

## Announcements

There will be an Image Kids Lunch for parents and volunteers on August 8 after the service.

## Prayer Suggestions

### COVID-19

I'm sure we are all tired of COVID, but the pandemic is not over and we should be in prayer over it. Communities in our country and around the world are still experiencing extreme suffering from this disease. In some places, the numbers of deaths and hospitalizations is higher now than it was at the "height" of COVID in 2020. In addition, as the virus mutates, it can become more transmissible and harder to fight (as we are seeing with the Delta variant).

Some things to pray for:

- A rapid end to the disease
- Peace and comfort to those who have lost loved ones
- Resources given to those communities and nations who need them
- Access to good healthcare for everyone
- Kindness in interactions with others
- Ease about re-entering society for those who are concerned about being in public after quarantine
- No more variants or mutations
- Opportunities for us to share the peace of Jesus with others in the midst of this trial
- An understanding of trauma and how the collective trauma we have experienced will affect how we move forward
- The willingness to think of others before ourselves

Joshua Project Unreached Peoples: <https://joshuaproject.net/pray/unreachedoftheday>

## Family Time

**Family Time** is an intentional space where we live out the model we see in Acts 2:42. We want to be devoted to the Word together, break bread, fellowship, and pray. It's also a place where we practice hospitality. We want this time to foster both spiritual and relational growth moving the group from acquaintances and friends to family. Family Time begins with conversations around a meal, followed by a discussion about Sunday's sermon.

### Sermon Discussion (30-40 min)

**Title:** Confident, Faithful Devotion!

**Series:** Standalone Message

**Scripture:** Acts 18:1-11

## Other Scripture/Cross References

Mentioned in the sermon:

2 Timothy 3:16

Hebrews 4:12

Ephesians 6 (Armor of God)

## Main Points

1. Be intentional with where God has you
2. Be devoted to the Word (vs 5)
  - a. When you are occupied with the Word of God, it will keep you focused on the mission of God
3. Don't let failure set you back (vs 6-8)
  - a. Paul didn't let failure set him back -- he looked for another way
  - b. The goal isn't acceptance or conversion, but to live out the mission and trust God.
4. Your confidence comes from Christ (vs 9-11)
  - a. Paul has the confidence to continue on no matter what was going on around him because of the finished work of Jesus.
  - b. You are given a new identity in Christ. Your acceptance & identity rests in Him.
  - c. Rejection from created things means nothing in light of the acceptance given by the Creator

## Quotes

Chaos impacts our confidence: chaos impacts our consistency, and consistency is what fosters confidence. When we are not consistent, we begin to lose confidence. When we lose confidence, our devotion begins to waver.

Being religious doesn't make you righteous; only Jesus can do that. Never mistake religious activity for the thing that saves you.

What seemed like an ending was really what God was going to use for a new beginning.

## Questions

1. What challenged you? What were your takeaways? What encouraged or convicted you?
2. What questions do you have?
3. What are times in your life that seemed like an ending, but God used for a new beginning? AND/OR What are times when you experienced something unexpected/not part of the plan, but you later saw that God was doing something new or orchestrating something bigger than your circumstances in your life?
4. Be Intentional
  - a. How can you be intentional where God has you? (think about work/ school/ community locations/ neighborhood/ etc. Also think about neighbors/ coworkers/ workers in stores & restaurants you frequent/ service workers (mail/garbage/yard/delivery/etc)/ etc.
  - b. What are some opportunities God is giving you to be intentional where you are? What is ONE STEP you can take to be intentional?
5. Be Devoted to the Word
  - a. What does it mean to be devoted to and occupied by the Word of God?
  - b. How are you devoted to and occupied by the Word of God in your life? What does that look like?
  - c. What is one step you can take this week to be devoted to the Word?
6. Don't Let Failure Set You Back
  - a. When you experience setbacks, failures, or opposition, do you continue in faith or sit in dejection and discouragement?
  - b. What does it look like to continue in faith in the face of setbacks, failures, and opposition?
7. Your Confidence Comes from Christ
  - a. What does it mean that your confidence comes from Christ?

- b. How do you see confidence in Christ on display in your life?
  - c. What causes your confidence in Christ to waver?
  - d. What are reminders & promises from God that we can hold onto when our confidence wavers?
8. (The first part is a yes/no type question, but it's meant to be an introspective question & conversation starter)
- Is the gospel the undercurrent to everything in your life?
  - What would your life look like if the gospel was the undercurrent to everything in your life?
  - What would change? What would stay the same?

(Think through things like how you make decisions, where you live, what you spend your time on, who you spend time with, how you use your money, entertainment, how you engage with social issues and politics, where you shop, how you use resources like food/water/gas, how you talk to others, how you think about others, who is in your circles, etc)

## **Academics (Theology, History, Word Studies)**

### Priscilla & Aquila

This couple is mentioned a few places in Scripture (and Priscilla is sometimes called the shortened version Prisca). In Romans 16, Paul calls them his “coworkers in Christ.” In this passage, we also learn that they risked their lives for Paul in some way (there’s a story I wish we knew!) and that they had a church meeting in their home. From the rest of the New Testament, we know that Priscilla and Aquila were with Paul in Corinth (Acts 18:1-4), Ephesus (1 Corinthians 16), and Rom (1 Corinthians 16:19, Romans 16). They are also mentioned in Acts 19 and 2 Timothy 4.

We know from Acts 18 that they were forced to leave Rome because Cladius had ordered all the Jews to leave. They likely had some amount of wealth (as evidenced by their home being large enough to house a church and their support of Paul’s ministry) and worked as tentmakers. They were a significant influence on Apollos’ faith and ministry.

### Claudius Expelling the Jews

Cladius was emperor from AD 41 to AD 54. We have references to this event in other historical documents outside of Scripture. Roman historians Suetonius and Cassius Dio, and 5th century Christian author Paulus Orosius all mention this. The exact date of the event is uncertain, but it likely occurred sometime between AD 41 and AD 53, with many scholars placing it around AD 49. Claudius expelled the Jews (a temporary edict) on account of “Chrestus,” with some believing this is a reference to Christ. Debates, arguments, and fights were breaking out among the Jews & Jewish Christians in Rome over Jesus being the Christ. Claudius, concerned with peace in the empire, Cladius forced the Jews to leave the city. However, the NIV Cultural Backgrounds Study Bible notes that “Jewish Roman citizens probably would not have left...and probably many others also remained; given the controversy, however, leaders of the Jesus movement were probably among those forced to leave.”

### Athenian Council

The Areopagus was Athens’ city council and court with about 100 members. The NIV Cultural Backgrounds Study Bible describes the Areopagus’s membership & jobs in this way: “Most were not professional philosophers but they were familiar with philosophy. They could investigate foreign cults and determine whether visiting speakers would be granted public lectureships.” Another interesting note they add: “Centuries earlier they had tried Socrates for ‘advocating foreign gods’ (v 18) and had him executed; although there is no danger here of Paul being executed, most of Luke’s audience would catch the implicit comparison with Socrates and his rejected wisdom.”

### Synagogue

The local places of worship for the Jews.

## **Other Resources**

Used in the sermon:

Spence Shelton, sermon title: Yearbooks, Dreams, and Jesus. July 6, 2014.

# Discipleship Groups

**Discipleship Groups** are where our community groups divide into gender-specific groups for a time of more intentional discussion and connection. This creates a safer and more intimate space to open up our hearts in order to grow deeper in the gospel. This time begins with a discussion about Sunday's sermon and then transitions to a time of transparency where we are honest about where we are relationally, personally, missionally, and spiritually.

## Sermon Discussion (30-40 min)

See Sermon Discussion Notes above.

## RPMS (30-45 min)

<b>R</b>	How are you doing <b>RELATIONALLY</b> ? (friends, coworkers, neighbors, spouses, family -- also, how are you building relationships with people different from you or on the margins?)
<b>P</b>	How are you doing <b>PERSONALLY</b> ? (emotionally, mentally, physically, financially, etc.)
<b>M</b>	How are you doing <b>MISSIONALLY</b> ? (what you're doing daily to be on mission, how you're engaging people, etc)
<b>S</b>	How are you doing <b>SPIRITUALLY</b> ? (time with God, in Scripture, what you're learning, who you're learning from, memorization, etc.)

## Prayer (10-15 min)