

Life Group Lesson

40 Days with the Holy Spirit • Week of June 26

Introduction

Any good company knows that in order for a business to be successful, it must offer folks what they need. A business that goes the distance, survives tough competition and lean times, is one that operates with integrity with employees working as a team to provide a service or product that matches the real needs of everyday people. In the church, exponential growth is preceded by a genuine love for the community; befriending people just where they are. Then, a simple focus on healing a hurt and meeting a need. Every person has needs. And our deepest need, whether or not we acknowledge it is to be loved, forgiven and freed from the eternal debt of sin. As Christ-followers, God has always wanted to teach us how to love, forgive, and release our neighbor of debt (see Deuteronomy 15:1). The apostle Paul preached a message of forgiveness – one that he knew firsthand. He preached that Christ alone “canceled the record of the charges against us and took it away by nailing it to the cross” (Colossians 2:14).

As soon as Paul (Saul of Tarsus) became a believer he began to proclaim Christ. This continued to the end of his days; he preached one message – “the necessity of repenting from sin and turning to God, and of having faith in our Lord Jesus” (Acts 20:21). Yet, in his missionary travels, not all people received the message of salvation. Many were opposed at times, causing Paul and his coworkers to face great obstacles and persecution along the way. But they never gave up. The Holy Spirit helped Paul discern how to build bridges of friendship and how to share Christ in a way that all people could understand. Paul always tried to meet people where they were – in a way that genuinely honored the Lord and produced lasting results. As our Plain Truth states: God meets us where we are and expects us to do the same for others.

Background

Paul on his second missionary journey, is accompanied by Silas (see Acts 15:22, 36-41). Setting out from Antioch of Syria (where believers were first called ‘Christians’), Paul and Silas travel northeast through Cilicia, Derbe, Lystra and Iconium. But notice, the Holy Spirit protects them, and prevents them from preaching in Asia at that time. The Holy Spirit also keeps them from going into the province of Bithynia (see Acts 16:6-7). So instead, Paul and Silas (and traveling companions) journey through Mysia to the seaport of Troas. That night Paul has a

vision of a man from Macedonia pleading for them to ‘come over to Macedonia and help us!’ They take this as a word from God. Thus, they go to preach the Good News in Greece (Acts 16:9-10).

Arriving in Philippi, Paul and Silas attend a prayer meeting just outside of town, near a riverbank, and begin to share Jesus. Several come to know the Lord. But then, they meet a demon-possessed girl, and after several days of the demon-possessed servant girl mocking their mission, Paul finally turns and commands the unclean spirit to leave her. The man who owned the slave girl is enraged and stirs up a mob against Paul and Silas. They are arrested, placed in the inner dungeon, feet clamped. But instead of wallowing in self-pity, Paul and Silas begin praying, singing hymns, and praising God. Around midnight, not only does God show up and free all the prisoners, but the jailer asks how he can be saved! Jesus is shared. And the jailer and his entire household come to know the Lord and are baptized (see Acts 16:16-34).

Reading the Text

Read Acts 17:1-15

1. What is the Holy Spirit saying to you?
2. What are you going to do about it?
3. How can we help you?

In Closing

The Holy Spirit will sometimes stir things up. We do not always understand God’s ways, but the Lord knows what lies ahead; He knows when our path needs to be protected and when our faith needs to be strengthened. Also, the Lord knows when people’s hearts are not yet ready to receive the message of Christ. It is the Holy Spirit who creates a hunger for the Scripture, for God’s Word, and the message of salvation. God’s Spirit goes before us, beside us, and behind us. He is above us, covering us much like the pillar of cloud in the wilderness, and He is underneath us, with everlasting arms ready to catch us should we fall (Deuteronomy 33:27).

We are to be on-mission for Christ regardless of the hardships we face. This is what Christ has commissioned us to be about. When Paul and Silas were driven

out of town, they shared Christ in the next town. When accusations were hurled by some, other persons did accept the truth. Even as believers were scattered, the beautiful Gospel message they carried went with them, producing fruit wherever Christ was shared and the Good News was preached. We do not have to become angry or discouraged and give up when we are met with challenges. Obstacles are only an opportunity for God to show up in a greater, more glorious way. Stay focused. Remain in-step with the mission of Christ. And the Holy Spirit will bring about unity in the mission.

Pray—

Lord, thank you for loving me enough to die for me – for taking my place on the cross and paying a price I could never pay. Thank you for making me ‘alive with Christ’ when you forgave all my sin. Lord, when you died on the cross, your Word says that you canceled the record of the charges against me. Praise you, Lord. I am forgiven! Thank you for allowing me to be a part of Your Kingdom. Help me to be grateful even if it means suffering for Christ. Lord, with your help, I will trust your greater purpose when things don’t go as planned. Keep my eyes focused on you. Thank you for the Church. Lord, I love you. I trust you. In Jesus’ name, Amen.

Close in a Time of Prayer asking:

How can I pray for my fellow Life Group participants this week?

One Year Bible Readings

- June 26: 2 Kings 9:14-10:31, Acts 17:1-34, Psalm 144:1-15, Proverbs 17:27-28
- June 27: 2 Kings 10:32-12:21, Acts 18:1-22, Psalm 145:1-21, Proverbs 18:1
- June 28: 2 Kings 13:1-14:29, Acts 18:23-19:12, Psalm 146:1-10, Proverbs 18:2-3
- June 29: 2 Kings 15:1-16:20, Acts 19:13-41, Psalm 147:1-20, Proverbs 18:4-5
- June 30: 2 Kings 17:1-18:12, Acts 20:1-38, Psalm 148:1-14, Proverbs 18:6-7
- July 1: 2 Kings 18:13-19:37, Acts 21:1-17, Psalm 149:1-9, Proverbs 18:8
- July 2: 2 Kings 20:1-22:2, Acts 21:18-36, Psalm 150:1-6, Proverbs 18:9-10

40 DAYS WITH THE HOLY SPIRIT

Text: Acts 17

Plain Truth:

God _____ us where we _____ and expects us to do the _____ for _____.

1. **The Holy Spirit _____.**
2. **The Holy Spirit will _____ things _____.**
3. **The Holy Spirit creates _____ for the Scripture.**
4. **In the controversy and disruption, the Holy Spirit can bring _____ of _____.**
5. **Though culture chases the newest _____, only Christ _____ our _____.**