

2016 SUMMER CARE GROUP SERIES

Believing, Receiving,
& Going

A Journey Through the Book of Acts

Believing, Receiving, & Going

The book of Acts picks up where the Gospel of Luke ends. Jesus had been crucified and resurrected and we find Him ascending into heaven. In the book of Acts we see the beginning of the church. The first thing they were instructed to do was to "WAIT" until they received the gift Jesus told them about. For He said they would receive the Promise of the Father.... 120 would gather together in the upper room to wait and pray in one accord. What did Jesus mean about this Promise? What kind of power would they receive? How would they ever become witnesses to the remotest places on earth? The apostles, along with men, women and children would soon find out about a whole new "WAY" of living. **Believing, Receiving, and Going**- empowered, filled, anointed and overflowing with the Holy Spirit would become the more excellent way to live the life the Lord had called them to.

In today's world, to fulfill God's call upon our lives and to live successfully, we too must follow the pattern set forth in the book of Acts. They believed in the Lord Jesus Christ, believed His Word, believed in the Promise and waited for it's fulfillment. And that day came! On the day of Pentecost and they were all filled with the Holy Spirit, given power and made witnesses. They were set ablaze. They learn the importance of **Believing and Receiving** before ever **Going**. This became their way of life. They would meet in the temple and from house to house, continuing to learn under the disciples teaching, breaking bread together and praying. They flowed together in unity. Jesus promised where two or three are gathered together, He is in their midst. Daily as they found themselves living their ordinary lives, extraordinary miraculous things began to happen. Crippled people began to walk, people who were born blind suddenly through prayer and the laying on of hands were instantaneously healed. People who were deaf could hear again. Power flowed out of them and miracles happened. When it was demanded of them to give an account of how and why these things were happening, right on the spot they found themselves witnesses of the glory of God, telling of His wonderful deeds and how it had nothing to do with them. Those asking the question would marvel, for surely it was obvious that these men were uneducated and untrained. The rationale, **"They realized that they (the men) had been with Jesus."**

Have you been with Him lately? When you join together with other believers He shows up. He fills you with His Power and makes you His Witness. As you walk along the "Way" in your daily lives miracles begin to happen. You lay hands on someone who is sick and they recovered. You sit next to your coworker and you can't help yourself but to tell them what Jesus has done for you. You are sitting together at your family table breaking bread and suddenly your whole household is turned upside down and are saved. If we want to see revival in our land and in our homes and in our personal lives we must return to this way of Life in the book of **ACTS**. Nothing but Holy Spirit Power and Fire will ignite this world again...

This series is a compilation of the writings and teaching of Pastor Frank Bailey. Let's join together for the next few weeks as we journey through the book of Acts.

Table of Contents

Week 1	Believing in the Promise	ACTS 1
Week 2	Receiving the Promise	ACTS 2
Week 3	The Power for Healing	ACTS 3
Week 4	The Power to Endure and to Serve	ACTS 4-6
Week 5	The Power of Your Testimony	ACTS 7-9
Week 6	The Power of Your Prayer and Your Giving	ACTS 10
Week 7	The Power to Change and to Stand	ACTS 11-14
Week 8	The Power of His Presence	ACTS 15
Week 9	The Power to Receive	ACTS 16-18
Week 10	The Power of the Anointing	ACTS 19
Week 11	The Power of the Blood	ACTS 20-22
Week 12	The Power That Binds Together	ACTS 23-28

Believing in the Promise

Acts 1:4 *"Gathering them together, He commanded them not to leave Jerusalem, but to wait for what the Father had promised, "Which," He said, "you heard of from Me"."*

There was a very important agreement made, it was made long before time began. It was a solemn, eternal covenant made between the Heavenly Father and His Only Begotten Son. What were the conditions of this covenant and what was the promise that was made? The agreement was this, that the Son of God would become a human, He would be born of a virgin and become part of the human race, permanently. As the representative of man before the Father, He would offer His life as a sacrifice for the sins of mankind. What would be the results of this arrangement? The Father would give the Holy Spirit to all that would **BELIEVE** on His Son. As a result, the Father gave an incredible promise to the Son, we call this **the Promise of the Father**. This would bring redeemed man into an incredible spiritual fellowship, a place of intimacy previously only enjoyed by the Father and the Son.

1. WHAT IS THE PROMISE OF THE FATHER?

_____!

Luke 24:49 *"And behold, I am sending forth the promise of My Father upon you; but you are to stay in the city until you are clothed with power from on high."*

John 14:16-17 *"I will ask the Father, and He will give you _____, that He may be with you forever; that is the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it does not see Him or know Him, but you know Him because He abides with you and will be in you."*

John 14:26 *"But the Advocate, the _____, whom the Father will send in my name, will teach you all things and will remind you of everything I have said to you."*

John 16:7 *"But very truly I tell you, it is for your good that I am going away. Unless I go away, the _____ will not come to you; but if I go, I will send Him to you."*

Acts 1:4 *"On one occasion, while He was eating with them, He gave them this command: "Do not leave Jerusalem, but wait for the gift My Father Promised, which you have heard Me speak about."*

"The Holy Spirit, in His indwelling presence, His influences and fruits, is the sum of all grace, holiness, comfort, and joy; or, in one word, of all the spiritual good Christ purchased for men in this world: and is also the sum of all perfection, glory, and eternal joy, that He purchased for them in another world. The Holy Spirit is the subject matter of the promises, both of the eternal covenant of redemption, and also of the covenant of grace. Therefore the Holy Spirit is so often called the Spirit of promise, and emphatically, the promise, the promise of the Father."

Jonathan Edwards

When the Holy Spirit was poured out on the day of Pentecost, this heavenly, eternal covenant began to be fulfilled. Today, people on every continent, from every ethnic group, every age and gender are experiencing the fruit of this covenant. The Holy Spirit is being poured out on all flesh. We are no longer orphans, we have been purchased by the blood of our Savior. The Holy Spirit is being poured out on all who believe. How about you? ***Have you received the Promise of the Father?*** He said in the last days He would pour out His Spirit on His Sons and His daughters. This promise is for you, this promise is for today.

2. THE FATHER'S PROMISE IS THE GIFT OF THE HOLY SPIRIT TO ALL WHO BELIEVE IN THE SON. WHAT WILL YOU RECEIVE AS A RESULT OF THIS PROMISE?

Acts 1:8 "Ye shall receive _____, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you."

Shortly after Katrina decimated New Orleans, Parris and I found ourselves living in a trailer in the driveway of our flooded home. We were the first people back on our street and the only ones there for many weeks. Our only neighbors were the occasional visits from the patrolling National Guard. We were running our lives with a gas-operated generator. You don't really notice the importance of electric power until you don't have it. That generator became precious and essential for everything we did. That is the way it is with the power of God. Without it we can do nothing. With God's power, all things are possible. I like to think of the power of God as our generator, the source of life for all we do.

3. WHY DO MOST CHRISTIANS NOT BEAR MUCH FRUIT?

Acts 1:4-5 *“Do not leave Jerusalem, but _____ for the gift my Father promise, in a few days you will be baptized with the Holy Spirit.”*

*“The Lord’s command to preach the gospel to all people not only applied to the disciples, but also to all followers of Christ. The very last command Jesus gave to His disciples, namely not to preach **until they had received the power from on high**, also applies to us. The church appears to have lost sight of this great secret (this was written in the 1800’s). We seem to have forgotten that it is only by living in the power of the Holy Spirit that we can preach the gospel. This might be the reason why so much preaching and so much working bear so little fruit. The church lacks the much-availing prayer that brings down the power from on high. The secret of Pentecost is that the disciples continued with one accord in prayer and supplication until they were filled with the Holy Spirit. They then proved what the mighty power of God could do through them.”*

Andrew Murray

4. WHAT IS THE MEANING OF THE WORD POWER IN ACTS 1:8?

Acts 1:8 *“Ye shall receive _____, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you.”*

The word He used that is translated **“power”** is the Greek word **“DUNAMIS.”**

STRONG’S- Dunamis- doo’-nam-is, force (literally or figuratively; specifically miraculous power usually by implication a miracle itself).

THAYER’S-

- A. Strength, ability;
- B. Inherent Power, power residing in a thing by virtue of its nature, or which a person or thing exerts and puts forth;
- C. Power for performing miracles;
- D. Moral power and excellence of soul

This “*dunamis*” is a game changer. Everything changed for Jesus and for His followers after they experienced the “*dunamis*” of God. In the same way today, the power of God will change your life significantly. The verse of scripture for today’s devotion is a direct word from Jesus Himself. He told His disciples not to leave Jerusalem on their charge of world evangelism until they were clothed with power from above. In the same way, in our dark, secular world, we are in great need of the power of God. His power on our life will give us the ability to live this Christian life and lead us into the supernatural life that the early church enjoyed, without this power, we are sadly left to our own inept attempts to change our lives.

5. WHAT CONNECTS US TO THE DUNAMIS POWER OF GOD?

Acts 1:13-14 “And when they were come in, they went up into an upper room...These all continued with one accord in prayer and supplication, with the women, and Mary the mother of Jesus, and with his brethren.”




_____ connects us to the “*dunamis*” power of the Holy Spirit. In light of this truth think about the condition our world is in today. For example, in today’s news we read about the definition of marriage being redefined, gender issues, ebola outbreaks, beheadings, the execution of Christians in the Middle East, inappropriate behavior of teachers with their students, and multiple failings by our government officials. You get the picture, our world is sick and dying. Nothing less than the power of God can effect the troubled lives of the people in our world. The good news is that unlimited power is available for His church; all we need to do is look to the Lord in prayer.

6. WHAT WILL THIS POWER ENABLE US TO BE?

Acts 1:8 “But you shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be _____ to Me in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth.”

Augustine had a powerful saying that this verse brings to mind. “Lord, command what you will, but give what you command”. Augustine understood the futility of trying to fulfill the will of God with our human talents or will power. Nothing is more frustrating than trying to live a Christian life and lifestyle without supernatural power. Thank the Lord for the power of Pentecost today. Daily we can continue to receive power when the Holy Spirit comes upon us. He not only gives us direction for His purpose in our lives,

He clothes us with power and ability to accomplish His purpose through the power of the Spirit. The contemporary church is in great need of this power. Without it, our testimony is not that much different from the rest of the world. With His power, alcoholics and substance abusers are free, those driven and controlled by sexual sin are cleansed and made whole, those struggling with depression are helped; yep. We need the rushing mighty wind of God to come blow upon our lives that we might receive power to become His witnesses to the world around us.

 ANSWERS	1. THE HOLY SPIRIT, ANOTHER HELPER, HOLY SPIRIT, HELPER; 2. POWER; 3. WAIT; 4. POWER; 5. PRAYER; 6. WITNESSES
 TAKEAWAY	1. The Holy Spirit is the Promise of the Father. 2. If we wait for Him to come He will give us power and make us His witnesses. 3. Through the Holy Spirit's power lives are changed.
 HOMEWORK	Read ACTS 2 before next weeks Bible Study.

Receiving the Promise

Acts 2:1-2 "And when the day of Pentecost was fully come, they were all with one accord in one place. And suddenly there came a sound from heaven as of a rushing mighty wind, and it filled all the house where they were sitting."

We saw in Acts 1 that the followers of Jesus had gathered together in the upper room devoting themselves to prayer and resolved to wait for the Promise of the Father to come. Their waiting was not in vain. "There is something powerful that comes from corporate spiritual hunger. These followers of Jesus had spent three years with a close relationship with Christ. Nothing ceremonial or symbolic could replace that incredible intimacy that they had experienced with the Lord. They knew something was coming. Jesus had promised. The Father had promised. The coming of the Holy Spirit was certain."

This would be a day no one would soon forget. It began as the last nine days had begun, waiting. The followers of Jesus were waiting for "the Promise of the Father". They were not quite sure what kind of promise that was, but they waited none the less. That tenth day, suddenly the very atmosphere in that upper chamber seemed to come alive. The room began to swirl with a wind that was more than a wind. It was the breath of God.

1. WHAT DOES THE WORD "WIND" MEAN IN THE HEBREW?

Acts 2:1-2 "And when the day of Pentecost was fully come, they were all with one accord in one place. And suddenly there came a sound from heaven as of a rushing mighty wind, and it filled all the house where they were sitting."

There are many visual pictures of God in His creation. One of the most incredible glimpses of God is the wind. In the Hebrew Bible the word for *wind* is "*ruwach*" which is used for *breath and spirit* also. In the Greek New Testament, "*pnuma*", is the word for "*spirit, wind, and breath*". In the first verses of the Bible, we see the "*wind of God*", moving on the surface of the deep, He was intimately involved in creation. We see the "*breath*" of God in the creation of Adam. In today's scripture verse, we see the "*rushing mighty wind*" filling the believers in the upper room, God was breathing His creative life into His church.

Next, strange languages began to flow from deep within, these were not ordinary languages, these were the very words of God. As this strange blessing began to spread, the sound of celebration and joy began to attract a crowd in the streets below.” These people are all drunk!” someone shouted. Before you knew it, Peter was in the street, lifting up his voice, “These men are not drunk as you suppose, this is the fulfillment of what the prophet Joel said”.

2. WHAT IS SPEAKING IN TONGUES AND EXPRESSION OF?

Acts 2:1-4 NASB When the day of Pentecost had come, they were all together in one place. And suddenly there came from heaven a noise like a violent rushing wind, and it filled the whole house where they were sitting. And there appeared to them tongues as of fire distributing themselves, and they rested on each one of them. And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit was giving them utterance.

“Speaking in tongues is a supernatural expression of God’s Spirit. It is a Holy Spirit-inspired way of speaking, praying or praising God by which a Christian speaks in a language (Gk glossa) they have never learned (Acts 2:4; 1Co. 14:14–15). When a person speaks in tongues, it may be an existing spoken human language (see Acts 2:6, where the people who heard the 120 speak in tongues recognized the languages). Or it may be a language unknown on earth (1 Co. 13:1, where Paul mentions speaking in “tongues of angels”). Whether the language is understandable to the hearers or like no other language on earth, it is a means of communicating with and expressing praise to God. Speaking in tongues is the outward sign, or physical evidence, of the baptism in the Holy Spirit when the experience first comes. When a Christian speaks in tongues through the inspiration of the Spirit, that individual’s spirit and the Holy Spirit join together in verbal prayer, praise and/or prophecy (i.e., messages that honor God by foretelling, warning, challenging, encouraging or inspiring believers).”

The Fire Bible

3. WHAT IS THE FIRE OF GOD ALL ABOUT AND HOW DOES IT AFFECT OUR LIVES?

Acts 2:1-4 NASB When the day of Pentecost had come, they were all together in one place. And suddenly there came from heaven a noise like a violent rushing wind, and it filled the whole house where they were sitting. And there appeared to them _____ as of _____ distributing themselves, and they rested on each one of them. And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit was giving them utterance.

Fire speaks of **purification**. The fire of God comes upon us and begins to burn away the past. All that remains of our past wickedness begins to be purged from us. Fire also speaks of **assimilation**. That means everything fire touches becomes like it, everything fire touches becomes fire. The fire of God is God's transforming agent, making us like Him. Fire also speaks to us about **power**, the baptism of the Spirit fills us with power to live a supernatural life, a life marked by signs and wonders. Fire also teaches us about **revelation**. The Holy Spirit brings light or revelation into our lives. We begin to have eyes wide open, the darkness of this world no longer blinding our eyes. Finally, the fire of God fills us with a **passion**. Our hearts literally get set on fire with a passion for God Himself.

FIRE:
Purification
Assimilation
Power
Revelation
Passion

4. IS THE PROMISE OF THE FATHER AVAILABLE TO ALL TODAY?

Acts 2:17 'And it will be in the last days,' declares God, 'that I will pour out my Spirit on _____, and your sons and your daughters will prophesy, and your young men will see visions, and your old men will dream dreams.

The Holy Spirit is being poured out on all mankind in these days. Anyone who is thirsty cannot only drink but can be a channel for the water of the Spirit to flow through in the power of signs and wonders....

The Old Testament was characterized by limited availability to the anointing. Only prophets and priests, and occasionally a king would experience the anointing upon their lives. That changed dramatically after the day of Pentecost. Peter spoke from Joel's prophesy on the day of Pentecost saying that the day Joel spoke of had come. All people can now experience the power of the Spirit. In Luther's day, the church had digressed and no longer allowed the common man to experience the anointing. The church had moved toward a professional clergy mentality and they only moved in a form of godliness. Luther began to proclaim that all of us are candidates to be used by the Spirit.

This is the same thing Peter said in Acts 2, ***“This is that”***, he began to cry out. ***“This is what we have waited for all of our lives. God has come down, He is here among us”***. Up until that point, only special people, prophets, priests, and kings, ever received an anointing. Now, everything had changed. Peter said this outpouring was for “all flesh”, young and old, rich or poor, all people of all races could experience this Pentecostal blessing. Today, we can all receive the powerful empowerment of the Holy Spirit.

5. PETER AND THE OTHERS WERE CHANGED THAT DAY. CAN WE EXPERIENCE THIS SAME TRANSFORMATION?

Peter had been turned into another man. Just a few days earlier, Peter had denied ever knowing Christ, but now things were different, now Peter was different. He was speaking like a man from another world. What had changed? Where had this new courage come from? Peter had received the “Promise of the Father”. Peter had been baptized in the Holy Spirit. He was a different man. He had been transformed by the touch of God into an Apostle of the Lord Jesus Christ. Peter’s life would never be the same. *He and the others were set on Fire*. Yes, you too can be turned into another man. How will it happen? When you are clothed with power from on high. Ask the Lord today for this change, listen carefully, you just might hear the sound of a rushing, mighty wind.

6. WHAT DID PETER TELL THE PEOPLE LISTENING TO HIS SERMON ON THE DAY OF PENTECOST WERE “CUT TO THE HEART” AND ASKED “WHAT SHOULD THEY DO” TO EXPERIENCE THIS SAME TRANSFORMATION AND INFILLING OF THE HOLY SPIRIT?




Acts 2:37-39 Now when they heard this, they were cut to the heart, and said to Peter and the rest of the apostles, “Men and brethren, what shall we do?” Then Peter said to them, “ _____, and let every one of you be _____ in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins; and you shall receive the _____ of the Holy Spirit. For the _____ is to you and to your children, and to all who are afar off, as many as the Lord our God will call”.

7. WHAT WERE THE AFTER-EFFECTS AFTER THE DAY OF PENTECOST?

Acts 2:46,47 “... _____ with one accord in the temple, and breaking bread from house to house, they ate their food with gladness and simplicity of heart, praising God and having favor with all the people. And the Lord added to the church* daily those who were being saved.”

After the day of Pentecost, there was an incredible newness about everything. The Word of God was new, worship was new, going to church was altogether new. There was a newness about everything, the Holy Spirit had come and the world was a new place. Gathering together with other believers was the ultimate joy, they were sharing this new life together and they were flowing together in the love of God. Spiritual outpourings produce this atmosphere called *“koineneia”* in the local church. This word means *“sharing together”*.

What were they sharing together in those early days in Jerusalem? They were sharing a common testimony. Each was experiencing a new intimacy with the Lord. This experience, our own personal testimony of Jesus is what we share. This is what makes church, church. This is the life that we share today in our churches, this is the life available to all of us. **THE COMFORTER HAS COME !!!** ...Are you connected to a body of believers? If not, find a good church and a good small group. Sharing this life with other Christians is where our joy is made full.

 ANSWERS	3. TONGUES, FIRE; 4. ALL FLESH; 6. REPENT, BAPTIZED, GIFT, PROMISE; 7. CONTINUING TOGETHER
 TAKEAWAY	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. God never breaks His promises. 2. Wind brings life and causes the fire to spread. 3. Fire purifies, assimilates, is powerful and brings revelation and passion. 4. The Promise is available to all who repent. 5. Being clothed with power and set on fire will transform you into a new man. 6. You will want to share what you have received with others.
 HOMEWORK	Read ACTS 3 before the next Bible Study.

The Power for Healing

Acts 3:6 "Silver and gold I do not have, but what I do have I give you: In the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, rise up and walk."

And so filled with power from on high they would continue along in their journey. In Acts 3 we see Peter and John headed to a regular time of prayer in the temple when something amazing happened. What happened next was unplanned and unscripted. The apostles came across a crippled beggar at the gate of the temple asking for money. In a moment of time Peter was proclaiming words; actually much more than words over this man's life. "Silver and gold have I none", Peter proclaimed. "But that which I have give I to you. In the name of Jesus rise up an walk". (fb)

As he reached his hand to lift the man to his feet, something went through Peter's body into the man's body. One ordinary touch and a few simple words spoken empowered by God proved to be miraculous. Peter, an ordinary man had found himself with supernatural power flowing through him to others, *how could this be????* Just a simple touch and words spoken... but the man went walking and leaping and praising God. From this one simple, small act, revival spread through the streets of Jerusalem. No slick marketing campaigns, no multi-million dollar budgets, no pre-planned agendas, just the power of God being released through one individual, then suddenly signs, miracles and wonders happened... Power from on High working through ordinary people willing to go out into the streets to touch and encourage others will transform ourselves, our families, our city, our nation, our world.... ***Lord use me!!!*** (kb)

1. WHEN JESUS WAS ON EARTH HOW WERE PEOPLE HEALED?

Luke 6:19 And all the people were trying to touch Him, for power was coming from Him and healing them all.

As Jesus was preaching His Father's word, the power of God was upon Him and flowing out from Him to such a degree that many people were being healed. Many ministries today are afraid to allow the power of God to be demonstrated in their services. I suppose that some are afraid of the criticism that follows the ministry of the Spirit. Obviously Jesus, and later His apostles, were not ashamed of the power of God. It was the demonstration of the signs and wonders that caused such a great impact on their society.

THE POWER OF THE ANOINTING

“power was coming out from Him – This is the reason for their continual approach to Jesus, *He healed them all, was healing all, kept on healing all.* The preacher today who is not a vehicle of power from Christ to men may well question why that is true.”

Robertson’s Word Pictures

2. WHAT ARE TWO WAYS SPIRITUAL IMPARTATION TAKES PLACE?

Romans 1:11 “For I long to see you, that I may impart unto you some spiritual gift, to the end ye may be established”

A. _____

B. _____

Spiritual impartation takes place through the laying on of hands and words spoken. Jesus laid hands on people, the apostles often laid hands on people, and laying on of hands was actually treated as a doctrine of the early church. The laying on of hands transfers the anointing one person has received into other people’s lives. The key is for the right people to lay their hands on you. Through Peter’s hands the power (the anointing) for healing flowed into the crippled man lying at the gate beautiful. Consider the following Scriptures.

Luke 4:40 “While the sun was setting, all those who had any who were sick with various diseases brought them to Him; and laying His hands on each one of them, He was healing them.”

Acts 8:17 “Then they began laying their hands on them, and they were receiving the _____.”

Acts 6:6 “And these they brought before the apostles; and after praying, they laid their hands on them.”

Acts 28:8 *“And it happened that the father of Publius was lying in bed afflicted with recurrent fever and dysentery; and Paul went in to see him and after he had prayed, he _____ his hands on him and healed him.”*

3. WHAT DOES THE BIBLE SAY ABOUT OUR WORDS?

Acts 3:6 *“Silver and gold have I none”, Peter proclaimed. “But that which I have give I to you. In the name of Jesus rise up and walk”.* Peter had said words that were more than words. He brought the blessing and power of God. We also carry the blessing of God on our lips. As we proclaim God’s word it brings tremendous power and blessing on people’s lives.

James 3:5b-8 *“How great a forest is set ablaze by such a small fire! And the tongue is a fire, a world of unrighteousness. The tongue is set among our members, staining the whole body, setting on fire the entire course of life, and set on fire by hell. For every kind of beast and bird, of reptile and sea creature, can be tamed and has been tamed by mankind, but no human being can tame the tongue. It is a restless evil, full of deadly poison. With it we _____ our Lord and Father, and with it we _____ people who are made in the likeness of God.”*

Proverbs 18:21 *“DEATH and LIFE are in the power of the tongue, and those who love it will eat its fruits.”*

Ephesians 4:29 *“Let ____ corrupting talk come out of your mouths, but only such as is good for building up, as fits the occasion, that it may give grace to those who hear.”*

Proverbs 12:18 *“There is one whose rash words are like sword thrusts, but the tongue of the wise brings _____.”*

Proverbs 13:3 *“Whoever guards his MOUTH preserves his life; he who opens wide his lips comes to ruin.”*

“Wishing you good things or nice, obedient children could hardly be considered giving you a blessing because of the uncertainty of the outcome. But the blessing Isaac gave Jacob was neither empty words nor good wishes from one person to another. Isaac’s blessing was definite and would certainly come to pass. It wasn’t just a wish. Isaac actually gave Jacob something, telling him in effect, “Take the gifts that I am promising with my word.” Saying, “I wish you a strong and healthy body and mind,” doesn’t mean much. But if I were to hand you a thousand dollars and say, “I would like you to have this money,” now that would be different. Similarly, Jesus told the paralyzed man, “Get up, take your mat and go home”. If He were merely wishing the best, He would have said, “Poor man, I wish you were healthy and strong.” But that wouldn’t have cured or strengthened the sick man. Those good wishes would have accomplished little.”

Martin Luther

Everyday we are confronted with hurting people. Some people mask their feelings better than others; nevertheless, you can be sure people are in pain all around you. The good news is this, like Jesus and like Peter we have received more than silver and gold. Yep, there is power and healing issuing from the very words of our mouths today.

4. BY WHAT NAME, AUTHORITY, AND POWER DID PETER SPEAK HEALING TO THIS MAN ?

Acts 3:11-16 Now as the lame man who was healed held on to Peter and John, all the people ran together to them in the porch which is called Solomon’s, greatly amazed. So when Peter saw it, he responded to the people: “Men of Israel, why do you marvel at this? Or why look so intently at us, as though by our own power or godliness we had made this man walk? And _____, through faith in His name, has made this man strong, whom you see and know. Yes, the faith which comes through Him has given him this perfect soundness in the presence of you all.

Healing is inseparable from the gospel of Jesus Christ. After all, He is the Sun of Righteousness that Malachi prophesied about. He has risen and there is healing in His beams. Everywhere Jesus went in His earthly ministry healing followed Him. From the paralytic let down through a roof to the healing of Blind Bartimaeus, Christ healed them all. This same miracle power continued after Christ’s death. The disciples moved in the same healing anointing that Jesus walked in. Their miracle ministry was introduced in today’s verse when the well known paralytic in the temple was healed. The name of Jesus was honored, the kingdom advanced, and the compassion of Christ for the hurting was displayed.

“It is done by the name of Christ, not merely by naming it as a spell or charm, but it is done by us as professors and teachers of His name, by virtue of a commission and instructions we have received from Him, and a power which He has invested us with, that name which Christ has above every name; His authority, His command has done it; as writs run in the king’s name, though it is an inferior officer that executes them. The power of Christ is fetched in through faith in His name, a confidence in Him, a dependence on Him, a believing application to Him, and expectation from Him, even that faith which is by Him, which is of His working; it is not of ourselves, it is the gift of Christ; and it is for His sake, that He may have the glory of it; for He is both the author and finisher of our faith. ***Those that wrought this miracle by faith derived power from Christ to work it, and therefore returned all the glory to Him.*** By this true and just account of the miracle, Peter both confirmed the great gospel truth they were to preach to the world—that Jesus Christ is the fountain of all power and grace, and the great healer and Savior...”

Matthew Henry

5. WHERE DID PETER’S FAITH COME FROM AND CAN WE EXPECT TO SEE MIRACLES HAPPEN TODAY AS WE LAY HANDS ON THE SICK?

Acts 3:16 And His name, through faith in HIS name, has made this man strong, whom you see and know. Yes, the faith which comes _____ has given him this perfect soundness in the presence of you all.

Hebrews 12:2 Looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of our faith...




Mark 16:17-18 And these signs will follow those who believe: In My name they will cast out demons; they will speak with new tongues; they will take up serpents; and if they drink anything deadly, it will by no means hurt them; they will lay hands on the sick, and _____ .

The Lord confirms His word as true with signs, wonders, and miracles. Maybe today the Lord will give you an opportunity to pray for someone who is suffering. As you lay your hands on them in faith, God Himself will begin to work. If you are sick, take courage. Jesus of Nazareth is still alive and I heard a rumor that He is passing your way.

6. PETER USED THIS TESTIMONY OF HEALING OF THE LAME MAN TO LEAD OTHERS TO WHAT?

Salvation. Souls being saved and people being added to the church should be the end result of every miracle. This glorifies God.

Acts 3:19 "Repent therefore and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out, so that times of refreshing may come from the presence of the Lord,"

 ANSWERS	2. A. LAYING ON OF HANDS B. WORDS, HOLY SPIRIT, LAID; 3. BLESS, CURSE, NO, HEALING; 4. JESUS CHRIST; 5. THROUGH HIM, THEY WILL RECOVER
 TAKEAWAY	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. His power will flow through our ordinary lives to touch others. 2. Laying on of hands and the words we speak are two ways that spiritual impartation takes place. 3. People are healed by Jesus Christ and through faith in His name. 4. We can lay hands on the sick and as a result- Jesus, through us, will heal the sick and bring salvation to the lost. 5. God will be glorified.
 HOMEWORK	Read ACTS 4-6 before Bible Study next week

The Power to Endure and to Serve

1. WHAT HAPPENED TO PETER AND JOHN AS A RESULT OF THE HEALING OF THE CRIPPLED MAN IN ACTS 3?

They were imprisoned!

Acts 4:1-4 *“Now as they spoke to the people, the priests, the captain of the temple, and the Sadducees came upon them, being greatly disturbed that they taught the people and preached in Jesus the resurrection from the dead. And they laid hands on them, and put them in custody until the next day, for it was already evening. However, many of those who heard the word believed; and the number of the men came to be about five thousand.”*

2. WHAT IS THE ONLY NAME THAT HAS POWER TO HEAL AND TO SAVE (ACTS 4)?

Acts 4:8-12 *Then Peter, filled with the Holy Spirit, said to them, “Rulers of the people and elders of Israel: If we this day are judged for a good deed done to a helpless man, by what means he has been made well, let it be known to you all, and to all the people of Israel, that by the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, whom you crucified, whom God raised from the dead, by Him this man stands here before you whole. This is the ‘stone which was rejected by you builders, which has become the chief cornerstone.’ Nor is there salvation in any other, for there is _____ under heaven given among men by which we must be saved.”*

3. DID THE THREATS AND OPPOSITION TO THE REVIVAL HAPPENING IN THE STREETS OF JERUSALEM DISCOURAGE THE NEW CONVERTS?

Far from it, the signs, wonders and miracles along with the threats and opposition that came as a result, only ignited the revival that was happening in their city. Instead of being discouraged they would pray for more boldness to speak His word and more strength to continue to lay hands and impart the healing power in which they had received! And more power came. As they continued to meet together and prayed, the Bible says, ***“The place where they were assembled was shaken and they were all filled with the Holy Spirit.”*** And the persecutions that those who believed began to experience only proved to join them together, in heart and soul and caused them to share what they had with others. **READ Acts 4:29-36**

Summary of Acts 5

In chapter 5 the people would learn that the power of God could be a source of tremendous blessing but needed to be handled with all fear and reverence. A Couple- a man named Ananias and his wife Sapphira learn the hard way that this power if not treated with respect could prove deadly.. But this would not stop the growth of the church at large. As the Revival spread through the streets of Jerusalem, many were healed, set free and delivered. As the new converts **BELIEVED AND RECEIVED THE POWER OF GOD INTO** their lives they went **FORTH** to their homes and brought out the sick and those vexed with unclean spirits and laid them on the streets of Jerusalem hoping for a miracle. As a result many signs and wonders were done through the hands of the disciples and the number of believers increased. But the more the church grew the more persecution the disciples experienced. The Apostles found themselves again in prison, but those bars could not hold them. An angel of the Lord open the prison doors and led them out to the streets to proclaim the Gospel once more. They stood trial again along with being beaten and told to stop preaching in the name of Jesus, yet they continued along the way. (kb)

4. WHAT HAPPENED AFTER ANANIAS AND SAPPHIRA DIED (ACTS 5)?

Acts 5:11-16 So _____ came upon all the church and upon all who heard these things. And through the hands of the apostles many signs and wonders were done among the people. And they were all with one accord in Solomon's Porch. Yet none of the rest dared join them, but the people esteemed them highly. And believers were increasingly added to the Lord, multitudes of both men and women, so that they brought the sick out into the streets and laid them on beds and couches, that at least the shadow of Peter passing by might fall on some of them. Also a multitude gathered from the surrounding cities to Jerusalem, bringing sick people and those who were tormented by unclean spirits, and they were all healed.

I used to love listening to Kathryn Kuhlman when she was alive. There was something about her voice, or should I say, something in her voice. It seemed like anything could happen when Miss Kuhlman began to talk about miracles; and they often did. Her meetings were reminiscent of the scene in Acts 5 in the streets of Jerusalem where faith was in the air and scores of people were being healed. I have always longed to see another wave of healing come across the land. Now I love what God has done and is doing in our midst. We have seen numerous miracles in our church over the years. We have seen heart patients given new hearts and cancer patients healed. We have seen hepatitis leave people's bodies and deaf people healed; there have been numerous healings in the past 37 years but we know there is more, there is way more.

5. WHAT WERE THE LEADERS IN THE BOOK OF ACTS FILLED WITH AND WHAT HAPPENED THROUGH THEM AS A RESULT?

“The leaders among God’s people were so completely filled and overflowing with God’s presence through the Holy Spirit that God’s miraculous power was with them wherever they went. Even indirect contact with them brought miracles from God. Of course, these material objects had no magical or supernatural qualities in themselves; but even the slightest item or shadow represented a point of contact and, mixed with faith, brought God’s presence in supernatural ways. These actions were evidence that Jesus’ disciples were continuing to do just as their Lord had done: they healed people and freed those tormented with evil spirits. This was a key sign and evidence that God’s kingdom had come and was active among the people with great power. It is always pleasing to God for us to pray that through the Holy Spirit we might do good and heal those troubled and oppressed by sickness and Satan.”

The Fire Bible

6. DO YOU BELIEVE THAT WHAT HAPPENED IN THE BOOK OF ACTS THROUGH THE HANDS OF THE APOSTLES COULD HAPPEN AGAIN IN OUR DAY?

Miss Kuhlman was raised up by God at the end of the great healing revival that began in the 1940’s. She was used to help lead us into the charismatic renewal of the 1960’s and 1970’s. I think it is about to happen again. Our world needs that kind of _____ and _____. I think the greatest of all revivals, characterized by healing signs and wonders, is about to shock our world again.

7. DID THE APOSTLES THEMSELVES EXPERIENCE MIRACLES FIRST HAND?

Yes. In Acts 5 the apostles would be imprisoned again for preaching about the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead and sharing their faith and doctrine with others. But supernaturally at night an angel of the Lord opened the prison doors and brought them out!

Acts 5:17-20 Then the high priest rose up, and all those who were with him (which is the sect of the Sadducees), and they were filled with indignation, and laid their hands on the apostles and put them in the common prison. But at night an angel of the Lord opened the prison doors and brought them out, and said, “Go, stand in the temple and speak to the people all the words of this life.”

Gamaliel's advice to the council that came against the apostles...

Acts 5:38-39 "And now I say to you, keep away from these men and let them alone; for if this plan or this work is of men, it will come to nothing; but if it is of God, you cannot overthrow it—lest you even be found to fight against God."




8. WHAT WAS THE RESPONSE OF THE APOSTLES AFTER BEING BEATEN AND COMMANDED TO STOP PREACHING IN THE NAME OF JESUS?

Acts 5:40-42 "And they agreed with him, and when they had called for the apostles and beaten them, they commanded that they should not speak in the name of Jesus, and let them go. So they departed from the presence of the council, rejoicing that they were counted worthy to suffer shame for His name. And daily in the temple, and in every house, they did not cease teaching and preaching Jesus as the Christ."

9. WHAT PRACTICAL NEEDS AROSE IN THE MIDST OF THE GROWING CHURCH AND WHO DID THEY APPOINT TO SOLVE THEM (ACTS 6)?

Acts 6:1-4 "Now in those days, when the number of the disciples was multiplying, there arose a complaint against the Hebrews by the Hellenists, because their widows were neglected in the daily distribution. Then the twelve summoned the multitude of the disciples and said, "It is not desirable that we should leave the word of God and serve tables. Therefore, brethren, seek out from among you seven men of good reputation, full of the Holy Spirit and wisdom, whom we may appoint over this business; but we will give ourselves continually to prayer and to the ministry of the word."

In the church today and especially in times of revival practical needs arise. In the book of Acts they chose 7 men to serve as a deacon ("*diakonos*"- meaning "*servant*") to take care of the practical needs of the growing church. But these men were no mere servants, they were powerful men, full of the Holy Ghost. They too shared their faith and doctrine and through them the Lord performed many signs, miracles and wonders. One of them was named Stephen. He would become the first martyr of the Christian church. And oh how things would change after that. We will talk more about him next week.

 ANSWERS	2. NO OTHER NAME; 4. GREAT FEAR; 6. POWER AND DEMONSTRATION
 TAKEAWAY	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Jesus Christ is the ONLY name that has power to heal and to save. 2. Opposition doesn't hinder the work of God, but causes Revival to spread. 3. When Revival spreads those who are healed, set free and delivered, go get others so they too can experience revival. 4. The Body of Christ needs men and women to be full of the Holy Spirit not only to serve but who have signs and wonders following them.
 HOMEWORK	Read ACTS 7-9 before Bible Study next week.

The Power of Your Testimony

In the ending verses of Acts 6 Stephen, full of faith and power, did great wonders and signs among the people. Because of this he was seized and brought before the great council to give an account of his actions. With the glory shining forth from his face, he would answer their questions by recounting the testimony of the patriarchs throughout the ages. The Scriptures say that “when they heard these things they were cut to the heart” and they proceeded to stone him. Saul would stand by in approval, then went out to persecute the Christians of the day. Because of these tragic events the Christians would have to leave their homes. They found themselves suddenly dispersed throughout the world. They would share their testimony and the Gospel began to spread throughout the whole earth. And then in an unbelievable turn of events Saul, the persecutor himself, would encounter Jesus as a light shone from heaven. From that moment his own testimony would begin. What is your testimony? Who knows as you go out into your city, the Lord might use your story to save souls.

1. HOW WAS STEPHEN ABLE TO STAND IN THE MIDST OF A PEOPLE THAT WANTED TO KILL HIM?

In Acts 6 it says, ***“And Stephen, full of faith and power, did great wonders and signs among the people. (vs 8) “And all who sat in the council, looking steadfastly at him, saw his face as the face of an angel.”(vs 15)*** They seized him and accused him of blasphemy. When given an opportunity to speak he shared the Gospel with the hearers.

And in ***Acts 7:54-56 “When they heard these things they were cut to the heart, and they gnashed at him with their teeth. But he, being _____, gazed into heaven and saw the glory of God, and Jesus standing at the right hand of God, and said, “Look! I see the heavens opened and the Son of Man standing at the right hand of God!”***

“Stephen was full of the Holy Spirit and had eyes to see into another dimension!”

2. WHAT DID STEPHEN PRAY FOR HIS ENEMIES (ACTS 7)?

Acts 7:57- 60 Then they cried out with a loud voice, stopped their ears, and ran at him with one accord; and they cast him out of the city and stoned him. And the witnesses laid down their clothes at the feet of a young man named Saul. And they stoned Stephen as he was calling on God and saying, “Lord Jesus, receive my spirit.” Then he knelt down and cried out with a loud voice, “Lord, _____ with this sin.” And when he had said this, he fell asleep.

*“Because he was full of the Holy Spirit
he had the power to forgive others who had wronged him.”*

3. HOW IMPORTANT IS FORGIVING THOSE WHO WRONG YOU?

*Matthew 6:15 “But if you do not forgive men their trespasses, _____ will
your Father _____ your trespasses”.*

4. AS A RESULT OF STEPHEN’S DEATH AND THE PERSECUTION THAT FOLLOWED BY THE HANDS OF A MAN NAMED SAUL WHAT HAPPENED TO THE CHURCH (ACTS 8)?

*Acts 8:1-4 Now Saul was consenting to his death. At that time a great persecution
arose against the church which was at Jerusalem; and they were all
_____ throughout the regions of Judea and Samaria, except the apostles. And
devout men carried Stephen to his burial, and made great lamentation over him. As
for Saul, he made havoc of the church, entering every house, and dragging off men
and women, committing them to prison. Christ Is Preached in Samaria.*

5. WHAT DID THE SCATTERED DO?

*Acts 8:4 “Therefore those who were scattered went everywhere _____ the
word.”*

And Philip went down to Samaria and preached Christ. The Lord through Philip healed the paralyzed and the lame. Many were saved and baptized. The apostles Peter and John would lay hands on those who were saved in Samaria and they too received the Holy Spirit. They also were used to expose evil. In Acts 8:25 it says, *“So when they had testified and preached the word of the Lord, they returned to Jerusalem, preaching the gospel in many villages of the Samaritans.”* And great joy spread throughout the land.

6. WHAT ASTONISHING THING HAPPENED TO THE MAN NAMED SAUL (ACTS 9)?

*Acts 9:3-5 As he journeyed he came near Damascus, and suddenly a light shone
around him from heaven. Then he fell to the ground, and heard a voice saying to him,
“Saul, Saul, why are you persecuting Me?” And he said, “Who are You, Lord?” Then the
Lord said, “I am Jesus, whom you are persecuting. It is hard for you to kick against the
goads.”*

“A man named Saul was saved that day. And his own testimony which he would recount over and over again would begin”

Paul’s testimony dominated his life and ministry from the day of his first encounter on the Damascus Road. Christ had become his life that day. He counted everything else as loss in view of the surpassing knowledge of Jesus Christ. How do I know this dominated Paul’s life? Luke recorded the story three times in the book of Acts. There are only a few small portions of several sermons in Acts. It speaks volumes that Luke included Paul’s testimony three times. This was obviously Paul’s message.

Paul preached and lived Jesus Christ. He said that he had been crucified with Christ and he no longer lived but Christ lived inside of him. This revelation of Christ is the key to Paul’s life and the answer to life’s questions. We find our purpose, our power, our salvation, our healing, our encouragement; we find everything that pertains to life and godliness in Christ. If you have been drifting through life, tossed to and fro with all the winds of change in our world, here is your solution. This is your only solution. Lose yourself in Christ. When you do, you will find Christ and discover life itself.

7. WHAT HAPPENS WHEN YOU SHARE YOUR TESTIMONY WITH OTHERS?

When you start talking about your testimony suddenly He comes alive. He lives and breathes in your testimony. The testimony of Jesus is the Spirit of prophesy. He lives in your experience of His love in your life.

8. WHAT DOES IT MEAN THAT THE TESTIMONY OF JESUS IS THE SPIRIT OF PROPHECY?




Rev. 19 :10 “Worship God! For the testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy.”

What a powerful word! Prophecy is the living word of God, or God speaking right now. The fact that Jesus Himself lives in us as born again Christians causes us to step into that prophetic anointing, John called it the testimony of Jesus. Christ is living out His life, or His testimony, in us to glorify His grace. His testimony makes us alive and makes Christianity real.

Jesus told His followers in Acts 1 that they would be “**witnesses**” of Him after the Holy Spirit came upon them. This word “**witnesses**” is the same root word as “**testimony**”. In other words, after we are filled with the Spirit we begin to carry the testimony of Jesus in our lives. He lives in us to reach others for the sake of His name.

The testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophesy. What is your testimony? Is Christ living in and through you? There are no limitations to what He can do. He is doing above and beyond anything we could have asked or even thought according to His power that is working in us.

Start today! Share your Testimony!

 ANSWERS	1. FULL OF THE HOLY SPIRIT; 2. DO NOT CHARGE THEM; 3. NEITHER, FORGIVE; 4. SCATTERED; 5. PREACHING
 TAKEAWAY	1. In order to forgive we must be full of the Holy Spirit. 2. If we do not forgive, the Father will not forgive us. 3. He scatters us to live in different locations, so that the Gospel will be spread. 4. Our testimony is actually the testimony of Jesus. 5. We need to share our testimony today.
 HOMEWORK	Read ACTS 10 before Bible Study next week.

The Power of Your Prayers and Your Giving

Acts 10:1-4 *At Caesarea there was a man named Cornelius, a centurion of what was known as the Italian Cohort, a devout man who feared God with all his household, gave alms generously to the people, and prayed continually to God. About the ninth hour of the day he saw clearly in a vision an angel of God come in and say to him, "Cornelius." And he stared at him in terror and said, "What is it, Lord?" And he said to him, "Your prayers and your alms have ascended as a memorial before God."*

1. DO OUR PRAYERS AND OFFERINGS GET GOD'S ATTENTION?

Acts 10:4 *"Your PRAYERS and your ALMS have _____ as a memorial before God."*

I can't imagine what Cornelius thought that day as he stood staring into the eyes of an angel...The scripture says he stared at him stunned with terror. Cornelius had never seen anything like this before. The events of the next few days would only intensify in shock value as the Lord began to move in his life and in his family. The Apostle Peter would actually come to his house. Then, the most amazing event of all, the Holy Spirit fell on Cornelius, his family, and all his friends. This was all too good to be true. The thing about this story that captures my attention is what the angel said to Cornelius, "Your prayers and your alms have ascended as a memorial before God." Wow, Cornelius had actually captured heaven's attention with his prayers and his offerings. Our prayer and our offerings actually make a difference.

2. WHAT TWO WAYS WILL YOUR HEART PULL YOU IF YOU ARE A CHRISTIAN?

If you are a Christian, then your heart is pulling you in two ways.

First, you have a distinct love and attraction to the Lord and as a result you pray and seek the Lord in worship.

Secondly, you have a love for hurting people. You want to share Christ with the lost and the broken and as a result, like Cornelius, you support ministries with your offerings - and pray for them.

If this is your story, don't be surprised if the Lord shows up in your circumstances. Maybe, as you serve the Lord or give an offering, you can lift up your need before the Lord in prayer. As you do the Lord will hear, like Cornelius- you too will get the attention of the Lord with your prayers and your offerings. At that point anything can happen. You never know, you might find yourself staring in terror in the face of one of His angels, or at least caught by surprise by the visitations of the Holy Spirit on you and your house.

3. WHICH PRAYERS ARE EFFECTIVE?

Rev. 5:8 And when he had taken the scroll, the four living creatures and the twenty-four elders fell down before the Lamb, each holding a harp and golden bowls full of incense, which are the prayers of the saints.

The nature of true prayer is spiritual, not natural. Our effective prayers are birthed by the Holy Spirit making our prayers themselves supernatural. Praying in the Spirit is actually the Lord praying through us; we may be praying scripture, praying for some well known need in our natural language, or even praying in our heavenly language. The Lord actually prays through us making our prayers actually eternal prayers. Our prayers transcend time and space and for us, stuck in the finite world governed by time, prayers appear to be “stored up” before the Father’s Throne.

“Just as men on earth accumulate money and allow it to increase as capital for greater undertakings, so the prayers of the saints are stored up in heaven until the measure is full and the answer can descend.”

Andrew Murray

4. HOW WILL OUR PRAYERS AFFECT WHAT HAPPENS IN THE LAST DAYS?

Revelation 8:2-5 And I saw the seven angels who stand before God, and to them were given seven trumpets. Then another angel, having a golden censer, came and stood at the altar. He was given much incense, that he should offer it with the prayers of all the saints upon the golden altar which was before the throne. And the smoke of the incense, with the prayers of the saints, ascended before God from the angel’s hand. Then the angel took the censer, filled it with fire from the altar, and threw it to the earth. And there were noises, thunderings, lightnings, and an earthquake.

One of the stunning visions in the book of Revelation is found in chapter 8 where the angel hurls the censer full of prayers to the earth, this begins the season of justice aimed at man. This censer is full of the prayers of the church and it effects what happens during the last days of our planet. Your prayers are all stored up. Prayers for your kids, your parents, your neighbors, none of them are forgotten or wasted. They all last forever.

There is a lot of prayer that has been stored up these last 2000 years. Every time I pray; Your Kingdom come, Your will be done, my prayers join together with the countless multitudes that have prayed that prayer the last 2000 years. My prayers are accumulated with the prayers of the 12 apostles, with the Apostle Paul, and all of those powerful first century Christians. My prayers are mingled before the throne with the prayers of the martyrs from every generation. They are joined with the prayers of Augustine, Luther, Calvin, Knox, and Bunyan. They ascend with the prayers of Whitefield, Edwards, Wesley, and Spurgeon. They even are rising as incense with the prayers of Evan Roberts, Seymour, McPherson and Kuhlman. Come Lord, pour out your Spirit, your censer is filling up!!!

“We are called “the Lord’s remembrances,” and are commanded to give Him no rest, day or night, but to crowd the heavens with our petitions. And in due time the answer will come with its accumulated blessings. Not a whisper of true prayer is ever lost. The longer it waits, the larger it becomes.”

A.B. Simpson

5. WHAT WAS THE RESULT OF THOSE STORED UP PRAYERS AND OFFERINGS ON CORNELIUS’ FAMILY?

Acts 10:44 While Peter was still speaking these words, the _____ fell upon all those who heard the word.

Your forgotten prayers, your casual prayers, those desperate prayers; they are all stored up and are released as a memorial before God. In Cornelius’ case, ***it resulted in an incredible outpouring of the Spirit upon his family.*** He had obviously been praying for some kind of awakening for his family and friends....So what do you think surprised Cornelius the most that day? Was it the angel that showed up in his house or maybe it was the effect of all those forgotten prayers. It seems his whole family was converted that day, maybe even the ones that seemed without hope.

What have you been asking God for lately?

6. WHO CAME TO PREACH TO THE PEOPLE GATHERED AT CORNELIUS' HOUSE?

Acts 10:9-10 *The next day, as they went on their journey and drew near the city, Peter went up on the housetop to pray, about the sixth hour. Then he became very hungry and wanted to eat; but while they made ready, he fell into a trance and saw heaven opened and an object like a great sheet bound at the four corners, descending to him and let down to the earth.*

This is the famous passage where Peter was on a rooftop praying and he had a vision of a white sheet coming out of heaven. Verse 12-13 tells us what happens next, ***“In it were all kinds of four-footed animals of the earth, wild beasts, creeping things, and birds of the air. And a voice came to him, “Rise, Peter; kill and eat.”*** But Peter wouldn't dare eat anything unclean, but the Lord commanded him to do so.

Peter would wonder about the meaning of the vision. But a few days later when two men found him to invite him to Cornelius' house, the meaning would become clear. ***Salvation was coming to the Gentiles.***

7. WHAT WAS PETER'S MESSAGE?

Acts 10:37,38 *...you yourselves know what happened throughout all Judea, beginning from Galilee after the baptism that John proclaimed: how God anointed _____ of Nazareth with the Holy Spirit and with power. He went about doing good and healing all who were oppressed by the devil, for God was with him.*

Peter would go and preach to this Gentile family and household. In his message he told them about _____!

8. HOW DO WE KNOW THAT SALVATION CAME TO THIS HOUSE?

Acts 10:44-48 *While Peter was still speaking these words, the Holy Spirit fell upon all those who heard the word. And those of the circumcision who believed were astonished, as many as came with Peter, because the gift of the Holy Spirit had been poured out on the Gentiles also. For they heard them speak with tongues and magnify God. Then Peter answered, “Can anyone forbid water, that these should not be baptized who have received the Holy Spirit just as we have?” And he commanded them to be baptized in the name of the Lord. Then they asked him to stay a few days.*

What a strange turn of events; Peter was resting on the rooftop, listening to the ocean waves when everything changed. He found himself in a trance looking at a bunch of unclean creatures coming from heaven in a sheet. Next, there were Gentiles knocking on the door asking for him. They were babbling on about an angelic visitation and a house full of Italians expecting God to show up. All that happened just a couple of days ago and now Peter was preaching to a house full of Gentiles at a Roman legionnaire's house. Could things get even weirder?

As Peter continued to preach suddenly the atmosphere in the room changed. It was strangely familiar to Peter. This was that same thick presence he felt at the beginning, the rushing mighty wind and the glory of God. Before he even finished his preaching those same familiar sounds filled the air. There were shouts of joy and cries of repentance. There were those unmistakable, un-fake-able belly laughs and all sorts of languages and singing all mixing together. The preaching was no longer necessary, the glory had come.




9. HOW WAS PETER SURE THEY WERE BAPTIZED IN THE HOLY SPIRIT?

Acts 10:45... because the gift of the Holy Spirit had been poured out on the Gentiles also. For they heard them _____ with tongues and _____ God.

The Gentiles were baptized in the Holy Spirit. How was Peter so sure? They were all speaking in other tongues. This was unmistakable, the same things the disciples had experienced that first day was now beginning to make its way to the nations. The world could never be the same.

As Peter made his way back to Joppa he reflected on what had happened. This was what Jesus had meant when He said go into all the world and preach the gospel to all people. This was just the beginning.

Today, Pentecost is still alive and well. While some try to deny it, quench it, or relegate it to the back room, the power of His presence is still falling on whosoever will. Have you been baptized with the Holy Spirit? How will you know? You will know all right! You too will be singing, laughing, and worshipping in those mystery tongues of the Angels.

 ANSWERS	1. ASCENDED; 5. HOLY SPIRIT; 7. JESUS; 9. SPEAK, MAGNIFY
 TAKEAWAY	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Our prayers and offerings do get God’s attention. 2. Cornelius’ prayers and offerings resulted in an incredible outpouring of the Spirit on his family. 3. Salvation and the Baptism of the Holy Spirit is for Jews and Gentiles alike. 4. Peter knew the Gentiles had been filled with the Holy Spirit because they spoke in tongues and magnified God. 5. Pentecost is still alive and well today!
 HOMEWORK	Read ACTS 11-14 before Bible Study next week.

The Power to Change and to Stand

Acts 11:18 When they heard these things they became silent; and they glorified God, saying, "Then God has also granted to the Gentiles repentance to life."

Last week we learned that salvation had been made available to the Gentiles. A man named Cornelius and his whole household were saved and filled with the Holy Spirit. Not everyone would be so happy to hear what went on. So now we pick up in Acts 11 with Peter defending what happened at Cornelius' house. From this point we will see the message would not stop just with this one family. Instead the good news of salvation would spread like wildfire throughout the Gentile nations and the church grew. "God had also granted to the Gentiles repentance to life."

1. WHAT IS REPENTANCE THAT LEADS TO LIFE?

I prayed "the prayer" many times before, this time was different. This time I was aware of my sinful condition. This time I was aware of why Jesus died. It was my sins that brought Jesus to the cross. I could finally see it. The Lord had granted me repentance that leads to life. Instead of just feeling guilty, I saw the mercy and grace offered to me in Christ. It was a combination of incredible sorrow and joy beyond compare. My sins were forgiven and I had been changed.

Jesus taught that one of the ministries of the Holy Spirit was to convict us of our sins. Until He opens our eyes to our sinfulness, we may feel remorse for the consequences of our sins, but we have no ability to repent. Repentance is the combination of God moving on our hearts and our yielding to His touch. Repentance is more than feeling sorry, it is the God given ability to change.

"When unbelievers say they're sorry for their sins, their sorrow is really the expression of disappointment that they will no longer be able to do what they want. They don't really want to change their behavior. When thieves express sorrow, they mean they're sorry they can't steal anymore. Laban (in dealing with Jacob) is portrayed in this same way. Deep down, he didn't really repent. His sorrow was only an outward show. Those who are truly repentant aren't afraid of anything except God's anger and displeasure. They aren't concerned about being humiliated and disgraced in front of other people as long as they know that God is on their side."

Martin Luther

2. WHAT MAKES REPENTANCE A POSSIBILITY?

I can remember witnessing in the bars in Fresno, California during my years in Bible School. It was common for drunks in the bar to cry and talk about old church songs and experiences but the next week you could find them at their same old spot in the bar. Repentance really has two parts to it. It starts with a guilty conscience about our sin and turns into a hatred for sin. Next, repentance turns us to the Lord. He becomes "altogether lovely" to us. Without the attraction to Christ we will be like the drunks in the bar crying in our beer. We may be sorry for what sin has done to us but still have no power to change, still ensnared in the lure and attraction of sin itself. ***It's the power of Christ's love and the attraction to Christ Himself that makes repentance a possibility.*** Until we fall into the arms of His matchless love, we are helpless, unable to change ourselves. When Jesus steps into our lives everything changes. Then, and then only, we can understand what Luke meant when he wrote, "God has also granted to the Gentiles repentance to life.

3. WHAT HAPPENED TO THE CHURCH AS A RESULT OF THE INCLUSION OF THE GENTILES?

The Church _____. They met regularly and learned the blessing of being a giver and in helping others.

Acts 11:21, 25-26,29-30 And the hand of the Lord was with them, and a great number believed and turned to the Lord....Then Barnabas departed for Tarsus to seek Saul. And when he had found him, he brought him to Antioch. So it was that for a whole year they assembled with the church and taught a great many people. And the disciples were first called Christians in Antioch.... Then the disciples, each according to his ability, determined to send relief to the brethren dwelling in Judea. This they also did, and sent it to the elders by the hands of Barnabas and Saul.

4. WHO WAS BARNABAS?

Barnabas and Saul (Paul) would travel together as ministry partners preaching the Gospel throughout the nations. They were under the authority of the apostles in Jerusalem. Barnabas was known as the "son of _____". The Bible says he was a good man and full of the Holy Spirit.

As Saul and Barnabas traveled they would experience persecution, but that was not uncommon during those years. In Acts 12, while the others were spreading the Gospel to Jews and Gentiles alike, we find Peter experiencing troubles of his own- he would be put back in jail again. This time, James would be killed and because it pleased the Jews, Herod would have Peter was seized and put into prison. But one thing Herod didn't account for... The power of corporate prayer and supernatural miracles..

Acts 12: 5 Peter was therefore kept in prison, but constant prayer was offered to God for him by the church.

Acts 12:7 Now behold, an angel of the Lord stood by him, and a light shone in the prison; and he struck Peter on the side and raised him up, saying, "Arise quickly!" And his chains fell off his hands. 8 Then the angel said to him, "Gird yourself and tie on your sandals"; and so he did. And he said to him, "Put on your garment and follow me."

"What a story!"

5. WHAT HAPPENED WHEN PETER KNOCKED ON THE DOOR WHERE THE BELIEVERS WERE TOGETHER PRAYING FOR HIS RELEASE?

The answer is found in Acts 12:11-19 "It is a wonder that when our prayers are answered that we too are surprised!"

"Oh what is man that YOU are mindful of him?" Psalm 8:4

6. AS THE GOSPEL SPREAD, WHAT DID PAUL AND BARNABAS DO WHEN THEY ENCOUNTERED PERSECUTION AND WERE KICKED OUT OF THE PLACES THEY WENT TO?

Acts 13:47-52 For so the Lord has commanded us: 'I have set you as a light to the Gentiles, That you should be for salvation to the ends of the earth.'" Now when the Gentiles heard this, they were glad and glorified the word of the Lord. And as many as had been appointed to eternal life believed. And the word of the Lord was being spread throughout all the region. But the Jews stirred up the devout and prominent women and the chief men of the city, raised up persecution against Paul and Barnabas, and expelled them from their region. But they shook off the dust from their feet against them, and came to Iconium. And the disciples were filled with joy and with the Holy Spirit.

Acts 14:5-7 *And when a violent attempt was made by both the Gentiles and Jews, with their rulers, to abuse and stone them, they became aware of it and fled to Lystra and Derbe, cities of Lycaonia, and to the surrounding region. And they were preaching the gospel there.*

7. WHEN PAUL WAS STONED AND LEFT FOR DEAD, WHAT DID THE DISCIPLES DO?

Acts 14:19-26 *Then Jews from Antioch and Iconium came there; and having persuaded the multitudes, they stoned Paul and dragged him out of the city, supposing him to be dead. However, when the disciples gathered around him, he rose up and went into the city. And the next day he departed with Barnabas to Derbe. And when they had preached the gospel to that city and made many disciples, they returned to Lystra, Iconium, and Antioch, strengthening the souls of the disciples, exhorting them to continue in the faith, and saying, "We must through many tribulations enter the kingdom of God." So when they had appointed elders in every church, and prayed with fasting, they commended them to the Lord in whom they had believed. And after they had passed through Pisidia, they came to Pamphylia.*

25 *Now when they had preached the word in Perga, they went down to Attalia. 26* *From there they sailed to Antioch, where they had been commended to the grace of God for the work which they had completed.*

You must surround yourself with _____ who will stand with you to pray and strengthen you no matter what you find yourself facing.

Paul was beaten, stoned and left for dead. But when all others deserted him, he had close, strong believers that gathered around him, who began to pray. I am sure it was the prayers of the saints heard in heaven that caused Paul to rise again that day. We too are face sometimes with things that we just can't seem to overcome. In those crucial times we must surround ourselves with strong believers who will strengthen us, pray and fast with us, and encourage us to continue in the faith. People who are committed to you and who will stay the course with you. As you attend your small group and corporate church services week after week, relationships will begin to happen. Those strong believers will be the ones who you will form a bond of love with and when needed they will stand with you in the worst of times, but also in the best times as well.
(kb)



ANSWERS

3. GREW; 4. ENCOURAGEMENT; STRONG BELIEVERS



TAKEAWAY

1. Repentance is God moving in our hearts which will cause us to yield to the God given ability to change.
2. His love and attraction to Christ Himself makes repentance a possibility.
3. We all must be like Barnabas and become a source of encouragement to others, especially new converts.
4. We need to be surrounded by strong believers who will stand with us when times get tough. Believers who will strengthen us, pray with us, fast with us and exhort us not to give up.



HOMEWORK

Read ACTS 15 before Bible Study next week.

The Power of His Presence

Acts 15:15-17 And with this the words of the prophets agree, just as it is written: "After this I will return And will rebuild the tabernacle of David, which has fallen down; I will rebuild its ruins, And I will set it up; So that the rest of mankind may seek the LORD, Even all the Gentiles who are called by My name, Says the LORD who does all these things.'

There was tension in the air as Paul gave the account of what had been happening amongst the gentiles through his ministry. He told of town after town, where a local church had been planted and thousands of gentiles were experiencing the power of the Holy Spirit in and upon their lives. These Jewish believers were okay with an occasional proselyte becoming a Christian, but this was different. The church was now becoming international, there were more Gentiles than Jews calling themselves Christians, this could hardly be the plan of the God of Abraham. That's when James, the brother of Jesus, stood up and begin to prophesy using this passage from the book of Amos. James said that Paul's ministry was the beginning of the fulfillment of this profound prophesy. He gave us a glimpse into the very purpose of the local church as he spoke about the restoration of the Tabernacle of David as being fulfilled in the establishing of New Testament local churches.

The tabernacle of who??? Everyone knows about the tabernacle that Moses built in the wilderness, but the tabernacle of David? Actually there is quite a lot said in the Bible about David's tabernacle. David pitched a tent on Mount Zion to house the ark of the covenant. Over the centuries, Moses' tabernacle had been neglected and fallen into disrepair. When David became king, he wanted to build a permanent dwelling place for the Lord's presence in Jerusalem. As you know, this never was fulfilled in David's life, his son Solomon built the temple. The Lord had other plans, better plans for David. You see, David pitched that tent, brought the ark to Jerusalem, and experienced a life of revival as the Lord granted David access into His presence, no one since Moses had this kind of favor. David was overwhelmed by the Glory of His presence, David spent hours in this tent worshipping the manifest glory of the Lord.

Pastor Frank Bailey

1. HOW WAS THE MINISTRY OF PAUL TO THE GENTILES A FULFILLMENT OF THIS PROPHECY?

James was declaring that the ministry of Paul to the gentiles was the beginning of the fulfillment of this prophecy by the prophet Amos. He was saying that the churches being planted amongst all of the gentile nations was the rebuilding of David's tabernacle, actually a provision by the Lord for the lost people of the world to have access to the powerful presence of the Lord.

2. WHAT DOES THE LOCAL CHURCH HAVE TO DO WITH THE TEMPORARY TENT DAVID PITCHED ON MOUNT ZION?

Actually everything, the outstanding characteristic of David's tabernacle was this, free access into the very Shekinah Glory of God's _____. This was unheard of, the tabernacle of Moses and the future temple had veils of separation. David's tent had no veil, you could worship in the very presence of God before the ark of the covenant.

3. WHY IS THIS SO IMPORTANT?

The veil was a picture of man's sin that separated us from God, this veil has been taken away by the blood of the cross. In the New Testament church, we have open access into the presence of God. (See Chapters 9 and 10 in Hebrews)

Hebrews 10:20 By a new and living way, which he hath consecrated for us, through the veil, that is to say, his flesh;

4. WHAT IS THE LOCAL CHURCH'S PRIMARY PURPOSE?

The local church's primary purpose is to provide a means for whosoever will in every nation to come into the Glory of His presence for themselves. It is the opportunity for _____ to experience the incredible power of His presence. The actual purpose of the church is to be the habitation of God. The Lord doesn't live in buildings made by hands, He lives in the gathering of His people from every tribe and every tongue.

5. IS THIS WHAT THE "CHURCH" IS DOING TODAY?

I hardly think so. The church actually does everything but allow for the powerful manifestation of the Glory of God. We have conferences, and relevant worship followed by a motivational talk using an occasional scripture text, but never an allowance for the outpouring of His Presence. If James is right, this Tabernacle of David will be powerfully restored before the end of this age, frankly, that is all this age is about.

6. WHAT IS OUR PRIMARY PURPOSE AS A FOLLOWER OF CHRIST?

Our primary purpose as a follower of Christ, is to promote and build His _____
_____ for the express purpose of providing a place for His Glory. A new day is dawning, as Isaiah prophesied, *Is. 4:5-6 "And the LORD will create upon every dwelling place of mount Zion, and upon her assemblies, a cloud and smoke by day, and the shining of a flaming fire by night: for upon all the glory shall be a defense. And there shall be a tabernacle for a shadow in the daytime from the heat, and for a place of refuge, and for a covert from storm and from rain."*

7. AS FAR THE TABERNACLE OF DAVID ITSELF WHAT THREE THINGS IS IT A PICTURE OF?

First, there was no veil in David's Tabernacle. David spoke and sung about the glory beneath the shadow of the wings of the cherubim on the ark of the covenant. This is a clear picture of New Testament _____, the veil taken away by the cross of Christ.

After David pitched this tent and brought the ark into Jerusalem, revival began to break out in Jerusalem. David was flooded with songs, his tongue became the pen of a ready writer, he spent his life shaping the river into words. David began to organize choirs and musicians whose entire life was devoted to ministry to the Lord. This was a foreshadowing of New Testament worship. David was living out the first New Testament church, a place where the power of God's presence is evident, a place dedicated to the worship of the Lord.

Secondly, David's tabernacle existed for one thing, to house the glory of the Lord. Paul describes this in Ephesians calling the church the very habitation of God.

Finally, the worship practiced at David's Tabernacle was continual, spontaneous, and passionate. This too is a foretaste of the church being raised up in these last days.

"God said He would rebuild the tabernacle of David, the only house God ever said He wanted to restore-not Moses' in its originality; not Solomon's in its splendor; but David's with its unveiled worship. It is as if what is important to God is that there are no barriers between Himself and His people. What He wants to restore is to open worship of His glory; where pagans and heathens would stand outside of the circle of worshippers of David's tabernacle and see the blue flame of the shekinah glory of God between the dancing feet and the outstretched arms of twenty four-hours-a-day, seven-days-a-week worshippers. The worshipers literally became the veil. It is time we, the Church, become people to stand in the gap between the glory of God and the wounded people. When we stand in the gap, then we become filters of His glory."

Tommy Tenney- *The Revival Study Bible*

8. WHY MUST WE WORSHIP HIM CONTINUALLY?

Zeph. 3:17 The Lord thy God in the midst of thee is mighty; He will save, He will rejoice over thee with joy.

In the time of David's reign he pitched a tent on Mount Zion that contained the ark of the covenant. David appointed musicians and singers to worship the Lord continually in this tent. What else could they do? God was there in His manifest presence. What else can we do? The Lord is in our midst, we have to worship Him continually.

"How did the people bring the Presence of God to the Tabernacle of David?

What did they do?

They lifted up their voices.

They sang with all their might. Some sang high piercing notes.

Other sang deep and low. There was dancing before the Lord.

They blew loud-sounding trumpets. They clashed cymbals of brass.

They strummed guitars.

They shouted the high praises of God.

They rejoiced greatly before the Lord."

Graham Truscott- *The Power of His Presence*




9. WHY DID THINGS CHANGE AFTER THE CROSS AND RESURRECTION?

The tabernacle of Moses was characterized by almost silent worship. It was formal and restrained. It was governed by the law. After the cross and the resurrection, we entered into a new season. How can we be restrained in our worship in light of what Christ has done for us? He has cleared away all the judgment against us. He has forgiven our sins. He has borne the curse of poverty at the cross. He has healed us of our diseases by His stripes. He has defeated death once and for all. He is seated at the right hand of the Father as my representative, always there making intercession for me. How can I remain silent, how can we not all break out in singing and dancing continually before our Lord?

10. WHAT DAYS ARE WE LIVING IN?

James may have been speaking about the gentile churches birthed in Paul's ministry but the Holy Spirit had His entire future church in mind. We live in those days, the times foretold by the prophets- the days of the restoration of the Tabernacle of David. The Tabernacle of David fell into disrepair over the ages, but today, he is restoring this place, his local church, to display the power of His presence.

The Lord has promised before He returns to restore His church to its former glory. What will that look like? I'm not sure about everything but this one thing I know. A major part of this move of the Spirit will be characterized by worship, unrestrained worship and dancing before the Lord. Let everything and everyone who has breath give praise to the Lord...These times of refreshing are promised, they will prepare the earth for the Second Coming of Jesus Christ.

 ANSWERS	2. PRESENCE; 4. EVERYONE, EVERYWHERE; 6. LOCAL CHURCH; 7. WORSHIP
 TAKEAWAY	1. There is nothing separating us from the presence of God. 2. The local church is a habitation of God so that everyone and everywhere will be given the opportunity to experience the incredible power of God. 3. Worship is the response of His presence and is an expression of appreciation for all that He has done for us.
 HOMEWORK	Read ACTS 16-18 before Bible Study next week.

The Power to Receive

Acts 17:25,28 ...nor is He served by human hands, as though He needed anything, since He Himself gives to all mankind life and breath and everything.... for in Him we live and move and have our being...

1. IN ACTS 16, WHERE WAS PAUL AND SILAS IMPRISONED, AND WHY?

Acts 16:25-26 But at midnight Paul and Silas were praying and singing hymns to God, and the prisoners were listening to them. Suddenly there was a great earthquake, so that the foundations of the prison were shaken; and immediately all the doors were opened and everyone's chains were loosed.

Paul had been ministering in the region near Galatia and wanted to go over into Asia when he was stopped by the Holy Spirit. That was followed by a dream where someone from Macedonia was calling Paul to come help him. Paul received that as direction from The Lord and crossed the sea to go into Macedonia. The city in Macedonia Paul ended up in was Philippi. That's when all the fun started. He had gathered together a small group of new converts and was ministering to those disciples when he encountered a fortune teller bound by demons. One thing led to another and Paul was arrested, beaten with rods, and put into stocks and bonds in prison (I am not talking about financial instruments). That night, Paul and Silas began to worship The Lord in the midst of their miserable circumstances, the Glory of The Lord fell down followed by an earthquake. Needless to say, the jailer became part of the growing congregation. Paul left town shortly after this incident leaving Luke as their pastor.

2. WHO BEGAN TO SUPPORT PAUL AT THAT TIME AND WHAT SCRIPTURE WOULD HE LATER ENCOURAGE THEM BACK WITH AS A RESULT?

The church in Philippi began to support Paul immediately, their support apparently continued throughout Paul's ministry. Later he would write to them in ***Phil. 4:19 And my God shall _____ all your need according to His riches in glory by Christ Jesus.***

Part of the reason Paul wrote them was to thank this church and encourage them about God's supernatural supply for their own lives.

“Paul hastens to assure them that they have not impoverished themselves in giving so liberally to the cause of the gospel. The word “supply” is the translation of the same Greek word translated “*I am full.*” That is, God’s treatment of the Philippian saints will correspond to their treatment of Paul. They filled full Paul’s every need to overflowing. God will do the same for them. ***The measure of the supply which God the Father has is determined by His wealth in glory, which wealth in glory is in Christ Jesus, an infinite supply.*** Translation: But my God shall satisfy to the full all your need in accordance with His wealth in glory in Christ Jesus. Now to God even our Father, be the glory forever and ever.”

Kenneth Wuest

“Paul and Silas had quite a few injustices done to them, but at midnight they got their praise on and it set them free.” Pastor Parris Bailey

3. HOW SHOULD WE SEE GOD AND HOW SHOULD WE VIEW OURSELVES?

He is the _____ and we are the _____. We do not serve God, He “serves” us and “supplies” us with everything we need.

Acts 17:25 nor is He served by human hands, as though He needed anything, since He Himself gives to all mankind life and breath and everything.... for in Him we live and move and have our being...

Somehow we always get it backwards. It has been said that the kingdom of God is an upside down kingdom, I tend to agree. The natural, un-renewed mind wants to be good or pleasing to God by doing. We feed the hungry, visit the prisoners, intercede for the lost, counsel the confused, tithe, fast... have I forgotten anything? I get tired just thinking about it all. The problem with that approach is we receive credit because of all our deeds. That’s not what glorifies God. What glorifies God is Him serving or ministering to us. That was the ministry of Jesus, He is the Giver we are the receivers. There is a fine balance here, we serve from a different perspective. We have received everything from His hand. We still do all of those other things, it is just somehow different. We could never think of taking credit for anything. Everything we have come from Him.

"AS you have RECEIVED CHRIST Jesus the Lord, SO walk in Him." Colossians 2:6

"...Thou dost seek us though Thou does not need us. We seek Thee because we need Thee, for in Thee we live and move and have our being. Amen."

A.W. Tozer- *"The Knowledge of the Holy"*

4. DOES THE LORD NEED TO BE SERVED?

The simple answer is _____!

John 5:35 says that we need to be a "burning and shining light". A shining light like a torch. Light speaks of revelation and an anointing that brings an awakening. But man, instead of *receiving* from the Lord's fullness, try in their own efforts to "serve the Lord".

Acts 17:24-25 says, " The God who made the world and everything in it. Being Lord over heaven and earth, does not live in temples made by man, nor is He served by human hands, as though He needed anything, since He gives to all mankind life, breath and everything."

The word "served" here in the Greek is *"therapeuo,"* "to wait upon, to adore or to relieve." It is like the word therapy or therapeutic. **God is not in need of "therapy". God is self sufficient in Himself. He doesn't need relief or help!**

You have nothing to offer to God!

God wants to do the serving. We are the one who is in lack and in need. We need Him to "serve" (*therapeuo*) us... To relieve us! ***Psalm 50:14, 15 says, "Offer to God a sacrifice of thanksgiving and perform your vows to the Most High, and call upon me in the day of trouble. I will deliver you, and you shall glorify Me."*** Answered prayer glorifies God.

HE IS THE MINISTER OF THE SANCTUARY

Hebrews 8:1-2 Now of the things which we have spoken this is the sum: We have such an high priest, who is set on the right hand of the throne of the Majesty in the heavens; A MINISTER OF THE SANCTUARY...

Mark 10:45 says, **“the Son of Man came not to be served but to serve and to give His life as a ransom for many.”** Jesus ministered to people, He went about doing good to others. He laid hands on the sick etc. and they received from Him what they needed. They were satisfied and enhanced by Him and equipped to share His love to others.

In John 13 we see Jesus take a basin of water and a towel wrapped around His waist stooping down to wash His disciples feet. In **John 13:8,9** Peter said to Him, **“You shall never wash my feet!”** Jesus answered him, **“If I do not wash you, you have no part with Me.”** Simon Peter said to Him, **“Lord, not my feet only, but also my hands and my head!”**

“God is not Served by Human Hands - Good News to the Weak”

But on the other hand, this is the best news in all the world - that God is not served by human hands as though he needed anything, since He Himself gives to all people life and breath and all things." If you are weak and helpless and sinful and know that any good you do, you need God's help to do, then this comes as the best news in the world. That God is the kind of God who cannot be served, but loves to serve. **His message to the world - the Christian gospel - is not a "help-wanted" sign, but a "help available" sign.** He is not served as though He needed anything, but He gives to all people life and breath and everything. To those who feel morally self-sufficient this is bad news. It threatens to take away our basis for boasting. But to those who feel morally desperate and hopeless before a holy and infinitely righteous God, this is good news. Maybe a God who doesn't need me would be willing to be for me what I need.

John Piper

5. HOW DO WE MINISTER TO PEOPLE?

This is how we minister to people- out of what we have _____ from Him! John Piper said, “ We are to glorify God by not serving Him, but by being served by Him.” Prayer is the needy calling out to the **ALL SUFFICIENT!!!!** ...You are the Recipient. ..He is the Giver!

With this mindset, “serving” Him becomes a pleasure! Acts 20:24 Ministry becomes the overflow of the life of Christ that is within. Overflow of what you have received... It begins to be more fun to pour out than to not! You can’t help yourself. Ministry becomes the overflow of grace and joy. The grace of God comes in.... worship, prayer and giving come out... It is out of this overflow of grace that the joy of “serving” in the

harvest is manifested . John 4:31-38

6. IF WE RECEIVED HIM, THEN WHAT MUST WE DO?

*Colossians 2:6 "Therefore since you have **RECEIVED** Christ Jesus the Lord, **SO WALK** in Him."*

This describes the total life of faith in this one small verse. The life of faith can be broken into two simple truths found here...

The Life of Faith- RECEIVING CHRIST Jesus the Lord

The Walk of Faith- WALK YE IN HIM.




"Having Christ you have God, and having God you have everything!!!"

So the incredibly good news is that God is so great and so self-sufficient that He cannot be served as though He needed anything, and His Son Jesus Christ is so great and so valuable that His death in our place is a sufficient ransom to pay all our debt to God. The question is, will we believe this, and will we *receive* God's service of us as the most precious gift in the world? **Believing. Receiving. Not serving.** That's the posture of a person who is right with God. God sets us right through the death of His Son in our place and we *receive* this right standing, this peace and acceptance and hope not by working for God, but by trusting in His work for us.

John Piper

7. WHAT DID PAUL DO IN ACTS 18?

He would meet Aquila and Priscilla. He would travel to Corinth, Ephesus and Antioch teaching and preaching Christ and strengthening all the disciples.

 ANSWERS	2. SUPPLY; 3. GIVER, RECEIVERS; 4. NO; 5. RECEIVED;
 TAKEAWAY	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. God will supply everything we need. 2. He is the Giver, we are the Receivers. 3. He doesn't need help, we have nothing to offer to Him. 4. He is the Minister of the Sanctuary. 5. We minister to others out of what we have received first from Him.
 HOMEWORK	Read ACTS 19-21 before Bible Study next week.

The Power of the Anointing

Acts 19:2 he said to them, "Did you receive the Holy Spirit when you believed?" So they said to him, "We have not so much as heard whether there is a Holy Spirit."

One of the great stories in the New Testament is the founding of the church in Ephesus. Ephesus was well known throughout the Roman Empire for its sensuality as well as being the center of their pagan worship. The temple for their goddess Diana was located there. This makes the impact that Paul's ministry had on this region even more impressive. Actually, Ephesus became a hub of the Christian faith led by two of the greatest pastors of the first century; Paul's disciple Timothy and none other than the Apostle John. It probably became the largest church of that time period.

1. WHAT QUESTION DID PAUL ASK THE BELIEVERS IN EPHEBUS AND WHAT WAS THEIR SURPRISING REPLY?

Acts 19:2 he said to them, "Did you receive the Holy Spirit when you believed?" So they said to him, "We have not so much as heard whether there is a Holy Spirit."

It all started with Paul's question to a bible study attended by twelve men, "Have you received the Holy Spirit since you believed?", Paul asked. "We haven't heard that there is a Holy Spirit", was their clueless reply. Now these men were already called disciples, they had believed in the Lord and been baptized for the forgiveness of sins. Of course they knew in theory about the Holy Spirit, they just hadn't known that you could actually be influenced the way Paul was describing by the Spirit. That's when it happened, Paul laid his hands upon them and the atmosphere in the room changed.

They were filled with the Holy Spirit just like the believers on the day of Pentecost. They also began to speak in tongues just like the believers in Jerusalem had experienced. They also began to prophesy. Paul was not shocked by this, this is exactly what he was looking for. He knew for the church to effect the pagan society of Ephesus there needed to be more than just a Christian creed, they needed the power of the Holy Spirit. Sometimes it feels like we live in Ephesus. Society is immoral and at the same time full of religious beliefs and practices. It also seems as if many Christians have not even heard that there is a Holy Spirit.

2. HOW CAN WE SEE OUR “EPHESUS” CHANGED?

It is really quite simple; we have to _____ be immersed into the person of the Holy Spirit. You can build large organizations with structure and eloquent preaching; you just can't change Ephesus.

3. WHAT IS THE KEY TO THE IMPORTANCE OF THE SPIRIT BAPTISM?

A key to the importance of the Spirit baptism is seen in the word _____ itself. You see the word baptism means to be immersed into a substance. It was the word used for dying fabric, turning a white cloth into a purple cloth. It is also the word used when referring to making a pickle out of a cucumber. The key in fabric and cucumbers is staying immersed into the substance long enough to take on the characteristics of that substance. Once a cucumber stays immersed into vinegar for a set amount of time there is no turning back, that pickle will never be a cucumber again.

As for us, we need to take on the nature of Christ to change us and to effect our world. How do we take on His nature? We have to be immersed into Him. Just once or once in a while is not enough. We have to be immersed (baptized) into His Spirit long enough to experience *permanent transformation*. Let the pickling begin!!!

4. CAN ANYONE SPEAK IN TONGUES?

Acts 19:5-6 When they heard this, they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus. And when Paul had laid hands on them, the Holy Spirit came upon them, and they spoke with tongues and prophesied.

I think there is a lot of confusion in today's church about praying in tongues. Often, scripture that applies to tongues and interpretation of tongues are thrown out there to quench the use of the prayer language. This is part of the reason today's Christians are largely without power in their lives.

“This event (in Acts 19) occurs about 25 years after the first outpouring of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost. Yet, the pattern of these twelve people receiving the fullness of the Holy Spirit is consistent with the pattern seen throughout the book of Acts. (1) They had believed in Jesus and were born again by the Spirit. (2) After they were baptized in water, Paul laid his hands on them and they were baptized in the Holy Spirit. As the Holy Spirit came on them, they began speaking in tongues and prophesying. The book of Acts never presents the outpouring of the Spirit without any outward evidence. Rather, it shows it to be an obvious and identifiable experience that could be verified by the initial physical evidence of speaking in tongues. This practice is a Holy Spirit-inspired way of speaking, praying or praising God by which a Christian speaks in a language they have never learned.”

The Fire Bible

5. HOW IS OUR FAITH BUILT?

Jude 20-21 But you, beloved, building yourselves up on your most holy faith, praying in the Holy Spirit, keep yourselves in the love of God, looking for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ unto eternal life.

The prayer language is an intricate part of our Christian faith. It comes out of the deepest part of our lives and enjoys a deep, intimate relationship with the Lord. Our faith is built as we _____ and we are filled with the power of God. This supernatural power enables us to live a godly testimony in a dark world and energizes us for powerful ministry to the hurting. Have you received the Holy Spirit like they did in the book of Acts since you believed?

6. WHAT WAS THE RESULT OF THE TWELVE MEN RECEIVING THE HOLY SPIRIT?

Acts 19:9,10 (Paul) took the disciples with him, reasoning daily in the hall of Tyrannus. This continued for two years, so that all the residents of Asia heard the word of the Lord, both Jews and Greeks.

There are some things in this chapter of the book of Acts that are quite shocking. It says that ***all of Asia (modern day Turkey) heard the gospel during those two years.*** Think about it, no television, newspapers, radio, or social media and all of Asia hears the word of God in two years. Obviously news of the meetings in Ephesus spread throughout that region, many came and were touched and brought the message back to their community. It also speaks of unusual miracles. Clothes were taken from Paul's body; whoever they touched were healed or even delivered from demon activity. It even goes on to say that there was mass repentance in Ephesus; in Ephesus?! Ephesus was known for its immorality and pagan religious practices.




7. IN THOSE TWO YEARS WHAT WERE THEY DOING AND WHAT WAS THE RESULT?

The answer can be quite revolutionary. They had daily meetings. They were meeting from 10-4, according to historians, for two years. ***The anointing began to increase.*** The anointing is also transferable or you might say, contagious. Everyone in those meetings were not only mightily affected, they became carriers of the anointing. The city and region were being transformed by the power of spiritual saturation.

8. WHAT DID THE LORD DO THROUGH THE HANDS OF PAUL?

Acts 19:11 Now God worked unusual miracles by the hands of Paul, so that even handkerchiefs or aprons were brought from his body to the sick, and the diseases left them and the evil spirits went out of them.

God worked _____. Now to me, all miracles are special. Luke described the miracles in Ephesus as special or unusual miracles. Dick Mills called them “special specials”. Paul had seen lame people healed, and blind people restored, and even saw a dead boy raised back to life but these miracles were different. What was the difference? It seems to me the big difference was the volume of miracles. It was as if miracles were in the air. Now what could precipitate such an amazing season of miracles? I think the key was saturation. Not just any kind of saturation, but a long season soaking in the very atmosphere of heaven.

 ANSWERS	2. CONTINUALLY; 3. BAPTISM; 4. PRAY IN THE SPIRIT; 8. MIRACLES
 TAKEAWAY	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. We must be continually immersed into the Holy Spirit. 2. Praying in our prayer language will build our faith. 3. The anointing increases as we meet together with other believers. 4. Miracles happen as a result.
 HOMEWORK	Read ACTS 20-21 before Bible study next week.

The Power of the Blood

Acts 20:28 "Pay careful attention to yourselves and to all the flock, in which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers, to care for the church of God," which He obtained with His own blood."

1. HOW WERE WE PURCHASED FROM SPIRITUAL SLAVERY?

Eph. 1:7,8 In Him we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of our trespasses, according to the riches of His grace which He made to abound toward us in all wisdom and prudence,

We have been purchased by the _____ The Bible teaches that all mankind have been born into a state of slavery. We are spiritual slaves, held by the power of sin by the prince of the power of the air. When Christ represented me on the cross, the shackles that held me as a captive were broken. The prison door literally swung open. I could walk out of the prison of sin into the glorious liberty as a child of God.

His greatest display of His glory is seen in His work of redemption in the purchasing of the sons and daughters of Adam from the grasp of sin. We were all slaves, bound by our own lusts until the grace of God appeared in the person of Jesus Christ. By His grace we are saved through faith. This is the greatest picture of our God, Christ died to save sinners. Because I was purchased by Jesus by the price of His blood ***I am no longer my own***. I have been bought with a price. I am now the purchased possession, the inheritance of Christ Himself.

You have ceased to be your own property, and belong to Him who bought you. Holiness, therefore, is necessary to all the redeemed. We cannot say: "I am redeemed, and yet I will live as I please." As redeemed men, consequences follow from the fact. We must be the servants of the Lord Jesus, consecrated unto God. If it is the most important thing in the world to you, that you were "bought with a price," then it must be the most prominent influence over your entire career. Be a man, be an (American), but be most of all Christ's man. A citizen, a friend, a philanthropist, a patriot: all these you may be, but be most of all a saint redeemed by blood.

Charles Spurgeon

3. HOW DOES THAT AFFECT MY LIFE?

1 Thess. 1:11-12 To this end also we pray for you always, that our God will count you worthy of your calling, and fulfill every desire for goodness and the work of faith with power, so that the name of our Lord Jesus will be glorified in you, and you in Him, according to the grace of our God and the Lord Jesus Christ.

I am not my own, my life is _____. My reason for existence and the source of all my joy is to glorify God with my life. What a deal!!!! He gets the glory I get the joy! Glorify God with your body because you are His purchased possession.

4. WHAT IS THE THEME OF HEAVEN?

Titus 2:14 Who gave Himself for us to redeem us from all lawlessness and to purify for Himself a people for His own possession who are zealous for good works.

1 John 3:16 By this we know love, that He laid down His life for us, and we ought to lay down our lives for the brothers.

_____ is the theme of heaven. When you reach the upper realms your most important memory will not be that you were wealthy or poor in this life, nor the fact that you were sick and died, but that you were "bought with a price." So above all things, be a man filled with love to Him who bought you, a man who lives for Christ, and knows no other passion.

5. WHAT IS THE HAPPY CONSEQUENCE OF BEING BOUGHT?

1 Corinthians 6:19-20 Or do you not know that your body is the temple of the Holy Spirit who is in you, whom you have from God, and you are not your own? For you were bought at a price; therefore glorify God in your body and in your spirit, which are God's.

If bought, you are not your own. It is a great privilege not to be one's own..... You are not the captain of your own ship... So therefore we are not left on a wild waste of chance to be tossed to and fro by circumstances... but there is a hand upon our helm; we have on board a pilot who owns us, and will surely steer us into the Fair Havens of eternal rest.

The sheep is on the mountain side, and the winter is coming on; it may be buried in the snow; perhaps the wolf may seize it, or by-and-by, when the summer crops have been eaten, there may be little fodder for it, and it may starve; but the sheep's comfort if it could think at all, would be this: it is not its own, it belonged to the shepherd, who will not willingly lose his property; it bears the mark of its owner, and is the object of his care. O happy sheep of God's pasture, what a bliss it is to you that you are not your own!

That she is her husband's does not speak of her slavery, but her happiness; she has found rest in her husband's house, and today, when the Christian confesses that he is not his own, he does not wish that he were. He is married to the Savior; he has given himself up, body, soul, and spirit, to the blessed Bridegroom of his heart; it is a blissful thing not to be our own.

Charles Spurgeon

6. WHAT WILL EXPERIENCE AS A RESULT OF BEING PURCHASED?

Ps. 16:11 You will show me the path of life; In Your presence is fullness of joy; At Your right hand are pleasures forevermore.

Augustine wrote, "How sweet all at once it was for me to be rid of those fruitless joys which I had once feared to lose and was now glad to reject! You drove them from me, you who are the true, the sovereign joy. You drove them from me and took their place, you who are sweeter than all pleasure, though not to flesh and blood, you who outshine all light yet are hidden deeper than any secrets in our hearts, you who surpass all honor though not in the eyes of men who see all honor in themselves. At last my mind was free from the gnawing anxieties of ambition and gain, from wallowing in filth and scratching the itching sore of lust. I began to talk to you freely Oh Lord my God, my Light, my Wealth and my Salvation."

Today, you can experience freedom from slavery that comes from the pursuit of the carnal pleasures of this world. Where does this freedom begin? It begins in the presence of the Lord. He is this Sovereign Joy Augustine spoke of. Only the higher joy found in Christ can satisfy our hungry hearts, this satisfaction is a deep rooted joy free from all of the lusts of this world. Drink deeply of His love. Drink Him in as you read His Word and as you worship Him. Like Augustine, the joy found in Christ, will drive the desire for the foolish pleasures of this life far from you.

ACTS 21 PAUL CONTINUES TO TRAVEL AND SHARE THE GOSPEL TO THE NATIONS. PEOPLE WERE SAVED, SET FREE, AND DELIVERED AND GOD WAS GLORIFIED.




7. AS HE TRAVELED PAUL WOULD SHARE THE GOSPEL EVERYWHERE HE WENT. WHAT ELSE DID HE LOVE TO TELL ABOUT (ACTS 22)?

Paul loved to tell his _____ (testimony). He must have told it hundreds, possibly thousands of times. Luke, the author of Acts, recorded Paul's testimony three times. That is quite amazing, seeing Acts is such a short book....The preaching and teaching of the Apostle Paul is the testimony of Jesus in Paul's life. One of the great truths displayed in Paul's life and teaching is salvation by grace through faith. Paul did not earn his salvation, he called himself the chief of sinners. Paul claims that he was saved or declared righteous by God, through faith in Christ, specifically His death on the cross..

Romans 4:5 But to him who does not work but believes on Him who justifies the ungodly, his faith is accounted for righteousness

Romans 1:16, 17 For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ, for it is the power of God to salvation for everyone who believes, for the Jew first and also for the Greek. For in it the righteousness of God is revealed from faith to faith; as it is written, "The just shall live by faith."

Paul encouraged His converts to follow him as he followed Christ. The testimony of Jesus was bearing fruit in others.

 ANSWERS	1. BLOOD OF JESUS; 3. NOW HIS; 4. REDEEMING LOVE; 7. STORY
 TAKEAWAY	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. I have been purchased by the blood of Jesus.2. I am not my own, I am His.3. As a result I can experience fullness of Joy.4. I can share this good news with others.
 HOMEWORK	Read Acts 23-28 before Bible study next week.

The Power That Binds Together

1. IN ACTS 23, WHEN A GROUP OF PEOPLE THREATENED TO PULL PAUL APART, “PIECE BY PIECE”, WHO STOOD BY HIM DURING THIS TIME?

Acts 23:10-11 Now when there arose a great dissension, the commander, fearing lest Paul might be pulled to pieces by them, commanded the soldiers to go down and take him by force from among them, and bring him into the barracks. But the following night the Lord stood by him and said, “Be of good cheer, Paul; for as you have testified for Me in Jerusalem, so you must also bear witness at Rome.”

The Lord stood by Him and also spoke a word to him revealing to Paul what would happen in the future.

2. IN ACTS 24-25, WE SEE HE WAS HELD IN PRISON FOR TWO YEARS. WHAT DID HE BELIEVE AND WHO DID HE PLACE HIS HOPE IN?

He believed in the _____ of God and had hope in Him.

Acts 24:14-15 But this I confess to you, that according to the Way which they call a sect, so I worship the God of my fathers, believing all things which are written in the Law and in the Prophets. I have hope in God, which they themselves also accept, that there will be a resurrection of the dead, both of the just and the unjust.

3. IN ACTS 26 WHEN GIVEN THE OPPORTUNITY TO DEFEND HIMSELF BEFORE KING AGRIPPA, WHAT DID PAUL SAY?

We finally see Paul stand before King Agrippa to speak about His case. When given an opportunity to defend himself, Paul did not talk about being mistreated by the hands of others. Instead, he chose to simply recount his testimony and how the Lord appeared and spoke to him on the Damascus road.

Acts 26:14-18 I heard a voice speaking to me and saying in the Hebrew language, 'Saul, Saul, why are you persecuting Me? It is hard for you to kick against the goads.' So I said, 'Who are You, Lord?' And He said, 'I am Jesus, whom you are persecuting. But rise and stand on your feet; for I have appeared to you for this purpose, to make you a minister and a witness both of the things which you have seen and of the things which I will yet reveal to you. I will deliver you from the Jewish people, as well as from the Gentiles, to whom I now send you, to open their eyes, in order to turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan to God, that they may receive forgiveness of sins and an inheritance among those who are sanctified by faith in Me.'

4. HOW CAN WE HEAR THE VOICE OF GOD TODAY?

ACTS 26:16 But rise and stand on your feet; for I have appeared to you for this purpose, to make you a minister and a witness both of the things which you have seen and of the things which I will yet reveal to you.

Obviously, Paul's ears were open to the voice of Jesus. He began to clearly hear the voice of Jesus. You know, God has some incredible things He wants to show each one of us. He has mysteries in His Word that He wants to share with you. It's more than just getting information from the Word of God. There's so much treasure locked up in the Word of God for you and for your life—treasures beyond measure, more precious than silver, more costly than gold and diamonds. There are precious treasures hidden away in the Word of God. He that hath ears to hear, let him hear what the Spirit is saying to the Church. (Rev. 2:11) He who has eyes to see, let him see what the Spirit of God is showing His Church. There are things He wants to show you in His _____, there are things He wants to speak to your heart, but some of us are dull of hearing. We can't hear the voice of God because we are breathing in the wrong atmosphere.

Christianity is more than a belief system, its a living relationship with the Living God. Maybe He is speaking to you today, maybe He is speaking through His Word!

5. WHEN WE ARE BEING BROKEN APART, WHAT DOES THE LORD PROMISE TO DO?

Acts 27:17 "Which when they had taken up, they used helps, undergirding the ship; and, fearing lest they should fall into the quicksands, strake sail, and so were driven."

Paul was talking about help in the midst of a life threatening storm in this verse. How do I know? He used the most unusual word for **“help”** in this verse. It is an ancient nautical term called boethia in Greek. This is the definition:

“boetheia” – aid; specially, a rope or chain for frapping a vessel:

“frap” – nautical term; to bind or wrap tightly with ropes or chains.

Paul was talking about a tactic sailors in his day used when a ship was being beaten by a storm and threatened to be broken apart. They would take ropes or chains and literally wrap the boat with these bands to strengthen the vessel. This would hold the wooden ship together against the pounding of the waves. Now do you see what Paul was trying to tell us? He was saying that we could be ‘frapped’, held together or helped by the strongest cords of all. We are held by the bonds of God’s love. Nothing can destroy us because we are helped by God.

6. WHAT TWO WAYS DOES THE LORD HOLD (BIND) US TOGETHER?

Acts 27:22-25 And now I urge you to take heart, for there will be no loss of life among you, but only of the ship. For there stood by me this night an angel of the God to whom I belong and whom I serve, saying, ‘Do not be afraid, Paul; you must be brought before Caesar; and indeed God has granted you all those who sail with you.’ Therefore take heart, men, for I believe God that it will be just as it was told me.

First we are held together by _____, (His embrace). The Lord stood by Paul again.

Secondly we are held together by His Word. Years before, on the Damascus road, the Lord not only stood by Paul but also told him he would go to Rome. (See Acts 23:11- ***But the following night the Lord stood by him and said, “Be of good cheer, Paul; for as you have testified for Me in Jerusalem, so you must also bear witness at Rome.”***)

Now he is on a ship going to ROME, but because of a horrific storm, the ship that he was on was battered and broken up by the sea. Any chance of getting to Rome , much less surviving was lost. Yet Paul stands on the Lord’s past words. But take note- the Lord who promises never to leave us appears again to him again and speaks to him a new, fresh word to encourage him and all those who were with him in his dilemma.

7. TO GET THE HELP WE NEED, WHAT MUST WE DO?

Heb. 4:16 Let us then with confidence draw near to the throne of grace, that we may receive mercy and find grace to "help" in time of need.

In this verse we find the same word "help- boetheia" as in Acts 27. So this verse tells us that we can draw near to the throne of grace with confidence in the midst of our storm and find help ("frapping" being held together) no matter what we may be facing.

The book of Hebrews was written to Jewish Christians who were being tempted to back down on their beliefs because of religious persecution. We live in similar times today. Paul was saying that no matter how hard the headwinds of resistance against you are blowing we have help that comes from the Lord. If the circumstances of your life are contrary to the gospel and the pressure from others to temper your beliefs is strong, it may be time for you to come boldly before the throne of grace. You will find well timed help that will be more than enough to get you through.



8. WHEN WE COME TO THE THRONE OF GRACE WHAT WILL WE FIND?

We will find that He is there to help us in the time of need. In the worst of times He will hold us in His embrace -strap us together with His cords of love- when we feel like our ship is coming apart at the seams. And in the throne room we will find _____
_____Who is the _____.

Maybe you are going through one of these storms of life, all of us do. When the wind begins to blow and the waves are pounding on our bow, frapping becomes a necessity. What am I talking about? You see, when your life seems to be bursting at the seams, we need the kind of help Paul is describing. It is the help of God found only in the place of intimacy. We call out to Him in our troubles and He begins to hold us in His arms of love. There has never been a better place of comfort and rest than found in the embrace of the Lord. But you might say, "I need more than a hug, I am in real trouble". That brings us to the best part, when we are in the embrace of the Lord, His love makes us forget our problems. At the same time, He begins to handle the storm itself, somehow we find ourselves safely transported to His harbor, not really knowing how we arrived. That is the greatness of His kind of help, we came to Him, just looking for a way out of our mess, and suddenly we got more than we ever imagined. He met us in the midst of our storm, maybe that's why we were there all along.

9. HOW DOES THE BOOK OF ACTS END (ACTS 28)?

Paul and his shipmates were shipped wrecked on the island on Malta. Paul gathered together sticks and was snake-bit. He shook it off and did not die. This proved to be yet another sign and wonder and before you knew it miracles broke out on that tiny island. 3 months later he was able to set sail and finally make it to Rome. Just as the Lord had spoken.

 ANSWERS	2. WORD; 4. WORD; 6. CHRIST HIMSELF; 8. CHRIST HIMSELF, WORD
 TAKEAWAY	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. When we are being pulled or broken apart the Lord stands by us and speaks His promise to us.2. When the promise is delayed, we must believe in His word and hope in Him.3. We can still hear His voice today.4. We are held together by Christ Himself ad His Word.5. We find help at the Throne of Grace.



Final TAKEAWAY from the the Book of Acts

THE SUCCESSFUL CHRISTIAN LIFE AS DESCRIBED IN THE BOOK OF ACTS

- 1 They **Believed** in and **Waited** for the Promise.

- 2 They **Received** what they were waiting for, **the Promise of the Father, the Holy Spirit.**

- 3 Through Him they **Received Power** and were made **Witnesses.**

- 4 They continued steadfastly in the Apostles doctrine and fellowship.

- 5 They broke bread together from house to house.

- 6 They prayed together with the other Christian believers.

- 7 They were filled with joy, gladness and simplicity of heart.

- 8 They were of one heart and one soul.

- 9 Great grace was upon them all.

- 10 They continued to be filled with the Holy Spirit and receive from His fullness.

- 11 No one lacked.

- 12 They lived a lifestyle of continuous giving and sharing what they had with the church and with others.

- 13 Sign and wonders and miracles were performed through their hands and in their own lives.

- 14 The sick being healed was widespread.

- 15 The Gospel and Revival swept the nations.

- 16 The Church grew.

- 17 Salvation was not reserved for just one ethnic group, it was open to all who would **Believe** in the Lord Jesus Christ.

- 18 Telling others the things they had witnessed and sharing their own story (the testimony of Jesus in their lives) was second nature to them.

- 19 Through the **Power** of the Holy Spirit, these men and women turned the world upside down.