into heaven but left the disciples with a promise
- Jesus told them that the Holy Spirit would come and give them power
- The Holy Spirit comes upon the people to empower them to witness
- The church lives in harmony and community, which attracts folks to join them
- The apostles gain favor with the people and the church grows but at the same time they face persecution from the religious leaders who have arrested them, beaten them and told them not to speak about Jesus
- There is great persecution that scatters the church out to where God had called them to go—Judea and Samaria—led by a man named Saul
- Jesus meets Saul and Saul believes in Jesus, is baptized, and begins to do ministry
- The disciples, including Peter, are now taking the Gospel outside of Jerusalem and even to the Gentiles, which was a surprise to the leaders
- Now that the Gentiles believe, the church begins to send out missionaries in order to spread the Gospel further—starting with Paul and Barnabas

OUTLINE

- I. Paul and Barnabas go to Iconium
 - A. City in Galatia – more Greek culture than Roman
 - B. Paul and Barnabas go into the synagogue
 1. Shared about Jesus
 2. A great number of people believed
 - a. Both Jews and Greeks
 - C. They were opposed by those who didn't believe
 1. Stirred up Gentiles
 2. Poisoned their minds against Paul and Barnabas
 3. Would say untrue things about them to confuse people
 4. Didn't want people to follow them
 5. Same as we have today

- D. Paul and Barnabas still stayed
 - 1. For a long time, even among people against them
 - 2. Knew people needed to hear about Jesus
 - 3. Spoke boldly and did wonders in Jesus' Name
- E. People tried to kill Paul and Barnabas
 - 1. Had a plan to take them and stone them
 - 2. They found out and left to other cities
 - 3. God protected them

II. Paul and Barnabas at Lystra

- A. Also a Roman city in Galatia—Paul visited here three times over his life
- B. Healing of crippled man
 - 1. Paul noticed him while teaching
 - a. Had been crippled since birth
 - b. Saw "he had faith to be made well"
 - c. Believed in what he was saying about Jesus
 - 2. Paul commanded the man to stand up
 - a. The man listened and obeyed
- C. The people respond with false worship
 - 1. Didn't know what to make of the man's healing
 - a. Had never seen anything like that before
 - 2. They recalled an old myth where once people said that Zeus and Hermes had walked among the people
 - a. False gods from Greek mythology
 - b. Vengeful and sinful gods
 - c. Kept people in line but were unknowable and didn't love people—saw them as play things for their entertainment
 - 3. They thought Paul and Barnabas were gods
 - a. Paul – Hermes, and Barnabas – Zeus
 - b. The people brought sacrifices to them and the priest came to worship them

- c. Would have been easy to accept this worship
 - "it's just their culture"
 - "They will understand it later"
 - "Don't want to offend them"
 - They had met so much opposition lately it was nice to be appreciated
- 4. Paul and Barnabas' response
 - a. Tore their clothes
 - Was a Jewish act of repentance
 - Sorrow over sin
 - b. Tried to explain to the people
 - We are just men like you
 - We want to tell you about the true and Living God
 - We are just His messengers
- D. The people went from worship to wrath
 - 1. The religious leaders from the two cities Paul and Barnabas went showed up
 - a. Were now following them to make trouble
 - b. Wanted to hurt their ministry
 - 2. Persuaded the crowd against Paul and Barnabas
 - a. Went from gods to enemies
 - b. Got the crowd to take Paul
 - 3. The crowd stoned Paul
 - a. Often this was done by putting someone in a pit and rolling large stones on top of them
 - b. Can also be hurling rocks at someone until dead
 - c. Whatever they did, they believed that Paul was dead
- E. The response of the believers
 - 1. Came to where Paul was—brave
 - 2. Came around him
 - a. Protecting him
 - 3. Helped him up
 - a. Were with him and encouraging him

F. Paul's response

1. He went back into the city for a night
 - a. Amazing courage
2. Then went to another city close by to share
 - a. Many heard and believed
3. He then WENT BACK
 - a. To Lystra—where he was stoned
 - b. To Iconium and Antioch—where he was opposed by the religious leaders
 - Showed that he was not afraid
 - Showed that he trusted God's plan and provision for him

To strengthen those who believed

- Encouraged them
- Helped them continue in their faith
 - Telling them it would be hard
 - He was living proof
- Helped them appoint leaders
 - Elders in every church

III. They returned to Antioch

- A. Where they were sent from
- B. Reported all that God had done to encourage the church
- C. Told them that God had truly opened the door for the Gentiles

IV. SO WHAT??!!

- A. We need to expect opposition as we follow Jesus
 1. People will not like what we say
 2. People will actively be against us
 3. We need to be prepared for people's anger and violence
- B. We need to see opposition as a chance to encourage others
 1. We need to see God's provision
 - a. Paul should have been killed but wasn't
 2. We need to share our stories of God's help
 - a. Tell others what He has done for us

3. We need to expect God to use those hard things
 - a. Encourage them to be bold
 - b. Comfort them when they face the same things
 - c. Be faithful to what God has called us to

FOLLOW-UP QUESTIONS FOR PARENTS

- What do you remember from the lesson this morning?
- What did the passage tell you about the early church?
- What happened to Paul in the first town he visited? Why?
- What happened to Paul in the second town he visited?
- How did he respond to that?
- How does Paul encourage you?

SMALL GROUP DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- What stuck out to you from the talk?
- How would you have responded to the opposition that Paul faced?
- What opposition do you face for being a follower of Jesus?
- What is amazing about how Paul handled the false worship?
- When is a time that you knew you should have stopped something but didn't because it was easier?
- How are you encouraged by Paul and his ministry?

FAMILY DEVOTION

OPEN IN PRAYER (choose 1 person to pray)

OPENING QUESTION/ACTIVITY

- When is a time that you made an excuse for something you really didn't want to do? Did it work?

READ LUKE 9:57-62

QUESTIONS FOR JK-3RD

- What does the first person say to Jesus?
- How does Jesus respond?
- What does the second person say when Jesus tells him to follow Him?
- How does Jesus respond?
- What does the third person say when Jesus tells him to follow Him?
- How does Jesus respond?
- What do you learn about God in all of this?

QUESTIONS FOR 4TH-8TH

- What did Jesus mean by His response to the first person?
- What was He trying to show him about following Him?
- What does Jesus mean by His response to the second person?
- What was He trying to show him about following Him?
- What does Jesus mean by His response to the third person?
- What was He trying to show him about following Him?
- What is the hardest thing for you in following Jesus? Why?
- What do you learn about God in all of this?

QUESTIONS FOR 9TH-12TH

- What sticks out to you from this passage? Why?
- What excuses are you using to not follow Jesus right now?
- What are the hardest things for you about truly following Jesus? Why?
- What do you learn about God in all of this?

CLOSE IN PRAYER (everyone participates)

FAMILY DEVOTION

OPEN IN PRAYER (choose 1 person to pray)

OPENING QUESTION/ACTIVITY

- Name someone who really doesn't like you.
Why do you think that is? How does it feel to be around them?

READ JOHN 15:18-25

QUESTIONS FOR JK-3RD

- What does Jesus say to His disciples about the world?
- What does "persecute" mean?
- What did Jesus do for us?—verse 19
- What do you learn about God in all of this?

QUESTIONS FOR 4TH-8TH

- Are you living enough like Jesus for the world to hate you?
- How does it make you feel that Jesus tells you that the world will hate you because of following Him?
- Why will the world persecute us?
- How did Jesus handle it and how should we?
- What do you learn about God in all of this?

QUESTIONS FOR 9TH-12TH

- What sticks out to you from this passage? Why?
- How do you see the world hating you?
- Do you believe that God has chosen you to represent Him in your whole life?
- What do you learn about God in all of this?

CLOSE IN PRAYER (everyone participates)

WEEK

21

ACTS 15:1-35

PURPOSE

Continuing the ministry of Jesus by the power of the Holy Spirit

WEEKLY FOCUS

Controversy in the church

ACTS 15:1-35

CONTEXT

- Jesus had ascended into heaven but left the disciples with a promise
- Jesus told them that the Holy Spirit would come and give them power
- The Holy Spirit comes upon the people to empower them to witness
- The church lives in harmony and community, which attracts folks to join them
- The apostles gain favor with the people and the church grows but at the same time they face persecution from the religious leaders who have arrested them, beaten them and told them not to speak about Jesus
- There is great persecution that scatters the church out to where God had called them to go—Judea and Samaria—led by a man named Saul
- Jesus meets Saul and Saul believes in Jesus, is baptized, and begins to do ministry
- The disciples, including Peter, are now taking the Gospel outside of Jerusalem and even to the Gentiles, which was a surprise to the leaders
- Now that the Gentiles believe, the church begins to send out missionaries in order to spread the Gospel further—starting with Paul and Barnabas

OUTLINE

- I. The circumcision debate
 - A. Circumcision was a sign given by God to set apart His people
 1. Given to Abraham—Genesis 17
 2. Was to be for all of God's people—Jews
 - B. Now that Gentiles (non-Jewish people) were believing some thought they also needed to be Jewish
 1. Needed to circumcise
 2. Needed to follow the ceremonial laws
 3. People came from the church in Jerusalem to speak about this to church in Antioch
 - a. Had heard how Gospel was spreading to Gentiles through them
 - b. Wanted to make them change what they were doing
- II. The Jerusalem Council
 - A. Barnabas and Paul were sent to Jerusalem to discuss this among the apostles
 1. To decide once and for all on the issue moving forward
 2. Told those there what they had seen among the Gentiles

B. There was much debate

1. Good people who loved Jesus on both sides
2. Was Jesus only a fulfillment of Old Testament Laws or something else
3. Peter speaks
 - a. He was seen as the main leader of the church
 - b. Reminded them who it was about and who was at work
 - God made the choice about where the Gospel was going
 - Only God can save people so if Gentiles are being saved then God must want them to be
 - God has made them the same as us when He gave them the Holy Spirit
 - c. Told them not to put a yoke on their neck
 - It was how you used a horse to do work, would connect them to whatever they were pulling through a yoke
 - Especially one that was too much for God's people before
 - The Law was impossible for sinful people to keep
 - Only Jesus kept it perfectly and He did it for us
 - Adding extra things to do made salvation about their works and not Jesus' work on the cross
 - We can't do anything to make us right before God
 - d. Had Paul and Barnabas speak about their ministry among the Gentiles
 - Signs and wonders God did in and through the Gentiles

C. The response of the Council

1. James spoke first
 - a. Recounted what Peter said (Simeon is another name for Simon Peter)
 - b. Pointed them all to Scripture
 - Amos 9:11-12
 - People called by God's Name
 - The Gentiles were that now
 - c. Made a suggestions for the future
 - Not add the ceremonial laws
 - Warn them about sin
2. The letter to the churches
 - a. How would they get this news out to all the churches?
 - b. The church writes a letter to be given to the churches, starting with Antioch
 - Even sent some from their church to go with the letter to encourage that church
 - Judas and Silas

- c. The church rejoiced upon hearing the letter
- d. Paul and Barnabas stayed there and encouraged the people through teaching and preaching

III. SO WHAT??!!

- A. We as a church will disagree
 - 1. People will always have different opinions
 - 2. People feel strongly about them
- B. We as a church are called to be unified
 - 1. John 17:21
 - 2. Is our greatest witness to the world
- C. We as a church need to talk to each other
 - 1. Be open and honest about our disagreements
 - 2. Talk to each other instead of about each other
- D. Remember it's about God and not us
 - 1. About His glory and not our preferences
 - 2. Need to give up some things for Him to shine

FOLLOW-UP QUESTIONS FOR PARENTS

- What do you remember from the lesson this morning?
- What did the passage tell you about the early church?
- How did the church handle their disagreement? Why was it important to handle it like that?
- How do you handle your disagreements?
- Who is someone you are disagreeing with right now? What should you do about it?
- How does "being on the same page" help us show Jesus to others? What gets in the way of that?

SMALL GROUP DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- What stuck out to you from the talk?
- What did you learn today from Paul's life and ministry?
- What are some things in the church that you don't understand?
Have you ever asked anyone about them?
- What are things in the church you don't agree with? Why?
- When is a time you disagreed and, instead of talking to that person, you talked about them?
How did it go?

FAMILY DEVOTION

OPEN IN PRAYER (choose 1 person to pray)

OPENING QUESTION/ACTIVITY

- When is a time you got in a big argument with someone else? How did you resolve it?

READ GALATIANS 2:11-14

QUESTIONS FOR JK-3RD

- Who is Cephas?
- What did Paul do when he arrived?
- What was Peter doing wrong?
- Who else was affected?
- What do you learn about God in all of this?

QUESTIONS FOR 4TH-8TH

- Do you act one way around certain people and another way around others? Why?
- How do you act differently around "popular" people?
- How do you act differently around church people?
- How do your actions affect other people?
- How are you living in step with the truth of the Gospel?
- What do you learn about God in all of this?

QUESTIONS FOR 9TH-12TH

- What sticks out to you from this passage? Why?
- How does your fear of what others think affect how you live?
- Are you treating all people the same in your life?
- What are ways that you are living like a hypocrite?
- What do you learn about God in all of this?

CLOSE IN PRAYER (everyone participates)

FAMILY DEVOTION

OPEN IN PRAYER (choose 1 person to pray)

OPENING QUESTION/ACTIVITY

- What are the things that you get in the most arguments about? Why do you think that is?

READ I CORINTHIANS 1:10-17

QUESTIONS FOR JK-3RD

- What does Paul want for us?
- What were the people doing?
- Why do you think they did that?
- What do you learn about God in all of this?

QUESTIONS FOR 4TH-8TH

- Why is it so easy to divide ourselves as Christians?
- How is it easier to follow people than Jesus?
- How are we to preach the Gospel? Why?
- How are you being strong and courageous for Jesus?

QUESTIONS FOR 9TH-12TH

- What sticks out to you from the passage? Why?
- Why is it bad for the church when we are divided?
- When is a time that you divided yourself out as a Christian? Why?
- What do you learn about God in all of this?

CLOSE IN PRAYER (everyone participates)

WEEK

22

ACTS 15:36-41

PURPOSE

Continuing the ministry of Jesus by the power of the Holy Spirit

WEEKLY FOCUS

Division in the church

ACTS 15:36-41

CONTEXT

- Jesus had ascended into heaven but left the disciples with a promise
- Jesus told them that the Holy Spirit would come and give them power
- The Holy Spirit comes upon the people to empower them to witness
- The church lives in harmony and community, which attracts folks to join them
- The apostles gain favor with the people and the church grows but at the same time they face persecution from the religious leaders who have arrested them, beaten them and told them not to speak about Jesus
- There is great persecution that scatters the church out to where God had called them to go—Judea and Samaria—led by a man named Saul
- Jesus meets Saul and Saul believes in Jesus, is baptized, and begins to do ministry
- The disciples, including Peter, are now taking the Gospel outside of Jerusalem and even to the Gentiles, which was a surprise to the leaders
- Now that the Gentiles believe, the church begins to send out missionaries in order to spread the Gospel further—starting with Paul and Barnabas
- The focus of the book of Acts goes from Peter and ministry to Jews to Paul and ministry to Gentiles

OUTLINE

- I. Paul and Barnabas decide to go back
 - A. To the churches they had visited last time
 - B. To see how they were doing and encourage them moving ahead
- II. Paul and Barnabas split
 - A. Although they agreed on the mission they disagreed on the team
 1. Barnabas wanted to take Mark
 - a. Who is Mark?
 - Also called John or John Mark
 - Was home in which they prayed for Peter when he was in prison- Acts 12:12
 - Eventually wrote the Gospel of Mark
 - He was also Barnabas' cousin- Col. 4:10

- b. What was the problem?
 - John Mark had been a part of the first trip they took
 - He left them to return home to Jerusalem
 - Early on in the trip- Acts 13:13
 - Paul didn't want to take him because he had already left once
 - Didn't want to give him another chance
 - Don't know why he left the first time
- 2. Paul and Barnabas had a sharp disagreement
 - Could not agree
 - Decided it was best to split up
 - Never took another journey together again
 - We will never know who was "right" or "wrong"
- a. Paul takes Silas to Syria
- b. Barnabas takes Mark to Cyprus
- 3. God used this disagreement
 - There were now two teams instead of one
 - Twice the amount of churches would be strengthened
 - Twice the amount of people would hear the Gospel
 - Mark and Paul reconciled
 - Paul came to love and appreciate Him
 - (Colossians 4:10, 2 Timothy 4:11, Philemon 23-24)
 - God used them both to reach different people

III. SO WHAT??!!

- A. We as Christians will disagree
 - 1. Our own personal feelings and hurts will come into play
 - 2. We may not be able to resolve it all
- B. We don't need to let our disagreements get in the way of what God is calling us to do
 - 1. Don't let them stop you from moving forward in ministry
 - 2. See how God could be using it for His glory
- C. We need to ultimately love one another
 - 1. Paul came around to trust and love Mark
 - 2. We love because He first loved us

FOLLOW-UP QUESTIONS FOR PARENTS

- What do you remember from the lesson this morning?
- What did the passage tell you about the early church?
- Who is someone you have a hard time loving? Why?
- How can you love them better?
- Is there anyone that you haven't reconciled with?

SMALL GROUP DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- What stuck out to you from the talk?
- What did you learn today from Paul's life and ministry?
- Who is someone you are divided from? How do you need to seek reconciliation?
- How have disagreements kept you from doing what God wants you to do?
- How do you handle heated arguments? What should you do?

FAMILY DEVOTION

OPEN IN PRAYER (choose 1 person to pray)

OPENING QUESTION/ACTIVITY

- What is your favorite part about church? Why?

READ JOHN 17:20-26

QUESTIONS FOR JK-3RD

- What is Jesus doing here?
- Who is He praying for?
- How does it make you feel that Jesus is praying for you?
- What does He want us to be?
- What example of unity does Jesus give them?
- What do you learn about God in all of this?

QUESTIONS FOR 4TH-8TH

- Why do you think Jesus wants for us to be one?
- What divisions exist between Christians?
- What will be the result of our unity to the world?—verse 23
- What do you learn about God in all of this?

QUESTIONS FOR 9TH-12TH

- What sticks out to you from this passage? Why?
- What are ways that you have separated yourself out from brothers and sisters in Christ?
- How are you seeking unity among believers, even those you don't get along with?
- What do you learn about God in all of this?

CLOSE IN PRAYER (everyone participates)

FAMILY DEVOTION

OPEN IN PRAYER (choose 1 person to pray)

OPENING QUESTION/ACTIVITY

- When is a time you really wanted something but didn't get it? How did you handle it?

READ JAMES 4:1-12

QUESTIONS FOR JK-3RD

- What does James say causes fights in the church?
- What does James say about friendship with the world?
- What does it say we are not supposed to do to a brother? Why?
- What do you learn about God in all of this?

QUESTIONS FOR 4TH-8TH

- When have your desires caused a fight with someone else? Why?
- What does James say we don't have?
- How does it hurt our witness to speak negatively about brothers and sisters in Christ?
- What do you learn about God in all of this?

QUESTIONS FOR 9TH-12TH

- What sticks out to you from this passage? Why?
- What are ways that you have let your selfish desires get in the way of unity?
- When have you spoken against a brother or sister in Christ? Why?
- What do you learn about God in all of this?

CLOSE IN PRAYER (everyone participates)

WEEK

23

ACTS 16:1-10

PURPOSE

Continuing the ministry of Jesus by the power of the Holy Spirit

WEEKLY FOCUS

God leads His church to new people and places

ACTS 16:1-10

CONTEXT

- Jesus had ascended into heaven but left the disciples with a promise
- Jesus told them that the Holy Spirit would come and give them power
- The Holy Spirit comes upon the people to empower them to witness
- The church lives in harmony and community, which attracts folks to join them
- The apostles gain favor with the people and the church grows but at the same time they face persecution from the religious leaders who have arrested them, beaten them and told them not to speak about Jesus
- There is great persecution that scatters the church out to where God had called them to go—Judea and Samaria—led by a man named Saul
- Jesus meets Saul and Saul believes in Jesus, is baptized, and begins to do ministry
- The disciples, including Peter, are now taking the Gospel outside of Jerusalem and even to the Gentiles, which was a surprise to the leaders
- Now that the Gentiles believe, the church begins to send out missionaries in order to spread the Gospel further—starting with Paul and Barnabas
- The focus of the book of Acts goes from Peter and ministry to Jews to Paul and ministry to Gentiles

OUTLINE

- I. God leads to new leaders
 - A. Paul goes back Lystra
 - B. Had been about 5 years since Paul had last been there
 - C. Going back to see a church he had started
 1. What would he find
 2. We see often from his letters the issues the churches had after he left
 - D. Found a new leader
 1. Timothy
 - a. Was well-respected by all
 - b. Later wrote him letters as leader of the church

2. Prepared him for ministry
 - a. Took him with him

Circumcised him

 - Wait, didn't they just agree that someone didn't need to do that...
 - Paul didn't do it so he could be saved but so he could be used
 - Sometimes we have to give up part of ourselves for God to use us
 - So he could minister to the Jews as a person who had a Greek father
 - Jews wouldn't associate with non-Jews
 - Wouldn't then be willing to hear the Gospel
 - Timothy saw the opportunity and allowed it to happen
 - E. Spread the word about what was decided in Jerusalem about the Gentiles
 1. Church was encouraged
 2. Church grew daily

II. God leads somewhere new

 - A. They had gone throughout Galatia spreading the Word
 - B. God restricts their movements
 1. Were forbidden by the Holy Spirit to go into Asia
 - a. Not told why or how
 2. Were forbidden by Spirit of Jesus to go to Mysia
 3. God had other plans for these places
 - a. Eventually Paul would reach them
 - Letter to the Ephesians
 - b. God would write to them in Revelation
 - 7 churches were in Asia
 - c. God made sure that the Gospel was spread to them even if not through Paul
 - C. God leads Paul to the next place
 1. Gives him a vision
 - a. In the night
 - b. A man from Macedonia
 - c. Calls out to Paul "Come over to Macedonia and help us"
 2. Paul and his group immediately got up and attempted to go to Macedonia
 - a. "We" in verse 10 – makes it seem that the author of Acts, Luke, has joined the team

III. SO WHAT??!!

- A. The church is moving and growing even where we can't see
 - 1. Often grows most in midst of opposition
 - 2. God is working for the good of the church and the world
- B. We often have to sacrifice to be used by God
 - 1. Need to be all things for all people- 1 Corinthians 9:22
 - 2. Need to look for ways to serve others so they can hear the Gospel
- C. God leads us where we need to go
 - 1. Doesn't always give us a vision like He gave Paul
 - 2. Puts people in our lives for us to share with them
 - a. People in need
 - b. In our neighborhood or class or office
 - 3. We need to be open to share in those places where He leads

FOLLOW-UP QUESTIONS FOR PARENTS

- What do you remember from the lesson this morning?
- What did the passage tell you about the early church?
- How have you been encouraged by people at church lately?
- What are some new places where you could go and tell people about Jesus?
- Who are new people you can talk to about Jesus?

SMALL GROUP DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- What stuck out to you from the talk?
- What did you learn today from Paul's life and ministry?
- What is something you might need to give up in order to truly witness for Jesus? Why?
- Where is a place you can see God leading you but you may not want to go?

FAMILY DEVOTION

OPEN IN PRAYER (choose 1 person to pray)

OPENING QUESTION/ACTIVITY

- When is a time someone broke a promise to you? How did that make you feel?

READ GALATIANS 3:23-28

QUESTIONS FOR JK-3RD

- What does Paul say happened to us before faith?
- What is a captive?
- What are we through Jesus by faith?
- What does verse 28 say?
- What do you learn about God in all of this?

QUESTIONS FOR 4TH-8TH

- How does the Law make us prisoners?
- How was the Law our guardian?
- What came to take over the Law for us?
- How does Jesus break down the divisions between people?
- What do you learn about God in all of this?

QUESTIONS FOR 9TH-12TH

- What sticks out to you from this passage? Why?
- How do you view the Law? Faith?
- How does Jesus see people once they become His? How do you see people?
- What do you learn about God in all of this?

CLOSE IN PRAYER (everyone participates)

FAMILY DEVOTION

OPEN IN PRAYER (choose 1 person to pray)

OPENING QUESTION/ACTIVITY

- Where is somewhere in the world that you really would like to visit someday? What is it about that place that makes you want to go there?

READ GALATIANS 5:1-6

QUESTIONS FOR JK-3RD

- What has Jesus done for us?
- How did Jesus set us free?
- What is circumcision? What did it mean in the Old Testament?
- What do you learn about God in all of this?

QUESTIONS FOR 4TH-8TH

- What are we to do since Jesus has set us free?
- How was accepting circumcision for the Galatians like submitting to the Law instead of grace?
- What is the only thing that counts according to verse 6?
- What are ways that you are showing your faith through love?
- What do you learn about God in all of this?

QUESTIONS FOR 9TH-12TH

- What sticks out to you from this passage? Why?
- What are ways in which we submit ourselves again to the yoke of slavery?
- What are ways that you try to please God by your “acts of righteousness” instead of trusting in His grace?
- What do you learn about God in all of this?

CLOSE IN PRAYER (everyone participates)

WEEK

24

ACTS 16:11-40

PURPOSE

Continuing the ministry of Jesus by the power of the Holy Spirit

WEEKLY FOCUS

God's work in Philippi

ACTS 16:11-40

CONTEXT

- Jesus had ascended into heaven but left the disciples with a promise
- Jesus told them that the Holy Spirit would come and give them power
- The Holy Spirit comes upon the people to empower them to witness
- The church lives in harmony and community, which attracts folks to join them
- The apostles gain favor with the people and the church grows but at the same time they face persecution from the religious leaders who have arrested them, beaten them and told them not to speak about Jesus
- There is great persecution that scatters the church out to where God had called them to go—Judea and Samaria—led by a man named Saul
- Jesus meets Saul and Saul believes in Jesus, is baptized, and begins to do ministry
- The disciples, including Peter, are now taking the Gospel outside of Jerusalem and even to the Gentiles which was a surprise to the leaders
- Now that the Gentiles believe, the church begins to send out missionaries in order to spread the Gospel further—starting with Paul and Barnabas
- The focus of the book of Acts goes from Peter and ministry to Jews to Paul and ministry to Gentiles

OUTLINE

- I. Paul and his group follow where God had led
 - A. Macedonia and then to city of Philippi
 1. A leading Roman colony
 2. Made it a very important city
 3. Former leaders and soldiers were sent to live there
 - B. Stayed there for several days
 - C. Went to place of prayer on the Sabbath
 1. Would mean there was no synagogue
 2. No practicing Jews
 - D. Found a group of women there who met together
 1. Spoke to the women there
 2. Another barrier broken
 - a. First witnessing to Gentiles and now to women
 - b. Things Paul would have never done before Jesus
 - c. Paul shared with Lydia, who was a worshiper of God
 - Was seller of purple cloth (color of royalty; probably meant she was wealthy)
 - She believed and was baptized; then she had her whole family baptized as well
 3. Lydia had them stay with her for days

II. Paul and Silas in prison

- A. Continued to go to the place of prayer
- B. On the way there was a servant girl that met them
 - 1. Had a spirit of divination
 - 2. Made her owners much money telling fortunes
 - 3. She would follow Paul around saying "These men are servants of the Most High God who proclaim to you the way of salvation"
 - a. Would help to get the attention of the crowd
 - b. Was also very annoying to Paul
- C. Paul healed the servant girl
 - 1. Commanded that the evil spirit come out of her in the name of Jesus
 - 2. The spirit immediately came out
 - 3. The owners of the girl were very angry
 - a. Could no longer make money off of her
 - b. Grabbed Paul and Silas and took them to the rulers of the city
- D. The owners accused Paul and Silas of disturbing the city
 - 1. Teaching the people non-Roman customs
 - 2. Illegal things
 - 3. Crowd joined in on this
 - 4. The leaders tore their clothes and ordered that they be beaten with rods and then thrown in jail
- E. God frees Paul and Silas
 - 1. At around midnight Paul and Silas were praying and singing hymns
 - a. Still were praising God despite all that had happened to them
 - b. The prisoners around were listening to them
 - 2. There was a great earthquake
 - a. Shook the prison to the foundation
 - b. All the doors were open
 - c. All the chains were opened so prisoners could go
 - 3. Jailer comes and sees what had happened and decided to kill himself
 - a. The punishment for prisoners who escape
 - b. Was a very big deal back then
 - c. Paul shouts and keeps the jailer from doing it
 - Don't harm yourself, we are all here
 - d. Jailer falls down before Paul's and Silas, afraid of all he had seen
 - "What must I do to be saved?"
 - Recognized God's power and their message
 - e. Jailer believed and he and all his household were baptized
 - They took care of Paul and Silas' wounds
 - Brought them to their house and shared a meal with them

- F. The leaders of the city ordered Paul's and Silas' release
1. Wanted it to be secret
 2. Knew many were following them in the city
 3. Paul confronts them
 - a. They beat us without a trial in public and we are also Roman citizens
 - b. Roman citizens were never to be beaten
 - c. Tells the magistrates to come and release them themselves
 4. The leaders came and apologized for how they treated Paul and Silas
 - a. Asked them also to leave the city
 - b. After encouraging the church they left

III. SO WHAT??!!

- A. God is leading us where He wants us to go
 1. Where you are is no accident
 - a. School, neighborhood, activity, team, etc.
 2. To be a light where people need it
- B. God wants us to go to people not like us
- C. God will be with us and help us even when things seem hopeless
 1. We are called to rejoice in our sufferings
 2. God used Paul's and Silas' singing and prayers for people to know Him
 3. How we handle hard times says more about Jesus than the good times

FOLLOW-UP QUESTIONS FOR PARENTS

- What do you remember from the lesson this morning?
- What did the passage tell you about the early church?
- How did Paul know where to go?
- Who did he find once he got there?
- How did God show that he was working through Paul and Silas?
- How did God show He was taking care of Paul and Silas?

SMALL GROUP DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- What stuck out to you from the talk?
- What did you learn today from Paul's life and ministry?
- Where are places you are interacting with people not like you?
- When are times you feel like you are on your own? How has God shown that He is with you?
- How are you living for Jesus in the little things? Like Paul and Silas singing and praying

FAMILY DEVOTION

OPEN IN PRAYER (choose 1 person to pray)

OPENING QUESTION/ACTIVITY

- God has given us all very special people who help us and encourage us and we often forget to let them know how thankful we are for them. Therefore, come up with a plan for each person in the family to find a way to thank/encourage three people who help them.

READ PHILIPPIANS 1:3-11

QUESTIONS FOR JK-3RD

- What does Paul say he feels about the people of Philippi?
- What does Paul say about the good work that God has started in us?
- What did Paul pray for them?
- What do you learn about God in all of this?

QUESTIONS FOR 4TH-8TH

- Who are people that you are very thankful for in your life?
- Why was Paul so thankful for the Philippians?
- What does a partnership in the Gospel look like?
- How do we see just how much Paul cared about these people?
- What do you learn about God in all of this?

QUESTIONS FOR 9TH-12TH

- What sticks out to you from this passage? Why?
- Who are people that you are partnering with for the sake of the Gospel?
- Who are people that you feel this way about?
- What do you learn about God in all of this?

CLOSE IN PRAYER (everyone participates)

FAMILY DEVOTION

OPEN IN PRAYER (choose 1 person to pray)

OPENING QUESTION/ACTIVITY

- Where is a place that is not home but is very special to you? Why do you feel that way about it?

READ PHILIPPIANS 2:12-18

QUESTIONS FOR JK-3RD

- What word does Paul call them here? What does it mean?
- What does Paul tell them to do in verse 14?
- What are things you complain about the most?
- If we don't grumble and complain what will we do?
- What do you learn about God in all of this?

QUESTIONS FOR 4TH-8TH

- What are the things that you grumble about the most? Why?
- What are the things you complain about the most? Why?
- Why would we shine like stars just by not grumbling and complaining?
- What are we to do to the word of life? How do we do that?
- What do you learn about God in all of this?

QUESTIONS FOR 9TH-12TH

- What sticks out to you from this passage? Why?
- How do you work out your own salvation?
- How often do you find yourself grumbling and complaining? Why?
- What do you learn about God in all of this?

CLOSE IN PRAYER (everyone participates)

WEEK

25

ACTS 17:1-15

PURPOSE

Continuing the ministry of Jesus by the power of the Holy Spirit

WEEKLY FOCUS

The people responding to God's Word

ACTS 17:1-15

CONTEXT

- Jesus had ascended into heaven but left the disciples with a promise
- Jesus told them that the Holy Spirit would come and give them power
- The Holy Spirit comes upon the people to empower them to witness
- The church lives in harmony and community, which attracts folks to join them
- The apostles gain favor with the people and the church grows but at the same time they face persecution from the religious leaders who have arrested them, beaten them and told them not to speak about Jesus
- There is great persecution that scatters the church out to where God had called them to go—Judea and Samaria—led by a man named Saul
- Jesus meets Saul and Saul believes in Jesus, is baptized, and begins to do ministry
- The disciples, including Peter, are now taking the Gospel outside of Jerusalem and even to the Gentiles, which was a surprise to the leaders
- Now that the Gentiles believe, the church begins to send out missionaries in order to spread the Gospel further—starting with Paul and Barnabas
- The focus of the book of Acts goes from Peter and ministry to Jews to Paul and ministry to Gentiles

OUTLINE

- I. Paul and Silas arrive in Thessalonica
 - A. They immediately go to the synagogue
 - B. Paul spent three weeks reasoning with them from the Scriptures
 1. Three straight Sabbaths
 2. Had to know God's Word pretty well
 3. Explaining and proving that the Christ had to suffer and rise again from the dead
 - a. Pointing out that Jesus was the Christ
 - C. People responded—believed and followed Paul and Silas
 1. Some of religious leaders
 2. The devout Greeks
 3. A good number of the leading women
 - D. The Jews respond
 1. Out of jealousy

2. Got wicked men out of the crowd
 - a. Created an uproar
 - b. Went to the house to drag them out
 - c. Took the owner of the house instead
 - d. Received money to return him safely
 3. Whole city was disturbed
 - a. Claimed that Paul and Silas were trying to overthrow Caesar
 - b. Saying that Jesus was the true king
- E. The brothers sent Paul and Silas away during the night
- II. Paul and Silas in Berea**
- A. Went first to the synagogue
 - B. They received the word with eagerness
 1. Were more noble than those in Thessalonica
 2. Examined the Scriptures to see if what was being taught was true
 3. Many believed
 - C. More persecution
 1. People from Thessalonica came
 - a. Heard they were preaching in Berea
 - b. Stirred up the crowds again
 2. Brothers sent Paul off at Athens
 - a. Silas and Timothy would join later
- III. SO WHAT??!!**
- A. We need to be able to explain our faith to others
 1. Give reason for the hope we have—1 Peter 3:15
 2. Be bold about it
 3. We need to believe it for ourselves
 - a. Take what is taught and seek it out in Scripture
 - B. We need to be prepared for persecution
 1. People will oppose you for following Jesus
 2. Need to stand firm
 3. Not let them keep you from sharing

FOLLOW-UP QUESTIONS FOR PARENTS

- What do you remember from the lesson this morning?
- What did the passage tell you about the early church?
- How would you explain your faith to someone else?
- If someone asked you questions about Jesus, could you answer?
- What Bible verses would you need to know if you were wanting to share the Gospel with someone else?

SMALL GROUP DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- What stuck out to you from the talk?
- What did you learn today from Paul's life and ministry?
- When is a time you have told someone about Jesus? How did it go?
- Have you spent time checking what you have heard from the Bible by reading the Bible yourself?
- What are some verses that would be important to have memorized?

FAMILY DEVOTION

OPEN IN PRAYER (choose 1 person to pray)

OPENING QUESTION/ACTIVITY

- What is your favorite Bible story that is not about Jesus? How does it point us to Jesus?

READ LUKE 24:13-32

QUESTIONS FOR JK-3RD

- What had just happened earlier that day?
- What were the two of them doing and who showed up?
- How did they not recognize that it was Jesus?
- What did Jesus do for them?
- How did Jesus open their eyes?
- What do you learn about God in all of this?

QUESTIONS FOR 4TH-8TH

- What did they say in verses 21-22?
- When is a time you had a hard time believing something amazing that God did? Why?
- How does Jesus reveal Himself to them through His Word?
- How did they respond once they realized it was Jesus?
- What did they do with their information? Did they wait until morning?
- What do you learn about God in all of this?

QUESTIONS FOR 9TH-12TH

- What sticks out to you from this passage? Why?
- How are you seeking who Jesus really is in all of the Bible?
- Are there people with whom you are waiting to tell the truth about Jesus instead of telling them now? Why?
- What do you learn about God in all of this?

CLOSE IN PRAYER (everyone participates)

FAMILY DEVOTION

OPEN IN PRAYER (choose 1 person to pray)

OPENING QUESTION/ACTIVITY

- If you could have any book you've read come to life, which would you choose and why?

READ HEBREWS 4:12-13

QUESTIONS FOR JK-3RD

- What does the writer of Hebrews say about God's Word?
- How is it like a sword?
- Can we hide from God and His Word?
- What do you learn about God in all of this?

QUESTIONS FOR 4TH-8TH

- How do you treat God's Word like it is alive in your life?
- How do you treat God's Word like it is active in your life?
- How sharp is God's Word?
- What do you typically use God's Word for?
- What does it say we must do in verse 13?
- What do you learn about God in all of this?

QUESTIONS FOR 9TH-12TH

- What sticks out to you from this passage? Why?
- How often do you use God's Word to judge your thoughts and actions?
- If you had to stand before God and give an account of your life, what would you say?
- What do you learn about God in all of this?

CLOSE IN PRAYER (everyone participates)

WEEK

26

ACTS 17:16-34

PURPOSE

Continuing the ministry of Jesus by the power of the Holy Spirit

WEEKLY FOCUS

Paul addresses “religious” people

ACTS 17:16-34

CONTEXT

- Jesus had ascended into heaven but left the disciples with a promise
- Jesus told them that the Holy Spirit would come and give them power
- The Holy Spirit comes upon the people to empower them to witness
- The church lives in harmony and community, which attracts folks to join them
- The apostles gain favor with the people and the church grows but at the same time they face persecution from the religious leaders who have arrested them, beaten them and told them not to speak about Jesus
- There is great persecution that scatters the church out to where God had called them to go—Judea and Samaria—led by a man named Saul
- Jesus meets Saul and Saul believes in Jesus, is baptized, and begins to do ministry
- The disciples, including Peter, are now taking the Gospel outside of Jerusalem and even to the Gentiles, which was a surprise to the leaders
- Now that the Gentiles believe, the church begins to send out missionaries in order to spread the Gospel further—starting with Paul and Barnabas
- The focus of the book of Acts goes from Peter and ministry to Jews to Paul and ministry to Gentiles

OUTLINE

- I. Paul in Athens
 - A. Center of culture and education in the world at this time
 1. Filled with art and architecture
 2. Very important city
 - B. Saw that the city was full of idols
 1. False religion
 2. Many gods
 - C. Went to the synagogue
 1. Reasoned with the Jews and devout people
 2. Those who worshiped the true God

D. Went into the marketplace

1. Reasoned with the philosophers who were there
 - a. Epicurean—pursuit of pleasure and fine living
 - Follow experience and not reason
 - b. Stoics—personal discipline and self-control
 - Be self-sufficient and follow reason
2. People were always excited about a “new teaching”
 - a. Wanted to get the latest information
 - b. Always looking for something new
3. Paul was teaching about Jesus
 - a. Something they had never heard before
4. The philosophers brought Paul to Areopagus
 - a. Where new ideas were discussed

E. Paul’s address

1. I perceive you are religious people
 - a. Noticed all the idols and objects you use for worship
2. The “unknown” god
 - a. Told them about the idol he saw dedicated to the unknown god
 - b. I have come to tell you about this God
 - Explains God to them
 - Creator of everything
 - Doesn’t live in temples made by men
 - He is not far from you
 - He allows us to know Him personally
 - Even quotes some of their poets
 - Says that God is not a created thing
 - Not an object of gold or silver or stone
 - c. God is calling all to repent
 - Turn away from their sin
 - Worship of idols
 - He will judge the world for its sin
 - He will resurrect His people from the dead
3. Some mocked Paul but many believed

II. SO WHAT??!!

- A. We need to be aware of the world around us
 - 1. Learn what they think about God
 - 2. Understand the issues and problems in culture
- B. We need to speak the language of the people
 - 1. Figure out where people are and join them there when we talk about God
- C. We need to know our own idols and repent of them
 - 1. What are the things that we put ahead of God?
 - 2. What do we turn to for comfort and relief?

FOLLOW-UP QUESTIONS FOR PARENTS

- What do you remember from the lesson this morning?
- What did the passage tell you about the early church?
- What is an idol in your life right now? Something that is just as important as God
- How is God sometimes unknown to you? What do you do when that happens?

SMALL GROUP DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- What stuck out to you from the talk?
- What did you learn today from Paul's life and ministry?
- What is an idol that you have in your life?—anything that you treat as more important than God
- What is the difference between religious people and Christians?
- What are the common "idols" around today?

FAMILY DEVOTION

OPEN IN PRAYER (choose 1 person to pray)

OPENING QUESTION/ACTIVITY

- What things do you think you need to do to make God happy? This is a great time to talk about grace and how God is always happy with us if we are in Christ because He sees Christ's righteousness when He looks at us.

READ EPHESIANS 2:8-10

QUESTIONS FOR JK-3RD

- What does it say that we have been saved by and through?
- What is salvation called in verse 8?
- What is it not a result of?
- What word does he call us in verse 10? What does that mean?
- What do you learn about God in all of this?

QUESTIONS FOR 4TH-8TH

- What is faith?
- What is grace?
- How do you think you can save yourself through your actions?
- What does it mean that you are God's workmanship?
- What do you learn about God in all of this?

QUESTIONS FOR 9TH-12TH

- What sticks out to you from this passage? Why?
- How are you walking in the good works that God has prepared for you to do?
- How are you trying to make your salvation about your works instead of Jesus' work?
- What do you learn about God in all of this?

CLOSE IN PRAYER (everyone participates)

FAMILY DEVOTION

OPEN IN PRAYER (choose 1 person to pray)

OPENING QUESTION/ACTIVITY

- What are ways that God shows that He loves you? How do we show Him that we love Him?

READ EXODUS 20:1-6

QUESTIONS FOR JK-3RD

- Who is speaking and to whom is He speaking?
- What does He tell them not to do?
- How does God describe Himself?
- What do you learn about God in all of this?

QUESTIONS FOR 4TH-8TH

- What are some “gods” in your life that you worship?
- What will God do for the generations that come after?
- How do you show God that you love Him?
- Can you keep His commandments perfectly?
- What do you learn about God in all of this?

QUESTIONS FOR 9TH-12TH

- What sticks out to you from this passage? Why?
- What are some ways that you serve other “gods” in your life?
- How are you showing God your love for Him through obedience?
- What do you learn about God in all of this?

CLOSE IN PRAYER (everyone participates)

WEEK

27

ACTS 18:1-23

PURPOSE

Continuing the ministry of Jesus by the power of the Holy Spirit

WEEKLY FOCUS

God is with Paul

ACTS 18:1-23

CONTEXT

- Jesus had ascended into heaven but left the disciples with a promise
- Jesus told them that the Holy Spirit would come and give them power
- The Holy Spirit comes upon the people to empower them to witness
- The church lives in harmony and community, which attracts folks to join them
- The apostles gain favor with the people and the church grows but at the same time they face persecution from the religious leaders who have arrested them, beaten them and told them not to speak about Jesus
- There is great persecution that scatters the church out to where God had called them to go—Judea and Samaria—led by a man named Saul
- Jesus meets Saul and Saul believes in Jesus, is baptized, and begins to do ministry
- The disciples, including Peter, are now taking the Gospel outside of Jerusalem and even to the Gentiles, which was a surprise to the leaders
- Now that the Gentiles believe, the church begins to send out missionaries in order to spread the Gospel further—starting with Paul and Barnabas
- The focus of the book of Acts goes from Peter and ministry to Jews to Paul and ministry to Gentiles

OUTLINE

- I. Paul in Corinth
 - A. God provided help
 1. Aquila and Priscilla
 - a. Were kicked out of Italy for being Jews
 - b. Aquila was a tentmaker like Paul
 - c. Stayed with them for a long time
 2. Paul went every Sabbath to the synagogue
 1. Speaking to persuade Jews and Greeks
 - B. The Jews opposed and reviled Paul
 1. As he was teaching about Jesus

2. Paul responds
 - a. Shook out his garments to them
 - Was saying he rejected them
 - Like Jesus told the disciples when he sent them out
 - Matthew 10:14
 - b. Saying that their blood is on their heads
 - He has given them the truth and they have rejected it
 - He is innocent
 - c. Saying he will now just go to the Gentiles
 3. Some Jews believed
 - a. Even the ruler of the synagogue—Crispus
 - b. They were baptized
 - c. Many of the Gentiles believed
 - D. The Lord speaks to Paul
 1. In a vision
 2. Don't be afraid
 3. Go on speaking for I am with you
 4. No one will harm you for I have many people in this city
 - E. Paul stayed there for a year and a half teaching the Word of God
 - F. The Jews attack again
 1. Arrested him and brought him before tribunal
 2. God protects Paul
 - a. Before he could even speak
 - b. Gallio spoke for Paul
 - If this were a vicious crime or wrongdoing I would accept your complaint
 - Since it is about your own law and names I refuse to be a judge
 - Threw them all out
- II. Paul makes his way home
- A. Sailed with Priscilla and Aquila
 - B. Went to Ephesus and spoke in synagogues
 - C. Returned home to Antioch
 - a. Traveled around strengthening the disciples

III. SO WHAT??!!

- A. We need to be aware that as we live for Jesus we will be opposed
 - 1. 2 Corinthians 2:15-16
 - a. To some aroma of death, and others aroma of life
 - 2. John 16:33
 - a. In this world we WILL have trouble
- B. Jesus promises to be with us
 - 1. Matthew 28:20
 - a. I am with you always to the end of the age
- C. Jesus promises to overcome
 - 1. John 16:33
 - a. I have overcome the world

FOLLOW-UP QUESTIONS FOR PARENTS

- What do you remember from the lesson this morning?
- What did the passage tell you about the early church?
- What are ways you have been treated differently because you follow Jesus?
- How did God encourage Paul in the midst of persecution?
- What do we need to remember when it seems hard to follow?

SMALL GROUP DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- What stuck out to you from the talk?
- What did you learn today from Paul's life and ministry?
- How did people respond to Paul?
- What would it look like for you to be as bold as Paul?
- When have you faced opposition for following Jesus? How did you respond?

FAMILY DEVOTION

OPEN IN PRAYER (choose 1 person to pray)

OPENING QUESTION/ACTIVITY

- When is a time that you felt really close to God? Why?

READ DEUTERONOMY 31:1-6

QUESTIONS FOR JK-3RD

- What does Moses say to the people?
- What does Moses tell them that God will do?
- Who will be the new leader?
- What does Moses tell them to be in verse 6?
- What does “forsake” mean?
- What do you learn about God in all of this?

QUESTIONS FOR 4TH-8TH

- Why might the people be upset about losing Moses as a leader?
- Why might that make them afraid?
- How can you be strong and courageous in following God at your school?
- Why is what God promises in verse 6 so important?
- What do you learn about God in all of this?

QUESTIONS FOR 9TH-12TH

- What sticks out to you from this passage? Why?
- How do you see the Lord with you on a daily basis?
- What things in your life tempt you to be afraid and not trust God? Why?
- What do you learn about God in all of this?

CLOSE IN PRAYER (everyone participates)

FAMILY DEVOTION

OPEN IN PRAYER (choose 1 person to pray)

OPENING QUESTION/ACTIVITY

- If you could spend the day with Jesus today on Earth what would you do with Him? Why those things?

READ ZEPHANIAH 3:16-17

QUESTIONS FOR JK-3RD

- What are the people told to not do?
- What does it say about the Lord in this verse?
- What does it say that the Lord will do?
- How does He quiet us?
- What do you learn about God in all of this?

QUESTIONS FOR 4TH-8TH

- Why is it important to see the Lord as your God? Do you see Him that way?
- Do you believe the Lord is with you every day? Why or why not?
- Does anything that God does here surprise you?
- How do you feel that God will rejoice over you with singing?
- What do you learn about God in all of this?

QUESTIONS FOR 9TH-12TH

- What sticks out to you from this passage? Why?
- What are ways in which you don't believe that God is personal and for you?
- What difference does the presence of the Lord make in your life?
- What do you learn about God in all of this?

CLOSE IN PRAYER (everyone participates)

WEEK

28

ACTS 18:24-19:20

PURPOSE

Continuing the ministry of Jesus by the power of the Holy Spirit

WEEKLY FOCUS

God reminds us that we always have more to learn of Him

ACTS 18:24-19:20

CONTEXT

- Jesus had ascended into heaven but left the disciples with a promise
- Jesus told them that the Holy Spirit would come and give them power
- The Holy Spirit comes upon the people to empower them to witness
- The church lives in harmony and community, which attracts folks to join them
- The apostles gain favor with the people and the church grows but at the same time they face persecution from the religious leaders who have arrested them, beaten them and told them not to speak about Jesus
- There is great persecution that scatters the church out to where God had called them to go—Judea and Samaria—led by a man named Saul
- Jesus meets Saul and Saul believes in Jesus, is baptized, and begins to do ministry
- The disciples, including Peter, are now taking the Gospel outside of Jerusalem and even to the Gentiles, which was a surprise to the leaders
- Now that the Gentiles believe, the church begins to send out missionaries in order to spread the Gospel further—starting with Paul and Barnabas
- The focus of the book of Acts goes from Peter and ministry to Jews to Paul and ministry to Gentiles

OUTLINE

- I. Apollos
 - A. Was from Alexandria
 - B. Was a very eloquent man
 - C. Knew the Scriptures well
 - D. Been instructed in the way of the Lord
 - E. Was fervent in Spirit
 - F. Only knew baptism of John
 1. Didn't know the full Gospel
 2. Didn't know about the Holy Spirit
 3. Priscilla and Aquila taught him what he didn't know
 - a. Explained God's way more accurately

- G. Was an encouragement to the believers
 - 1. Was bold in refuting the Jews
 - 2. Could prove that Jesus was the Christ from the Scriptures

II. Baptism of the Holy Spirit

- A. Paul goes to Ephesus
- B. Found disciples there
 - 1. They hadn't received the Holy Spirit when they believed
 - 2. Had only known John's baptism
 - 3. Baptism of repentance
- C. Paul baptized them in the name of Jesus
 - 1. They were filled with the Holy Spirit
 - 2. Spoke in tongues and prophesied

III. God uses Paul there

- A. Paul stays there for two years
 - 1. Reasoning and persuading about Kingdom of God
 - 2. All residents of Asia heard the Word of the Lord
 - a. Both Jews and Greeks
- B. God was doing amazing miracles through Paul
 - 1. Even things that touched Paul were being used to heal others

IV. Others try to do what Paul was doing

- A. Sons of Sceva
 - 1. Jewish men who cast out demons
 - 2. Their father was the Jewish High Priest
 - 3. Started to use Jesus' Name even though they didn't believe in Him
- B. Response of the demon
 - 1. Tried to cast a demon out of a man
 - 2. Evil spirit talked back to them
 - a. Jesus I know and Paul I recognize but who are you?
 - 3. The man then fought the sons with the power of evil spirit so that they fled the house naked and wounded

- C. The people heard what happened and were afraid
 - 1. The Name of Jesus was held in high regard by all
 - 2. Many who were believers came confessing the sins they were still holding on to
 - 3. Burned books and such that were not of the Lord
- D. The Word of the Lord continued to increase and prevail

V. SO WHAT??!!

- A. We need to always realize that there is still more we can learn about Jesus
 - 1. Will never have it all figured out
 - 2. Need to always be learners
- B. We need to ask for the Holy Spirit in our lives
 - 1. He is the comforter and power from God for His people
- C. We need to hold Jesus' Name in high regard
 - 1. Not misuse it
 - 2. Remember that if we identify as Christians then we represent Jesus in all we say and do
 - 3. Need to continually get rid of sin in our lives
 - a. Especially those things we keep holding on to

FOLLOW-UP QUESTIONS FOR PARENTS

- What do you remember from the lesson this morning?
- What did the passage tell you about the early church?
- What does it mean to honor Jesus' Name? How do you do that?
- Who are people in your life who continually teach you more about Jesus?
- What are some sins you need to keep giving over to the Lord?

SMALL GROUP DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- What stuck out to you from the talk?
- What did you learn today from Paul's life and ministry?
- How have you seen the Holy Spirit at work?
- What are ways that people abuse Jesus' Name today?
- What are some of the sins that you have been holding on to that you need to give over to the Lord?

FAMILY DEVOTION

OPEN IN PRAYER (choose 1 person to pray)

OPENING QUESTION/ACTIVITY

- What is your favorite book? Why?

READ JOHN 21:20-25

QUESTIONS FOR JK-3RD

- What did Peter ask Jesus?
- Why did it matter to him?
- What did Jesus say to Peter?
- What did Jesus say about John?
- What rumor was started because of that?
- What does John say about himself?
- What does John say about all Jesus did?
- What do you learn about God in all of this?

QUESTIONS FOR 4TH-8TH

- When is a time that you have been more concerned about someone else's relationship with Jesus than your own?
- Do you ever get to the point that you think you have nothing else to learn from Jesus?
- What keeps you from studying God's Word more?
- What do you learn about God in all of this?

QUESTIONS FOR 9TH-12TH

- What sticks out to you from this passage? Why?
- How are you following Him?
- How often are you studying God's Word to know Jesus more?
- What do you learn about God in all of this?

CLOSE IN PRAYER (everyone participates)

FAMILY DEVOTION

OPEN IN PRAYER (choose 1 person to pray)

OPENING QUESTION/ACTIVITY

- As a family, choose a verse that you will memorize for the next week and spend time working on it together.

READ COLOSSIANS 3:16-17

QUESTIONS FOR JK-3RD

- What are we to do with the Word of Christ?
- What is the Word of Christ?
- What does "dwell" mean?
- How should we use God's Word with each other?
- Why should we do anything we do?
- What do you learn about God in all of this?

QUESTIONS FOR 4TH-8TH

- What are ways that you are having God's Word dwell in you?
- Who are people that are teaching and admonishing you from God's Word?
- How are you doing things to Jesus' Name?
- What are some ways you can glorify Jesus with your actions?
- What do you learn about God in all of this?

QUESTIONS FOR 9TH-12TH

- What sticks out to you from this passage? Why?
- What things keep God's Word from dwelling in you?
- How is God's Word active in your friendships?
- What do you learn about God in all of this?

CLOSE IN PRAYER (everyone participates)

WEEK

29

ACTS 19:21-41

PURPOSE

Continuing the ministry of Jesus by the power of the Holy Spirit

WEEKLY FOCUS

Jesus affects all areas of life

ACTS 19:21-41

CONTEXT

- Jesus had ascended into heaven but left the disciples with a promise
- Jesus told them that the Holy Spirit would come and give them power
- The Holy Spirit comes upon the people to empower them to witness
- The church lives in harmony and community, which attracts folks to join them
- The apostles gain favor with the people and the church grows but at the same time they face persecution from the religious leaders who have arrested them, beaten them and told them not to speak about Jesus
- There is great persecution that scatters the church out to where God had called them to go—Judea and Samaria—led by a man named Saul
- Jesus meets Saul and Saul believes in Jesus, is baptized, and begins to do ministry
- The disciples, including Peter, are now taking the Gospel outside of Jerusalem and even to the Gentiles, which was a surprise to the leaders
- Now that the Gentiles believe, the church begins to send out missionaries in order to spread the Gospel further—starting with Paul and Barnabas
- The focus of the book of Acts goes from Peter and ministry to Jews to Paul and ministry to Gentiles

OUTLINE

- I. The rise of Christianity was affecting all aspects of life
 - A. Religious life
 1. People were no longer worshiping idols
 2. They were seeking after the One True God
 - B. Social life
 1. People began to live in greater community together
 2. People from the outside saw how Christians cared for each other and wanted to be a part of it

C. Business life

1. Because people didn't need idols, many people were losing money
2. One of those was Demetrius, a silversmith
 - a. Made silver shrines for those who worshiped false god Artemis
 - b. Gathered the craftsmen together
 - Spoke about how Paul had turned many away
 - Talked about the temple of Artemis as well
 - c. They were all enraged and the city was thrown into confusion
 - They went and found some of Paul's companions
 - Paul wanted to go to help his friends but other friends wouldn't let him
 - When people tried to speak the crowd would shout "Great is Artemis of the Ephesians!"
3. Town clerk spoke up
 - a. Calmed the crowd
 - b. Told them that this wasn't the way
 - c. If they had a complaint they needed to take it to the courts
 - d. Told them that they could be charged with rioting

II. SO WHAT??!!

- A. As Christians, Jesus needs to be Lord of all parts of our lives
1. Not just Sundays and Wednesdays and church things
 2. He needs to influence us at school and at work
 3. He needs to be clearly seen in all we do and everyone we are around

FOLLOW-UP QUESTIONS FOR PARENTS

- What do you remember from the lesson this morning?
- What did the passage tell you about the early church?
- Where is a place that Jesus isn't Lord in your life?
- What is something in your life that you just don't want Jesus to touch?

SMALL GROUP DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- What stuck out to you from the talk?
- What did you learn today from Paul's life and ministry?
- How does Jesus affect the world around you?
- How would your school look different if the Christians truly lived for Christ in everything?

FAMILY DEVOTION

OPEN IN PRAYER (choose 1 person to pray)

OPENING QUESTION/ACTIVITY

- What is your favorite outfit to wear to church? Why?

READ PHILIPPIANS 3:7-11

QUESTIONS FOR JK-3RD

- What does Paul say about the things that were once important?
- What word does he use to describe how we should see all things in respect to Jesus? What does that mean?
- How did Jesus affect Paul's life? How should He affect yours?
- What do you learn about God in all of this?

QUESTIONS FOR 4TH-8TH

- How do we count all things as a loss for the sake of knowing Jesus?
- What were the things that Paul lost that the world saw as important?
- What does Paul want to know in verse 10?
- How do we share in His sufferings?
- What do you learn about God in all of this?

QUESTIONS FOR 9TH-12TH

- What sticks out to you from this passage? Why?
- Where does our righteousness come from? How?
- How much of verse 10 describes your relationship with Jesus?
- What do you learn about God in all of this?

CLOSE IN PRAYER (everyone participates)

FAMILY DEVOTION

OPEN IN PRAYER (choose 1 person to pray)

OPENING QUESTION/ACTIVITY

- If you could be the ambassador for the US to another country, which country would you choose and why?

READ 2 CORINTHIANS 5:16-21

QUESTIONS FOR JK-3RD

- What does it say happens to anyone who is in Christ?
- Who makes that happen?
- What does Jesus do for us with God?
- What is an ambassador?
- What do you learn about God in all of this?

QUESTIONS FOR 4TH-8TH

- What are some “gods” in your life that you worship?
- What does reconciled mean?
- How does Jesus make His appeal through us?
- What do you learn about God in all of this?

QUESTIONS FOR 9TH-12TH

- What sticks out to you from this passage? Why?
- What are ways we can regard people according to the flesh? Why shouldn't we do that?
- Are you allowing Jesus to use you as His ambassador? Why or why not?
- What do you learn about God in all of this?

CLOSE IN PRAYER (everyone participates)

WEEK

30

ACTS 20:1-38

PURPOSE

Continuing the ministry of Jesus by the power of the Holy Spirit

WEEKLY FOCUS

Paul leaves an example to be followed

ACTS 20:1-38

CONTEXT

- Jesus had ascended into heaven but left the disciples with a promise
- Jesus told them that the Holy Spirit would come and give them power
- The Holy Spirit comes upon the people to empower them to witness
- The church lives in harmony and community, which attracts folks to join them
- The apostles gain favor with the people and the church grows but at the same time they face persecution from the religious leaders who have arrested them, beaten them and told them not to speak about Jesus
- There is great persecution that scatters the church out to where God had called them to go—Judea and Samaria—led by a man named Saul
- Jesus meets Saul and Saul believes in Jesus, is baptized, and begins to do ministry
- The disciples, including Peter, are now taking the Gospel outside of Jerusalem and even to the Gentiles, which was a surprise to the leaders
- Now that the Gentiles believe, the church begins to send out missionaries in order to spread the Gospel further—starting with Paul and Barnabas
- The focus of the book of Acts goes from Peter and ministry to Jews to Paul and ministry to Gentiles

OUTLINE

- I. Paul stays on the move
 - A. He leaves the area in response to the riot
 - B. Went through Macedonia and Greece encouraging the believers
 - C. Brought folks from all the different churches with him
- II. Paul's ministry as he went
 - A. Troas
 1. Paul speaks to the group for a long time
 2. Was near midnight and he was still speaking
 3. A young man named Eutychus was there
 - a. Sitting in the window
 - b. Fell asleep and fell out of window and died
 - c. Paul goes to him and took him in his arms and brought him back to life

- B. Sailed past Asia this time
 - 1. Was hoping to get to Jerusalem in time for Pentecost
 - 2. Still desired to encourage the elders there
 - a. Called them to meet him in Miletus
 - b. Spoke to them to encourage them in ministry
- C. Paul's message to the Ephesian elders
 - 1. You saw my life among you—filled with humility and tears and difficulties at the hands of the Jews
 - 2. You saw that I did not shrink in the face of that opposition but remained bold
 - a. Teaching you
 - b. Spreading the Gospel
 - 3. I am going to Jerusalem not knowing what will happen
 - 4. I do know that everywhere I go there will be afflictions and imprisonment for the sake of the Gospel
 - 5. Charges them
 - a. Pay careful attention to your lives and your flock
 - b. There will be some who will come to devour your people
 - c. Stay grounded in God's Word
 - 6. He prayed with them and all were sad to see him go
 - a. Not sure if they would ever see him again

III. SO WHAT??!!

- A. We all need examples of how to live for Jesus
 - 1. Paul is an example of this
 - 2. We need these to keep us strong and bold when things get hard
- B. We need to be paying attention to our own spiritual lives
- C. We need to be prepared for hardships because we follow Jesus
 - 1. Just like Paul was ready to suffer
 - 2. We need to see Jesus as worth that
- D. We need to stay connected to God's Word

FOLLOW-UP QUESTIONS FOR PARENTS

- What do you remember from the lesson this morning?
- What did the passage tell you about the early church?
- Who are the best examples of how to live for Jesus in your life? What do they do?
- What are ways you are staying connected to God's Word?
- What are ways you are paying careful attention to your life?

SMALL GROUP DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- What stuck out to you from the talk?
- What did you learn today from Paul's life and ministry?
- How can you be paying attention to your spiritual life?
- Who are the people who truly live for Jesus that you see?
- How can you follow their example?

FAMILY DEVOTION

OPEN IN PRAYER (choose 1 person to pray)

OPENING QUESTION/ACTIVITY

- What is something you have had to practice a lot to get better at?
Why do you think the practice helped?

READ PHILIPPIANS 4:4-9

QUESTIONS FOR JK-3RD

- What does Paul tell us to do in verse 4? What does that mean?
- What does he tell us not to do in verse 6?
- What does it mean to be “anxious”?
- What will guard our hearts and minds?
- What does Paul say in verse 9?
- What do you learn about God in all of this?

QUESTIONS FOR 4TH-8TH

- What are the things you are most anxious about right now?
- Do you believe you can trust God with those things?
- Does God want us to bring those things to Him?
- What keeps you from doing it?
- Who is someone who has set an example that you should follow?
- What do you learn about God in all of this?

QUESTIONS FOR 9TH-12TH

- What sticks out to you from this passage? Why?
- Is your life filled more with the peace of Christ or anxiousness of the world? Why?
- Do you find yourself daily making your requests known to God?
- Whose example are you following in your life? Are you setting an example for those younger than you to follow?
- What do you learn about God in all of this?

CLOSE IN PRAYER (everyone participates)

FAMILY DEVOTION

OPEN IN PRAYER (choose 1 person to pray)

OPENING QUESTION/ACTIVITY

- Who in your family can you do the best impression of? Show everyone else.

READ 1 CORINTHIANS 10:31-11:1

QUESTIONS FOR JK-3RD

- What are we to do all things for?
- What are we to try to do in verse 33?
- What does Paul say in 11:1?
- What do you learn about God in all of this?

QUESTIONS FOR 4TH-8TH

- What are ways you can do all things for the glory of God?
- How do you try to please everyone? Is that even possible?
- What are specific ways that you can follow Paul's example of following Jesus?
- What do you learn about God in all of this?

QUESTIONS FOR 9TH-12TH

- What sticks out to you from this passage? Why?
- What things keep you from doing everything for glory of God?
- Does your life look like you are following Paul's example? Following Jesus' example?
- What do you learn about God in all of this?

CLOSE IN PRAYER (everyone participates)

WEEK

31

ACTS 21:1–26

PURPOSE

Continuing the ministry of Jesus by the power of the Holy Spirit

WEEKLY FOCUS

Paul is about God's will and not his will

ACTS 21:1-26

CONTEXT

- Jesus had ascended into heaven but left the disciples with a promise
- Jesus told them that the Holy Spirit would come and give them power
- The Holy Spirit comes upon the people to empower them to witness
- The church lives in harmony and community, which attracts folks to join them
- The apostles gain favor with the people and the church grows but at the same time they face persecution from the religious leaders who have arrested them, beaten them and told them not to speak about Jesus
- There is great persecution that scatters the church out to where God had called them to go—Judea and Samaria—led by a man named Saul
- Jesus meets Saul and Saul believes in Jesus, is baptized, and begins to do ministry
- The disciples, including Peter, are now taking the Gospel outside of Jerusalem and even to the Gentiles which was a surprise to the leaders
- Now that the Gentiles believe, the church begins to send out missionaries in order to spread the Gospel further—starting with Paul and Barnabas
- The focus of the book of Acts goes from Peter and ministry to Jews to Paul and ministry to Gentiles

OUTLINE

- I. Paul is making his way back to Jerusalem
 - A. Would be very dangerous for him there
 - B. His name and fame have spread and the Jews would look to arrest and kill him
- II. The people of Tyre tell Paul not to go
 - A. Paul and his companions went to Tyre
 1. Ship they were on was stopping there to unload its cargo
 2. Stayed there for seven days
 - B. The people told Paul to not go to Jerusalem
 1. They even accompanied him to the boat and prayed with him
 2. Wives, children and all

III. The people of Ceasarea plead with Paul

- A. They stay there for a few days in the house of Philip
- B. Prophet named Agabus comes to speak to Paul
 - 1. Showed Paul what would happen if he went to Jerusalem
 - a. Took off Paul's belt and bound him with it
 - b. Told him they would bind him and hand him over to the Gentile authorities
- C. Paul's response
 - 1. Why are you weeping and breaking my heart?
 - 2. I am ready to not just be imprisoned for Jesus but to die for Him
 - a. In Jerusalem in Jesus' Name
- D. The people finally say "Let the will of the Lord be done"
 - 1. Some even went with him towards Jerusalem

IV. James speaks to Peter

- A. James the brother of Jesus
- B. Brings up a problem
 - 1. Many Jews were accusing Paul of telling other Jews that they no longer needed to obey the Jewish laws
 - a. No longer circumcise
 - b. Not obey the Laws set out for them by Moses
 - 2. Paul had not actually done that but had said that Gentiles didn't need to be circumcised to be saved
- C. Comes up with a solution
 - 1. The Jewish Christians will know that Paul has returned
 - 2. They will watch what he does and see if what they heard was true
 - 3. There were four men who were taking the Nazirite vow
 - a. They would not have wine or meat for 30 days
 - b. They would have their hair grow during this time
 - c. After the 30 days they would shave off their hair and burn it on the altar
 - d. It was a show of submission to the Lord for what He has done

4. They asked Paul to go through the purification with them and even provide the sacrifices for all
 - a. This would affirm Paul's feelings towards being a Jew
 - b. Would be a huge encouragement to the Jewish believers
- D. Paul did not have to do it but did it for the good of the church
 - a. Was willing to submit to the leaders even when he didn't have to
 - b. Would be costly for him to provide the sacrifices

V. SO WHAT??!!

- A. We need to be able to know truth so as not to be influenced by others
 1. Even good people
 2. Need to do God's will
- B. We need to be willing to lose everything for the sake of Jesus
- C. We need to be willing to do anything for the sake of people knowing and loving God more

FOLLOW-UP QUESTIONS FOR PARENTS

- What do you remember from the lesson this morning?
- What did the passage tell you about the early church?
- What is one way you could sacrifice your will for God's will?
- What is something you wouldn't be willing to lose for the sake of Jesus? Why?

SMALL GROUP DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- What stuck out to you from the talk?
- What did you learn today from Paul's life and ministry?
- How was Paul able to stay on course when everyone was trying to talk him out of it?
- What are ways that you can sacrifice your desires for the good of others?
- What is something you wouldn't be willing to do or lose for the sake of Jesus?

FAMILY DEVOTION

OPEN IN PRAYER (choose 1 person to pray)

OPENING QUESTION/ACTIVITY

- If you could run the world for a day, what would you do?

READ ROMANS 12:1-2

QUESTIONS FOR JK-3RD

- What does Paul do for the brothers here?
- What should we present our bodies as?
- What does Paul tell us about God's will?
- What do you learn about God in all of this?

QUESTIONS FOR 4TH-8TH

- What does it mean to be a living sacrifice?
- How do we do that?
- What does it mean to be conformed to the world?
- What needs to be transformed? How does that happen?
- Do you trust God's will for your life? Why or why not?
- What do you learn about God in all of this?

QUESTIONS FOR 9TH-12TH

- What sticks out to you from this passage? Why?
- How do you see yourself as being conformed to the world?
- What are ways that you are seeking God's will instead of your own?
- What do you learn about God in all of this?

CLOSE IN PRAYER (everyone participates)

FAMILY DEVOTION

OPEN IN PRAYER (choose 1 person to pray)

OPENING QUESTION/ACTIVITY

- When is a time you knew what you were supposed to do but didn't because you didn't want to?

READ LUKE 22:39-46

QUESTIONS FOR JK-3RD

- Where do we find Jesus here?
- Where have they just been?
- What does Jesus tell the disciples to do?
- What did Jesus pray?
- What do you learn about God in all of this?

QUESTIONS FOR 4TH-8TH

- How are you using prayer to fight the temptations in your life?
- How does Jesus' prayer encourage you?
- How are you seeking God's will in your life?
- What does this show us about Jesus?
- What do you learn about God in all of this?

QUESTIONS FOR 9TH-12TH

- What sticks out to you from this passage? Why?
- Where are you seeking your will over God's will?
- What does this show us about how difficult the cross would be for Jesus?
- What do you learn about God in all of this?

CLOSE IN PRAYER (everyone participates)

WEEK

32

ACTS 21:27-22:29

PURPOSE

Continuing the ministry of Jesus by the power of the Holy Spirit

WEEKLY FOCUS

Paul shares his testimony with a hostile crowd

ACTS 21:27-22:29

CONTEXT

- Jesus had ascended into heaven but left the disciples with a promise
- Jesus told them that the Holy Spirit would come and give them power
- The Holy Spirit comes upon the people to empower them to witness
- The church lives in harmony and community, which attracts folks to join them
- The apostles gain favor with the people and the church grows but at the same time they face persecution from the religious leaders who have arrested them, beaten them and told them not to speak about Jesus
- There is great persecution that scatters the church out to where God had called them to go—Judea and Samaria—led by a man named Saul
- Jesus meets Saul and Saul believes in Jesus, is baptized, and begins to do ministry
- The disciples, including Peter, are now taking the Gospel outside of Jerusalem and even to the Gentiles which was a surprise to the leaders
- Now that the Gentiles believe, the church begins to send out missionaries in order to spread the Gospel further—starting with Paul and Barnabas
- The focus of the book of Acts goes from Peter and ministry to Jews to Paul and ministry to Gentiles

OUTLINE

- I. Paul goes to the temple
 - A. Is confronted by Jews from Asia
 1. Spoke out against him
 - a. This is the man who is teaching everyone everywhere against the Law of Moses
 - b. He even brought Greeks into the temple which has defiled it
 - Non-Jews were not allowed in the temple but only in the outermost courtyard
 2. They stirred up the people and they arrested Paul
 - a. They sought to kill him
 - b. They were beating him
 - B. The commander of the army heard what was happening and sent troops at once
 1. The soldiers saw and stopped the beating
 2. They arrested Paul and asked for the charge
 3. The soldiers had to carry him to keep him from the crowds
 4. Were taking him to barracks to keep him safe

II. Paul speaks to the people

- A. Spoke to them in Hebrew which got their attention
- B. Told of his life before he met Jesus
 - 1. Pharisee who imprisoned those who belonged to the WAY
 - 2. Was on way to arrest more followers of Jesus
- C. Told what happened when Jesus came to him
 - 1. Jesus identified Himself
 - 2. Jesus blinded him
 - 3. Jesus sent Ananias to restore Paul's sight
 - 4. Called by Jesus to be a witness for Him
 - a. I will send you to the Gentiles
 - b. Sent him away as protection

III. The crowd responds

- A. Were willing to listen until he mentioned the Gentiles
- B. Told them guards to take him away
- C. Wanted him to be killed

IV. The response of the commander

- A. Wanted to please the crowd so planned on flogging Paul
- B. Figured then he could find out what was really going on
- C. As they got ready to whip him, Paul tells them he is a Roman citizen
 - 1. Romans were not to be punished in this way
 - 2. They immediately stopped
- D. They were afraid of what would happen for what they had done to a fellow Roman citizen

V. SO WHAT??!!

- A. Paul was very bold in the face of great opposition
- B. Paul shared his story of what Jesus did in his life
 - 1. Even to a crowd that might not want to hear it

FOLLOW-UP QUESTIONS FOR PARENTS

- What do you remember from the lesson this morning?
- What did the passage tell you about the early church?
- What is your story of how you came to know Jesus? Go around and have everyone share their story.
- Who else in your life needs to hear your story?

SMALL GROUP DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- What stuck out to you from the talk?
- What did you learn today from Paul's life and ministry?
- Where is a place that you would never talk about Jesus? Why?
- If someone asked you to tell your story about Jesus, what would you say?

FAMILY DEVOTION

OPEN IN PRAYER (choose 1 person to pray)

OPENING QUESTION/ACTIVITY

- If someone were to ask you to tell them about Jesus what would you say?

READ I PETER 3:13-17

QUESTIONS FOR JK-3RD

- What does Peter say about suffering here?
- What does he tell us not to do?
- What do we need to be prepared to do?
- How are we to do it?
- What does Paul say is better?
- What do you learn about God in all of this?

QUESTIONS FOR 4TH-8TH

- How do we honor Christ as holy in our hearts?
- Are you prepared to make a defense for the hope that you have?
- How can you share about Jesus and your faith with gentleness and respect?
- Do you have a testimony about how you first believed in Jesus?
- What do you learn about God in all of this?

QUESTIONS FOR 9TH-12TH

- What sticks out to you from this passage? Why?
- How are you defending your faith to others?
- What is your testimony? Can you share it with others?
- What do you learn about God in all of this?

CLOSE IN PRAYER (everyone participates)

FAMILY DEVOTION

OPEN IN PRAYER (choose 1 person to pray)

OPENING QUESTION/ACTIVITY

- What is your favorite story to tell someone else? Why? Do you have a story about how you came to know Jesus?

READ PSALM 96:1-4

QUESTIONS FOR JK-3RD

- What are we called to do here?
- What are we called to tell?
- How do we declare His glory?
- What do you learn about God in all of this?

QUESTIONS FOR 4TH-8TH

- How are you telling of God's salvation from day to day?
- What makes you nervous about sharing your faith with others?
- What marvelous things has God done in your life that are worth sharing with others?
- What do you learn about God in all of this?

QUESTIONS FOR 9TH-12TH

- What sticks out to you from this passage? Why?
- When is the last time you shared your faith with someone?
- Who are people that you could be sharing with?
- What do you learn about God in all of this?

CLOSE IN PRAYER (everyone participates)

WEEK

33

ACTS 22:30-23:22

PURPOSE

Continuing the ministry of Jesus by the power of the Holy Spirit

WEEKLY FOCUS

God protects His people

ACTS 22:30-23:22

CONTEXT

- Jesus had ascended into heaven but left the disciples with a promise
- Jesus told them that the Holy Spirit would come and give them power
- The Holy Spirit comes upon the people to empower them to witness
- The church lives in harmony and community, which attracts folks to join them
- The apostles gain favor with the people and the church grows but at the same time they face persecution from the religious leaders who have arrested them, beaten them and told them not to speak about Jesus
- There is great persecution that scatters the church out to where God had called them to go—Judea and Samaria—led by a man named Saul
- Jesus meets Saul and Saul believes in Jesus, is baptized, and begins to do ministry
- The disciples, including Peter, are now taking the Gospel outside of Jerusalem and even to the Gentiles, which was a surprise to the leaders
- Now that the Gentiles believe, the church begins to send out missionaries in order to spread the Gospel further—starting with Paul and Barnabas
- The focus of the book of Acts goes from Peter and ministry to Jews to Paul and ministry to Gentiles

OUTLINE

- I. Paul goes before the Sanhedrin
 - A. The leaders of the temple
 - B. Acted as the Jewish court
 - C. Paul speaks
 1. I have lived my life before God in good conscience
 - D. The High Priest commands him to be struck in the mouth
 1. Paul responds
 2. Calls him a whitewashed wall
 - a. Means it looks clean on the outside but is dirty within
 - b. Says that they are going to judge him by the law and yet break the law by hitting him

E. Paul knows his audience

1. Saw that it was made up of Pharisees and Sadducees
2. Knew that they disagreed on resurrection
3. Decides to get their focus off of him and on to each other
4. Tells them that he is a Pharisee and is only on trial because he has taught on the resurrection of the dead
5. They disagree loudly and some of the Pharisees wanted to let him go
6. Because of the commotion and disagreement they had Paul returned to the barracks

II. The Lord appears to Paul

- A. Tells him to have courage
- B. Gave him hope
 1. You will testify about me to Rome
 2. He would not die here and now

III. The plot to kill Paul

- A. Jews wanted to get rid of Paul
- B. Made an oath to neither eat nor drink until he was dead
- C. They took their plan to the chief priests and elders
 1. Call for Paul to be brought before you
 2. We will lie in wait and kill him on the way
- D. Paul's nephew heard about it and told Paul
 1. Paul had his nephew tell the commander what he had heard
 2. The commander listened and then told the nephew to tell no one else

IV. SO WHAT??!!

- A. God is working for us all the time
 1. Even in ways we don't see
 2. He helped Paul know how to get out of his trial
 3. He gave Paul hope for the future
 4. He protected Paul by letting him know about the plot against him

FOLLOW-UP QUESTIONS FOR PARENTS

- What do you remember from the lesson this morning?
- What did the passage tell you about the early church?
- What are ways that you have seen that God is working for you?
- How did God give help to Paul?
- How do you know that you can trust God?

SMALL GROUP DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- What stuck out to you from the talk?
- What did you learn today from Paul's life and ministry?
- Could anyone accuse you of being a whitewashed wall? Why or why not?
- How is God at work for you even this week?
- How do you know that you can trust God?

FAMILY DEVOTION

OPEN IN PRAYER (choose 1 person to pray)

OPENING QUESTION/ACTIVITY

- When is a time that you felt protected by someone else?

READ PSALM 46

QUESTIONS FOR JK-3RD

- What does it say about God in verse 1?
- What is a “refuge”?
- What causes you to doubt that God is in control?
- What does the Lord do with His voice?
- What are we called to do in verse 10?
- What do you learn about God in all of this?

QUESTIONS FOR 4TH-8TH

- How do you see God as your refuge and strength?
- How do you feel about these pictures of God’s power?
- Why is it important that God is with us?
- What does it look like to be still before God?
- What do you learn about God in all of this?

QUESTIONS FOR 9TH-12TH

- What sticks out to you from this passage? Why?
- What is happening in the world that causes you to fear?
- What are ways that you are seeking to be still and know that God is God?
- What do you learn about God in all of this?

CLOSE IN PRAYER (everyone participates)

FAMILY DEVOTION

OPEN IN PRAYER (choose 1 person to pray)

OPENING QUESTION/ACTIVITY

- When is a time that you broke something? What did you do and how did you feel?

READ 2 CORINTHIANS 4:7-12

QUESTIONS FOR JK-3RD

- What does verse 7 say we have?
- What is the treasure in?
- Whose power are we looking to show?
- What do you learn about God in all of this?

QUESTIONS FOR 4TH-8TH

- Why is it strange to keep a treasure in a jar of clay?
- What does the jar of clay represent? How does it show God's power?
- How do we see God taking care of His people in verses 8-9?
- What is to be manifested in our bodies?
- What do you learn about God in all of this?

QUESTIONS FOR 9TH-12TH

- What sticks out to you from this passage? Why?
- How are you like a jar of clay?
- Do you feel the truth of verses 8-9?
- How are you showing the life and death of Jesus in all you do?
- What do you learn about God in all of this?

CLOSE IN PRAYER (everyone participates)

WEEK

34

ACTS 23:23-24:27

PURPOSE

Continuing the ministry of Jesus by the power of the Holy Spirit

WEEKLY FOCUS

God uses difficult things for His purposes

ACTS 23:23-24:27

CONTEXT

- Jesus had ascended into heaven but left the disciples with a promise
- Jesus told them that the Holy Spirit would come and give them power
- The Holy Spirit comes upon the people to empower them to witness
- The church lives in harmony and community, which attracts folks to join them
- The apostles gain favor with the people and the church grows but at the same time they face persecution from the religious leaders who have arrested them, beaten them and told them not to speak about Jesus
- There is great persecution that scatters the church out to where God had called them to go—Judea and Samaria—led by a man named Saul
- Jesus meets Saul and Saul believes in Jesus, is baptized, and begins to do ministry
- The disciples, including Peter, are now taking the Gospel outside of Jerusalem and even to the Gentiles which was a surprise to the leaders
- Now that the Gentiles believe, the church begins to send out missionaries in order to spread the Gospel further—starting with Paul and Barnabas
- The focus of the book of Acts goes from Peter and ministry to Jews to Paul and ministry to Gentiles
- Paul has been arrested and is being held pending a trial based on false accusations from the Jews

OUTLINE

- I. Paul sent to Felix
 - A. He was the Roman governor of Judea
 - B. To Caesarea
 - C. Why?
 1. Helped to solve Claudius Lysias' problem with Paul
 - a. Got Paul out of Jerusalem
 - b. Allowed one to judge whether they could lawfully hold a Roman citizen
 2. Shows importance of Paul as a prisoner
 - D. Protected on his journey
 1. 470 soldiers accompanied him
 - a. 200 soldiers, 200, spearmen, 70 horsemen
 2. Shows importance of Paul as a prisoner
 - E. Sent with a letter for the governor
 1. Told him of what happened to Paul
 2. Asking him to judge Paul and his accusers
 - F. Soldiers deliver Paul as instructed

II. Paul before Felix

- A. Waited for accusers from Jerusalem to arrive
- B. The Jews' charges
 - 1. First they kissed up to Felix
 - a. You have brought us peace
 - b. You have helped us with your wisdom
 - 2. About Paul
 - a. He is a plague
 - b. Stirs up riots among the Jews
 - c. Ringleader of troublemakers
 - d. Tried to profane the temple
 - Bring it dishonor
- C. Paul's response
 - 1. I came to Jerusalem only 12 days ago
 - a. Had been in custody for about 7 days
 - 2. They can't prove that I stirred up anything
 - a. Not causing riots
 - b. Not even disputing with others
 - 3. Shares his faith
 - a. I belong to the Way
 - b. I worship the One True God
 - Revealed by the Law and the Prophets
 - Hoping in a Resurrection from Him
 - 4. Explains his actions
 - a. Came to temple to bring alms and worship
 - b. They found me purified at the temple
 - c. Some Jews from Asia came and stirred up the crowd
 - d. They have no charges against me
- D. Felix's decision
 - 1. To have Claudius Lysias come and testify
 - 2. Keep Paul in custody for his safety
 - a. Given freedoms and privileges
 - b. Allow his friends to freely visit him

III. Felix and Paul

- A. Felix would often speak with Paul about his faith
 - 1. Both he and his wife Drusilla
 - 2. She was Jewish
- B. Reasoned about righteousness and self-control and judgment
 - 1. Challenged Felix in his sin
 - 2. Alarmed Felix and would send him away
 - 3. Boldly sharing truth with him
- C. Felix wanted Paul to pay him to release him
 - 1. Kept him for two years
 - 2. In order to do the Jews a favor

IV. SO WHAT??!!

- A. Paul continued to be faithful even in midst of opposition
 - 1. Defended himself and his actions
 - 2. Used the opportunities to share his faith with the Jews and the governor
- B. God was using Paul's imprisonment for His glory
 - 1. Where he wrote many of his letters that we find in the Bible
 - 2. Giving truth to the Roman governor
 - 3. Protecting Paul's life

FOLLOW-UP QUESTIONS FOR PARENTS

- What do you remember from the lesson this morning?
- What did the passage tell you about the early church?
- What are some hard things that have happened in the last year and how has God used them?
- When is a time you were accused of something you didn't do, and how did you respond?
- How do we see God continuing to take care of Paul?

SMALL GROUP DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- What stuck out to you from the talk?
- What did you learn today from Paul's life and ministry?
- How did Paul defend himself when accused?
- How do you handle yourself when you have been accused of something?
- How was God caring for Paul through all of this?

FAMILY DEVOTION

OPEN IN PRAYER (choose 1 person to pray)

OPENING QUESTION/ACTIVITY

- What do you think would be the hardest thing for you if you had to be in jail?

READ PHILIPPIANS 1:12-18

QUESTIONS FOR JK-3RD

- What does Paul say about what has happened to him?
- What had happened to him?
- How was God using his time in prison?
- What do you learn about God in all of this?

QUESTIONS FOR 4TH-8TH

- How has God used hard things in your life this year?
- How do you show Jesus as you go through hard times?
- How did Paul's imprisonment help spread the Gospel?
- What is the one thing that Paul rejoiced in through it all?
- What do you learn about God in all of this?

QUESTIONS FOR 9TH-12TH

- What sticks out to you from this passage? Why?
- Are you continuing to show Christ even in difficult circumstances?
- Are you rejoicing that Christ is being preached regardless of the circumstances?
- What do you learn about God in all of this?

CLOSE IN PRAYER (everyone participates)

FAMILY DEVOTION

OPEN IN PRAYER (choose 1 person to pray)

OPENING QUESTION/ACTIVITY

- When is a time that you stood up for what was right even though it was hard?

READ DANIEL 3:8-4:3

QUESTIONS FOR JK-3RD

- What did the Chaldeans accuse the Jews of?
- What were the Jews supposed to do? Why wouldn't they do it?
- What was the punishment for not bowing down?
- What did the three guys say to the king when he asked him?
- What did the king do to them?
- What did God do for them?
- What was the result of all of this? What did the king do?
- What do you learn about God in all of this?

QUESTIONS FOR 4TH-8TH

- What are ways that the world tries to get you to turn away from God and worship the things of the world?
- What was amazing about what they said in verses 17-18?
- Could you say that you would worship God even if He didn't save you?
- What do you learn about God in all of this?

QUESTIONS FOR 9TH-12TH

- What sticks out to you from this passage? Why?
- How can you stick up for your faith the way that they did?
- How did God use the faith of these three guys to impact the world?
- What do you learn about God in all of this?

CLOSE IN PRAYER (everyone participates)

WEEK

35

ACTS 25:1-12

PURPOSE

Continuing the ministry of Jesus by the power of the Holy Spirit

WEEKLY FOCUS

God speaks for and through His people

ACTS 25:1-12

CONTEXT

- Jesus had ascended into heaven but left the disciples with a promise
- Jesus told them that the Holy Spirit would come and give them power
- The Holy Spirit comes upon the people to empower them to witness
- The church lives in harmony and community, which attracts folks to join them
- The apostles gain favor with the people and the church grows but at the same time they face persecution from the religious leaders who have arrested them, beaten them and told them not to speak about Jesus
- There is great persecution that scatters the church out to where God had called them to go—Judea and Samaria—led by a man named Saul
- Jesus meets Saul and Saul believes in Jesus, is baptized, and begins to do ministry
- The disciples, including Peter, are now taking the Gospel outside of Jerusalem and even to the Gentiles, which was a surprise to the leaders
- Now that the Gentiles believe, the church begins to send out missionaries in order to spread the Gospel further—starting with Paul and Barnabas
- The focus of the book of Acts goes from Peter and ministry to Jews to Paul and ministry to Gentiles
- Paul has been arrested and is being held pending a trial based on false accusations from the Jews

OUTLINE

- I. A new governor
 - A. Porcius Festus replaces Felix
 1. Felix was removed for not dealing properly in a dispute between Jews and Gentiles in Cesarea
 - B. Wanted to do right by the people he governed
 1. Went up to Jerusalem to meet with Jewish leaders
 2. They laid out their case against Paul again
 3. Wanted Festus to send Paul to Jerusalem for trial
 - a. They still planned to ambush and kill him on the way
 - C. Festus' response
 1. I am keeping him in Caesarea
 2. I will hear his defense
 3. You can come also and bring charges there

- D. The problem
 - 1. Release Paul and upset the Jews
 - 2. Continue to hold Paul and risk upsetting the Romans for holding a citizen without cause

II. The trial before Festus

- A. He had Paul brought out amongst his accusers
 - 1. They could not prove any of the charges against him
 - 2. Paul said he hadn't done anything wrong
 - a. Not against the Law or the Temple or Caesar
- B. Festus wanted to help the Jews
 - 1. Asked Paul whether he wanted to go to Jerusalem for a trial
 - a. Not knowing that Paul knew about the plot to kill him
 - b. Roman judge had to ask permission of a citizen to move a case to another judge
 - 2. Paul says he is where he should be tried
 - a. I have done nothing wrong against the Jews
 - b. If I am guilty then I accept the punishment
- C. Paul appeals to Caesar
 - 1. Every Roman citizen had the right to appeal his case directly to Caesar—the emperor of Rome
 - 2. The Caesar at this time was Nero
 - 3. Took the case completely out of the hands of the Jews
 - a. Thwarted all of their plans
- D. Festus sends Paul to Caesar

III. SO WHAT??!!

- A. God will give us the words to say
 - 1. Luke 12:12
 - 2. When you are faced with difficult situations
 - 3. We are just to appeal to the truth
- B. John 8:32

FOLLOW-UP QUESTIONS FOR PARENTS

- What do you remember from the lesson this morning?
- What did the passage tell you about the early church?
- What was the difficult situation Festus found himself in?
- How do you make decisions when in difficult circumstances like that?

SMALL GROUP DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- What stuck out to you from the talk?
- What did you learn today from Paul's life and ministry?
- How did Paul defend himself when accused?
- When have you had to stand up for yourself like this because of your faith? What happened?

FAMILY DEVOTION

OPEN IN PRAYER (choose 1 person to pray)

OPENING QUESTION/ACTIVITY

- When is a time you had to defend yourself from someone either physically or verbally?

READ LUKE 12:4-12

QUESTIONS FOR JK-3RD

- Who does Jesus say we shouldn't fear?
- Who does Jesus say we should fear?
- What does Jesus say about knowing us?
- What does it mean to acknowledge Jesus?
- What do you learn about God in all of this?

QUESTIONS FOR 4TH-8TH

- How do you feel about the fact that Jesus knows you so well that He even knows how many hairs are on your head?
- What are ways you can acknowledge Jesus before people?
- What happens if we deny Jesus?
- What does Jesus promise us when we need to speak for Him?
- What do you learn about God in all of this?

QUESTIONS FOR 9TH-12TH

- What sticks out to you from this passage? Why?
- Who are you afraid of that you shouldn't be?
- What are ways you have acknowledged Jesus? Denied Jesus?
- Do you trust that the Holy Spirit will give you what to say when you need it? Why or why not?
- What do you learn about God in all of this?

CLOSE IN PRAYER (everyone participates)

FAMILY DEVOTION

OPEN IN PRAYER (choose 1 person to pray)

OPENING QUESTION/ACTIVITY

- If you had to stand up in church and speak, what would you say and how would you prepare?

READ EXODUS 4:10-17

QUESTIONS FOR JK-3RD

- Who is God speaking to here?
- What did God ask Moses to do?
- What were Moses' excuses?
- How did God respond to Moses' excuses?
- What do you learn about God in all of this?

QUESTIONS FOR 4TH-8TH

- What excuses do you make for not sharing Jesus with others?
- How does God's response to Moses apply to you?
- What does God say He will do for Moses?
- How can we trust that God will speak for and through us?
- What do you learn about God on all of this?

QUESTIONS FOR 9TH-12TH

- What sticks out to you from this passage? Why?
- When is a time that you said to God "send someone else"?
- How did God respond to Moses when he said that?
- What do you learn about God in all of this?

CLOSE IN PRAYER (everyone participates)

WEEK

36

ACTS 25:13-26:32

PURPOSE

Continuing the ministry of Jesus by the power of the Holy Spirit

WEEKLY FOCUS

Paul follows Jesus to the end

ACTS 25:13-26:32

CONTEXT

- Jesus had ascended into heaven but left the disciples with a promise
- Jesus told them that the Holy Spirit would come and give them power
- The Holy Spirit comes upon the people to empower them to witness
- The church lives in harmony and community, which attracts folks to join them
- The apostles gain favor with the people and the church grows but at the same time they face persecution from the religious leaders who have arrested them, beaten them, and told them not to speak about Jesus
- There is great persecution that scatters the church out to where God had called them to go—Judea and Samaria—led by a man named Saul
- Jesus meets Saul and Saul believes in Jesus, is baptized, and begins to do ministry
- The disciples, including Peter, are now taking the Gospel outside of Jerusalem and even to the Gentiles, which was a surprise to the leaders
- Now that the Gentiles believe, the church begins to send out missionaries in order to spread the Gospel further—starting with Paul and Barnabas
- The focus of the book of Acts goes from Peter and ministry to Jews to Paul and ministry to Gentiles
- Paul has been arrested and is being held pending a trial based on false accusations from the Jews

OUTLINE

- I. Paul goes before King Agrippa
 - A. Festus explains Paul's situation
 1. Paul was brought to him by religious leaders
 2. There was no crime, just religious point of dispute
 3. I offered for him to go to Jerusalem and be tried and instead he appealed to Caesar as a Roman citizen
 - B. Agrippa requests to hear Paul himself
 1. Brings him in the next day
 2. Makes a show of his entrance to show his power
 - a. To show Paul that he doesn't need to go to Caesar

II. Paul's defense before Agrippa

- A. Thanked Agrippa for the chance to speak
 - 1. Knew that he understood the customs of the Jews
- B. Spoke about his former life
 - 1. Grew up as a Pharisee
 - 2. Opposed the name of Jesus
 - 3. Arrested and imprisoned many of those who believed in Jesus
 - 4. Even cast votes of death against many of them
 - 5. Would attempt to make them blasphemy so they could be put to death
- C. Spoke about his encounter with Jesus
 - 1. Jesus asking him why he was persecuting Him
 - 2. Gave him purpose
 - a. To share the Gospel with the Gentiles
- D. Spoke about what he has done since
 - 1. Obeyed the vision
 - 2. Declared in Damascus and then Judea and then to Gentiles
 - a. Calling them to repent and turn to God
 - b. Living lives of repentance
 - 3. This is why the Jews want me dead
- E. Festus' response
 - 1. Paul, you are out of your mind
 - 2. Your great learning is driving you mad
- F. Paul responds to Agrippa and not Festus
 - 1. The King knows these things
 - 2. I am speaking boldly for his sake
 - 3. Do you believe the prophets?
 - a. Knew that he did believe
- G. Agrippa's response
 - 1. Do you think you can make me a Christian that fast?
 - a. Paul says that he hopes that he does come to believe
 - 2. Agrippa says that Paul is doing nothing that deserves punishment or prison
 - 3. He would have been set free if he hadn't appealed to Caesar

III. SO WHAT??!!

- A. Paul could have stopped sharing
 - 1. Was in prison for his beliefs
 - 2. Was waiting a real trial before Caesar
 - 3. Doesn't need to waste his breath
- B. Paul shares boldly before the king
 - 1. About his experience with Jesus
 - 2. Challenges the king to believe as well
 - 3. Continues to share the Gospel even to the end

FOLLOW-UP QUESTIONS FOR PARENTS

- What do you remember from the lesson this morning?
- What did the passage tell you about the early church?
- How did Paul handle going before the king?
- Why would most of us not have blamed him for not being bold?
- How does Paul show his faith in Christ?

SMALL GROUP DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- What stuck out to you from the talk?
- What did you learn today from Paul's life and ministry?
- Who is someone you need to be bolder with about the Gospel? How will you do that?
- When is a time you had the chance to stand up for Jesus but didn't do it? How did you feel afterwards?

FAMILY DEVOTION

OPEN IN PRAYER (choose 1 person to pray)

OPENING QUESTION/ACTIVITY

- What are some rules at school or work that just seem unnecessary? Why do you think they exist?

READ GALATIANS 5:1-10

QUESTIONS FOR JK-3RD

- What is freedom?
- Why has Jesus freed us?
- What does Paul say is the only thing that counts?
- What happened to the Galatians according to verses 8-10?
- What do you learn about God in all of this?

QUESTIONS FOR 4TH-8TH

- What are ways that you submit again to slavery?
- What did Paul say about what circumcision does for those already in Christ?
- What actions are you trying to do to "make God more pleased with you"?
- What do you learn about God in all of this?

QUESTIONS FOR 9TH-12TH

- What sticks out to you from this passage? Why?
- What rules have you added to your faith in Christ?
- What hinders you from obeying the truth?
- What effect does a little legalism have?
- What do you learn about God in all of this?

CLOSE IN PRAYER (everyone participates)

FAMILY DEVOTION

OPEN IN PRAYER (choose 1 person to pray)

OPENING QUESTION/ACTIVITY

- What is your most treasured possession? Has it always been that or did it used to be something else? Think about how your love has changed for things you've owned over the years.

READ REVELATION 2:2-7

QUESTIONS FOR JK-3RD

- What does the angel say is good about the church in Ephesus?
- What did the angel have against them?
- What does that mean?
- What do you learn about God in all of this?

QUESTIONS FOR 4TH-8TH

- What are ways that you are enduring difficulty for the Name of Jesus?
- What did you used to do as a Christian that you don't do as much now? Why?
- What do you need to start doing again as acts of worship to the Lord?
- How are you being strong and courageous for Jesus?

QUESTIONS FOR 9TH-12TH

- What sticks out to you from the passage? Why?
- How have you abandoned the love you had at first when it comes to Jesus?
- How has your passion for Jesus changed over the years? Why?
- What do you learn about God in all of this?

CLOSE IN PRAYER (everyone participates)

WEEK

37

ACTS 27:1 - 44

PURPOSE

Continuing the ministry of Jesus by the power of the Holy Spirit

WEEKLY FOCUS

God uses circumstances to make His Name known

ACTS 27:1-44

CONTEXT

- Jesus had ascended into heaven but left the disciples with a promise
- Jesus told them that the Holy Spirit would come and give them power
- The Holy Spirit comes upon the people to empower them to witness
- The church lives in harmony and community, which attracts folks to join them
- The apostles gain favor with the people and the church grows but at the same time they face persecution from the religious leaders who have arrested them, beaten them and told them not to speak about Jesus
- There is great persecution that scatters the church out to where God had called them to go—Judea and Samaria—led by a man named Saul
- Jesus meets Saul and Saul believes in Jesus, is baptized, and begins to do ministry
- The disciples, including Peter, are now taking the Gospel outside of Jerusalem and even to the Gentiles which was a surprise to the leaders
- Now that the Gentiles believe, the church begins to send out missionaries in order to spread the Gospel further—starting with Paul and Barnabas
- The focus of the book of Acts goes from Peter and ministry to Jews to Paul and ministry to Gentiles
- Paul has been arrested and is being held pending a trial based on false accusations from the Jews

OUTLINE

- I. Paul's journey to Rome
 - A. Paul was placed on a ship with other prisoners
 1. Would stop at other ports in Asia
 2. Would help them to find a boat for Rome
 - B. The journey was slow and difficult
 1. Winds were against them
 2. The commander was kind to Paul
 - a. Treated him nicely, even allowed him leave to see friends
 3. Took them a long time to make any progress
 - a. Made the whole trip more dangerous
 - b. There were times of the year where sailing became too dangerous because of the weather
 4. The Fast-Day of Atonement; most people didn't sail after this point in the year
 - C. Paul advises them to stay put
 1. To stay in Lasea for the winter
 2. Saw that if they continued it would be costly
 - a. For the ship and cargo
 - b. For the lives of those on the boat as well

3. They decide to keep going
 - a. Felt the harbor wasn't good enough to stay
- D. The storm at sea
 1. A great storm came upon them
 - a. A Northeaster (word where we get the English word, typhoon); very violent winds
 2. Had to just drift because they couldn't steer the boat
 3. Wrapped ropes or chains around the ship to keep it from falling apart
 4. Continued for many days
 - a. Got rid of cargo on the 2nd day
 - b. Got rid of everything else on the 3rd day
 - c. Anything to keep them afloat
 5. Gave up all hope
 - a. Hadn't seen the sun or stars for many days – only storm and clouds
 - b. The storm continued on
- E. Paul encourages them
 1. Because they had been without food for a long time
 - a. Had to ration the food and also constantly working to keep the ship going
 - b. They were ready to quit
 2. Tells them to take heart
 - a. Says that no one will die
 - b. Says that the ship will be lost
 - c. God had spoken to him
 - Told him he would stand before Caesar
 - God will save all of those on the boat
 - Gives them the hope that God had given Him
 - Showing them God's character
 - d. They must run aground
- F. The people are saved
 1. It was the 14th day since they left
 2. They thought they were getting close to land
 - a. Started to measure it and they were approaching
 3. Sailors were looking to escape the ship
 - a. Better chance to survive on a small boat than the big one
 - b. Paul sees what they are trying to do and alerts the soldiers
 - If they leave we cannot be saved
 - They were the only ones who knew how to steer the boat safely in
 - c. The soldiers cut the ropes on life boat

4. Paul urges them to eat to prepare for the day
 - a. Reminds them that God is with them
 - Not a hair on your head shall perish
 - b. Paul gives thanks and breaks the bread to be shared amongst the sailors
 - Similar to Jesus feeding the 5,000
 - c. They were encouraged and threw out the rest of the wheat
 - Showed that they believed they would be saved
 5. They make landfall
 - a. They tried to hit the beach but they hit a reef instead
 - b. The boat got stuck and the stern was breaking up
 - c. The soldiers planned to kill the prisoners so none would escape
 - Would be punished for escaped prisoners
 - d. The centurion wanted to save Paul
 - Kept the soldiers from carrying out their plan
 - Ordered those who could swim to make it to land first
 - The rest made it to land on pieces of the ship
 6. All were brought to safety
- II. SO WHAT??!!
- A. God has a plan to protect His people
 - a. Uses circumstances to make Him known to others
 - B. God gives us hope in the midst of trials
 1. We are to pass that hope on to others (tell others what He has done and said for us)
 - C. God does all this so people may know Him

FOLLOW-UP QUESTIONS FOR PARENTS

- What do you remember from the lesson this morning?
- What did the passage tell you about the early church?
- When is a time you have seen God work something out for you?
- What are things that God has shown you or done for you that you could tell others?
- How did God use Paul in all of this?

SMALL GROUP DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- What stuck out to you from the talk?
- What did you learn today from Paul's life and ministry?
- How did Paul help the folks he was around?
- How did Paul's actions show Jesus to others?
- How did God work all things out?
- Where is a place you are having a hard time trusting God right now?

FAMILY DEVOTION

OPEN IN PRAYER (choose 1 person to pray)

OPENING QUESTION/ACTIVITY

- If you could become famous, how would you want to do it? Ex. Politics, sports, acting, singing, etc.

READ PSALM 105:1-6

QUESTIONS FOR JK-3RD

- What are we called to do in verse 1?
- What are we called to do in verse 2?
- What are we to seek?
- Why is it so important that people hear God's Name so much?
- What do you learn about God in all of this?

QUESTIONS FOR 4TH-8TH

- How are you making His deeds known among the people?
- How are you singing praises to Him and telling of His wonderful works?
- What are ways that you can bring glory to His holy Name?
- What do you learn about God in all of this?

QUESTIONS FOR 9TH-12TH

- What sticks out to you from this passage? Why?
- How often do you remember the amazing works that the Lord has done for you?
- How do you seek His Presence continually?
- What do you learn about God in all of this?

CLOSE IN PRAYER (everyone participates)

FAMILY DEVOTION

OPEN IN PRAYER (choose 1 person to pray)

OPENING QUESTION/ACTIVITY

- What are ways that you have attempted to make a name for yourself? How has that worked out for you?

READ ISAIAH 48:9-11

QUESTIONS FOR JK-3RD

- Why does God defer His anger?
- What does it mean that God has refined us?
- How did He do that?
- What does verse 11 tell us is the reason God does everything?
- What do you learn about God in all of this?

QUESTIONS FOR 4TH-8TH

- What does it mean that God defers His anger for His Name's sake?
- How does God's grace and mercy glorify His Name?
- How do you see affliction refining you?
- What does it mean that God shows you mercy for His sake?
- What do you learn about God in all of this?

QUESTIONS FOR 9TH-12TH

- What sticks out to you from this passage? Why?
- How does God's grace and mercy in your life lead to praise?
- How has God used hard times to make you more like the person He wants you to be?
- How does it change your view of God to know that offering you grace and mercy is for His sake as well?
- What do you learn about God in all of this?

CLOSE IN PRAYER (everyone participates)

WEEK

38

ACTS 28:1-10

PURPOSE

Continuing the ministry of Jesus by the power of the Holy Spirit

WEEKLY FOCUS

God uses His people to show His power

ACTS 28:1-10

CONTEXT

- Jesus had ascended into heaven but left the disciples with a promise
- Jesus told them that the Holy Spirit would come and give them power
- The Holy Spirit comes upon the people to empower them to witness
- The church lives in harmony and community, which attracts folks to join them
- The apostles gain favor with the people and the church grows but at the same time they face persecution from the religious leaders who have arrested them, beaten them and told them not to speak about Jesus
- There is great persecution that scatters the church out to where God had called them to go—Judea and Samaria—led by a man named Saul
- Jesus meets Saul and Saul believes in Jesus, is baptized, and begins to do ministry
- The disciples, including Peter, are now taking the Gospel outside of Jerusalem and even to the Gentiles, which was a surprise to the leaders
- Now that the Gentiles believe, the church begins to send out missionaries in order to spread the Gospel further—starting with Paul and Barnabas
- The focus of the book of Acts goes from Peter and ministry to Jews to Paul and ministry to Gentiles
- Paul has been arrested and is being held pending a trial based on false accusations from the Jews

OUTLINE

- I. The people land safely
 - A. The island was named Malta
 - B. Was on the way to Rome
 1. God had kept them on course even in the midst of the storms
 - C. Encountered the native people
 1. Word for them was from the word where we get “barbarian”
 - a. Meant that they didn’t speak Greek
 2. They showed them unusual kindness
 3. Started fire for them because it was cold
- II. Paul shows the power of Jesus to the natives
 - A. The viper
 1. Paul was gathering firewood for the fire

2. As he was putting wood on the fire a viper came out of the fire and bit him
 - a. Very poisonous snake
 - b. Most people died from snakebites at this time
 3. The people thought this was justice
 - a. Believed Paul must be a bad man
 - Thought he was a murderer
 - b. How else could you explain someone surviving the storms and shipwreck only to be killed as soon as they reached the island?
 - Had to be justice making things right
 4. Paul shook off the snake
 - a. The people waited to see the effects
 - Swollen arm
 - Getting sick
 - b. Nothing happened to Paul
 5. The people changed their minds about Paul
 - a. Thought he must be a god to survive that
- B. Publius' father
- a. Publius was the chief man of the island
 - Showed hospitality to Paul and his companions
 - Took care of them for three days
 - b. His father was very sick
 - Had fever and dysentery (a disease that often came from goat's milk)
 - c. Paul heals him
 - Laid hand on him
 - Prayed to the Lord for him
 - d. The people brought all who were sick and Paul healed them
 - The people showed the people favor
 - Gave them whatever they needed for the journey to Rome

III. SO WHAT??!!

- A. God was showing His power through creation
 1. Sent Paul to a people who had not heard
 2. Using the storms and reef to get them there
- B. God was showing His power through Paul
 1. Kept him safe from the snake
 2. Used him to heal the chief's son

FOLLOW-UP QUESTIONS FOR PARENTS

- What do you remember from the lesson this morning?
- What did the passage tell you about the early church?
- When is a time God has used you to show His power?
- What are other ways that you have seen His power at work?

SMALL GROUP DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- What stuck out to you from the talk?
- What did you learn today from Paul's life and ministry?
- How did God use Paul to show His power?
- How can God use you to show His power?

FAMILY DEVOTION

OPEN IN PRAYER (choose 1 person to pray)

OPENING QUESTION/ACTIVITY

- What are ways you have seen God's power in nature? Which is your favorite?

READ JOHN 11:32-44

QUESTIONS FOR JK-3RD

- What had happened? Who died?
- What did Mary say to Jesus?
- What did Jesus do in verse 35?
- What did the crowd say?
- What did Jesus do when He got to the tomb?
- What do you learn about God in all of this?

QUESTIONS FOR 4TH-8TH

- Why is it amazing that Jesus wept over Lazarus?
- What did the people say when Jesus said to roll the stone away? Why?
- How did Jesus bring glory to God through this?
- What do you learn about God in all of this?

QUESTIONS FOR 9TH-12TH

- What sticks out to you from this passage? Why?
- Do you believe that Jesus feels your pain and sorrow like this?
- Do you believe that Jesus is truly this powerful?
- What do you learn about God in all of this?

CLOSE IN PRAYER (everyone participates)

FAMILY DEVOTION

OPEN IN PRAYER (choose 1 person to pray)

OPENING QUESTION/ACTIVITY

- Who is the strongest person you know? What makes them so strong?

READ 2 CORINTHIANS 12:7-10

QUESTIONS FOR JK-3RD

- What did Paul say was given to him?
- What does that mean?
- What did Paul do?
- How did God respond?
- How can we be strong according to Paul?
- What do you learn about God in all of this?

QUESTIONS FOR 4TH-8TH

- Why was Paul given this thorn?
- How is God's power made perfect?
- What do we typically do with our weaknesses?
- How did Paul say about his weaknesses?
- How do our weaknesses show Christ's strength?
- What do you learn about God in all of this?

QUESTIONS FOR 9TH-12TH

- What sticks out to you from this passage? Why?
- What are ways that God is keeping you from becoming conceited?
- How could you boast about your weaknesses for God's sake?
- What do you learn about God in all of this?

CLOSE IN PRAYER (everyone participates)

WEEK

39

ACTS 28:11-30

PURPOSE

Continuing the ministry of Jesus by the power of the Holy Spirit

WEEKLY FOCUS

God uses our whole lives for His glory

ACTS 28:11-30

CONTEXT

- Jesus had ascended into heaven but left the disciples with a promise
- Jesus told them that the Holy Spirit would come and give them power
- The Holy Spirit comes upon the people to empower them to witness
- The church lives in harmony and community, which attracts folks to join them
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- There is great persecution that scatters the church out to where God had called them to go—Judea and Samaria—led by a man named Saul
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- The disciples, including Peter, are now taking the Gospel outside of Jerusalem and even to the Gentiles, which was a surprise to the leaders
- Now that the Gentiles believe, the church begins to send out missionaries in order to spread the Gospel further—starting with Paul and Barnabas
- The focus of the book of Acts goes from Peter and ministry to Jews to Paul and ministry to Gentiles
- Paul has been arrested and is being held pending a trial based on false accusations from the Jews

OUTLINE

- I. The journey continues
 - A. Stayed on Malta for 3 months
 - B. Got on a ship that had been there for the winter
 1. Headed towards Rome
 2. Had carved figures
 - a. Castor and Pollux—twin sons of Zeus
 - b. False gods who protected sailors
 - C. Gets to Puteoli
 1. Busy Roman port
 2. Found people who believed in Christ there
 3. Evidence the Gospel had been spreading
 - a. Huge encouragement to him

D. Arrives at Rome

1. Many brothers came from all over to meet Paul
 - a. Gave Paul courage
 - b. He thanked God for this gift
2. Paul was allowed to stay by himself with a guard

II. Paul in Rome

- A. Called for all the Jewish leaders to gather
- B. Explained why he was in Rome
 1. Had not broken any Jewish laws
 2. Was about to be set free but Jews in Jerusalem objected
 - a. Had to appeal to Caesar
 3. He is in chains because of the hope of Israel
 - a. The Messiah
 4. They had not heard of anything against him and wanted to hear more
 - a. Had heard about the Way
 - b. Spoken against everywhere
- C. Met again with Jewish religious leaders
 1. More came than before
 2. Shared about Jesus to them
 - a. Testifying about the Kingdom of God
 - b. Pointed to Jesus from both the Law and the Prophets
 3. Some were convinced and others didn't believe
 4. Paul's last words to them
 - a. Isaiah 6:9-10
 - b. They often hear it but don't receive it
 - c. So now the Gospel will go to the Gentiles
- D. Paul lived there for two years
 1. He paid for everything
 2. Welcomed all who came to him
 3. Proclaimed the Kingdom of God and taught about Jesus
 - a. To all
 - b. With boldness

III. The rest of Paul's story

- A. Spent his time in prison writing letters to encourage the churches
- B. Tradition tells us that Paul was released from prison and went on to spread the Gospel
 - 1. Perhaps traveling as far as Spain—Romans 15:24, 28
 - 2. Then he was arrested again around 67
 - a. Didn't live in a house but chained in prison—2 Timothy 1:16, 2:9
 - b. Forsaken by believers in Rome—2 Timothy 4:16-17
 - 3. Tradition says he was beheaded in Rome for spreading the Gospel

IV. SO WHAT??!!

- A. God was always using Paul to proclaim about Jesus
 - 1. In everything he did
 - a. Prison, shipwrecks, teaching, etc.
 - 2. His whole life was a testimony for Him
- B. Paul was sharing about Jesus to the very end
 - 1. 2 Timothy 4:6-8
 - 2. Would always be remembered as a bold witness for Jesus

FOLLOW-UP QUESTIONS FOR PARENTS

- What do you remember from the lesson this morning?
- What did the passage tell you about the early church?
- How would you like to be remembered when your time on Earth is done?
- What sticks out to you from Paul's life and ministry?

SMALL GROUP DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- What stuck out to you from the talk?
- What did you learn today from Paul's life and ministry?
- What are ways that you would like to live more like Paul did?
- What are one or two words you would use to describe Paul?
- What are one or two words you would like people to use to describe you?



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