

GOD’S SPIRIT, OUR POWER

PART 2

BY JACKIE OESCH

STORIES FROM THE BOOK OF ACTS

LESSON 1: *THE FELL SILENT* – THERE IS NO DIFFERENCE

LESSON 2: *SENT OUT BY THE HOLY SPIRIT* – FIRST MISSIONARY JOURNEY

LESSON 3: *WHAT MUST I DO TO BE SAVED?* – SECOND MISSIONARY JOURNEY

LESSON 4: *GO TO THE GENTILES* – ON TRIAL

LESSON 5: *THEY WILL LISTEN* - ROME

“...I have stored up Your Word in my heart...”

Psalm 119:11

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GETTING STARTED

You are continuing on an adventure that will shape the rest of your life. Your journey will be unique to you and will be determined in part by your eager and enthusiastic desire to grow in your understanding of the book called The Holy Bible. Your commitment to the study promises to enrich your life as God speaks to you through His Word.

As you study you are encouraged to have some recommended supplies on hand:

1. This Bible Study unit: *God's Spirit, Our Power-Part 2*
2. English Standard Version of the Holy Bible (ESV). Note: If you are making a new purchase, look for a Bible, if possible, that has:
 - a. a cross-reference column preferably down the center of each page,
 - b. a Concordance usually found in the back of the Bible, and
 - c. a few basic maps also usually found in the back.
3. Pen or pencil
4. 3x5 or 4x6 index cards

With the three features listed in #2 you will be adequately supplied for your study and be ready to successfully navigate through these lessons. If, however, this is your first exposure to the Bible, you may want to consider beginning with the study entitled *Navigating the Bible*. This study provides navigational tools designed to help you develop skills and make you a more confident Bible student. *Navigating the Bible* may be downloaded at no cost or obligation from the CrossConnect Ministries website (www.crosscm.org). Although this study is recommended, it is not essential for success in studying *God's Spirit, Our Power-Part 2*.

Do not hesitate to mark up your Bible. It's your Bible to study. Make it your own with your notes, your underlining, highlighting, circling and arrows! You may choose to use a notebook or tablet for recording thoughts, questions, and tracking your journey through the study.

The study material is written so that you are able to learn on your own. With a degree of self-discipline you will cover the material with little or no difficulty. At the same time, you will acquire new information, share new insights, and ask some challenging questions that will beg for answers. Anticipating this response you are encouraged to seriously consider inviting a couple of friends to study with you.

May you find joy in your study. May your heart be receptive as God speaks to you through His Word. May these Bible stories reassure you of His great love given to you through His Son Jesus Christ, our Lord and Savior.

Editor's note: For clarification, capitalized pronouns reference God. i.e. "...what He said."

LESSON ONE

THEY FELL SILENT

ACTS 10-12 – THERE IS NO DIFFERENCE

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INTRODUCTION

The rulers of Israel were threatened by the new life orientation that Jesus taught the people. Now they are disturbed by a new decision of the church. Initiated by the work of the Holy Spirit in and through the life of Peter, who made the declaration that God shows no partiality, the church acknowledged that God had also granted repentance to the Gentiles that leads to life (Acts 11:18).

In this lesson discover the ramifications of such a declaration. As you study keep in mind the Jewish history. What had they been taught throughout their time in the wilderness? What was the covenant God had made with them? What did the law reveal? This was the setting in which Peter and Cornelius received the visions from the Lord.

Consider what might be circumstances and situations in your life that need to be reevaluated and explored in order to determine their value and purpose in the light of the words of Jesus to “Go into all the world...”

They fell silent and glorified God!

LESSON 1

Part 1

TEACHING: In Acts 9:31 we learn that the church from Judea in the south all the way to Galilee in the north enjoyed a time of peace. During this time of peace the church was being _____.
We are told that the church walking in the fear (awe) of the Lord and in the living in the comfort of the Holy Spirit that it _____.

The chapter concludes with two stories about Peter. The first (verses 32-35) is about Aeneas, a paralytic who was healed and the second is about Dorcas (Tabitha), a disciple who was always doing good works and helping the poor (verse 36-42). She died. When other believers heard that she had died, they sent for Peter. Peter turned in prayer to the Lord Who gave her life once again.

Peter had experienced similar circumstances with Jesus. In Luke 8:51-56 Jesus takes Peter, James, and John with him as he raises Jairus' daughter from the dead. Assuming that His disciples were with Him, Mark tells the story of Jesus healing the paralytic whose friends brought him to Jesus (Mark 2:1-12). Notice the similarity in the way Jesus instructed the paralytic (verse 11) and Peter's command to Aeneas. What Peter observed Jesus do he now did as Jesus did, as His witness.

INTRODUCTION: Acts 10 records another interesting story about Peter. The story takes place in Caesarea where Cornelius lived and Joppa located about 30 miles south where Peter was staying. Caesarea was named in honor of Caesar Augustus and was the headquarters for the Roman forces. Cornelius was a Gentile.

ASSIGNMENT: Read Acts 10:1-7.

EXERCISE: Vision #1

1. What do we learn about Cornelius in verses 1-2? _____

2. What happened to him one day (verse 3)? _____
3. The angel called out to him. What were the two things the angel said (verses 4b-5)?
 - a. _____
 - b. _____

4. What are we told Cornelius did (verses 7-8)? _____

ASSIGNMENT: Read Acts 10:9-23.

EXERCISE: Vision #2

1. What happened the next day when the men Cornelius sent approached the city (verses 9b-10)?

2. Describe Peter's vision (verses 11-15): _____

3. In the vision Peter saw animals that he was to kill and eat. The Levitical laws dictated that certain foods were detestable and unclean to eat. See Leviticus 11. This command to kill and eat was contrary to what Peter had been taught and practiced. In verse 15, however, what does the voice tell him? _____

What insights do the following references give to verse 15?

- a. Matthew 15:11, 18-20 _____

- b. John 15:3 _____
- c. Romans 14:17 _____

4. Peter was still trying to figure out the vision and its meaning when someone arrives at the gate (verse 17): _____

5. Who were they looking for (verse 18)? _____

6. The voice of the vision is revealed. It is the _____ (verse 19). What did the Spirit tell Peter (verses 19-20)?
a. _____
b. _____
c. _____ for I have sent them.

7. Peter went downstairs, greeted the men and asked the reason for their visit. What did they tell Peter (verse 22)?

- a. Who did they represent? _____
- b. How did they describe him? _____

- c. Why were they sent? _____
8. What was Peter's response (verse 23a)? _____

PERSONAL REFLECTION: As you reflect on the story to this point, what are some of your thoughts?

Part 2

ASSIGNMENT: Read Acts 10:23b-48.

EXERCISE:

1. Who did Cornelius have at his house waiting for Peter (verse 24)? _____

2. Describe their meeting. _____
3. Peter enters and finds not just Cornelius but a large gathering of people (verse 27). What did the Jewish law forbid (verse 28a)? _____
4. For Peter, what would override the law (verse 28)? _____
5. What was his lesson from God? _____
6. What did Peter ask Cornelius (verse 29)? _____
7. Cornelius tells Peter why he sent for him. First, he tells the story of the vision. Then he says (verse 33b) "Now we are all here _____"

8. What's the first thing Peter mentions as he begins to speak (verse 34-35)? _____

9. Peter began with the words "you know." What did they know (verse 36)? _____

10. What else did they know (verses 37-38)? _____

11. What did Peter say he and those with him also knew (verses 39-41)? _____

12. What had those who were eye witnesses been commanded to do (verse 42)?

- a. _____
- b. _____

13. What was their message to be (verse 43)? _____

14. While Peter was speaking what happened?

- a. Verse 44: _____
- b. Verse 45: _____
- c. Verse 46: _____

15. What did Peter order in verses 47-48? _____

TEACHING: Peter’s vision and his visit are significant happenings because as Peter said in verses 34 and 35: “God shows no _____ but in every _____ anyone who _____ Him and _____ what is _____ is _____ to Him.” Some who read these words will say, “Well, of course, God accepts everyone,” but for the devout Jew, like Peter, this was not so. It was against the law. Everything that happened was against the law. Peter associated with a Gentile. He invited the visitors into his home and he was a guest in a Gentile home. All of these things violated Jewish law. Peter, like other Jews, saw Gentiles as unclean.

Now the meaning of the vision he had become clear to him. God doesn’t call Gentiles unclean. He accepts them. So also Peter and the church are to cease considering non-Jews, Gentiles, as unclean. They, too, are invited into God’s Kingdom and into His mission. God reached out to Peter and Peter believed he was sent by God’s Holy Spirit to the house of Cornelius. God’s command had been to preach and testify that “everyone who believes in Him receives forgiveness of sins through His name (verse 43).” What happened after this was God in action. We are told that the gift of the Holy Spirit came on all who heard the message. Those who had traveled with Peter were astonished that the gift of the Holy Spirit had been poured out on the Gentiles. Peter saw no reason why they could not be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ.

ASSIGNMENT: Read Acts 11:1-18. Change, however, causes a reaction.

EXERCISE:

1. What is the first thing we learn in verse 1? What news had spread throughout Judea?

2. So what happened to Peter when he returned to Jerusalem (verse 2)? _____

3. What were these circumcised believers all upset about (verse 3)? _____

4. Summarize verses 4-17. What did Peter tell them? _____

5. Now what was the reaction of those who heard what Peter shared (verse 18)? When they heard these things they felt _____. They _____ God, saying, “Then to the _____ also God has granted _____ that leads to _____.”

Part 3

REFLECTION: Consider what the outcome could have been had Peter refused to accept Cornelius’ invitation to come to his home: _____

APPLICATION:

1. What is some cherished belief or practice that I may need to challenge? _____

 2. Forgiveness is for everyone who believes in Jesus. Are there individuals in my life from whom I withhold forgiveness? _____
 3. Forgiveness wipes out fear. Forgiveness from God draws me closer to Him. It brings me a more intimate relationship with Him. What would happen if I forgave others as God has forgiven me?

- We pray, “And forgive us our trespasses *as we* forgive those who trespass against us.”
4. How might forgiveness draw you into a restored relationship with those you forgive? _____

MEMORIZATION: In the story of Peter and Cornelius we are reminded that in baptism we are all clothed in Jesus’ righteousness and we are all made one. No one is excluded from the family of God for any reason. This is stated clearly in Galatians 3:26-28. This is another excellent passage that keeps us mindful that we are all one in Christ Jesus our Lord. Write out these verses on an index card and work to memorize them. Be alert watching for incidences when you are reminded that you are one with all of God’s people because of Jesus. “There is neither _____ nor _____ (Gentile), there is neither _____ nor _____, there is no _____ and _____, for you are all _____ in _____.”

PRAYER: O my God, so often I find prejudices taking over and making my decisions for me. I must confess to You the many times I have regarded myself better than others. I have determined my own criteria for loving others. Rather than draw close I choose to judge. You have commanded me to share Your Good News of salvation with others and have made me Your witness. Clean up my heart and restore within me the joy of Your salvation. Enable me to embrace others with a life that testifies to Your great love for all humankind. Thank you for Your grace that abounds and continues to draw me ever closer to you. _____

Part 4

TEACHING: The persecution of the early church scattered people north to such places as Phoenicia, Cyprus, and Antioch. Many shared the message only with Jews. Others began to speak to the Greeks (Gentiles) also telling them the Good News about Jesus. We are told in Acts 11:21 that the Lord's hand was with them and a great number of people believed and turned to the Lord. When the news reached the church in Jerusalem, they sent Barnabas to Antioch. When he arrived he saw evidence of God's grace working among the people and was glad and encouraged them to remain true to the Lord.

1. How is Barnabas described in verse 24?
 - a. _____
 - b. _____ and _____
2. What was happening in Antioch (verse 29b)? _____

Barnabas brought Saul to Antioch where they taught a great number of people for a whole year.

Something significant happened in Antioch about that same time. What are we told in Acts 11:26b?

INTRODUCTION: Persecution does not stop. In Acts 12 we will read another miraculous story that tells of God's hand of protection resting on His people, His Church. It's another story about Peter and his arrest. It's a story of the praying church and God's surprises. It's a story of God's intervention in the lives of those who are targeted, arrested, imprisoned, persecuted, and even put to death. It's a story of the church in earnest prayer to God on behalf of those suffering.

ASSIGNMENT: Read Acts 12:1-19.

EXERCISE:

1. Who was the king (verse 1)? _____ What was he doing (verse 1)?

 2. What had he done to James (verse 2)? _____
 3. What was the reaction of the Jews to this (verse 3)? _____
 4. So, what did King Herod do to Peter (verses 3-4)? _____

 5. Verse 5: “So Peter was _____ but the church was earnestly _____.”
 6. What happened the night before he was to be brought to trial (verse 6)? _____

 7. Describe in your own words what happened next (verses 7-10). _____

 8. What was Peter’s realization in verse 11? From what had the Lord rescued him?
 - a. _____
 - b. _____
 9. Where did he go (verse 12)? _____
 10. Who were the others at her house and what were they doing? _____

 11. What was the incident that happened when he arrived at the outer entrance (verses 13-15)?

 12. When they finally opened the door, what was their reaction to seeing Peter (verse 16)? _____

 13. What did Peter do and say (verse 17)? _____

 14. What were his instructions before he left (verse 17b)? _____

- Note:* James is Jesus’ brother, a leader, one of the pillars of the church in Jerusalem.
15. Meanwhile, back at the prison... What was happening (verse 18)? _____

 16. What did Herod do? What was his order (verse 19a)? _____

Part 5

REFLECTION:

1. One cannot read this story without smiling. First, Peter was considered to be such a slippery character that Herod had him placed under the watchful eye of sixteen guards, four guards for each of the four watches of the night! Then, in spite of all the watchmen, a light appeared in his cell and an angel of the Lord strikes Peter who was sleeping between two soldiers. He's commanded to get up and the two chains that bound him fell off. The angel gave Peter enough time to get dressed—clothes, sandals, and cloak—and then led Peter out of the prison. They passed the guards and the iron gate opened for them. They walked down the street and the angel disappeared. So, if you were Peter, what just happened? What would you be thinking about now? _____

According to verse 11 what did Peter conclude from this experience? _____

2. Where was the first place Peter went? John Mark's mother Mary's home was one of the house churches, or a place for the followers to gather and pray. We can imagine it was the middle of the night yet we are told that those gathered were praying. Their prayers were answered. Peter stood at the outer entrance. Rhoda, a servant girl, heard Peter's voice and was so excited that she failed to let him in. Instead, she ran to tell everyone but they refused to believe her. She kept insisting and Peter kept knocking. Finally, they opened the door and were astonished to see him. If you had been at Mary's home with friends gathered for prayer, earnestly praying to God for Peter, how do you think you would have responded to his knock at the door? _____

3. Peter was in prison waiting for his trial. As far as Herod was concerned, Peter was already a dead man. He had pleased the Jews by killing John's brother James and decided to seize Peter also. The cell that night was like a tomb until the angel of the Lord appeared and a light shone in the cell. He was brought from death to life and appeared walking on the street free and unbounded. He went and told those praying for him how the Lord had brought him out of his cell. Before he left Peter told them to go and tell James and the brothers in Jerusalem. What, if any, similarities do you see between Jesus' resurrection and Peter's release? _____

APPLICATION:

1. Peter was kept in prison, but the church was earnestly praying to God for him (verse 5). Have you gathered with others to pray for someone? Did you ask God for the impossible? What was the miracle you were asking for? _____

Now faith is the _____ of things _____ for; the _____ of things not _____ (Hebrew 11:1). Faith enables us to believe what only God can accomplish.

2. God promises to hear our prayers when we cry out to Him. Is the purpose of prayer to tell Him what we want and how He is to respond? Of course not! Prayer keeps us mindful of God and who He is. Prayer reminds us to thank and praise Him for His faithfulness to hear the prayers of our hearts and to answer them according to His good and gracious will. What might make it difficult for you to pray believing that He hears you? _____

3. What might make it difficult for you to pray believing that He will answer according to His good and gracious will, and not yours? _____

4. Apparently those praying in Mary’s house were not prepared for the Lord to answer their prayer, to deliver Peter to them. “You’re out of your mind.” “It is his angel.” Rhoda was so overjoyed that she failed to open the door! The others were stuck in their disbelief and wouldn’t open the door.

PRAYER: We are invited to boldly come before the Lord in prayer. We are encouraged to pray with the confidence of a child asking his/her father for whatever is on the heart and mind of the child. We are to acknowledging the Father’s love for us, His children. _____

LESSON TWO

SENT OUT BY THE HOLY SPIRIT

ACTS 13-14 – FIRST MISSIONARY JOURNEY

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INTRODUCTION

First, we heard of Saul's conversion experience on the road to Damascus. Then we were told about Peter's vision that revealed God's plan of salvation for both Jew and Gentile. This reality added more fuel to the violent persecutions that were ravaging the early church. James was killed; Peter was imprisoned; and Paul with Barnabas were set apart by the church leaders and then sent off on their first missionary journey.

Paul and Barnabas were called by the Holy Spirit who empowered them for their work. Follow them as they got into the boat and sailed down to Seleucia. Stand by Paul as he pronounced judgment on Elymas. Observe the boldness and confidence with which these men spoke of Christ the crucified and resurrected Lord. Consider what it would have been like to share the Truth of Jesus and to have unbelievers follow after you attempting to destroy truth with lies. And, what would it feel like to be stoned and left for dead?

Paul and Barnabas stood their ground even during the onslaught of persecution. O Lord, grant me an obedient heart that trusts You by faith.

LESSON 2

Part 1

INTRODUCTION: Many stories are told in the Book of Acts but only a few can be studied in these few lessons. Several of the previous stories related happenings that occurred in the life of Peter. We were introduced to Saul, also named Paul (Acts 13:9), in chapter 9. In Acts 13 Paul becomes a predominant figure in the early church as a missionary. Acts records three missionary journeys that Paul took bringing the Good News of Jesus wherever he went. Acts 13 and 14 are about his first trip. We will highlight this journey to develop a concept of what his life on the road was like.

ASSIGNMENT: Read Acts 13 and 14. Don't concern yourself with details but rather get an overview of this first missionary journey.

EXERCISE: Acts 13

1. Prophets and teachers are listed in (verse 1). Which two names are familiar to you?
_____ and _____
2. What was the instruction of the Holy Spirit (verse 2)? _____

3. We are told that they worshipped the Lord, fasted, and prayed. What did they do next (verse 3)?

These men, Paul and Barnabas, were set apart by the church in Antioch with the laying on of hands in order that they might be sent off to do the work to which God had called them. They were set apart and sent off!

Note: The laying on of hands was an act of blessing those who were set apart for the work they were called to do. Paul and Barnabas were an extension of the church's ministry in Antioch to the world where they were sent!

4. They went to the coastal town of _____ and set sail for the island of _____ and arrived in _____. What did they do when they arrived (verse 5)? _____
5. Who was their companion and helper (verse 5b)? _____ See the cross-reference for John in Acts 12:12.
6. We are told that they traveled to Paphos. What happened in Paphos? Who did they meet?
Reread 6-12 and retell the story in your own words. _____

-
-
7. Paul and his companions left Paphos and sailed to _____ in _____ (verse 13). What little fact are we told at the end of verse 13?

 8. Then they traveled north to _____. On the Sabbath Paul was invited to speak in the synagogue (verses 14-15). Carefully reread Paul’s message to those gathered (verses 16-41). What is the essence of Paul’s message according to verses 38b-39? “...through this man _____ of _____ is _____ to you. By Him everyone who _____ is _____ from _____ from which you could not be _____ by the _____ of _____.”
 9. What was the response of the people as Paul and Barnabas were leaving the synagogue (verses 42-43)? _____

 10. What happened the next Sabbath (verse 44)? _____
 11. What was the reaction of the Jews to the crowds (verse 45)? _____

 12. What was Paul and Barnabas’ response (verses 46-47)? _____

 13. What was the response of the Gentiles (verse 48)? _____

- Note:* The word “appointed” is a military term meaning next in order. First Paul and Barnabas reached out to the Jews and now to the Gentiles. See also Romans 1:16-17: “I am not ashamed of the Gospel, for it is the _____ of God for the _____ to everyone who _____, to the _____ first, and also to the _____ (verse 16).
14. In Acts 13:49 we are told that the word of the Lord was _____ through the whole region. What happened to Paul and Barnabas in verses 50-51? _____

 15. Verse 52: “And the _____ were _____ with _____ and with the _____.”

REFLECTION: When Paul was in Paphos with Barnabas he was dealing with Elymas the sorcerer. At one point in verses 9-11 Paul was very stern with Elymas and called him a “child of the devil and an enemy of everything that is right.” Paul went on to say that he was “full of all kinds of deceit and trickery.” Paul’s last comment was the question, “Will you never stop perverting the right ways of the Lord?” One can’t help but wonder if Paul, filled with the Holy Spirit (verse 9) remembered his own experience when Jesus said to him, “Saul, Saul, why do you persecute Me?” He goes on to tell Elymas that “the _____ of the _____ is upon _____ (verse 11a).” What did Paul tell him in verse 11b? _____

Paul again treated this man in the same way that the Lord treated him. Elymas was told that he was going to be blind. “Immediately _____ and _____ fell on him, and he _____ about, _____ people to _____ him by the hand.” See also Acts 9:8.

Part 2

INTRODUCTION: We can refresh our memory as we recall what the Lord told Ananias when Ananias was told to go to Saul and place his hands on him to restore his sight (Acts 9:10-12). In Acts 9:16 the Lord said, “I will show him how much he must _____ for My _____.” This next chapter gives us some sense of what Paul was to endure for the name of Jesus.

ASSIGNMENT: Reread Acts 14.

EXERCISE:

1. Paul and Barnabas left Antioch in Pisidia and went to Iconium located about 75-100 miles east of Antioch. They went to the Jewish synagogue as they usually did. What are we told about the response of the people to the message (verse 1)? _____

2. What did the unbelieving Jews do (verse 2)? _____

3. Notice the partnership Paul and Barnabas had with the Lord (verse 3).
 - a. What was the responsibility of Paul and Barnabas? _____

 - b. What was the Lord’s responsibility? _____

4. The people were divided. What was the plot that was planned by the Gentiles and Jews (verse 5)? _____

5. The plot was foiled and the disciples fled to the Lycaonian cities of _____ and _____ . There they continued to _____ .
6. An interesting story takes place in Lystra. What happens in the first part of the story (verse 8-10)? _____

7. Because the lame man is healed, how does the crowd respond? Describe the scene in verses 11-18. _____

TEACHING: The response of the crowd was to make gods of these men and offer sacrifices to them. But things quickly changed. Some of the Jews from Pisidian Antioch and Iconium, two of the previous places on Paul’s journey, followed after the disciples and came to Lystra in order to influence the crowd. We are told that they succeeded in winning the crowd over and the next thing they do (verse 19b) they _____ Paul and _____ him outside the city, thinking he was _____ .

EXERCISE:

1. The crowd thought Paul was dead. But what are we told in verse 20? _____

Not only is Paul not dead but after the disciples gathered around him, “he got up and _____ .”
2. The next day he and Barnabas left for _____ (verse 20b)
3. What was the response in Derbe (verse 21)? _____
4. Why did they return to Lystra, Iconium, and Antioch? _____

5. What were Paul’s words in verse 22b? “Though many _____ we must enter the _____ of God.”
6. According to verse 23 what else did Paul and Barnabas do with the disciples in these places?

7. The disciples returned home to Antioch where they had been _____ to the _____ of God (verse 26) for the _____ they had _____ .
8. What did they do when they arrived in Antioch (verse 27)?
 - a. _____

b. _____ and _____

Part 3

REFLECTION AND APPLICATION:

1. As we read about Paul and Barnabas' first missionary journey we can't help but notice the courage of these men of faith. The message in Antioch (in Pisidia) was that "through Jesus the forgiveness of sins is proclaimed to you." The men were encouraged to stay so the people could hear the Word of God on the next Sabbath. The Jews were filled with jealousy, however, and talked abusively against what Paul was teaching. Persecution began there and the disciples were kicked out of the region.
 - a. Question: Are you one who knows that through Jesus the forgiveness of sins is yours? Are you one who knows that Jesus has justified you and made you righteous before God? Your thoughts: _____

 - b. Question: When you speak to others about Jesus, do others talk abusively against what you say? What are the things they say and do? _____

2. We can't pass through this chapter without reflecting on Paul's physical persecution. He is stoned, dragged out of the city and left for dead. One can't help but wonder what the Jews from Antioch (in Pisidia) and Iconium had to say that won over the crowd. What caused them to act so vehemently against those who earlier had been embraced as gods? Isn't it difficult to comprehend the courage of these men as they went back into Lystra. What would their presence mean to those new believers who lived in Lystra? The question needs to be asked: Was the persecution against Paul and Barnabas? What was the question Jesus asked Saul on the road to Damascus (Acts 9:4)? "Saul, Saul, why do you _____ _____?"
3. Not only did they go into Lystra but they returned to Antioch and to the church from where they had been sent via the same route, visiting the disciples, strengthening and encouraging them to remain true to the faith, and appointing elders for each church. How did they do that? Where did their courage come from? What kept them strong in the faith? In Acts 13:2 we learned that they were set apart for the work that the Holy Spirit called them to do. What do we learn from this? Your thoughts: _____

4. Ask yourself: Do I believe that I have been set apart by God who has been made His child in baptism? How does my life reflect the life of one who has been set apart for God's righteous purposes? _____

DIGGING DEEPER: In 2 Timothy 3:10 Paul writes to Timothy and recalls his experience on this first journey, specifically to Antioch (in Pisidia), Iconium, and Lystra. Paul reminds Timothy that he knows Paul well, even intimately. Write out this verse: _____

Then he goes on to say, "Yet from all of them the Lord _____ me ..." The word for rescued is *rhuomai* meaning to draw to oneself, draw or snatched from danger. And, isn't that exactly what the Lord did? Paul encourages Timothy and he encourages us not to be surprised by persecution and sufferings. Rather he reminds us that as the Lord rescued him by snatching him from danger so He will also snatch us from danger and draw us to Himself.

PRAYER: Realizing that everyone who wants to live a godly life in Christ Jesus will be persecuted (2 Timothy 3:12), allow the Lord to draw you ever closer to Himself as you lift up to Him the concerns of your heart. _____

Part 4

A SIGNIFICANT TEACHING: Acts 15:1-35 holds a pivotal lesson for the future of Christianity. Although the debate over circumcision may seem strange to you, the decision made by the early church declared that Christianity was not a sub-sect of Judaism but a new world religion. Had the church decided that all would be circumcised it would have meant that to be a follower of Jesus one had to become a Jew first because circumcision was the rite by which one became a Jew. The decision to put no barriers before people in order to become a follower of Jesus was based on what Jesus said in John 14:6, "I am the Way and the Truth and the Life. No one comes to the Father except through Me." It is only through Jesus and not through obedience to laws, even the law of circumcision, that we become the children of God.

INTRODUCTION: After a period of time Paul wanted to return with Barnabas to the churches that had been established on their first missionary journey. They had a sharp disagreement, however, whether or not they should take John Mark who had deserted them in Pamphylia. As a result, they parted company. We are told that Barnabas took John Mark and went to Cyprus. Paul went with Silas and traveled north “strengthening the churches (Acts 15:36-41).”

ASSIGNMENT: Read Acts 16:1-10

EXERCISE:

1. In the first few verses we learn that Paul found _____, a young man who was a disciple in _____. He joined Paul and Silas as they traveled from church to church.
2. What was happening to the churches (verse 5)?
 - a. _____
 - b. _____
3. As they were traveling Paul and his companions were trying to determine where the Spirit of Jesus wanted them to go next (verses 6-7). They traveled to the town of _____ (verse 8).
4. What happened according to verse 9? _____

5. They left Troas and headed for _____ (verse 10a). What had the group concluded (verse 10b)? _____

REFLECTION: Paul was eager to preach Jesus wherever he could. However, not everywhere he wanted to go was where the Spirit wanted him to go. We don’t know how the Spirit communicated with Paul and his companions as to where they were to go or not to go. We only know that they were kept from, were not allowed, to enter these places. Realizing that they had been traveling primarily on foot, one can only imagine the frustration developing among these missionaries. Then came the vision of the man from Macedonia. His words were simple, “Come over to Macedonia and help us.” Apparently Paul shared the vision with the others and they got ready to leave at once. The conclusion was that this is where God wanted them to bring the Gospel.

APPLICATION: Although we may not experience visions, yet the teaching for us is significantly appropriate for today. Paul was God’s man in ministry. As one baptized and living under God’s covenant Paul was claimed by God to be His and God made Himself to be Paul’s God. “I will be your

God and you will be My people (Jeremiah 32:38 and 2 Corinthians 6:16).” This is also His proclamation to you and to me. We are told in 1 Peter 2:9, “But you are a _____ race, a royal _____, a _____ nation, a people for His own _____, that you may _____ the _____ of Him who _____ you out of _____ into His marvelous _____.” Like Paul, we are called to declare His praises in order that darkness may be eradicated and the Light may shine ever so brightly in the hearts and lives of people everywhere.

So, the question... If, like Paul, I am in ministry, what is my ministry? Where has God placed me now? Who are the people within my sphere of influence? Who are the people I consider to be a part of my ministry? _____

Paul’s ministry was different than yours and mine. Each one has been given his or her own unique ministry. We live in relationship with other people who in their own ways are standing and begging us, “Come over to Macedonia and help us.” And as one in ministry, like Paul, we conclude that God has called us to bring the Gospel, His Good News, to them. He lives in us and when we come into their lives we bring Jesus to minister and care for them.

CHALLENGE QUESTION: As a man or woman in ministry with Jesus, what difference does it make in the way I live out my life with my husband or wife? with my children, nieces, and nephews? with my coworkers, my boss, the office workers? with my fellow students and teachers? with my neighbors, store clerks, postal workers, and delivery people? _____

LESSON THREE

WHAT MUST I DO TO BE SAVED?

ACTS 16-19 – SECOND MISSIONARY JOURNEY

OVERVIEW OF LESSON 3

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INTRODUCTION

The more the persecutions intensified the more the church spread and grew.

Paul and Silas began the second of three journeys. They continue to press on as they traveled into new territories. Along the way they preached and taught in the synagogues and other interesting places. Travel with them again and enjoy the journey. Find joy as the Lord opened the hearts of Lydia, the jailer, and the magistrate. Discover ways in which your life, like theirs, can influence others for the sake of the Gospel.

The Gospel always caused a reaction—some accepted the message and some disregarded it, some ignored it and others even fought against it. No matter what the response, Paul and Silas remained faithful and proclaimed God’s truth.

Brace yourself for the inevitable persecution these men would suffer. How did Paul regard suffering? Watch what he did when imprisoned or on trial. The fear of persecution and suffering did not seem to determine where these missionaries went, what they said, or what they needed to do for the sake of the Gospel. So suffer with these missionaries and learn from them. And, listen to them sing in the strangest place. Ask yourself, “Could I sing if I was there?”

LESSON 3

Part 1

INTRODUCTION: Paul's journey continues...

ASSIGNMENT: Read Acts 16:11-15

EXERCISE:

1. They first traveled to _____. Macedonia, like Galatia and Cappadocia, is not a specific town but a region that included such towns as Philippi, Thessalonica, and Berea. What are we told about Philippi (verse 12)? _____

Philippi was a town where many from the Roman army retired. Not many Jews lived there. In fact, there were not enough Jews to establish a synagogue so a place of prayer was established outside of the city near the river. This was customary so Paul and Silas went to the river expecting to find believers gathered there. *Note:* Ten Jewish men were required to establish a synagogue in a town.

2. Who was one of the women listening to Paul and Silas (verse 14)? _____
What do we learn about her? _____

3. The Lord opened her heart to respond to the message. How did Lydia respond (verse 15)?
 - a. _____
 - b. _____
4. What was Paul's response to her invitation? Visualizing these tired, hungry, and worn travelers, do you think it took much to persuade them? _____

ASSIGNMENT: Reread Acts 16:16-40.

EXERCISE:

1. Who did Paul and Silas meet on their way to the place of prayer (verses 16-17)? What are we told about her? _____

2. What happened in verse 18? _____

Note: The Greek word for “troubled” is *diaponeo* which means to be tired, to become wearied at the continuance of anything.

3. The spirit that possessed the girl left her (verse 18b). What a chain of events that set off!
- a. What did the owners do (verse 19)? _____
 - b. What did they tell the magistrates? _____
 - c. How did the crowd respond (verse 22)? _____
 - d. What did the magistrates order? _____
 - e. What happened to Paul and Silas? _____
 - f. What was the jailer ordered to do (verse 23)? _____
 - g. What did the jailer do? _____

4. The owners, the magistrates, the crowd, and the jailer all played their part in the attack against Paul and Silas. Things finally quieted down. Once again, God acts on behalf of His servants. It was about midnight. What are Paul and Silas doing (verse 25)? _____

5. What does God do in verse 26? _____

6. What was the jailer’s reaction to everything (verse 27)? _____

7. What did Paul shout out (verse 28)? _____

8. Now what was the jailer’s reaction? What did he ask Paul and Silas (verses 29-30)? _____

9. And they replied, “_____.”

10. Paul and Silas spoke the word of the Lord to all of them. Then what happened (verses 33-34a)?
- a. _____
 - b. _____

11. What are we told about the jailer in verse 34b? _____

12. And, how does the story end? What was the order given by the magistrates (verse 35)? _____

13. What was Paul’s reaction to the message delivered by the jailer (verse 37)? _____

14. What did Paul demand (verse 37b)? _____

15. What was the response to Paul’s demand (verses 38-39)?

- a. They were _____.
 - b. They came and _____ to them
 - c. They took them _____
 - d. They requested them to _____.
16. Where did Paul and Silas go (verse 40)? _____
17. What did they do there? _____
- And then they left.

Part 2

REFLECTION:

1. What a contrast between Lydia’s mansion and the dungeon of the prison! Yet in both Lydia’s home and the prison these men spoke of Jesus in word and song. We are told that in prison they prayed and were singing hymns to God. Lydia listened and the prisoners listened. Paul and Silas used their circumstances as an opportunity in which to give witness to Jesus. Your thoughts: _____

2. What must have been going through the minds of Timothy and Luke as they witnessed Paul and Silas dragged into the marketplace? Would they be next? Would they ever see Paul and Silas again? Alive? Your thoughts: _____

3. What was going through the mind of Silas as he and Paul were attacked by the crowd, stripped, beaten, flogged, and thrown into prison, placed in the inner cell and his feet fastened in stocks? To our knowledge, he had never experienced anything like this before. What suffering! What persecution for the sake of the Gospel! Recall Paul’s words to the disciples in Antioch (Acts 14:22) and his words to Timothy (2 Timothy 3:12). Your thoughts: _____

4. Lydia and the jailer were people of influence. We are told that Lydia was baptized and the members of her household (Acts 16:15). We are also told that immediately the jailer and all his family were baptized (Acts 16:33). In verse 34 the jailer is filled with joy because he had come to believe in God—he and his whole family. These people influenced the lives of others for eternity! Your thoughts: _____

APPLICATION: Take time to consider yourself as being a man or woman of influence. You are an influence on others whether you realize it or not. You are being observed. Others watch the way you respond to life, deal with crisis, and how you live your life as one who knows Jesus.

1. Who are the people within your sphere of influence? _____

2. As you take a proactive approach to live as an influence in someone's life, how might you live your life with deliberate intention? _____

3. Most people have children they can influence. How might you influence a child's life bringing them into an intimate relationship with Jesus? _____

PRAYER: Thank the Lord for using you in ministry and ask for guidance and direction as one who recognizes the responsibility to those within your circle of influence. _____

Part 3

INTRODUCTION: The remainder of Paul's second missionary journey included five more cities: Thessalonica, Berea, Athens, Corinth, and Ephesus. These names may seem strange to you, however, five of the New Testament books were letters written by Paul to the churches in these cities. Look in the Table of Contents and identify these books of the Bible.

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____

Let's look briefly at events that took place in each of these cities.

ASSIGNMENT: Read Acts 17:1-9 (in Thessalonica)

EXERCISE:

1. What did Paul preach (verses 2b-3)? _____

2. What was the outcome of his preaching (verse 4)? _____

3. What persecution and suffering took place (verses 5-7a)? _____

4. What was the accusation (verses 6b, 7b) _____

5. What was the reaction of the people to these accusations (verses 8-9)? _____

ASSIGNMENT: Read Act 17:10-15 (in Berea)

EXERCISE:

1. What do we learn about the Bereans (verse 11)? _____

2. What was the outcome of Paul's preaching (verse 12)? _____

3. What persecution and suffering took place (verses 13-15)? _____

ASSIGNMENT: Read Acts 17:16-34 (in Athens)

EXERCISE:

1. What do we learn about Athens (verse 16) and the Athenians (verse 21)? _____
 2. What did Paul preach (verse 18b)? _____

- What did Paul teach about the unknown God in verses 24-31? _____

3. What was the response of some (verse 32a)? _____
What was the response of others (verse 32b)? _____
and (verse 34)? _____

ASSIGNMENT: Read Acts 18:1-17 (in Corinth)

EXERCISE:

1. Paul was rejected in Athens and went to Corinth. Who did he meet, why were they in Corinth, and what do you learn about them (verses 1-4)? _____

-
-
2. What did Paul preach (verse 5)? _____
 3. What persecution and suffering took place (verse 6a)? _____
 4. What did Paul declare regarding his ministry (verse 6b)? _____
-
5. What did Paul find when he went to the house next door (verses 7-8)? _____
-
6. Paul appears to be worn out from all of the abusive treatment he had received. How did God bless him (verses 9-11)? _____
-
7. Observe what happens to Paul when Gallio was proconsul of Achaia. The Jews united to attack Paul and brought him to court accusing him of “persuading the people to worship God in ways contrary to the law.” Gallio dismissed the case ordering them to settle the matter themselves and ejected them from the court. Instead of attacking Paul, what did the Jews do? _____
-
8. In 1 Corinthians 1:1 we can assume that Sosthenes became a traveling companion of Paul for Paul begins a letter he wrote, “Paul, called by the will of God to be an _____ of _____, and our brother _____,” Verse 2: “To the _____ of God that is in _____...”

Part 4

TEACHING: A pattern developed as Paul traveled. He always began by going to the Jewish synagogue where he taught, debated, preached, and explained to prove that Jesus was the Christ who had to suffer and rise from the dead. Each and every time this caused a reaction. Some Jews believed; some did not. Some Greeks believed and some did not. Some were jealous and some caused riots. Some received the message and some sneered and tore their clothes. Some embraced the message and others regarded the message as sounding strange to their ears. Regardless of how the people reacted we must remember that the message of Jesus as the resurrected Living Lord caused a reaction.

This same message continues to cause a reaction to this present day. The message is either received or rejected. Even when the Athenians wanted to keep talking with Paul about this subject, Paul left Athens because he knew they spent their time doing nothing but talking about and listening to the latest ideas. Their reaction was to reject the men and their message.

APPLICATION: The question remains. What is *my* reaction to the message? _____

TEACHING:

1. As we look at those who received the message we notice that many were baptized like Lydia, the jailer, and the synagogue ruler with their entire household. Others, like Aquila and Priscilla, became followers and partnered with Paul as he traveled. Still others, like Apollos, were students and traveled to other places encouraging the brothers and assisting with the teaching of the new believers. The church grew and spread.
 - a. Acts 16:5 says that the _____ were _____ in the _____ and they _____ in _____.
 - b. And in Acts 19:20 it says, “the _____ of the Lord _____ to _____ and prevail _____.”
 - c. Acts 19:17 says that the _____ of the Lord _____ was _____.
2. We are told the churches, as fragile as they were, needed to be strengthened and encouraged by Paul and Silas, Barnabas, Timothy and others. In Acts 18:23, for example, we read about Paul setting out and traveling from place to place throughout the region strengthening all the disciples. The Christians were enduring severe suffering and needed to be lifted up by those who had introduced them to the Lord.
3. In Acts 19:21 we are told that Paul decided to go to _____. About that same time a disturbance broke out about the Way (the followers of Jesus) back in Ephesus. Paul’s message from his last journey was causing a silversmith named Demetrius a problem. His business and others in related trades were at risk because “Paul had convinced and led astray large numbers of people in Ephesus and the province of Asia (verse 26a).” What had Paul said (Acts 19:26b)? “_____.” Their trade was in danger and also the temple of the great goddess may count as nothing and she may even be _____ from her _____, she whom all Asia and the world _____.
4. Everyone was in an uproar except Paul. Everyone was upset but Paul. The people were furious and shouting. “_____.” Those assembled were in confusion. Acts 19:32b says, “Most of the people did not even know

why they were there.” Such confusion ensued. For two hours they shouted, “Great is Artemis of the Ephesians (verse 24)!” Finally the city clerk quieted the crowd and reminded them of the undeniable fact that Ephesus is the guardian of the temple of Artemis. He went on to say that Paul had not robbed or blasphemed Artemis and if Demetrius had any grievance against anybody that he was to bring it before the courts. What was the city clerk’s concern (verse 40)? _____

The assembly was dismissed and the crowd dispersed.

LESSON FOUR

GO TO THE GENTILES

ACTS 20-23 – ON TRIAL

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INTRODUCTION

Paul had said his good-byes to the church in Ephesus and was in a hurry to return to Jerusalem in time for Passover. Before he faced his opposition there, take some time and carefully look at Paul's character. Consider how he regarded persecution and suffering, his assignment that the Lord had given him, his expectations for those who were a part of the body of believers, and his love for those who partnered with him.

Having returned to Jerusalem from his last missionary journey Paul was determined to report to James, the brother of Jesus, and to the elders "the things that God had done among the Gentiles through his ministry." Notice the response of those who heard.

Shortly, his life would be threatened because he brought a Greek into the temple which according to Jewish law defiled the place. What did Paul's action stir up? What did those who arrested him have to contend with? What was the result? Listen closely. Do you hear things that remind you of Jesus' trial and execution?

LESSON 4

Part 1

EXERCISE:

1. What did Paul do before he set out for Macedonia (Acts 20:1)? _____

2. Traveling was slower than Paul had anticipated. What delayed his trip according to verse 3?

3. Finally he was reunited with his traveling companions in Troas (verses 4-6). What was the incident recorded in Acts 20:7-12? _____

4. Paul was rushing to get to Jerusalem (verses 13-16). Why was he in such a hurry according to verse 16? _____
5. Who did Paul send for in verse 17? _____
Rather than travel to Ephesus these elders came to Miletus. What does Paul tell these men?
 - a. Verse 18: _____
 - b. Verse 19: _____
 - c. Verse 20: _____
 - d. Verse 21: _____
6. Things were difficult for Paul. The _____ compelled Paul to go to _____ . What was the Spirit's warning as he traveled from town to town (verse 23)? _____
7. How did Paul regard his own life (verse 24a)? _____
8. What was it that he wanted to do above all else (verse 24b)? _____

9. Paul will never see these Ephesian elders again. Now he exhorts them to stand firm, finish the race, and hold on to their course. What did Paul tell the elders?
 - a. Verse 28a: _____
 - b. Verse 28b: _____
 - c. Verses 29-31: _____

10. Leaving was not easy. After committing them to God and to the word of His grace (verse 32) we are told in verse 36 that he _____.
- They all _____ as they _____ him and _____ him.
11. What grieved the elders the most (verse 38)? _____
- _____
12. They accompanied Paul to the ship and the travelers continued their journey. They landed in Tyre and stayed several days. They were accompanied out of the city and on the beach (Acts 21:5b-6) they _____.
13. They traveled from one place to another, from one home to another and even stayed at the home of _____ (verse 8). *Note:* This is the same Philip we read about in Acts 8 who performed miraculous signs in Samaria and ministered to the Ethiopian eunuch telling him the Good News about Jesus.
14. Even with the prophet's prophecy in verse 11, Paul would not be dissuaded and continued the journey to _____ (verse 15). Describe Paul's reception by the church in Acts 21:17: _____
15. What was one of the first things Paul did when he arrived (verses 18-19)? _____
- _____

REFLECTION: We see Paul's character in the way he lived his life. Consider a couple of things from Acts 20...

1. In verse 23 we know that Paul was *not surprised by hardships*. The Holy Spirit had warned him that _____.
2. In verse 24 we see his *enthusiasm* and *passion* to _____ the course and the _____ he had received from the Lord Jesus. What was that ministry? _____
3. Paul had *expectations* for those brought to the faith and for those who were spiritual caretakers (verse 28, for example). They were to _____ to yourselves and to all the flock, in which the Holy Spirit has made you _____, to care for the _____ of God, which he obtained with His own _____.
4. In verses 36-38 we see the *love* of Paul for those who were partners with him in the Gospel. We read about the difficulty he had leaving these Ephesian elders and how he had to tear himself away from them.

APPLICATION:

1. Consider your own character. How is your character strengthened? _____

2. If someone was asked you to describe your opinion about hardships, what would you share?

3. What difference would embracing hardships for the sake of the Gospel make in how you lived your life? _____

Part 2

INTRODUCTION: The remainder of *God's Spirit, Our Power* will focus on the story of Paul's arrest, his trials, and his journey to Rome. We remember that life for Paul was not easy. The Lord had told Ananias that Paul would suffer much for His name (Acts 9:15-16). Consistently Paul's journeys were disrupted by those Jews who followed him, harassing him and stirring up trouble. Paul was persecuted, stoned, beaten, arrested, and thrown in prison. Death was never far away, yet he continued to preach wherever he went.

ASSIGNMENT: Read Acts 21:27-36. As you read these verses watch for the words that describe the anger of the people. What was causing their reaction?

EXERCISE:

1. Where were these Jews from (verse 27)? How would they have known Paul? _____

2. They _____ the crowd and _____ Paul.
3. What were they shouting? What were their accusations (verse 28a)? He teaches against:
 - a. _____
 - b. _____
 - c. _____
4. What was their other accusation (verse 28b)? _____

5. Describe the scene in verses 30-32: _____

6. Where is this riot taking place? City? _____ Place? _____
7. What kept Paul from being killed? _____
8. What did the commander do (verse 33)? _____
9. Then he attempted to find out the truth about what was going on? What did he learn (verse 34)?

10. Describe the violence of the crowd (verse 35): _____

11. What did the crowd keep shouting (verse 36)? _____

REFLECTION:

1. One can't help but wonder what this scene in Jerusalem was like. What caused such violence? If Paul was acting in obedience to God and giving testimony of Jesus throughout Asia Minor (modern day Turkey) and the surrounding territories, who were they really fighting against? Your thoughts: _____

2. We have heard the words in verse 36 before. See Luke 23:18 and John 19:15. Describe what was happening in these references. _____

APPLICATION QUESTION: What do you believe with such conviction that if opposed or attacked you would act as vehemently as these people did? _____

Part 3

ASSIGNMENT: Read Acts 21:37-22:21. First, Paul explains who he is. Then he gives his testimony. Watch this unfold in these verses.

EXERCISE:

1. Paul wants to give his testimony. What does he ask in verse 37? _____

2. Paul received permission to speak to the people (verse 40). What language does he use?
_____ This was the language of those who heard him. We are told that when he spoke there was a _____.

3. Consider what Paul shared:

- a. First, he established his ancestry (verse 3a): _____
- b. What was his education background (verse 3b)? _____

- c. What was his former conduct (verses 4-5)? _____

- d. Next, he shares his conversion experience on the road to _____
Jesus' question: _____
Saul's question: _____
Jesus' answer: _____
Saul's question: _____
Jesus' answer: _____
- e. Describe the scene with Ananias in verses 12-16: _____

- f. What does Paul say happened to him when he returned to Jerusalem (verses 17-20)?

- g. What was the Lord's command (verse 21)? _____

REFLECTION:

- 1. Paul goes into great detail about his conversion experience. Probably no other conversion would ever be as dramatic as Paul's. The Lord Jesus Himself called out to him! The conversion wasn't so much about the bright light, the blindness, the voice, and such things. The conversion was all about what happened to Saul's heart. He went from a person who gave approval to the killing of Stephen and the beating, imprisoning, and persecuting those who were the followers of this Way to a man who himself was beaten, imprisoned, and persecuted because now he was a follower of this Way. He was baptized. He had his sins washed away. He called on the name of the Lord.
 - a. What value would his testimony spoken in Aramaic have for those who heard him?

 - b. Do I have a heart conversion testimony? What is my testimony? _____

- c. What value can my testimony have for those who hear it? _____

2. Acts 22:21 tells us what the Lord said to him, “ _____, for I will _____ you far away to the _____.” Paul lived as one who had been sent! He was a man on a mission, God’s mission, to reach the Gentiles, the lost ones. God wanted someone with great passion and He knew that the converted heart of Saul would direct and utilize that same great passion for His mission to reach the Gentiles. Your thoughts: _____

APPLICATION:

1. How passionate are you? How zealous are you for the things of God? How enthused are you for the mission of God? Do you find great joy in living as one sent by God, living as one in mission? Are you willing to suffer hardships and persecutions for the name of Jesus?

2. What are some of your thoughts regarding your own willingness to have God direct your dreams and ambitions so that He can use you in His mission of reaching the lost? _____

Part 4

ASSIGNMENT: Read Acts 22:22-29. The story poses some difficulties for the Roman authorities.

EXERCISE:

1. Paul has just said in verse 21 that the Lord said He would send him far away to the Gentiles. Everyone had been listening carefully up to this point. What happens next in verses 22-24?

2. They stretched Paul out to flog him. What was Paul’s question (verse 25)? _____

3. So, the centurion runs to his commander and reports, “This _____ is a _____.” No Roman citizen received punishment with flogging, scourging, or crucifixion. They were protected by Roman law. Now

there's a problem. So, the commander questions Paul who confirms the report. He is a Roman citizen. In fact, Paul says, "I was a citizen by _____."

4. We are told that those who had been sent to question Paul _____ from him immediately (verse 29). The commander himself was _____. Why?
-

Part 5

INTRODUCTION: Now Paul's trials begin. You will notice that Paul is treated very much like Jesus was. He has done nothing wrong from the Lord's point of view but from the Jewish viewpoint he has gravely violated their Law. In Acts 21:36 we read that the crowd kept shouting, "Away with him!" In Acts 22:22 we read again that the crowd was shouting, "Rid the earth of him! He's not fit to live!" This all sounds a lot like, "Crucify Him! Crucify Him!" These next few chapters of Acts speak about his trial. The Jews want him dead and the Roman's don't know what to do with him because he's a citizen and has done nothing to violate Roman law.

ASSIGNMENT: Read Acts 22:30-23:11

EXERCISE:

1. The commander thought it was time for a face-to-face confrontation. What did he want to know (verse 30)? _____
2. What did Paul declare in 23:1? _____
3. What did Ananias order (verse 2)? _____
4. What did Paul, not knowing that Ananias was the high priest, say (verse 3)? _____

5. We are told that Paul knew that both Pharisees and Sadducees were present in the assembly. What did he say next (verse 6) that caused a dispute and divided the group (verse 6b)?

6. Describe the scene that followed (verses 9-10): _____

7. Were they more upset because the Lord had talked to him or that the Lord was sending him to the Gentiles whom they did not regard as God's chosen people? What do you think and why?

-
-
8. The commander feared again for Paul's life so he had him removed from the Sanhedrin. What happened later that night (verse 11)? _____

Paul would be going to Rome.

ASSIGNMENT: Read Acts 23:12-22.

EXERCISE:

1. What was the plot and who was involved (verses 12-15)? _____
2. Who heard about this plot (verse 16)? _____
3. What did he do with the information (verses 17-21)? _____
4. What was the commander's order to Paul's nephew (verse 22)? _____

ASSIGNMENT: Read Acts 23:23-35.

EXERCISE:

1. What did the commander order next (verses 23-24)? _____
2. Caesarea was the headquarters of Roman rule for Samaria and Judea. Felix was the governor representing Rome. The commander prepared all of the soldiers, horsemen, and spearmen for Paul's safe journey in order to stand trial before Felix.
3. Summarize what Commander Claudius Lysias wrote to the Governor (verses 27-30). _____
4. The soldiers carried out their orders and had Paul delivered by the cavalry to Felix. What did Felix determine to do after he read the letter (verse 35)? _____

LESSON FIVE

THEY WILL LISTEN

ACTS 24-28 – ROME

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INTRODUCTION

Paul's journey to Rome was long and arduous. He endured trials before Felix and Festus and then with King Agrippa. As you study you will learn about the trip by sea and his arrival in Rome. Jesus set His face toward Jerusalem and endured the cross. Paul set his face toward Rome and never wavered.

Observe Paul's proactive approach before the governors and king. He took the lead and spoke with intention telling of what God had done in his life. He approached the court believing he was given another opportunity to be "My Witness" and spoke with bold confidence as the innocent man that he was.

Learn what each of the governors and the king said about Paul. Hang on for the rough boat ride to Rome. Celebrate your delayed arrival into Rome and settle in as you listen Paul proclaim the kingdom of God as he taught about the Lord Jesus Christ "with all boldness and without hindrance."

LESSON 5

Part 1

ASSIGNMENT: Read Acts 24.

EXERCISE:

1. What were the accusations made against Paul before Felix by Annas, the elders and by the lawyer Tertullus (verses 5-8)?

a. Verse 5a _____

b. Verse 5b _____

c. Verse 6 _____

And the Jews declared these same accusations to be true (verse 9).

2. In summary what did Paul say in his own defense (verses 10-21):

a. Verse 14a _____

b. Verse 14b _____

c. Verse 15 _____

3. In addition, Paul negates the argument of his accusers (verse 18): There was no crowd with me nor was I involved in any uproar or commotion.

4. In verse 21 what does Paul say is the one reason he's on trial? _____

5. Felix adjourned the meeting. What was his decision (verses 22-23)? _____

It's interesting to note in verse 22 that Felix was "well acquainted with the Way."

6. An interesting relationship developed between Paul and Felix. Felix would send for Paul. What would Paul talk about (verses 24-25)? _____

Felix, on the other hand, was hoping for something else. What was it (verse 26)? _____

7. Two years passed. Who succeeded Felix as Governor of the province (verse 27)? _____

What was the unfinished business Felix left for Festus? _____

ASSINGMENT: Read Acts 25.

EXERCISE:

1. Shortly after arriving in Caesarea Festus left for _____
What happened there (verse 2)? _____
2. What did the Jewish leaders want (verse 3a)? _____
3. What was their plot (verse 3b)? _____
4. What did Festus tell them (verses 4-5)? _____

5. Court convened. Paul was brought before them. What do we learn from verse 7? _____

6. What did Paul say in his defense (verse 8)? _____
7. What do we notice about Festus in verse 9? What did he ask Paul? _____

8. What is the exchange that takes place in verses 10-11? _____

9. Paul appeals to Caesar. Festus met with his council and declared, “ _____
_____.”

REFLECTION: One can’t help but notice the phrase “handed me over” in verse 11. Once again the words remind us of Jesus’ trial. He was handed over to Annas, then to Caiaphas, and on to Pilate, then handed over to Herod and back to Pilate. Finally, He was handed over to be crucified (John 19:16). No one knew what to do with Jesus and, ultimately, no one knew what to do with Paul either. We, too, are given the same opportunity in our own life. What am I going to do with Jesus? Am I going to receive Him or am I going to hand Him over to someone else and miss the relationship with Him that offers life and salvation in this world and the next? Your thoughts: _____

Part 2

TEACHING: We can surmise that Festus was a little upset that Felix left this unfinished business for him to resolve. What was he going to do with Paul? The Jews wanted him condemned but Festus insisted that Roman law ordered the accused to face the accusers and that the accused has the opportunity to defend himself against the charges. Rather than be sent to Jerusalem, Paul appealed to Caesar. Festus explained his dilemma to King Agrippa who was visiting in Caesarea with Bernice. Festus went on to explain that the dispute between the Jewish leaders and Paul were matters related to their religion.

Obviously, Festus knew nothing about “a dead man named Jesus who Paul claimed was alive.” What was he to do? In Acts 25:22 Agrippa said to Festus, “_____.”

EXERCISE:

1. What was the atmosphere in the audience room when Paul entered (verse 23)? _____

2. Festus speaks. What is his primary purpose for this meeting (verses 24-27)? _____

3. Paul is given the opportunity to present his defense against the accusations. What is a summary of his opening statement (Acts 26:4-8)? _____

4. Why does Paul believe he is on trial (verse 8)? _____

5. What had been Paul’s past (verses 9-11)? _____

6. In verses 12-18 Paul shares his conversion testimony. Several of these verses are a repeat of what Paul shared with the crowd in Jerusalem (Acts 22). Look closely at verses 15-18. Note what Jesus told Paul:
 - a. Verse 16: I have _____ to you for this _____, to _____ you as a _____ and _____.
 - b. Verse 17: delivering you from your _____ and from the _____ to whom _____
 - c. Verse 17b-18: I am _____ you to _____ their _____, so that they may _____ from _____ to _____, and from the power of _____ to _____, that they may receive _____ of _____ and a _____ among those who are _____ by _____ in _____.
7. What does Paul say was the message he preached (verse 20b)?
 - a. They should _____ and
 - b. _____ to God,
 - c. Performing _____ in keeping with their _____.
8. What does Paul say about his testimony (verses 22-23)? _____

9. Festus interrupts Paul's defense by shouting out: "_____."
_____.
10. To Festus Paul says that he is not insane but rather true and reasonable. What does he direct to Agrippa (verse 26)? _____

11. What question does he ask Agrippa (verse 27)? _____
12. What is Agrippa's response (verse 28)? _____

13. What is Paul's response? _____

14. Then Festus, King Agrippa, Bernice, and the others sitting with them leave the room. What is the discussion among themselves (verse 31)? _____

15. What do we hear Agrippa saying to Festus? _____

Part 3

REFLECTION: Take a moment to consider Paul, the accused, walking into the audience room where the governor and king were sitting along with the high ranking officers and leading men of the city (Acts 25:23). If you were Paul, what would you be feeling? What would be going through your head about now? Would you feel intimidated? Nervous? Tense? How do you think Paul was feeling? Look at Acts 26:2. How does Paul view this audience? Do you sense weakness or strength as he positions himself and begins his defense? What an opportunity Paul had to give his testimony of the hope that was his! Paul appeared as a free man, free from the guilt of any wrongdoing. He was free to tell his story of what God had called him to do. He was a man sent on a mission, on God's mission, to open the eyes of people and to turn them from darkness to light, from the power of Satan to God, so that they may receive forgiveness of sins and a place among those who are sanctified by faith in Jesus!

APPLICATION QUESTION: What are some situations I have that give me the opportunity to declare the hope that is in me? _____

PRAYER: O Jesus, as You sent Paul, You also send me to those who do not know You. You send me with purpose to them. You send me to open their eyes and turn them from darkness to light. You send me to turn them from the power of Satan to God so that they may receive forgiveness of sins and a place among those who are sanctified by faith in You. Strengthen me for the assignment. Give me courage and boldness to speak as one who lives and testifies to the hope that is in me. _____

Part 4

INTRODUCTION: At last the decision was made to sail for Italy (Acts 27:1). Paul and the other prisoners were made the responsibility of Julius, a centurion of the Imperial Regiment. We aren't sure who all traveled with Paul but we do know that Aristarchus was with him and we can assume Luke, the writer of the Book of Acts, because the personal pronoun "we" was used. We boarded the ship. We put out to sea. You may recall, Aristarchus, Paul's traveling companion from Macedonia, was one seized by the crowd during the riot in Ephesus (Acts 19:29).

ASSIGNMENT: Read Acts 27:1-12.

EXERCISE:

1. What are we told about the relationship between Julius and Paul in verse 3? _____

It almost sounds as though Paul was released to visit his friends and was expected to return to the ship before it set out to sea again. It does not seem as if he was confined to chains and put under a guard's watchful eye.

2. What do you notice very quickly as you read through verses 4-12? What were the conditions at sea?
 - a. Verse 4: _____
 - b. Verse 7: _____
 - c. Verse 7: _____
 - d. Verse 7: _____
 - e. Verse 8: _____
 - f. Verse 9: _____

3. The journey began but we know much time was lost and the best season for sailing was past. Now it was late September, early October and sailing was dangerous (verse 9). What was Paul's warning in verse 10? _____

4. Paul's warning was not heeded by the centurion, the pilot or the owner of the ship. What was the decision of the majority (verse 12)? _____

ASSIGNMENT: Read Acts 27:13-26.

EXERCISE:

1. With the wind reaching hurricane force the ship was caught by the storm. Now the challenge was to keep the battered ship together. They began to jettison the _____ (verse 18). Verse 19 tells us that they even threw _____.
2. Not only the wind and the waves of the storm made the sailors fearful of running aground but we are told that as the storm raged and they were without the navigational assistance of either the sun or the stars. What was happening psychologically to those on the boat (verse 20b)? _____

3. Then comes Paul's "I told you so" statement. What does he tell them (verse 21)? _____

4. Paul also encourages the men (verse 22): _____

5. What was the angel's message (verses 23-24)? _____

6. So, what's the good news in verse 25? _____

7. What's the bad news in verse 26? _____

REFLECTION: Isn't it interesting that the decision of the majority isn't the best decision? In verse 12 we are told that the majority decided. In spite of the dangers, in spite of the warning, the majority decided to disregard the advice. Because of the decision Paul and those sailing with him were in desperate circumstances. The battered boat was being held together by rope. The crew was hungry. The cargo and ship's tackle was thrown overboard and then comes verse 20: "We finally gave up all hope of being

saved.” Hope was gone. The last thing one wants to hear at such a time is someone saying, “I told you so.” Yet, that’s exactly what Paul said. But that’s not all he said. God reassured Paul that he would be delivered to Rome. He also graciously gave Paul the lives of all who sailed with him. With these words of encouragement, Paul lived believing that what God said He would do He would indeed do.

APPLICATION:

1. When have you felt like your life was battered by storms that made it difficult to stay the course?

2. What has been your experience when you have followed the decision of the majority? As a child?
As a citizen? As a leader/follower? _____

3. Has the decision of the majority caused you to compromise your beliefs, convictions, your moral judgment? If so, how? _____

Part 5

ASSIGNMENT: Read Acts 27:27-44.

EXERCISE:

1. For fourteen nights the ship was tossed about on the sea. The sailors sensed that they were approaching land. Afraid that the boat would crash against the rocks, they attempted to escape from the ship on the lifeboat. What did Paul tell the centurion and the soldiers (verse 31)?

So, the last thing to be lost at sea was the lifeboat.
2. Paul now encourages them to _____ (verse 33). Paul lived believing they would all survive but they needed to eat to sustain their energy for survival. He told them to eat and then he took bread, gave thanks, broke it, and began to eat. Sounds simple enough! Because he did the others on board were encouraged to do the same. How many were on board? _____
3. After they ate what did they do (verse 38)? _____
4. What happened at daybreak (verses 39-44)? _____

5. The ship ran aground just as Paul had said it would. What did the soldiers want to do (verse 42)?

6. What was the centurion's decision (verse 43)? _____

Some men jumped overboard and others grabbed on to planks or other pieces of the ship. In this way _____ (verse 44b).

REFLECTION: The ship saved those onboard (verse 31). The ship broke into pieces by the pounding of the surf (verse 41). The pieces became the lifeline for those who couldn't swim (verse 44). The ship held the community of the sailors, the prisoners, the soldiers, and the centurion. There were 276 sailing. All 276 were saved. The circumstance in which these men found themselves was harsh. Everything around them was bombarding the ship. The surf pounded the ship. The sandbar caused the ship to run aground. Yet Paul said that "Unless these men _____ in the _____, you cannot be _____ (verse 31)." The ship carried these men through the storm. The ship enabled 276 men to be saved. God provided the ship during the storm and kept it together through the storm. Even though the ship was broken to pieces, even then the pieces enabled everyone to reach land in safety. Faith becomes that ship for us as we weather the storms of life. St. Paul wrote to Timothy encouraging him to fight the good fight, holding on to faith and a good conscience. Then he goes on using the shipwreck as a picture. He tells Timothy, "By _____ this some have made _____ of their faith (1 Timothy 1:19) and in 1 Timothy 6:21 Paul speaks about those who have _____ from the _____.

APPLICATION:

1. Who are those who encourage you to fight the good fight of faith? _____
2. Who are those you encourage to fight the good fight of faith? _____
3. When life gets stormy, faith enables us to endure through the difficulty. Look for those whose faith strengthens yours faith during such times.
4. Look for opportunities to provide for others the faith you have in the One who has fought the good fight of faith, even our Lord Jesus Christ.

ASSIGNMENT: Read Acts 28.

EXERCISE:

1. The island was _____ (verse 1). Everyone arrived safely on shore.

2. What are we told about the islanders (verse 2)? _____
3. What was the incident that happened to Paul in verses 3-6? _____

- What was the conclusion of the islanders (verse 6)? _____
4. Who was Publius (verse 7) and what did he do? _____

5. What was Paul's ministry while on Malta (verses 8-9)? _____

6. Three months later they put out to sea. What do we know about the ship (verse 11)? _____

7. They traveled from Syracuse to Rhegium to Puteoli and at last arrive in _____.
8. What encouraged Paul after his long and arduous trip (verse 15)? _____
9. What were Paul's living conditions in Rome? _____

Part 6

TEACHING: At long last Paul arrived in Rome. There weren't any jets or modern day ocean liners that transported him and the other prisoners. He was at the mercy of those to whom he was chained. Life in Rome provided the opportunity for him to teach. The first group he called together was the Jewish leaders. He begins by telling them his side of the story.

What does he tell them?

1. Verse 17b: _____
2. Verse 17c: _____
3. Verse 18: _____
4. Verse 19a: _____
5. Verse 19b: _____

Why does Paul say that he is bound in chains (verse 20)? _____

What is this *hope of Israel* that Paul is talking about? See the cross-reference: Acts 26:6. See also Acts 23:6 and Acts 24:15. _____

The Jewish leaders tell Paul that they have received no communication from Judea concerning him and none of the _____ who have come from there has reported anything bad about

him (verse 21). However, they had heard about this sect (the Way) and wanted to hear what he had to say about it. So, they arranged to meet.

EXERCISE:

1. What did Paul explain to them? _____
2. What did Paul try to convince them about Jesus through the Law and the Prophets? See also Acts 17:3. _____
3. What was the result of his teachings (verses 24-25)? _____

4. According to verses 26 and 27 what had the Holy Spirit said through the prophet Isaiah (Isaiah 6:9-10) to the Jewish people?
 - a. You will be indeed _____ but never _____
 - b. You will be indeed _____ but never _____
 - c. For this people's _____ has grown _____
 - d. And with their _____ they can barely _____
 - e. And their _____ they have _____.
 - f. Lest they should _____ with their _____,
 - g. And _____ with their _____,
 - h. And _____ with their _____ and
 - i. _____, and I would _____ them.
5. Then comes the big therefore. What did Paul want these Jewish leaders to know (verse 28)?

He declared, "And they will listen!" The Gentiles will listen!

6. For the next two years Paul stayed in the rented house and _____ all who came to see him, _____ the kingdom of _____ and _____ about the _____ with all _____ and without _____ (verses 30-31).

REFLECTION: The Book of Acts ends. In a way, we are left with lots of questions. How did Paul's trial turn out? Did he ever get out of prison? Was he ever released by the Romans? Did he die in Rome? What happened to him? It's interesting that Luke did not regard that as important enough to share. Maybe the rest had not been resolved before Luke sent this communication off to Theophilus (Acts 1:1). Theophilus was a Gentile. He was the one to whom Luke had written both the Book of Luke (Luke 1:1-4) and Acts. Luke wanted him to know that the Gospel, the Good News of salvation through faith in

Jesus Christ was for all people whether Jew or Gentile. It was for him, Luke, the physician, and it was for Theophilus. It is for you, whoever you are and it is for me. It is for the criminal and the king, the rich and the poor, the sick and the dying. Jesus is for everyone! Let's all be like the Gentiles and listen! Let's all be like Paul who boldly and without hindrance explained the kingdom of God and taught about the Lord Jesus Christ!

PRAYER: O Lord God of heaven and earth, You have fearfully and wonderfully made each one of us (Psalm 139:14). You created us to be Yours and yet sin has fought to keep us far from You. Your love for us, however, has prevailed. Your love gave Your one and only Son to be our Savior (John 3:16-17). Your love makes no differentiation between those You created (Romans 10:12-13). You remind us that You would have all humankind to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the Truth (1 Timothy 2:3-6). Now, in baptism You have come to live in us by Your Holy Spirit. He has enlightened us with the knowledge of Your love that is ours through Jesus. You waged the war against the evil one for our souls and Jesus is our Victor! Enable us to see that Your victory is for all of us no matter who we are for You show no preference. May I never cease to give You my thanks and praise. May I live knowing that You have sent me to be an ambassadors for You and that You have given to me the message of reconciliation (2 Corinthians 5:17, 20-21). For You made Him who had no sin to be sin for me, so that in Him I might become the righteousness of God! _____

IN CONCLUSION: Throughout the centuries believers have expressed their faith in what is called the Apostles' Creed. These words seem fitting to conclude our study of the Book of Acts.

THE APOSTLES' CREED

I believe in God the Father Almighty, Maker of heaven and earth.

And in Jesus Christ His only Son, our Lord,

who was conceived by the Holy Ghost

born of the virgin Mary,

suffered under Pontius Pilate,

was crucified, died, and was buried.

He descended into hell,

the third day rose from the dead.

He ascended into heaven

and sits at the right hand of God the Father Almighty.

From thence He will come to judge the living and the dead.

I believe in the Holy Spirit,

the holy Christian church, the communion of saints,

the forgiveness of sins,

the resurrection of the body

and the life everlasting. Amen.

UNIT REVIEW

**GOD'S SPIRIT,
OUR POWER**

REVIEW

Congratulations! You have completed the study *God's Spirit, Our Power*. You have become acquainted with the early Christian church and how it grew in Jerusalem, spread by persecution into Judea, Samaria, and on to Rome. You have learned the habits of the early church and how they worshipped together and shared fellowship with the breaking of bread and prayer. We became familiar with Peter and Paul, pillars of the church who reached out to both the Jews and Gentiles. Peter was regarded as one who anchored the church in Jerusalem and Paul sent by the church traveled with his companions on extensive missionary journeys. We also saw how persecution relentlessly badgered the church and those like Paul, Barnabas, and Silas who sought to establish the churches were often stoned, imprisoned, flogged and even left for dead. Yet we saw the strength and courage of the early church as these witnesses of Jesus Christ eagerly climbed into chariots to teach and reached down into the waters to baptize, faithfully preached in the synagogues and diligently taught in homes. They lived their convictions with courage believing that repentance offered everyone the forgiveness of sins. Through baptism God brought His Spirit into the lives of people empowering them for the work of being His disciples and faithful witnesses in the world.

Acts opens with the power of the Spirit changing the hearts of people to be not only followers of Jesus but also proclaimers, His witnesses. The proclamation of the Gospel is what brought together believers who grew into communities of saints, the church. In the Book of Acts we see God acting through people to bring others to faith in Jesus. Acts is the story of the growing of the church as men and women were committed to the words of Jesus in Matthew 28:19-20. It's the Great Commission that reminds us that we are sent to teach, baptize, and make disciples.

Now it's time for you to review. Remember, this is not a test, only an opportunity to affirm you and your progress in this exciting journey. Remember Jesus' words to His disciples in John 20:21 were "As the _____ has _____ Me, even so I am _____ you." Let's review some of the experiences of the early church as it accepted the invitation to join God in His mission.

Recall who the Holy Spirit sent to *connect people to Jesus*:

Reference	Who was sent?	What was the story?
Acts 1:8		
Acts 2:1-13		
Acts 3:1-10		
Acts 6:1-7		
Acts 8:26-40		
Acts 9:1-19		
Acts 10		
Acts 13:1-3		
Acts 16		
Acts 23-26		
Acts 28:17-31		

Every day regardless of where we live we have the opportunity to give witness to our faith. In Acts we read about the many different situations in which the disciples had the opportunity to give their witness and testify to what they knew to be true about the Christ, the Messiah, the one who had been crucified but who was raised to life. Each shared from his/her own unique experience. Each gave witness to what was true. Each testified boldly by the power of God's Spirit at work in them. But none of them was unprepared to speak. None of them was hesitant or cringed at the thought that they might be asked to give the reason for the hope that they had. They were eager to share. They lived intentionally as ones who were sent and could not help but speak of the things they had seen and heard (Acts 4:20).

Peter exhorted the new believers to _____ be _____ to make a _____ to _____... (1 Peter 3:15).

Write out your witness giving the reason for the hope that you have. _____

PRAYER:

With boldness and confidence in Jesus, who is the One who has sent you to be His witnesses, and in His Holy Spirit who has empowered you with wisdom from on high and promises to give you the words to speak and the knowledge of how to say them (Matthew 10:19-20), write out your prayer asking that God the Father would give you many, many opportunities in which to be His witness and by His Spirit to courageously speak of the things you have been taught and learned. _____

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