



Easy-to-read overview of the Bible

Daily Devotionals for October

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October 1

From Doubt to Breakfast: Jesus Meets Us Where We Are (John 20:24–21:14)

Sometimes we feel like we need to see something with our own eyes to believe it. That's exactly how one of Jesus' disciples felt after the resurrection. But in John 20:24–21:14, we see how Jesus meets His followers with patience, peace, and even breakfast.

Let's walk through these powerful moments.

Doubting Thomas

One of Jesus' disciples, Thomas, wasn't there the first time Jesus appeared to the others after rising from the dead. When they told him, "We've seen the Lord!" he didn't believe them.

Thomas said,

"Unless I see the nail marks in His hands and put my finger where the nails were... I will not believe."

A week later, the disciples were together again—and this time, Thomas was with them. Even though the doors were locked, Jesus suddenly appeared among them and said, "Peace be with you."

Then He turned to Thomas and gently said,

"Put your finger here; see my hands. Stop doubting and believe."

Overwhelmed, Thomas responded,

"My Lord and my God!"

Jesus said,

"Because you have seen Me, you have believed; blessed are those who have not seen and yet have believed."

Jesus didn't scold Thomas—He met him where he was. That same kindness and patience is available to us today when we struggle with questions or doubts.

Back to the Boat

Later, some of the disciples went fishing on the Sea of Galilee, but they caught nothing all night. At daybreak, a man stood on the shore and called out, "Friends, haven't you any fish?"

They said no, and He told them to throw their net on the right side of the boat. When they did, the net filled with so many fish they could barely haul it in!

That's when John realized—"It is the Lord!"

Peter didn't wait. He jumped into the water and swam to shore, eager to be near Jesus.

Breakfast with Jesus

When they got to land, they found a fire with fish and bread cooking. Jesus invited them to eat and said,
“Come and have breakfast.”

This simple moment—sharing a meal by the water—shows us how personal and loving Jesus is. He didn’t just rise from the dead to show His power. He rose to be with His people, to care for them, and to remind them that their relationship with Him is real and ongoing.

This was the third time Jesus appeared to His disciples after rising from the dead.

What This Means for Us

This passage shows us two important truths:

1. Jesus meets us in our doubts – like He did with Thomas.
2. Jesus meets us in our daily lives – like He did with the fishermen, offering guidance and even cooking breakfast.

Whether we are questioning, working, or simply feeling lost, Jesus is never far away. He doesn’t wait for us to figure everything out—He comes to us, patiently, lovingly, and personally.

Final Thought

John 20:24–21:14 reminds us that Jesus isn’t just a figure in history. He’s a living Savior who knows our hearts, meets us where we are, and invites us into a relationship with Him—sometimes through miracles, and sometimes over a quiet breakfast by the sea.

Wherever you are today—in doubt, in routine, or in need—Jesus is near. Will you recognize Him?

October 2

Do You Love Me? – A Fresh Start with Jesus (John 21:15-25)

Have you ever messed up badly and wondered if someone would still believe in you? That's exactly what Peter might have felt like in John 21:15–25.

A Breakfast by the Sea

After Jesus had risen from the dead, He appeared to His disciples several times. One morning, He met them by the Sea of Galilee. They had been fishing all night and caught nothing—until Jesus told them to cast their net on the right side of the boat. Suddenly, their net was overflowing! That's when they realized: It's the Lord!

They came to shore, and Jesus had already made breakfast—bread and fish over a fire. After they ate, Jesus turned to Peter.

The Big Question

Jesus asked Peter three times, “Do you love me?” Each time Peter said yes, Jesus replied, “Feed my sheep” or “Take care of my lambs.”

Why did Jesus ask Peter three times? Maybe because Peter had denied knowing Jesus three times before the crucifixion. Now, Jesus was giving Peter a chance to start over. Not only did Jesus forgive Peter, but He also trusted him with a big job: taking care of His followers.

Jesus didn't bring up Peter's past mistakes to shame him. Instead, He reminded Peter that love for Jesus shows through caring for others.

Follow Me

Then Jesus said something simple but powerful: “Follow me.” That's the same call Peter had heard when they first met. Even after all the failures and regrets, Jesus still wanted Peter to follow Him. That's grace.

Peter noticed that another disciple—probably John—was nearby and asked, “What about him?” But Jesus said, “What is that to you? You follow me.” In other words, don't worry about someone else's path. Focus on your own walk with Me.

What This Means for Us

This story isn't just about Peter. It's about all of us who've failed, doubted, or walked away at times. Jesus doesn't give up on us. He meets us right where we are, forgives us, and invites us to follow Him again.

If you've ever felt like your past disqualifies you from being used by God, think of Peter. Jesus took his greatest failure and turned it into a new beginning.

Jesus still asks today: "Do you love me?" If the answer is yes, then let's show it—not just in words, but by how we live, care, and follow.

October 3

Jesus Sends Us Out – The Great Commission (Matthew 28:16-20)

After Jesus rose from the dead, He met with His disciples one last time on a mountain in Galilee. What He told them that day still matters for us today. This moment is known as "The Great Commission."

Meeting on the Mountain

The eleven disciples went to the mountain where Jesus had told them to go. When they saw Him, some worshiped Him, but some still had doubts. Isn't that encouraging? Even after all they'd seen—miracles, the resurrection—some were still unsure. Yet Jesus didn't push them away. He met them where they were.

Jesus Has All Authority

Jesus began by saying, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me." That means Jesus is in charge of everything—both the spiritual world and the physical world. He has the power to lead, to forgive, to save, and to send.

Because He has all authority, we can trust what He says next.

Go and Make Disciples

Jesus told them:

“Go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you.”

This is a mission for everyone who follows Jesus. We are called to go—to step outside of our comfort zones—and make disciples, which simply means helping others follow Jesus. We’re to baptize them and teach them how to live like Jesus taught us.

And this isn’t just for pastors or missionaries. It’s for all of us. Whether you’re at school, work, home, or in your neighborhood, you can live out this mission by sharing God’s love and truth with others.

You Are Not Alone

Jesus ends with a powerful promise:

“And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age.”

Even when we feel nervous, unsure, or not good enough, Jesus reminds us: I am with you. Always.

We’re not doing this alone. His Spirit gives us the strength, courage, and words we need.

What This Means for Us

Jesus has a purpose for each of us. He calls us to follow Him, to share His message, and to help others know Him. And He doesn’t send us out empty-handed—He goes with us every step of the way.

Whether you’re talking to a friend, helping someone in need, or just living in a way that shows love and kindness, you’re part of this mission.

Jesus still says today: “Go and make disciples... and I am with you.”

October 4

Jesus Opens Their Eyes – The Promise and the Power (Luke 24:44-53)

After Jesus rose from the dead, He spent time with His disciples to help them understand everything that had happened. In Luke 24:44–53, we read about one of His final moments with them before He returned to heaven. It’s a powerful reminder that Jesus keeps His promises and gives us what we need to share His message with the world.

Jesus Explains the Scriptures

Jesus told His disciples, “Everything written about me in the Law of Moses, the Prophets, and the Psalms must be fulfilled.” These were parts of the Old Testament that pointed to the coming of the Messiah—Jesus Himself.

Then something amazing happened:

He opened their minds so they could understand the Scriptures.

The disciples had heard these words before, but now they *truly* understood what they meant. Jesus explained that it was always God’s plan for the Messiah to suffer, die, and rise again on the third day. And now, forgiveness of sins would be preached to all nations—starting right there in Jerusalem.

You Are Witnesses

Jesus said, “You are witnesses of these things.”

In other words, “*You’ve seen it all—now go and tell others.*”

But He also knew they couldn’t do it on their own. So He gave them a promise.

Wait for the Power

Jesus told them to stay in the city until they were “clothed with power from on high.” That power was the Holy Spirit, whom God would send to give them strength, courage, and wisdom. They wouldn’t be alone in this mission.

This was a key moment: Jesus was preparing them to continue His work on earth, but not in their own strength—they would be filled with God’s power.

The Blessing and the Goodbye

Then Jesus led them out to a place near Bethany. He lifted His hands, blessed them, and while He was blessing them, He was taken up into heaven.

Imagine that—Jesus rising into the sky as He blessed them!

But the disciples weren't sad. The Bible says they worshiped Him, went back to Jerusalem with great joy, and stayed in the temple praising God.

What This Means for Us

Jesus didn't just give His followers a task—He gave them understanding, forgiveness, a mission, and power. And He still offers those same things to us today.

We may not have seen Him with our eyes, but we have His words and His Spirit. Like the disciples, we are called to share His love and message with others.

And the best part? We don't have to do it alone.

Jesus keeps His promises, and He gives us everything we need.

October 5

Jesus Goes Up – But the Mission Continues (Acts 1:1-11)

Have you ever had to say goodbye to someone important? In Acts 1:1–11, Jesus' followers experienced a goodbye like no other. But it wasn't a sad ending—it was a powerful beginning.

Looking Back, Moving Forward

The book of Acts begins with a quick reminder of everything Jesus had already done—His teachings, miracles, death, and resurrection. For 40 days after rising from the dead, Jesus appeared to His disciples, proving He was alive and teaching them more about God's kingdom.

That must have been an incredible time! Imagine learning directly from the risen Jesus.

A Promise, Not a Plan

One day, while they were with Jesus, the disciples asked,
“Lord, are you going to restore the kingdom to Israel now?”

They were still thinking about a political kingdom—freedom from Rome and a strong nation. But Jesus had something much bigger in mind. He said,
“It’s not for you to know the times or dates the Father has set.”

In other words: *“God’s plan is bigger than you think, and it will happen at the right time.”*

But Jesus didn’t leave them empty-handed. He gave them a promise.

Power and Purpose

Jesus told them,
“You will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you, and you will be my witnesses... to the ends of the earth.”

He was saying:
“I’m going back to heaven, but the Holy Spirit will come and give you the strength and courage to share my message with the whole world.”

That was their mission—and it’s our mission too.

Lift-Off and the Angels

Right after He said those words, something amazing happened.
Jesus was lifted up into the sky, and a cloud hid Him from their sight.

The disciples stood there, staring into the sky—probably in shock. Then, two angels appeared and said,
“Why are you standing here looking up? Jesus has been taken into heaven, and He will come back the same way you saw Him go.”

It was like the angels were saying: *“Don’t just stand here—get ready. He’s coming back, and there’s work to do!”*

What This Means for Us

Jesus may have gone back to heaven, but His work on earth continues—through us. He sends us His Holy Spirit to help us. He gives us courage, wisdom, and power to share His love and truth with others.

We don't have to be perfect. We just need to be willing.

The mission is still the same:

Be His witnesses. Tell His story. Live for His glory.

And one day, just like the angels said, Jesus will return.

So let's not just stand and watch—let's go and live out His mission. He's given us the power, the promise, and the purpose.

October 6

Waiting, Praying, and Choosing – Trusting God for What's Next (Acts 1:12-26)

After Jesus went back to heaven, His followers were left with a big task: spread His message to the world. But before they could start, they needed to wait, pray, and prepare.

Back to the Upper Room

Right after Jesus ascended into heaven, the disciples returned to Jerusalem, just as He had told them. They went to an upstairs room where they were staying—probably the same place they had been meeting before.

There were 11 apostles now (Judas was no longer with them), and they were joined by other followers—about 120 people in total, including Mary (Jesus' mother) and His brothers.

What were they doing?

They weren't rushing into action or trying to figure everything out on their own.

They were praying together, waiting for the gift Jesus had promised: the Holy Spirit.

Filling the Empty Spot

Peter stood up and said something important. He reminded everyone that Judas, who had betrayed Jesus, had fulfilled what the Scriptures said would happen. But now, they needed to choose someone to take his place as an apostle.

Why did this matter? Because Jesus had chosen 12 apostles, and that number was symbolic of the 12 tribes of Israel. It showed completeness and God's plan.

Peter said the new apostle had to be someone who had been with them the whole time—from Jesus' baptism to His resurrection.

They came up with two candidates:

- Joseph (called Barsabbas, also known as Justus)
 - Matthias
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Letting God Decide

Instead of voting or arguing, they prayed.

They asked God to show them who He had chosen.

Then they cast lots (similar to rolling dice or drawing straws), and the lot fell to Matthias. He was added to the group of apostles.

This may seem like a strange way to make a decision today, but in Bible times, casting lots was a common way to seek God's guidance when choices had to be made—and when both options were good.

What This Means for Us

This story reminds us of a few important truths:

- God works through prayer. The early believers didn't rush ahead—they waited and prayed together.
- God still leads today. Even when we face tough decisions, we can trust Him to guide us.
- Everyone matters. Matthias isn't a famous name in the Bible, but God chose him for an important role. That shows us that we don't have to be well-known to be part of God's plan.

Sometimes, the most powerful things we can do are the simplest: gather with others, pray, and trust God with what comes next.

God doesn't just want us to do something—He wants us to do the right thing, at the right time, with His help.

October 7

The Holy Spirit Arrives – A New Beginning for the Church (Acts 2:1-13)

Have you ever experienced a moment that changed everything? In Acts 2:1–13, something amazing happened that would change the world forever. It's the day the Holy Spirit came—and it's often called the day the Church was born.

Waiting Together

Jesus had told His followers to wait in Jerusalem until they received the gift of the Holy Spirit. So that's what they were doing—about 120 believers gathered together in one place.

Then, on the day of Pentecost (a Jewish festival that came 50 days after Passover), everything changed.

Wind, Fire, and a Miracle

Suddenly, a sound like a mighty rushing wind filled the house. It wasn't an ordinary breeze—it was a powerful noise, like a storm blowing through.

Then they saw what looked like tongues of fire that came and rested on each person. It was a sign that something holy and supernatural was happening.

At that moment, everyone was filled with the Holy Spirit, just like Jesus had promised. And here's where the miracle happened: they began speaking in different languages—languages they had never learned before.

A Crowd Gathers

Because it was Pentecost, Jews from all over the world were in Jerusalem. When they heard the sound, a crowd gathered, wondering what was going on.

And then the crowd was amazed and confused. Why? Because each person heard the believers speaking in their own language—their native tongue!

They asked:

“Aren’t all these people from Galilee? How are they speaking our languages?”

They heard them talking about the wonderful things God had done—but in languages from places like Egypt, Rome, Asia, Arabia, and more.

Some people were amazed and wanted to know more. But others laughed and said, “They’re just drunk!”

They didn’t understand that this was a powerful move of God.

What This Means for Us

The coming of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost is a big deal for a few reasons:

- God keeps His promises. Jesus said the Holy Spirit would come—and He did.
- The message of Jesus is for everyone. The different languages showed that the good news isn’t just for one group or nation—it’s for the whole world.
- The Holy Spirit gives us power. That same Spirit helps believers today to live boldly, love others, and share the truth.

Sometimes God works in quiet ways—but on this day, He moved in a loud, powerful, and unforgettable way. And it was only the beginning!

God’s Spirit is still at work today—helping us, guiding us, and reminding us that the message of Jesus is for all people, everywhere.

October 8

Peter Speaks Boldly – The First Gospel Message (Acts 2:14-40)

Something powerful happened on the day of Pentecost. The Holy Spirit came, and the followers of Jesus began speaking in different languages. A crowd gathered, amazed—but

also confused. Some even joked, “They must be drunk!”

That’s when Peter stood up and delivered the first public sermon in church history. His message was clear, bold, and full of truth.

Not Drunk—But Filled with the Spirit

Peter began by addressing the confusion. He said, “These people are not drunk, as you suppose. It’s only nine in the morning!” Instead, he explained that what they were seeing was the fulfillment of a promise God had made long ago.

He quoted the prophet Joel, who had said that in the last days, God would pour out His Spirit on all people—sons, daughters, young, old, men, and women. People would have dreams, see visions, and speak from God.

Peter was saying: “This is that moment. God’s Spirit has come.”

Jesus Is the Promised Savior

Next, Peter turned the focus to Jesus. He reminded the crowd that Jesus had done many miracles—proof that He was sent by God. But even though Jesus was innocent, He was handed over, crucified, and killed.

But Peter didn’t stop there. He said something powerful:
“God raised Him from the dead.”

Then he explained that King David, a hero in Jewish history, had actually pointed to the resurrection of the Messiah. Peter showed from the Scriptures that Jesus is the one David was talking about—the one who would not stay dead, whose body would not decay.

Jesus is alive, Peter declared, and now exalted in heaven. He is the one who sent the Holy Spirit, which is why they were seeing and hearing such amazing things.

A Hard Truth and a Hopeful Response

Peter didn’t hold back. He looked at the crowd and said:

“Let all of Israel be sure of this: God has made this Jesus—whom *you* crucified—both Lord and Messiah.”

That hit hard. The Bible says the people were cut to the heart. They asked, “What should we do?”

Peter answered with words that still matter today:

“Repent and be baptized, every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins. And you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.”

He told them the promise was not just for them, but for their children and for people far away—meaning everyone, even us today.

Peter kept urging them to turn away from their sins and choose a new path. And that day, about 3,000 people believed and were baptized.

What This Means for Us

Peter’s message is just as powerful now as it was then:

- Jesus really is the Savior—He died for our sins and rose again.
- God wants everyone to know Him, no matter where they come from.
- There is hope and forgiveness when we turn to Jesus.

The people in the crowd that day started with confusion and ended with transformation. That’s what the good news of Jesus does—it changes hearts and gives us a fresh start.

The same Spirit that moved on Pentecost is still at work today, calling people to turn from sin and trust in Jesus.

Will you respond like the crowd did—asking, “What should I do?”—and taking your next step with God?

October 9

A New Community and a Life-Changing Miracle (Acts 2:41-3:11)

After Peter boldly preached about Jesus on the day of Pentecost, something amazing happened—thousands of people believed. But that was only the beginning. The early

church quickly became a vibrant, caring community, and God began to work through them in powerful ways.

Let's look at what happened next in Acts 2:41–3:11.

A Growing and Loving Church

After Peter's message, about 3,000 people believed and were baptized. These new believers didn't just go back to their old lives—they stuck together and formed a close, loving community.

Here's what they did:

- They learned together, listening to the apostles' teaching.
- They shared meals, including the Lord's Supper.
- They prayed together.
- They shared everything they had, helping anyone in need.
- They praised God and found favor with others.

This wasn't just religion—it was real life change. People weren't just attending a gathering; they were living like a family, putting love and generosity into action.

And every day, more people joined them. God was growing His church.

A Man Who Couldn't Walk Meets a Powerful God

In the next scene, Peter and John were heading to the temple to pray. As they walked in, a man who had been lame from birth was sitting by the gate, asking for money. He had been carried there every day—it was the only way he could survive.

When he saw Peter and John, he asked them for help, expecting some coins. But Peter said something surprising:

“Silver or gold I do not have, but what I do have I give you. In the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, walk.”

Then Peter took his hand and lifted him up—and instantly, the man's feet and ankles became strong. He stood up, walked, and started jumping and praising God!

Can you imagine the joy he felt? For the first time in his life, he could walk—and it was all because of Jesus' power.

Wonder and Amazement

Everyone at the temple knew this man. They had seen him sitting by the gate for years. When they saw him walking, leaping, and praising God, they were amazed.

He held on to Peter and John as people rushed over to see what had happened. This miracle opened the door for Peter to explain that it wasn't their power that healed the man—it was faith in Jesus.

What This Means for Us

This story gives us two beautiful pictures:

1. The Church as a Family

The early believers showed us how the church is meant to be—a community of love, learning, sharing, and prayer. It wasn't about buildings or programs; it was about people walking with Jesus together.

2. Jesus Still Changes Lives

The man who couldn't walk didn't just get coins—he got his life changed. When we call on Jesus, He meets us with more than we expect. He brings healing, hope, and new beginnings.

Jesus invites us to be part of His family and His mission. Just like in Acts, He still works through ordinary people to do extraordinary things.

So whether you need healing, hope, or a place to belong—Jesus is still reaching out His hand.

October 10

It's Not About Us – Pointing People to Jesus (Acts 3:12-4:4)

Imagine seeing a man who couldn't walk suddenly jumping, running, and praising God. That's what happened in Acts 3. A man who had been unable to walk from birth was healed when Peter told him, "In the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, walk."

The crowd at the temple was shocked—and excited. People rushed toward Peter and John, amazed by the miracle. But what Peter said next was even more powerful than the healing itself.

"Don't Look at Us!"

When Peter saw the crowd gathering, he spoke up right away. He said, "Why are you staring at us, as if we made this man walk by our own power or goodness?"

Peter wanted everyone to know:

"This miracle wasn't because of us—it was all Jesus."

He pointed the crowd to God, the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. Then he boldly reminded them of something difficult:

"You handed Jesus over to be killed... You rejected Him... But God raised Him from the dead."

And then Peter said something amazing:

"It is by faith in the name of Jesus that this man was made strong."

The man they all knew—the one who sat outside the temple gate every day—was now walking because of Jesus.

A Second Chance

Peter didn't stop with a history lesson. He gave them hope.

He said, "I know you acted in ignorance... but now's the time to repent and turn to God, so your sins can be wiped away."

Peter was saying:

"Yes, you made a terrible mistake—but God is offering forgiveness."

He reminded them that this was all part of God's plan, and that Jesus is the promised Savior, the one Moses and the prophets talked about long ago.

Peter's message was clear and full of grace:
"Turn back to God. He's ready to forgive you."

Not Everyone Was Happy

While many people were amazed and moved by Peter's message, the religious leaders were not.

The priests, the captain of the temple guard, and the Sadducees were annoyed that Peter and John were talking about Jesus' resurrection. They arrested them and put them in jail for the night.

But here's the good news:

Even though Peter and John were arrested, many people believed. About 5,000 men (plus women and children) came to faith in Jesus that day.

What This Means for Us

This story reminds us of a few important truths:

- God uses ordinary people: Peter and John weren't special by the world's standards—but they trusted Jesus and let Him work through them.
 - Miracles point to Jesus: The healing amazed people, but Peter didn't want the credit. He used the moment to talk about Jesus, not himself.
 - God offers forgiveness: Even to those who rejected Jesus, Peter offered hope. That same hope is for us today.
 - Bold faith makes an impact: Even though it got them arrested, Peter and John didn't stay silent. And because of their courage, thousands believed.
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When we experience God's goodness, we don't need to take the spotlight. We just need to point people to Jesus—the one who truly saves, heals, and gives second chances.

October 11

Standing Strong for Jesus – Even When It's Hard (Acts 4:5-22)

Have you ever had to speak up for what you believe, even when it wasn't easy? That's exactly what happened to Peter and John in Acts 4:5–22. They had healed a man in Jesus' name and boldly told people about Him. But not everyone was happy about it.

In fact, the religious leaders were angry—and they wanted Peter and John to stop talking about Jesus.

Brought Before the Powerful

After spending the night in jail, Peter and John were brought before the Jewish high council—a powerful group of priests, rulers, and teachers of the law. This included Annas the high priest, Caiaphas, and others who had helped put Jesus on trial not long before.

These leaders asked them a pointed question:

“By what power or in whose name did you do this?” (talking about the miracle)

This was a big moment. Peter and John were facing the very people who had sentenced Jesus to death.

Bold Words from Peter

But Peter wasn't afraid. The Bible says he was filled with the Holy Spirit, and he spoke clearly and boldly:

“We didn't heal this man by our own power. He was healed by the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth—the one you crucified, whom God raised from the dead!”

Then Peter said something powerful and unforgettable:

“There is no other name under heaven given to mankind by which we must be saved.” (Acts 4:12)

In other words, Jesus is the only way to be saved and have a right relationship with God.

Shocked but Speechless

The leaders were shocked. Peter and John were ordinary men with no special education—but they spoke with confidence and wisdom. The leaders realized these men had been with Jesus.

And there was one big problem for the council: the healed man was standing right there! Everyone knew he had been crippled for years, and now he was walking. They couldn't deny the miracle.

So they told Peter and John to stop speaking or teaching in Jesus' name.

A Courageous Response

Peter and John didn't back down. They replied:

“Which is right in God's eyes—to listen to you, or to Him? You be the judge. As for us, we can't help speaking about what we have seen and heard.”

They were basically saying, “*We have to obey God, not people.*” And they weren't going to stay quiet about Jesus.

In the end, the council couldn't punish them because too many people were praising God for the miracle. So they let them go—but warned them again to stay silent.

What This Means for Us

This story shows us what bold faith looks like:

- God gives courage when we face pressure or fear. Peter used to be afraid, but now he stood tall.
 - The message of Jesus is worth sharing, even when others don't like it.
 - When we walk closely with Jesus, people notice—even if we're not famous, educated, or powerful.
 - Obeying God matters most. When human rules go against God's truth, we must choose God.
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Peter and John didn't let fear stop them. They knew Jesus was alive, and they were determined to tell the world—no matter the cost.

What about you? Are you willing to stand for your faith when it's hard?

A Church That Prayed Boldly and Gave Generously (Acts 4:23-37)

Have you ever been in a tough situation and didn't know what to do—so you prayed? That's exactly what the early believers did after Peter and John were released from jail. Instead of hiding or giving up, they turned to God in prayer and responded with bold faith and generous hearts.

Let's look at what happened in Acts 4:23–37.

Back to Their People

After Peter and John were warned by the religious leaders to stop talking about Jesus, they were let go. What did they do next? They went straight back to the other believers and told them everything that had happened.

The whole group could have panicked—but instead, they prayed.

And not just any prayer—they prayed with boldness.

A Powerful Prayer

They didn't ask God to make life easy. They didn't pray to be safe or comfortable. Instead, here's what they asked:

- They praised God as the Creator of heaven and earth.
- They reminded themselves of how God's enemies had tried to stop His plan before—but never could.
- They asked God to give them boldness to keep sharing about Jesus.
- And they asked for miracles, healing, and signs to continue in Jesus' name.

This prayer wasn't fearful—it was faith-filled.

And something amazing happened when they prayed:

The place where they were meeting shook, and they were all filled with the Holy Spirit. They went out and spoke the word of God boldly!

A Community That Shared Everything

After they prayed, their actions matched their words. The Bible says:

“All the believers were one in heart and mind.” (Acts 4:32)

They didn’t think of their stuff as just their own. They shared what they had, and no one in the community was left in need.

Some people even sold property or land and gave the money to the apostles, who used it to help others. One example was a man named Barnabas. He sold a field and gave the money to support the church.

This was more than just giving—it was a deep expression of love, unity, and generosity.

What This Means for Us

This passage gives us a powerful picture of what the church is meant to be:

- A people who pray together: When hard times came, the first thing the believers did was pray—and God answered in a big way.
 - A people full of boldness: They didn’t let fear stop them. They asked God to help them speak even more boldly.
 - A people who take care of one another: No one was left out. They shared freely and gave joyfully, just like a big family.
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The early church wasn’t perfect, but it was powerful—because it was filled with the Holy Spirit, prayer, and love.

What if today’s churches looked more like that? What if we prayed bigger prayers, spoke with more courage, and gave with open hearts?

October 13

Being Real with God – The Story of Ananias and Sapphira (Acts 5:1-16)

In the early days of the church, believers were full of faith, generosity, and unity. People were selling their belongings and giving to those in need. It was a beautiful picture of God’s

love in action.

But then something happened that shocked everyone—and reminded them that God cares deeply about honesty.

Let's look at the events in Acts 5:1–16.

A Couple's Costly Lie

A man named Ananias and his wife Sapphira sold a piece of land. That was fine—many others were doing the same. But here's where they went wrong:

- They kept part of the money for themselves (which was okay in itself),
- But they pretended they were giving all the money to the apostles.

It wasn't the amount that was the problem—it was the lie.

Ananias brought the money and laid it at the apostles' feet, acting like it was the full amount. But Peter, led by the Holy Spirit, knew the truth. He asked Ananias:

“Why did you lie to the Holy Spirit? The land was yours. The money was yours. No one forced you to give it all. Why pretend?”

Right then, Ananias fell down and died. Great fear spread through everyone who heard what happened.

Three hours later, Sapphira came in, not knowing what had happened. Peter asked her if the money they gave was the full price. She said yes—it was a lie. And just like her husband, she fell down and died.

A Serious Wake-Up Call

This story is sobering. It shows that:

- God values truthfulness.
- We can't fake generosity or holiness before God.
- Lying to people is serious—but lying to God is even more serious.

This doesn't mean God strikes people down every time they sin. But it does show how important it is to be honest and real with Him.

The early church was being built on trust, love, and sincerity—and God protected it from becoming a place of hypocrisy.

God Still Moved in Power

Even after this shocking event, the church didn't fall apart. In fact, the opposite happened:

- The apostles continued to perform many miracles.
 - People gathered in the temple courts to hear the message.
 - More and more people believed in Jesus—both men and women.
 - People brought the sick out into the streets, hoping that even Peter's shadow might fall on them and heal them.
 - Crowds from nearby towns came with their sick and those troubled by evil spirits—and all of them were healed.
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What This Means for Us

This story gives us two important truths:

1. God wants our honesty, not a performance.
We don't have to pretend to be better than we are. God knows the truth, and He wants a sincere heart more than an impressive appearance.
 2. God still works through His people.
Even in the middle of hard lessons and serious moments, the Holy Spirit was still moving. People were being healed, helped, and saved.
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God is holy, but He is also loving. He calls us to live honestly, give generously, and trust Him completely.

Let's be the kind of people who are real with God—and ready for Him to use us in powerful ways.

October 14

When God Opens the Door – Bold Faith in the Face of Opposition (Acts 5:17-42)

Have you ever been stopped from doing something good? That's exactly what happened to the apostles in Acts 5. They were sharing the message of Jesus and healing people, but not everyone was happy about it.

Let's take a look at what happened in Acts 5:17–42—a powerful story about bold faith, unexpected freedom, and trusting God no matter what.

Jealousy and Jail

The apostles were doing amazing things. Crowds were gathering. Sick people were being healed. Lives were changing. But the high priest and his fellow Sadducees—religious leaders who didn't believe in resurrection—were jealous.

So what did they do?

They had the apostles arrested and put in jail.

It looked like their mission might be over.

A Miracle in the Night

But then, something unexpected happened.

An angel of the Lord came during the night, opened the prison doors, and led the apostles out. The angel told them:

“Go stand in the temple courts and tell the people all about this new life.”

The next morning, instead of hiding, the apostles were right back at it—preaching boldly in the temple, just like before.

Confused Leaders

When the religious leaders sent guards to the jail to bring the apostles to court, the guards came back confused:

“The jail was locked, the guards were standing there—but the apostles were gone!”

Then someone reported, “They're in the temple, teaching the people!”

So the apostles were brought back in, but the guards were careful—they didn't want to cause a riot, because the people respected the apostles.

Standing Up for Jesus

The high priest scolded them:

“We told you not to teach in Jesus' name! But you've filled the city with your message and are blaming us for His death.”

Peter and the other apostles answered boldly:

“We must obey God rather than human beings.”

They told the leaders again about Jesus—how He was killed, raised from the dead, and now offers forgiveness and new life.

This made the leaders so angry that they wanted to kill the apostles.

A Wise Warning

But then, a respected Pharisee named Gamaliel spoke up. He reminded everyone that other rebellious leaders had come and gone before. If the apostles were just another group like that, their movement would fade away on its own.

But then he added something important:

“If this is from God, you won't be able to stop it—you might even find yourselves fighting against God.”

The leaders took his advice. They didn't kill the apostles, but they had them beaten, warned them again not to speak about Jesus, and then let them go.

Rejoicing After Suffering

You might think the apostles would be discouraged. But what did they do?

They rejoiced!

They were actually glad they had been counted worthy to suffer for the name of Jesus.

And they didn't stop.

“Day after day, in the temple and from house to house, they never stopped teaching and proclaiming the good news that Jesus is the Messiah.” (Acts 5:42)

What This Means for Us

This story is a powerful reminder of what real faith looks like:

- Obeying God comes first. Even when others try to silence us, we're called to follow God's voice.
 - God opens doors—literally! When things seem impossible, He can make a way.
 - We may suffer for our faith, but it's never wasted. The apostles rejoiced, knowing they were part of something bigger than themselves.
 - The message of Jesus can't be stopped. No jail, no threats, no beatings could silence the good news.
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Are you willing to follow Jesus—even when it's hard?

The apostles show us that bold faith isn't about being fearless—it's about trusting that God is bigger than fear, and that His truth is worth sharing no matter what.

October 15

Serving Well and Standing Firm – The Story of Stephen (Acts 6:1-15)

As the early church grew, so did its challenges. In Acts 6:1–15, we see how the first Christians dealt with problems inside the church—and how one faithful man named Stephen stood strong for his faith, even when it got him into trouble.

This story teaches us the importance of serving with love and speaking with courage.

A Problem in the Church

At this point in Acts, the number of believers was growing fast. But as the church got bigger, some people began to feel overlooked.

Specifically, the Greek-speaking Jewish widows weren't getting the same daily food as the Hebrew-speaking widows. This caused tension. It wasn't intentional, but it needed to be fixed.

The apostles (Jesus' closest followers) were busy teaching and leading, and they realized something important:

They couldn't do everything by themselves.

So, they came up with a solution.

Choosing Servant Leaders

The apostles said:

“We need to keep focusing on prayer and teaching God's word. But let's choose seven wise, Spirit-filled men to take care of this food ministry.”

Everyone agreed, and they chose seven trusted men—including a man named Stephen.

Stephen stood out. The Bible says he was:

- Full of faith
- Full of the Holy Spirit
- Full of God's grace and power

He helped with daily needs, but also did miracles and shared the message of Jesus with boldness.

Trouble from Opposition

But not everyone liked what Stephen was saying. Some members of a local synagogue started arguing with him. But no matter what they said, they couldn't win the debate, because Stephen spoke with wisdom from God.

So, instead of listening or learning, they did something unfair:

- They secretly got people to lie about Stephen.
- They claimed he was speaking against Moses and God.
- They said he wanted to destroy the temple and change the Jewish laws.

These lies stirred up the crowd. Soon, Stephen was arrested and brought before the high council.

A Face Like an Angel

As the religious leaders glared at him and questioned him, something amazing happened:

“Everyone in the council looked at Stephen and saw that his face was like the face of an angel.” (Acts 6:15)

Even though Stephen was in danger, he was calm, peaceful, and full of God’s presence. He wasn’t afraid. He knew he had done nothing wrong—and that God was with him.

This moment sets the stage for one of the most powerful speeches in the whole Bible, which we’ll see in the next chapter.

What This Means for Us

There’s a lot we can learn from this story:

- Every role in the church matters. Whether you’re teaching or serving meals, your work is important.
 - God uses ordinary people who are full of faith and ready to serve.
 - Telling the truth about Jesus isn’t always easy, and it may bring opposition—but we can stay strong.
 - When you walk closely with God, people will notice. Stephen’s peace and courage were clear to everyone.
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Stephen shows us how to live with purpose, serve with love, and stand for truth—even when it’s hard.

October 16

**Stephen’s Story: Remembering God’s Faithfulness
Through History (Acts 7:1–29)**

In Acts 7, we find a powerful speech by a man named Stephen, one of the early followers of Jesus. Stephen was being questioned by religious leaders who were angry with him because he spoke about Jesus being the Son of God. Instead of defending himself right away, Stephen began telling a story—a story about God’s faithfulness to His people.

Let’s look at the first part of his speech (Acts 7:1–29) and see what we can learn.

Abraham: Trusting God Without Knowing the Full Plan

Stephen begins with Abraham, the father of the Jewish people. God told Abraham to leave his home and go to a new land. Even though Abraham didn’t know exactly where he was going, he trusted God and obeyed. God promised to give the land to Abraham’s descendants, even though Abraham didn’t have any children yet.

Stephen reminded his listeners that God is a God of promises—He sees the big picture, even when we don’t. Abraham’s story shows us what it means to walk by faith, even when the path ahead isn’t clear.

Joseph: God’s Plan in Hard Times

Next, Stephen talked about Joseph, one of Abraham’s great-grandchildren. Joseph’s brothers were jealous of him and sold him as a slave to Egypt. It seemed like everything was going wrong. But God was with Joseph, and over time, Joseph rose to a powerful position in Egypt. When a famine came, Joseph was able to help his family and many others survive.

Joseph’s story teaches us that God can bring good even out of bad situations. Even when people treat us unfairly, God is still working behind the scenes for a greater purpose.

Moses: Chosen by God to Set His People Free

Then Stephen moved on to Moses, the man God used to rescue the Israelites from slavery in Egypt. Moses grew up in Pharaoh’s palace but knew he was an Israelite. One day, when he saw an Egyptian hurting an Israelite, Moses stepped in and killed the Egyptian. Because of this, he had to run away to the desert, where he lived for 40 years.

At this point, Moses didn’t seem like a hero. But God was preparing him for something big.

Stephen's point? God uses people who may not seem ready or perfect. Moses made mistakes, but God still chose him to do something amazing.

Why Does Stephen Tell This History?

Stephen wasn't just giving a history lesson. He was showing that God had always been working through people and situations, even when it didn't make sense at the time. He wanted the religious leaders to see that they were part of a long story—and that Jesus was the fulfillment of that story.

What Can We Learn?

1. God has a plan—even when we can't see it. Just like Abraham, Joseph, and Moses, we may not understand everything that's happening, but we can trust God.
 2. God works through broken people. None of these heroes were perfect. Yet God used them in powerful ways. He can use us too.
 3. God is always faithful. Through every twist and turn in history, God kept His promises. He still does today.
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When we feel confused, discouraged, or unsure about the future, we can remember what Stephen shared: God has been faithful before, and He will be faithful again.

October 17

Stephen's Final Words: Standing for Truth, Even When It's Hard (Acts 7:30–60)

In the second half of Acts 7, Stephen continues his powerful speech. He's still standing before the religious leaders who are accusing him of speaking against God. But instead of backing down, Stephen tells the truth about how God had worked in the past—and how the people had often resisted Him.

Let's walk through what Stephen said and what it means for us today.

God Calls Moses Again

Stephen picks up the story of Moses, where he left off. Moses was living in the desert when God appeared to him in a burning bush. It was an amazing moment. God told Moses that He had heard His people's cries in Egypt and was sending Moses to rescue them.

Stephen reminds us: God sees our pain, and He cares. Even when it feels like nothing is happening, God is preparing to act.

Israel Resists Moses

Stephen makes an important point here. Even though Moses was sent by God, the people didn't always listen to him. They complained. They rejected him. They even made an idol—a golden calf—and worshiped it instead of God.

Stephen says clearly: God gave His people leaders and prophets, but they often pushed them away. Instead of following God, they turned to idols and ignored His voice.

The Temple Was Never the Point

Stephen talks about the Tabernacle, the tent where people worshiped God during their journey through the desert. Later, King Solomon built a beautiful temple in Jerusalem. But Stephen says something important: God doesn't live in buildings. He is greater than any place made by human hands.

Stephen quotes the prophet Isaiah:

“Heaven is My throne, and the earth is My footstool... What kind of house will you build for Me?”

The point is this: God wants our hearts, not just our buildings or rituals.

A Hard Truth

Now Stephen gets very direct. He tells the religious leaders that they are just like their ancestors—they resist the Holy Spirit. They killed the prophets who spoke about the coming Savior, and now they've betrayed and killed Jesus, the Righteous One.

It was a bold thing to say. Stephen wasn't trying to win a popularity contest. He was standing for truth.

Stephen's Vision and Martyrdom

The leaders were furious. But Stephen, filled with the Holy Spirit, looked up and saw a vision of Jesus standing at the right hand of God in heaven.

He said,

“Look, I see heaven open and the Son of Man standing at the right hand of God!”

That was the final straw for the crowd. They dragged Stephen out of the city and began to stone him. As they were killing him, Stephen prayed:

“Lord Jesus, receive my spirit.”

“Lord, do not hold this sin against them.”

Then he died.

Stephen became the first Christian martyr—someone who died for their faith in Jesus.

What Can We Learn?

1. God is always reaching out. From Moses to Jesus, God has sent people to lead, guide, and save. But we must choose to listen.
 2. Faith means standing for what's right. Stephen didn't back down, even when it cost him his life. He stood firm in the truth of who Jesus is.
 3. We can respond with grace, even in pain. Stephen forgave the people who were killing him. That's the kind of love and forgiveness Jesus showed—and Stephen followed His example.
 4. Jesus is with us. As Stephen was dying, he saw Jesus standing—not sitting—at the right hand of God. It's as if Jesus was standing to welcome Stephen home. He's with us, even in the hardest moments.
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Stephen's story reminds us that following Jesus isn't always easy—but it's worth it. He calls us to be faithful, to speak truth with love, and to trust that He is always with us.

October 18

Scattered but Not Stopped: How the Good News Kept Spreading (Acts 8:1–25)

The story in Acts 8:1–25 shows us something amazing: even when life gets hard, God’s message keeps moving forward. After the death of Stephen, one of the first Christians to die for his faith, things got very dangerous for the followers of Jesus in Jerusalem. But instead of stopping them, persecution actually helped spread the message of Jesus to new places.

Let’s look at what happened and what we can learn from it today.

Trouble in Jerusalem

After Stephen was killed, a wave of persecution broke out. Saul (who would later become the apostle Paul) was leading the charge, dragging Christians out of their homes and putting them in prison. Many believers fled Jerusalem to escape.

It might have seemed like the end—but it wasn’t. God used this scattering to send His people out with the message of Jesus. What looked like defeat was actually part of God’s plan to reach more people.

Philip in Samaria

One of those scattered believers was Philip. He went to Samaria, a place many Jews avoided because of old tensions between Jews and Samaritans. But Philip didn’t let cultural divisions stop him. He told people in Samaria about Jesus, and he performed miracles—healing the sick and freeing people from evil spirits.

The result?

“There was great joy in that city.” (Acts 8:8)

God’s message brings joy, healing, and hope—no matter where it goes.

Simon the Sorcerer

In Samaria, there was a man named Simon who practiced sorcery. He had amazed people with his magic and claimed to be someone great. But when he heard Philip’s message about Jesus, he believed and got baptized along with many others.

Later, when Peter and John came from Jerusalem and prayed for the new believers to receive the Holy Spirit, Simon saw something powerful happening. But instead of understanding it as a gift from God, he offered them money to get the same power.

Peter rebuked him strongly, saying:

“May your money perish with you, because you thought you could buy the gift of God with money!”

Simon quickly realized his mistake and asked them to pray for him.

Lesson: The things of God are not for sale. His power isn't a trick or something we can earn—it's a gift, given by grace.

The Gospel Keeps Moving

After their time in Samaria, Peter and John didn't just head straight back to Jerusalem. They stopped in many villages along the way and kept sharing the good news.

The message here is simple but powerful: God's Word keeps spreading, and His love keeps reaching new hearts.

What Can We Learn?

1. Hard times don't stop God's plan. Persecution scattered the believers, but it didn't stop the gospel. In fact, it helped it spread faster and farther.
 2. The good news is for everyone. Philip didn't skip over Samaria—he went right into it. Jesus came for all people, regardless of background.
 3. God's gifts can't be bought. Faith is not a magic trick or a business deal. It's a relationship with a living God who gives freely to those who trust Him.
 4. We're all part of the mission. Philip wasn't one of the original twelve apostles—he was an ordinary believer, just like us. And yet, God used him in a big way. That means God can use you, too.
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When life feels uncertain, remember this: God's message is stronger than any challenge, and when we follow Him with open hearts, He will use us to spread hope wherever we go.

October 19

A Desert Road and a Divine Appointment — Philip and the Ethiopian (Acts 8:26–40)

Sometimes, God asks us to do something that doesn't make sense at first. That's what happened to Philip in Acts 8:26–40. But because he listened and obeyed, one man's life was changed forever—and the good news of Jesus spread even farther than before.

Let's explore this amazing story and what it means for us today.

A Strange Command

Philip had been preaching in busy cities like Samaria, where crowds were coming to faith. But then an angel of the Lord told him to go to a desert road—a quiet stretch between Jerusalem and Gaza.

That might have seemed like a step backward. Why leave a place full of people to go to an empty road?

But Philip obeyed without hesitation. And because of that, he ended up right where God needed him to be.

Lesson: Sometimes God leads us to unexpected places for important reasons we can't yet see.

A Curious Traveler

On that road, Philip saw a man riding in a chariot. This man was an Ethiopian official, a trusted leader under the queen of Ethiopia. He had traveled all the way to Jerusalem to worship God and was now heading home.

As he traveled, he was reading from the book of Isaiah—a part of the Old Testament that talks about the coming Messiah. But he didn't understand what he was reading.

Lesson: People may be seeking truth without fully understanding it—and that's where God can use us to help.

A Divine Conversation

The Holy Spirit told Philip, “Go over and stay near the chariot.” So Philip ran up to it and asked, “Do you understand what you’re reading?”

The man replied honestly: “How can I, unless someone explains it to me?”

So Philip climbed into the chariot and started explaining how the verses from Isaiah were actually talking about Jesus—the One who suffered, died, and rose again for us.

Lesson: God opens hearts—and He uses people like us to share His message in simple ways.

An Immediate Response

As they traveled along, the man saw some water and said, “Look, here is water! What can stop me from being baptized?”

Nothing could. So they stopped the chariot, and Philip baptized him right then and there.

This man had been searching for God, and in just one conversation, he found Jesus and was ready to follow Him with his whole heart.

Lesson: When someone truly understands the gospel, their life can change in an instant.

Philip Moves On, But the Story Continues

As soon as they came out of the water, the Holy Spirit took Philip away—just like that! The Ethiopian went on his way, filled with joy, and Philip continued preaching the gospel in other towns.

We never hear this man’s name again in the Bible, but history tells us that Christianity later spread into Africa. Many believe this encounter was part of that beginning.

Lesson: One small act of obedience can have a big ripple effect in God’s kingdom.

What Can We Learn?

1. Be willing to go where God leads, even if it seems random or inconvenient.
2. Look for open hearts—people are often more ready to hear about Jesus than we think.
3. Explain the gospel simply and clearly. People don’t need fancy words—just the truth.

4. Celebrate the power of a changed life. One conversation can lead to joy, freedom, and purpose.

This story is a beautiful reminder that God is always at work, preparing hearts, sending His people, and writing bigger stories than we can imagine. Like Philip, all we need to do is listen, obey, and trust that He will do the rest.

October 20

From Enemy to Believer — The Powerful Transformation of Saul (Acts 9:1–19)

Some people think they're too far gone for God to forgive them. But in Acts 9:1–19, we meet a man who went from being the church's biggest enemy to one of its greatest messengers. His name was Saul, and his story shows us that no one is beyond God's reach.

Saul: A Man on a Mission

At the beginning of this story, Saul was not a friend of Jesus. In fact, he was actively hunting down Christians—dragging them out of their homes and throwing them in prison. He believed he was doing the right thing by protecting his religion from what he saw as a dangerous new movement.

Now, Saul was heading to a city called Damascus, hoping to arrest more followers of Jesus.

But God had other plans.

A Shocking Encounter

As Saul got close to Damascus, a bright light from heaven suddenly surrounded him. He fell to the ground and heard a voice say:

“Saul, Saul, why are you persecuting Me?”

It was Jesus speaking to him! Saul asked, “Who are you, Lord?” and Jesus replied, “I am Jesus, whom you are persecuting.”

Jesus wasn't just defending His followers—He was making it personal. Hurting them was like hurting Him.

Then Jesus gave Saul a clear command: “Get up and go into the city. You will be told what to do.”

Blind and Broken

When Saul got up, he couldn't see—he was completely blind. His friends had to lead him by the hand into Damascus. For three days, Saul didn't eat or drink anything. He just sat in the dark, thinking.

This was more than physical blindness. It was a symbol of what had been going on inside Saul—he hadn't been seeing the truth. But now God was preparing his heart.

Lesson: Sometimes God has to stop us in our tracks to open our eyes to what really matters.

A Brave Believer: Ananias

While Saul waited, God spoke to a believer named Ananias in a vision. God told him to go and visit Saul.

At first, Ananias was nervous. “Lord, I've heard about this man! He's done terrible things to your people!”

But God said:

“Go! This man is My chosen instrument to carry My name before the world.”

So Ananias obeyed. He trusted God and took a big step of faith.

Lesson: Sometimes God asks us to love people we're afraid of—but He sees what they can become.

A New Beginning

Ananias went to Saul, placed his hands on him, and said:

“Brother Saul, the Lord Jesus... has sent me so that you may see again and be filled with the Holy Spirit.”

Immediately, something like scales fell from Saul's eyes, and he could see! He got up, was baptized, and began a completely new life.

Saul had walked into Damascus as a persecutor. Now he walked out as a follower of Jesus.

Lesson: No one is too lost for Jesus to find—and change—forever.

What Can We Learn?

1. God can change anyone. Saul was an enemy of the church, but Jesus didn't give up on him. He saw the potential in Saul—and He sees it in you too.
 2. God's love is personal. Jesus didn't say "Why are you persecuting the church?"—He said "Why are you persecuting Me?" Jesus feels our pain and stands with us.
 3. Obedience brings healing. Both Saul and Ananias had to take bold steps. Their obedience led to transformation and healing.
 4. God uses unlikely people. Saul would later become Paul, the apostle who wrote much of the New Testament. His past didn't disqualify him—it prepared him to reach others with grace.
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This story reminds us that God is still in the business of changing lives. No one is too far gone. And if He could transform Saul, He can do the same in us and through us.

October 21

Saul's Bold New Life — From Persecutor to Preacher (Acts 9:20–31)

Imagine a person who once fought hard *against* something—then suddenly becomes one of its biggest supporters. That's exactly what happened to Saul after he met Jesus. In Acts 9:20–31, we see how quickly his life turned around—and how others responded to the change.

This part of Saul's story reminds us that God can completely transform a life, and when He does, the world takes notice.

A Shocking Message

Right after Saul was healed and baptized, he didn't waste any time. He began preaching in the synagogues (Jewish places of worship), boldly saying:

“Jesus is the Son of God.”

This shocked everyone! Just a few days ago, Saul was *hunting down* Christians. Now he was *joining them* and *telling others about Jesus*. People didn't know what to make of it.

Lesson: When Jesus changes your heart, it's hard to keep quiet about it.

Growing Strong in Faith

At first, people were confused by Saul's message. But the more he spoke, the stronger he became in his faith. He could explain clearly from Scripture that Jesus really was the promised Savior.

Even his enemies couldn't argue with his message. Saul's knowledge of the Bible, combined with his personal experience, made his message powerful.

Lesson: God can use both our past and our passion to help others understand who Jesus is.

A Target on His Back

Saul's bold preaching didn't sit well with everyone. In Damascus, a group of people made a secret plan to kill him. But Saul found out, and with the help of his new friends, he escaped by night, being lowered in a basket through an opening in the city wall.

It's a reminder that following Jesus isn't always safe or easy, but God gives courage and help when we need it.

Lesson: God protects His people and often uses others to help us through tough times.

Doubt and Trust in Jerusalem

Saul then traveled to Jerusalem, but the believers there were afraid of him. Can you blame them? The last time they saw Saul, he was helping put Christians in prison or worse.

But then a man named Barnabas stepped in. He brought Saul to the apostles and explained what had happened—how Saul met Jesus, preached boldly, and truly had changed.

Thanks to Barnabas, the other believers welcomed Saul, and he began sharing Jesus in Jerusalem too.

Lesson: Sometimes people need someone like Barnabas to speak up for them. We all need encouragement and second chances.

Another Escape and Growing Peace

Once again, Saul's preaching stirred up opposition. Some people tried to kill him, so the believers helped him escape to Tarsus, his hometown.

Then something beautiful happened. The early church—spread across Judea, Galilee, and Samaria—began to experience peace. The Bible says they were:

- Encouraged by the Holy Spirit
- Growing in numbers
- Living in the fear (respect) of the Lord

Even though things were still dangerous at times, the church was becoming stronger.

Lesson: God uses both peaceful and difficult seasons to help His people grow.

What Can We Learn?

1. A changed life is powerful. Saul's transformation showed everyone that no one is too far from God's grace.
 2. New believers need support. Like Saul, many people face fear or doubt after choosing to follow Jesus. Encouragers like Barnabas make a big difference.
 3. God works through people. Friends helped Saul escape danger, and the church helped him grow. We are meant to support one another in faith.
 4. Growth takes courage. Saul didn't wait for perfect conditions to speak up about Jesus. He started right away—and God used him mightily.
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Saul's journey had just begun, but already we can see how God was turning his story into something incredible. From enemy to preacher, from feared man to faithful servant—Saul's life is proof that Jesus can make all things new.

October 22

Two Miracles That Changed Lives (Acts 9:32-42)

In the book of Acts, we see the early church growing and the followers of Jesus spreading His message. One of the key leaders during this time was Peter. In Acts 9:32–42, we read about two amazing miracles Peter did as he traveled to encourage believers and share the good news of Jesus.

A Man Named Aeneas

Peter was visiting a town called Lydda when he met a man named Aeneas. This man had been paralyzed and bedridden for eight years. Imagine not being able to move for that long—his whole life had likely changed because of his illness.

Peter looked at him and said, “Aeneas, Jesus Christ heals you. Get up and roll up your mat.” Immediately, Aeneas stood up and was healed! It was a powerful moment that showed that Jesus was still healing people through His followers. When the people in Lydda and nearby Sharon saw what happened, many of them turned to the Lord.

A Woman Named Tabitha

Next, Peter was called to a nearby town called Joppa. There, a well-loved woman named Tabitha (also called Dorcas) had died. She was known for doing many good deeds and helping the poor. When Peter arrived, the room was full of people crying and showing him the clothes she had made for them. She had touched many lives with her kindness.

Peter went into the room where her body was, knelt down, and prayed. Then he said, “Tabitha, get up.” And she opened her eyes and sat up—she came back to life! Peter helped her to her feet and called in the other believers. You can imagine the joy and amazement in that room.

This miracle spread quickly through the whole town, and many people believed in the Lord.

What Can We Learn from These Stories?

These two miracles remind us of a few important truths:

1. Jesus still changes lives – Even though He had already gone back to heaven, Jesus was still working through Peter to bring healing and hope.
2. God cares about both physical and emotional pain – Aeneas was healed physically, and Tabitha’s friends were comforted when she was brought back to life.
3. Kindness and faithfulness matter – Tabitha’s life made a difference in her community, and her story shows how God honors a life of service.

God used Peter in powerful ways, but the focus wasn’t on Peter—it was always on Jesus. The miracles weren’t just exciting events; they led people to believe in the Lord and gave hope to those who needed it most.

Final Thought:

Whether it’s through healing, comfort, or everyday acts of kindness, God is still at work today. He can use anyone—just like He used Peter and Tabitha—to bring light and love into the world.

October 23

When God Opened the Door — The Story of Cornelius and Peter (Acts 10:1–23)

In Acts 10, we read about a life-changing event—not just for one person, but for the entire world. This moment marked the beginning of something big: the message of Jesus reaching people from every nation, not just the Jewish people. It all started with a man named Cornelius and a vision from God.

Meet Cornelius — A Good Man Searching for God

Cornelius was a Roman officer who lived in a city called Caesarea. Even though he wasn’t Jewish, he believed in the one true God. He was known as a kind and generous man who prayed often and gave to the poor. People respected him.

One day around 3:00 in the afternoon, Cornelius had a vision from God. An angel appeared to him and said, “God has heard your prayers and seen your kindness. Now send men to a place called Joppa and ask for a man named Peter.” The angel told him exactly where to find Peter, who was staying at a man’s house by the sea.

Cornelius didn't waste time. He sent two of his servants and a soldier to go find Peter.

Meanwhile, Peter Has a Vision Too

The next day, as Cornelius's men were getting close to Joppa, Peter went up on the roof to pray. It was around noon, and he was hungry. While waiting for food, Peter had a vision too.

In this vision, he saw something like a big sheet coming down from heaven. Inside the sheet were all kinds of animals, including some that Jewish people weren't allowed to eat. A voice said, "Get up, Peter. Kill and eat."

Peter was shocked. He replied, "No, Lord! I've never eaten anything unclean." But the voice said, "Do not call anything unclean that God has made clean." This happened three times, and then the vision ended.

Peter was confused. What did it mean?

God Connects the Dots

Right then, the men from Cornelius arrived and asked for Peter. The Holy Spirit told Peter, "Don't hesitate to go with them—I have sent them."

Peter welcomed them and invited them to stay the night. The next day, he went with them to meet Cornelius. Peter didn't fully understand what was happening yet, but he was learning to trust God's leading.

What's the Big Deal About This Story?

This part of Acts is more than just an interesting story. It's a turning point in history. Before this, many people believed the good news of Jesus was only for the Jewish people. But God was about to show Peter—and the whole church—that Jesus came for everyone, no matter their background, nationality, or culture.

Here's what we learn from Acts 10:1–23:

1. God sees every heart – Cornelius wasn't Jewish, but he was sincere in his prayers and generosity. God noticed him.

2. God is always working behind the scenes – While Cornelius had his vision, Peter had his own. God was preparing both men for something greater.
 3. God wants to break down barriers – The vision Peter saw was about more than food. It was about removing walls between people so that everyone could be included in God’s family.
 4. Obedience leads to discovery – Peter didn’t fully understand the vision, but he obeyed God anyway. Because of that, he was about to witness something amazing.
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Final Thought:

Sometimes God calls us to step outside our comfort zone, to love people we wouldn’t normally reach out to, or to rethink old ideas. When we listen and obey—just like Peter and Cornelius did—God can use us to change lives.

October 24

A New Beginning — When the Good News Reached Everyone (Acts 10:24–48)

In the second half of Acts 10, something amazing happens—God shows Peter, Cornelius, and the early church that the message of Jesus is for everyone, not just for a certain group of people. It’s a powerful moment of inclusion, understanding, and transformation.

Cornelius Welcomes Peter

Peter had been invited to visit Cornelius, a Roman army officer, after both men had special visions from God. When Peter arrived at Cornelius’s house in Caesarea, he found a large group of people waiting for him—family and friends who wanted to hear from God.

When Cornelius saw Peter, he bowed down to him, but Peter quickly helped him up and said, “Stand up. I’m just a man, like you.” Peter didn’t want attention or praise—he was just there to share what God had told him.

Peter then spoke honestly. He said that, as a Jewish man, it was usually considered wrong to visit people from other nations. But God had shown him, through a vision, that he should not call anyone “unclean” or unworthy.

In other words, God loves all people, and Peter was learning to see others through God's eyes.

Cornelius Shares His Story

Cornelius explained why he had called for Peter. He told him about the angel's message—that God had heard his prayers and told him to send for Peter. Then he said, “Now we are all here, ready to listen to everything the Lord has commanded you to tell us.”

What an incredible moment—a room full of people, eager to hear about God!

Peter Preaches the Good News

Peter began to speak. He said, “Now I truly understand that God does not show favoritism. He accepts people from every nation who respect Him and do what is right.”

Peter then shared the story of Jesus:

- How He was sent by God
- How He healed people and did good
- How He died on the cross and rose again
- How Peter and others were witnesses to it all
- And how everyone who believes in Jesus receives forgiveness of sins

This was the message of salvation, and it was for everyone.

The Holy Spirit Comes

While Peter was still speaking, something amazing happened. The Holy Spirit came upon everyone in the room—even though they were Gentiles (non-Jews). They began to speak in different languages and praise God, just like the Jewish believers did back in Acts 2.

The Jewish believers who came with Peter were shocked—they had never expected God to give His Spirit to people outside of their community. But Peter saw what was happening and said, “Can anyone stop them from being baptized? They have received the Holy Spirit just as we have.”

So right then and there, they were baptized in the name of Jesus Christ, and a new chapter in the church began.

What This Story Means for Us

This powerful moment in Acts 10 shows us a few important truths:

1. God's love has no borders – He doesn't care where you're from, what language you speak, or what your background is. He wants everyone to know Him.
2. The gospel is for everyone – Not just a certain group, but for all who are willing to believe.
3. The Holy Spirit is a gift to all believers – God gives His presence and power to everyone who puts their faith in Jesus.
4. God can surprise us – Sometimes He works in ways we don't expect, and we need to be open to His plan.

Final Thought:

This moment in the early church reminds us that no one is too far, too different, or too unlikely to receive God's love. Just like Peter learned, we're called to open our hearts and share the good news with everyone—because Jesus is for all people, everywhere.

October 25

A Church That Learns to Welcome All (Acts 11:1–18)

Have you ever had to explain yourself for doing something people didn't understand—even though you knew it was the right thing to do? That's exactly what happened to Peter in Acts 11:1–18. After sharing the good news of Jesus with people who weren't Jewish, some believers were confused and upset. But what came next was a powerful reminder that God's love is for everyone.

Peter Faces Questions

Word spread quickly. The Jewish believers in Judea heard that Peter had visited Gentiles (non-Jews) and even shared meals with them. This shocked many of them. At that time, Jewish people often followed strict rules about food and who they associated with, especially Gentiles.

So when Peter returned to Jerusalem, some believers confronted him, saying, “Why did you go into a Gentile home and eat with them?”

Peter Tells the Whole Story

Peter didn’t get defensive. Instead, he calmly explained everything that had happened:

- He told them about the vision he had in Joppa—how he saw a large sheet with different animals and heard a voice saying, “Get up, Peter. Kill and eat.”
- He explained how he refused at first, because the animals were considered “unclean” by Jewish law.
- But the voice replied, “Do not call anything impure that God has made clean.” This happened three times, and then the vision ended.

Right after that, three men from Caesarea arrived, sent by a man named Cornelius, who had also seen a vision from God. Peter said the Holy Spirit told him to go with them—and he did.

God’s Spirit Makes It Clear

Peter went to Cornelius’s house and shared the message of Jesus. And while he was still speaking, something amazing happened: the Holy Spirit came on the Gentiles, just like He had come on the Jewish believers at the beginning.

Peter realized this was God’s doing. So he asked, “Who was I to stand in God’s way?” In other words, if God had accepted them, Peter had to accept them too.

A Change of Heart

After hearing Peter’s story, the believers in Jerusalem stopped arguing. Instead, they praised God, saying, “So then, God has given even the Gentiles the chance to turn to Him and live.”

This moment was a big turning point in the early church. It helped the believers realize that the message of Jesus was not just for one group of people—it was for everyone, everywhere.

What We Can Learn from This Story

1. God's love is for all people – No matter where you're from, what your background is, or what you look like, God wants you in His family.
 2. Sometimes we need to change our thinking – The early believers had to let go of old ideas and see things the way God sees them.
 3. When God moves, we shouldn't stand in His way – Peter didn't fully understand everything at first, but he followed God's leading.
 4. Listening matters – Peter took the time to explain, and the believers were willing to listen and learn.
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Final Thought:

This part of Acts reminds us that the church is not meant to be a closed group—it's meant to be open to all people who want to know and follow Jesus. When we listen to God and each other with open hearts, we'll see just how big and welcoming His love really is.

October 26

A Growing Church with Open Arms — The Good News Reaches Antioch (Acts 11:19–29)

In the early days of the church, following Jesus wasn't always easy. Many believers were scattered from Jerusalem because of persecution. But instead of keeping quiet, they continued to share the message of Jesus wherever they went. What seemed like a setback turned into an opportunity for God to work in new and powerful ways.

Scattered But Not Silent

After Stephen was killed for his faith (see Acts 7), a great persecution broke out. Many believers fled from Jerusalem and went to other places like Phoenicia, Cyprus, and Antioch. At first, most of them only shared the good news with Jewish people.

But something amazing began to happen in Antioch, a large city filled with people from many backgrounds.

The Good News for Everyone

Some believers from Cyprus and Cyrene arrived in Antioch and shared the message of Jesus with Gentiles (non-Jews) too. This was a big step! And God was clearly with them—many people believed and turned to the Lord.

This shows us something important: when God is at work, His love crosses boundaries. The gospel isn't just for one group—it's for everyone who wants to hear and believe.

Encouragement from Barnabas

When the church leaders in Jerusalem heard about all the new believers in Antioch, they sent a man named Barnabas to check it out. Barnabas was the perfect person for the job—he was full of faith and the Holy Spirit, and he was known for being encouraging (his name even means “son of encouragement”).

When Barnabas arrived in Antioch and saw how God was blessing the people, he was overjoyed. He encouraged them to stay faithful and true to the Lord with all their hearts.

Then Barnabas went to find Saul (later known as Paul) in Tarsus and brought him back to help teach and strengthen the new believers. Together, Barnabas and Saul stayed in Antioch for a whole year, teaching and helping the church grow strong.

This moment was so significant that it's in Antioch where the followers of Jesus were first called “Christians.”

A Church That Cares

While the church in Antioch was growing in faith, they also showed love in action. A prophet named Agabus shared a message from God that a great famine was coming. The believers in Antioch decided to send help to their fellow believers in Judea.

Everyone gave what they could, and they sent their gift with Barnabas and Saul to take care of those in need.

What Can We Learn from This Story?

1. God works through hard times – Even when the early church was scattered and suffering, God used it to spread the message of Jesus to new places.
2. The gospel is for everyone – In Antioch, Gentiles (non-Jews) were welcomed into the family of faith, showing us that God's love has no limits.

3. Encouragement matters – Barnabas lifted others up and helped them grow in their faith. We can all be encouragers like him.
 4. Faith leads to action – The church in Antioch didn't just believe—they gave and helped others in need.
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Final Thought:

God used a group of ordinary, scattered believers to build a strong and generous church in Antioch. They welcomed people from all backgrounds, grew in faith, and gave to those in need. That's a powerful example of what the church is meant to be—a community of faith, love, and action.

October 27

God's Power Can't Be Stopped — Even When the Church Is Under Attack (Acts 12:1–25)

Have you ever felt like things were out of control? Like the people doing wrong were winning, and those doing good were suffering? That's how it must have felt for the early church in Acts 12. But this chapter reminds us of a powerful truth: even when things look dark, God is still in control.

Trouble for the Church

At this point in the story, the early church was growing—but they were also facing serious danger. King Herod Agrippa I, who ruled in Jerusalem, began to attack the leaders of the church. He had the apostle James (the brother of John) killed with a sword. This was heartbreaking.

When Herod saw that this made some people happy, he went further—he arrested Peter, one of the main leaders of the church. He planned to put Peter on trial after the Passover festival. To make sure Peter didn't escape, Herod had him chained and guarded by 16 soldiers.

Things looked hopeless.

The Church Prays

But the church didn't give up. They couldn't break Peter out of prison—but they could pray. And that's exactly what they did. Day and night, the believers prayed earnestly for Peter's release.

What happened next was nothing short of a miracle.

God Sends an Angel

The night before Peter's trial, while he was sleeping between two guards, an angel of the Lord appeared. A bright light filled the cell. The angel woke Peter up, tapped him on the side, and said, "Quick, get up!"

The chains fell off Peter's wrists. The angel told him to get dressed and follow him. Peter thought he was dreaming, but he did as he was told. They walked past guards and out through the prison gates—which opened by themselves! Then the angel disappeared.

Peter finally realized, "This is real! God has rescued me!" So he went straight to the house where many believers were praying.

Surprise at the Prayer Meeting

Peter knocked on the door, and a servant girl named Rhoda came to answer. She recognized his voice but got so excited that she ran back inside without opening the door!

"Peter is at the door!" she told everyone.

They didn't believe her. "You're out of your mind," they said. But Peter kept knocking, and when they finally opened the door and saw him, they were amazed.

Peter told them how God had rescued him, and then he left to stay safe somewhere else.

A Warning to the Proud

While Peter was saved, things didn't go well for King Herod. A little later, he gave a speech in front of a crowd, and the people shouted, "This is the voice of a god, not a man!" Herod liked the attention and didn't give credit to God.

Because of his pride, God struck him down, and Herod died.

The Church Keeps Growing

Even after all the trouble and danger, the chapter ends with hope:

“But the word of God continued to spread and flourish.” (Acts 12:24)

God’s mission couldn’t be stopped. His power was greater than prison walls, soldiers, or kings.

What We Can Learn from Acts 12

1. God hears our prayers – Even when we feel powerless, prayer connects us to God’s power.
 2. God’s timing is perfect – Peter was rescued at the last possible moment, reminding us that God never forgets us.
 3. God is more powerful than any leader or enemy – Herod tried to stop God’s work, but in the end, it was Herod who was stopped.
 4. The church moves forward – Even in tough times, God’s message keeps spreading.
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Final Thought:

When things look darkest, don’t give up—pray. Trust that God is still working, even when you can’t see it yet. Just like He did for Peter and the early church, He still makes a way when there seems to be no way.

October 28

Sent by God — The Start of Paul’s First Mission Trip (Acts 13:1–12)

The book of Acts tells the exciting story of how the message of Jesus spread around the world. In Acts 13, we see the beginning of something big: the first mission trip led by Paul and Barnabas. They were chosen by God to go and share the good news with people in other places—and it all started with prayer, fasting, and obedience.

Let’s take a closer look at how this mission began and what happened on the journey.

A Church That Listened to God

The story begins in the city of Antioch, where there was a strong group of believers. Among them were teachers and prophets—people who helped others understand God’s Word. Some of these leaders were:

- Barnabas
- Simeon (called Niger)
- Lucius of Cyrene
- Manaen (who grew up with King Herod)
- Saul (later called Paul)

While these leaders were worshiping and fasting, the Holy Spirit spoke to them, saying:

“Set apart for Me Barnabas and Saul for the work I have called them to do.”

(Acts 13:2)

So the church prayed again, laid hands on them (a sign of blessing and support), and sent them out to do God’s work.

On Mission in Cyprus

Barnabas and Saul set out, taking a helper named John Mark with them. Their first stop was the island of Cyprus. They traveled across the island, stopping in cities to teach about Jesus in the Jewish synagogues.

When they reached the city of Paphos, they met two important people:

1. Sergius Paulus, the Roman governor, who was an intelligent man and wanted to hear the Word of God.
2. Elymas the sorcerer (also called Bar-Jesus), who was close to the governor but tried to stop him from believing.

Elymas was using his influence to turn Sergius Paulus away from the truth.

Paul Speaks with Power

Saul (now called Paul for the first time in this chapter) saw what Elymas was doing and responded boldly. Filled with the Holy Spirit, Paul said:

“You are a child of the devil and an enemy of everything that is right! Will you never stop twisting the truth?”

Then Paul told Elymas that he would be struck blind for a time—and immediately, Elymas couldn’t see. He groped around, looking for someone to lead him by the hand.

This miracle got the governor’s attention. When he saw what happened, he believed in the Lord, amazed by what he had heard and seen.

What We Can Learn from This Story

1. God calls people to share His message – Paul and Barnabas were chosen and sent out through prayer and obedience.
 2. The Holy Spirit leads the mission – This wasn’t just their idea. It was God’s plan from the beginning.
 3. Not everyone will support the truth – Elymas tried to block the message, but God’s power is greater than any opposition.
 4. God uses boldness and miracles to open hearts – The governor saw God’s power in action and decided to believe.
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Final Thought:

This part of Acts shows us how the church is meant to go and grow. God doesn’t want the good news to stay in one place—He wants it to reach everyone. And just like He called Paul and Barnabas, He still calls people today to share His love and truth around the world.

When we pray, listen, and obey, God can do amazing things—more than we can imagine.

October 29

Faith, Miracles, and Boldness — Paul and Barnabas Keep Going (Acts 14:1–28)

Have you ever tried to do something good and been misunderstood or mistreated for it? That’s what happened to Paul and Barnabas as they continued their journey to share the good news about Jesus. In Acts 14, we see how they faced opposition, confusion, and danger, yet they didn’t give up.

This chapter shows us that God works through ordinary people who stay faithful, even when things get tough.

Preaching in Iconium — Some Believe, Some Attack

Paul and Barnabas arrived in a city called Iconium. As usual, they went to the Jewish synagogue and preached boldly. A large number of people—both Jews and Gentiles—believed the message about Jesus.

But not everyone was happy. Some people stirred up trouble and tried to turn others against them. Still, Paul and Barnabas stayed a long time, speaking with confidence and performing miracles that showed God was with them.

Eventually, the city became divided—some were with Paul and Barnabas, and others were against them. When a group planned to stone them, they found out in time and fled to the nearby towns of Lystra and Derbe, where they continued preaching the good news.

A Miracle in Lystra — and a Big Misunderstanding

In Lystra, something incredible happened. Paul saw a man who had never been able to walk—he was crippled from birth. Paul looked at him and saw that he had faith to be healed. So Paul said loudly:

“Stand up on your feet!”

And the man jumped up and began to walk!

The crowd was amazed—but also very confused. They thought Paul and Barnabas were Greek gods in human form! They shouted, “The gods have come down to us!” They called Barnabas Zeus and Paul Hermes (because he did most of the talking). The local priest even brought animals to offer sacrifices to them.

Paul and Barnabas were horrified. They tore their clothes and rushed to stop the people, shouting:

“We are only human, just like you! We are here to tell you to turn from these worthless things to the living God.”

They explained that God created everything and had shown His goodness to all people. But even with their explanation, the crowd barely listened.

Trouble Follows Them

Soon, some of the same enemies who had stirred up trouble in Iconium came to Lystra. They turned the crowd against Paul. In a sudden turn, Paul was stoned and dragged out of the city, left for dead.

But he wasn't done yet. When the other believers gathered around him, Paul got up and walked back into the city! The next day, he and Barnabas left for Derbe.

Encouraging the Churches

In Derbe, many more people became believers. Then, instead of heading home the easy way, Paul and Barnabas went back through the cities where they had faced danger—Lystra, Iconium, and Antioch. They returned to:

- Strengthen the believers
- Encourage them to keep the faith
- Remind them that following Jesus includes hardships

They also helped appoint leaders in each church and prayed with the people.

Finally, they sailed back to Antioch, where they had first been sent out. They gathered the church and told them all the amazing things God had done—especially how Gentiles (non-Jews) were now coming to faith too.

What We Can Learn from Acts 14

1. Faithfulness brings results—and resistance

Paul and Barnabas saw many people come to Jesus, but they also faced attacks and danger.

2. Miracles point to God, not to people

The healing in Lystra was powerful, but the crowd misunderstood it. Paul and Barnabas stayed humble and pointed people back to God.

3. Courage means not giving up

Even after being stoned, Paul got up and kept going. He didn't let pain or fear stop him.

4. The church needs encouragement

Paul and Barnabas went back to the new believers to support them and help them grow strong in their faith.

Final Thought:

Sometimes following Jesus is hard. People may misunderstand you or even oppose you. But like Paul and Barnabas, we can stay faithful, stay bold, and keep going—because God is always at work. And in the end, every step of obedience matters.

October 30

What Really Matters? — The Church Decides on Grace (Acts 15:1–21)

As the early church grew, people from all kinds of backgrounds began to follow Jesus. Many of them were not Jewish, and this raised a big question:

Do non-Jewish believers have to follow all the Jewish laws to be saved?

This question led to one of the most important meetings in early church history—and it taught a powerful lesson about God’s grace and what really matters in following Jesus.

A Big Debate Begins

Some Jewish believers came to Antioch, where Paul and Barnabas were teaching. These men started telling the new Gentile (non-Jewish) believers:

“You must be circumcised to be saved.”

In other words, they were saying, “You have to become Jewish first if you want to follow Jesus.”

Paul and Barnabas strongly disagreed with this. So the church decided to send them to Jerusalem to meet with the apostles and elders and settle the matter once and for all.

A Meeting with Church Leaders

When they arrived in Jerusalem, Paul and Barnabas shared how God was working among the Gentiles—how many people were believing in Jesus without following Jewish laws.

Still, some believers from a group called the Pharisees stood up and said:

“Gentile believers must be circumcised and follow the law of Moses.”

This led to a serious discussion. The leaders had to decide: Is salvation based on following rules—or on faith in Jesus?

Peter Speaks the Truth

Peter, one of Jesus’ closest followers, stood up and reminded everyone what God had already shown them:

“God chose me to share the good news with the Gentiles, and they believed. God gave them the Holy Spirit, just like He gave to us. He made no difference between us and them, because He purified their hearts through faith. Why put a heavy burden on them that even we Jews haven’t been able to carry? We are saved by the grace of the Lord Jesus—just like they are!” (Acts 15:7–11, paraphrased)

Peter made it clear: salvation is a gift from God, not something we earn by keeping all the rules.

Paul and Barnabas Share More

Next, Paul and Barnabas told everyone how God had done miracles and wonders among the Gentiles. It was clear that God was at work, even though the Gentiles weren’t following all the old laws.

James Offers a Solution

Finally, James (the brother of Jesus and a leader in the Jerusalem church) spoke up. He agreed with Peter, Paul, and Barnabas. Then he suggested a wise and peaceful solution:

“Let’s not make it difficult for the Gentiles who are turning to God.”

Instead of requiring them to follow all Jewish laws, James suggested they follow a few basic guidelines to promote peace and unity, especially when living among Jewish believers. These included:

- Avoiding food offered to idols
- Avoiding sexual immorality
- Not eating meat with blood or from animals that were strangled

This wasn't about earning salvation—it was about helping believers live together in love and respect.

What We Can Learn from Acts 15:1–21

1. Salvation is by grace, not by rules

We don't have to earn God's love—we simply trust in what Jesus has done for us.

2. God welcomes everyone

The early church realized that God was saving people from every nation, not just one group.

3. The church should not put up unnecessary barriers

We must be careful not to add extra rules that make it harder for people to come to Jesus.

4. Wisdom and unity matter

The leaders didn't fight or split—they listened, prayed, and made a decision that honored both truth and love.

Final Thought:

The early church faced a big question—and they answered it by looking at what God was already doing, listening to each other, and focusing on what really matters: grace through Jesus Christ. It's a powerful reminder that today, too, we are saved not by what we do, but by what Jesus has done.

October 31

A Letter of Encouragement—and a Sharp Disagreement (Acts 15:22–41)

After the early church leaders in Jerusalem made an important decision about salvation (Acts 15:1–21), they wanted to make sure all the new believers understood it clearly. So they didn't just talk about it—they took action. They wrote a letter, sent trusted people to deliver it, and helped spread peace and clarity.

But even in the middle of all this good news, we also see a disagreement between two leaders—Paul and Barnabas—showing us that even faithful people don't always agree. Let's explore both parts of this story.

A Letter That Brought Joy

The church leaders in Jerusalem wrote a letter to the Gentile (non-Jewish) believers in Antioch and other places. This letter came after a big decision: Gentiles didn't need to follow all the old Jewish laws to be saved—they were saved by faith in Jesus.

The church chose two respected leaders, Judas (called Barsabbas) and [Silas](#), to go with Paul and Barnabas and personally deliver the letter. The letter said something like this:

“We’ve heard some people have confused you by saying things we didn’t send them to say. We want you to know that we’ve agreed—after seeking God’s direction—not to burden you with unnecessary rules.

Just follow a few basic things to keep peace:

- Don’t eat food offered to idols
- Avoid blood and meat from strangled animals
- Stay away from sexual immorality

We’re not adding heavy rules—just simple things to help everyone live well together.”

When the believers in Antioch read the letter, they were very encouraged. It was good news! Judas and Silas stayed for a while, encouraging the believers and strengthening their faith. Then Judas returned to Jerusalem, while Silas stayed with Paul and Barnabas.

A Disagreement Between Friends

Later, Paul suggested to Barnabas that they go back and visit the churches they had started during their first mission trip. They wanted to see how the new believers were doing.

Barnabas agreed—but he wanted to bring John Mark with them.

Paul said no. John Mark had left them partway through their earlier journey (Acts 13:13), and Paul didn't think it was wise to bring him again.

The disagreement became so strong that Paul and Barnabas decided to separate:

- Barnabas took John Mark and sailed to Cyprus.
- Paul chose Silas, and they traveled through Syria and Cilicia, strengthening the churches.

Even though it was sad to see two leaders part ways, God still used both teams to spread the gospel.

What We Can Learn from Acts 15:22–41

1. Clear communication brings peace

The letter from the Jerusalem church helped clear up confusion and bring joy to new believers.

2. Encouragement is powerful

Judas and Silas were sent not just with a message, but with hearts to encourage and strengthen others.

3. Even strong leaders disagree

Paul and Barnabas loved Jesus, but they had different views. Disagreement doesn't mean failure—it just means they were human.

4. God works through all things

Even though Paul and Barnabas split up, their new teams were still used by God to continue spreading the gospel in more places.

Final Thought:

The early church wasn't perfect—but it was faithful. Through letters, conversations, encouragement, and even disagreements, God kept His mission moving forward. And just like back then, God still uses imperfect people to share His perfect message today.
