

HIS CHURCH IN ACTION

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CHRIST OUR PERFECT VISION

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A Study from Acts



DeoGloria
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CHRIST OUR PERFECT VISION

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CHRIST OUR PERFECT VISION

INTRODUCTION

Acts was written by Luke, a medical doctor and a disciple of Jesus. He had also written the book of Luke, because he felt he had a responsibility to accurately record the events in the early church. As with his Gospel, Luke dedicated the book of Acts to Theophilus. He was a prominent Roman official who became a Christian shortly before this book was written. Thus, he was a member of the Christian community somewhere in the Graeco-Roman world. Acts is not a complete history of all that happened, but through the Spirit of God, Luke recorded clear, foundational facts about the early church. People often refer to the book as the Acts of the apostles, but it is the acts of Jesus Christ through the Holy Spirit.

Whenever there is a new movement which gains momentum, a few basic questions about it follows: How did it start? Who are the people associated with it? What are the present conditions? What are the obstacles for success? Where is it going? The early chapters of the book of Acts answer all these questions about the church of Jesus Christ.

When the church began, all its members were Jews. *Luke tells us how the Gentiles came to join them in fellowship.*

Luke describes the church life as a community of joyful believers, empowered by the Spirit, living for the Lord and for one another, concerned about sharing the joy with others and in reinforcing their circle of fellowship (C & W Christensen).

As we grow in our response to the presence and power of the Holy Spirit, we experience a new community. As we experience authentic community, worship erupts. As we grow in our deep worship of Jesus Christ, our mission becomes crystal clear.

People matter to God and they matter to us when we have the heart of Christ. Acts helps us to see that a group of Christian followers, ignited by the presence of the Holy Spirit, truly can change the world. Church then no longer is just a place we go to or something we do; we are the church.

History shows that when God moves in mighty ways, the people of God face life together. They don't just go to church – they meet, pray together, share what they have and invest deeply in each other's lives. Explosive energy is generated when God's people are together. Worship and praise erupt and cannot be stopped! (J. Ortberg).

As we look at the early church through the writings in Acts, we will learn to practice community in new and fresh ways. This new, growing movement that Luke described, had a powerful message, but it also had its problems. Therefore, it reminds us of our world today and of its need for a message from God. The Holy Spirit is just as active now as He was then. He still strengthens and preserves all those who believe in Jesus Christ. God is still moving amongst us; therefore, we are a church in action!

We pray that, as you do this study, you will discover that we are not only studying the story of the early church, but also our story. We are the church of Jesus Christ, still growing, still maturing, still learning and still discovering what God wants us to be. May your place in the life of the community of God's people become clear as the book of Acts helps us to build a new church community.

Soli Deo Gloria!

HIS CHURCH IN ACTION

Week **1**

Commissioned by the Master

Memory verse:

But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth.

Acts 1:8 (NIV)



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Day 1: Jesus is Alive

Begin today's study with prayer.

Read Acts 1:1-11

Luke reminds Theophilus of his previous book, the Gospel of Luke, and the situation he had described at the end of that book. Jesus suffered and died and was raised from the dead. He appeared to the disciples and gave them a dramatic new understanding of the Scriptures.

Read Luke 24:36-49

How would the prophecy in verse 47, be fulfilled?

The Old Testament had not only predicted the Messiah and his suffering, but it also predicted that repentance for the forgiveness of sins will be preached in His name to all nations. Jesus reminded the disciples that they had seen the fulfillment of Messianic prophecies — and in this Jesus implied that the disciples would be involved in fulfilling the Biblical prediction about preaching.

Read Acts 1:3, 8:12, 14:22, 19:8, 20:25, 28:23, 31

What did Jesus teach His disciples in the period between His resurrection and ascension?

During the 40 days during which Jesus appeared to the disciples, He spoke about the kingdom of God. This was the substance of His message throughout His ministry. During His appearances to his disciples, He clarified the meaning of the kingdom in the light of His ministry of salvation.

The apostles continued to preach the theme of the kingdom of God. In their preaching they proclaimed, particularly to Jews, that all the promises of the Old Testament had been fulfilled. The kingdom of God had come with power in the person of the resurrected Son of God. He came to save the world from sin and death.

Jesus proclaimed the good news of the kingdom of God. The book of Acts an extension of Jesus' work, details the spreading of the good news by the witnesses.

End today's study by returning to the Lord in prayer.

Day 2: Holy Spirit – Fathers' Gift

Begin today's study with prayer.

Read Acts 1:6-11

How could the disciples preach to all nations?

Jesus told the disciples to stay in the city until they receive God's gift, the Holy Spirit. Although Jesus had taught them about God's kingdom, their final question to Jesus was about the kingdom from a Jewish perspective, leaving the Gentiles out of the picture. The disciples' choice of words indicates that they did not have in mind to preach forgiveness to all nations. Instead, they wanted the Messiah to bring glory and power to the Jewish people living in the land of Israel.

Jesus did not plan to restore the Jewish kingdom; He had the whole world in mind. Therefore, He reminds His disciples to wait for the Holy Spirit, God's gift to His church. God would empower them through the Holy Spirit, and the disciples, who were witnesses of Jesus' ministry, were to carry the message throughout the world in His power.

How would you describe the work of the Holy Spirit?

The Holy Spirit is the force behind the mission program of the church. The agenda for spreading the message of salvation — from Jerusalem to Rome — is orchestrated by the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit was and is the source of all guidance for God’s children.

Do we have to wait for the Holy Spirit?

We received the Holy Spirit when we were saved and born again. So, in that sense we do not have to wait for the Holy Spirit. But sometimes we must wait on the Holy Spirit to do God’s work. We can only do God’s work in God’s time. But we do not have to wait for the Holy Spirit to empower us, because we have already received the power of the Holy Spirit.

The same Holy Spirit who came upon Jesus at His baptism, empowered the early church so it could continue Jesus’ work on earth and He also empower us to do God’s work here.

End today’s study by returning to the Lord in prayer.

CHRIST OUR PERFECT VISION

Day 3: You will Receive Power

Begin today's study with prayer.

Read Acts 1:8 and Luke 24:48-49

What is the “power from high” Luke is talking about? Why is the power essential for a disciple-making church?

The word in the Greek language for power is ***dunamis***, it can be translated as “*strength power, ability, an inherent power, power residing in a person by virtue of its nature.*” The English words **dynamite** and **dynamic** originates from this word.

The Holy Spirit's power is essential to enable us to be witnesses. This special power is essential because it takes power just to become a Christian. But it takes another dimension of power to be a witness of Christ. The power comes first and then we will be able to witness. Tomorrow we will talk more about the definition of a witness.

Read 1 Thessalonians 1:5 and 2 Timothy 1:7-8

What do you think this power can produce in you and in our church?

We need power because we need deep and confident conviction when we speak about Christ. The power of the Holy Spirit produces that confidence in us. The Holy Spirit also produce courage in us. We need His power to have courage and boldness.

The Holy Spirit also produces wisdom in us. His power gives us heavenly, supernatural wisdom. We need special power in our witness so that our wisdom will be convincing and irresistible.

The Holy Spirit will produce love and self-control. His love is not merely an emotional feeling, but the power of His love is a deep sense of care and concern for others that always puts their interests first.

End today's study by returning to the Lord in prayer.

CHRIST OUR PERFECT VISION

Day 4: Be Witnesses

Begin today's study with prayer.

Read Acts 1:8 and Luke 24:45-49

What does it mean to be a witness? What does it mean to be a witness for and of Jesus?

The definition of a witness is: *"a person who sees an event," (i.e. a crime or accident)*. The word in the Greek language is ***martus***. We get the English word, "martyr" from it. It can be translated as "one who testifies. The followers of Jesus are to testify with their mouths and their lives about the new life Jesus brought through His death and resurrection. To testify about what we have heard about Jesus, is hearsay. When we accept Jesus as our Saviour, we receive the power of the Holy Spirit to be witnesses of what Christ did in our lives. When we continue in sin, our witness to the world and the people around us - is that our new life is worthless.

When Jesus commands His church to be witnesses of Him, He is not talking about an occasional word of witness

in our circle of people. He is talking about ever-expanding efforts to penetrate more and more the of lost world we are living in. That is why Jesus said special power is essential for an expanding witness of Christ.

What do you think it meant to be witnesses in
Jerusalem? _____
Judea? _____
Samaria? _____
The ends of the earth? _____

The message of salvation offered through Christ to all people was first to be declared in Jerusalem. It was to their own people, our own people. The people around us, in our city or neighbourhood. Then to Judea. Judea was their province. For us it means to be witnesses in our state or country. Then to Samaria. The Jews hated the Samaritans. Jesus also sends us to the people whom we like the least. The people who persecute or ridicule us. The difficult people we share the world with. Finally, the witness would go to the ends of the earth. We are also called to bring the message of salvation to people in other countries, far from us.

End today's study by returning to the Lord in prayer.

CHRIST OUR PERFECT VISION

Day 5: Make Disciples

Begin today's study with prayer.

Read Mathew 28:16-20

What do you think does Jesus' authority have to do with making disciples?

Nothing could withstand the power of Him who had died and conquered death. Now He gave them their last instructions, and He assures them that He has authority to send them, but also over the people that will receive Him.

What does it mean to make disciples?

This passage is often referred to as the Great Commission. The mandate of The Great Commission is to "Go". This is a word of action! We cannot "go" if we are sitting still. We cannot "go" if we stay where we are. We cannot "go" if we do not make a move. This verb literally means "as you go". As we pass through this world, we are

to carry the Gospel message with us, sharing it with everyone we meet along the way. There are two ways we can do this:

- With our Lifestyle – Our joy, our peace, our differences from the world should cause them to want to know why we are like we are. Our lives should be like a great spotlight which directs its beam toward Jesus. If He is the focus of our lives, men will see Him.
- With our testimony (witness) - In Acts 1:8 Jesus said we will be His witnesses. Here in Matthew 28:20, the instruction is, go and teach. We ought to share our faith. We should tell our story to a lost world. The story of our journey with God, what Jesus did for us when He saved us and what He can do for them if they will trust Him as we do.

Read Acts 1:8

Are “making disciples” and “being witnesses” the same thing? Explain your answer.

The commission is to “make disciples,” not converts. And how do we do that? By witnessing, telling people about our new life and showing the fruit of being a child of God.

End today’s study by returning to the Lord in prayer.

CHRIST OUR PERFECT VISION

GROUP DISCUSSION

Prayer

Memory verse:

But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth.

Acts 1:8 (NIV)

Reflection:

Share with the group members how God worked in your life during this week.

Scripture Reading:

Read Acts 1:1-11 and Mathew 28:16-20

Discussion questions

Read Acts 1:8. What is the power of the Holy Spirit?

What does it mean to be a witness? How can we be better witnesses for Jesus at work, with friends, and in the community?

Read Matthew 28:16-20. How does the authority of Christ give us confidence in our own life and ministry?

What is a disciple? What ought we as His disciples to do? What does it practically mean for us?

Close in prayer

HIS CHURCH IN ACTION

Week **2**

Seek the guidance of the Lord

Memory verse:

They all joined together constantly in prayer...

Acts 1:14(a) (NIV)

CHRIST OUR PERFECT VISION

Day 1: Prayer and Encouragement

Begin today's study with prayer.

Consider for a moment the situation that the Apostles found themselves in. They have just returned from Mount Olive, after the Ascension of Christ. There they were, the spearhead of Jesus' plan to renew and restore God's people. There were supposed to be twelve of them, but only eleven were left. How could they model and symbolize God's plan for Israel (and therefore for the world) if they were, so to speak, one patriarch short of a true Israel? Did they just have to stay like that, and if not, what should they do about it?

Read Acts 1:12-26

What did the apostles do to find an answer? Where did they look for instructions?

Prayer plays a significant role in the story of the church as recorded in the Book of Acts. The believers prayed for guidance in making decisions and for courage to witness for Christ. In fact, prayer was a normal part of their daily

ministry. Corporate prayer is the term used to describe praying together with other people—in small groups or in larger bodies of people.

Read Acts 1:13-15 and Acts 4:23-24

What reference to corporate prayer do you find in these verses?

Read Matthew 18:19-20

Do you think corporate prayer is important? Why?

Corporate prayer has a positive impact on the church:

- *Encouragement:* Praying with others brings encouragement to the members of the group. As people are upheld in prayer, the Holy Spirit brings them encouragement and reassurance of His promises.
- *Unity of purpose:* Corporate prayer knits a group together in a bond of fellowship and praise. As people pray together, they build love and concern for others

and display their dependence on God. And Jesus acknowledges their united prayer.

- *Worship*: Corporate prayer brings intimate communion with the Saviour.
- *Repentance*: As people pray, the Holy Spirit brings conviction and draws His children to repentance.

Prayer is both the “thermometer” and the “thermostat” of the local church; for the “spiritual temperature” either goes up or down, depending on how God’s people pray. John Bunyan, author of *Pilgrim’s Progress*, said, “Prayer is a shield to the soul, a sacrifice to God, and a scourge to Satan.”

End today’s study by returning to the Lord in prayer.

CHRIST OUR PERFECT VISION

Day 2: Appoint Leaders

Begin today's study with prayer.

Read Acts 1:15-26, Psalm 69:5 and Psalm 109:8

During this period of prayer and waiting, one essential item of business had to be considered by the young Christian community—the reconstitution of the apostolic circle of Twelve. Peter assumed leadership among the apostles and convened the assembly. Throughout Acts we see that Peter played this role. He was the spokesman, the representative apostle. The other apostles were present and active, but Peter was their mouthpiece.

In verses 21-22 Peter laid down the qualifications for Judas' replacement: What were the qualifications needed to be an apostle?

This whole process was based on prayer and the Word. Why then, do they cast the lot when two candidates were

put forward? Does this mean that they worked with the element of “chance”?

In the Old Testament, casting the lot was the way to determine a decision and the outcome was always seen to be determined by God. That was probably the consideration in this case. After Pentecost, the church in Acts made its own decisions under the direction of the Spirit. In this instance, it was even more important that the decision be the Lord’s, not theirs.

How does your church appoint leaders? What criteria do you use?

God ‘knows the hearts’ of people and His plan for the church, therefore it should be up to God who gets chosen for a role, and a task, in the church – His church.

End today’s study by returning to the Lord in prayer.

CHRIST OUR PERFECT VISION

Day 3: Support Leaders with Prayer

Begin today's study with prayer.

Read Acts 4:23-30

The believers were all together, praying for the deliverance of the two apostles from the Sanhedrin. When Peter and John were released, they went back to the believers and reported what happened. How did the church respond to the release of Peter and John?

What did the believers pray? In what way is this surprising?

The believers quote Psalm 2 in their prayers. Psalm 2 describes the kings of this world lined up against God's holy King. God's King laughs at the puniness of the opposition and warns them to submit before it is too late.

To whom does the believers apply the references of Psalm 2?

Read Acts 4:28-30

What did they finally request of God in the last part of their prayer?

What does this prayer tell you about their faith in the character, power and faithfulness of God?

The church, in every generation, needs to learn what it means to pray with confidence – to pray for your leaders. Opposition to the church is present, and God knows about it. We do not go looking for persecution, but when it comes, in whatever form, it should send us back to the scriptures, and cast us on God’s mercy and power.

End today’s study by returning to the Lord in prayer.

CHRIST OUR PERFECT VISION

Day 4: Functioning as One

Begin today's study with prayer.

Unity is essential in the church, because the church is the "body of Christ" (1 Corinthians 12:27), and a body cannot be in disunity or disharmony with itself. If disunity occurs, it essentially ceases to be a body and becomes a disjointed group of individuals. Jesus' plan for His church is people unified in the faith.

Read Acts 1:14-15 and Acts 4:23-24

How do we see the unity in the early church reflected in these verses?

Leaders and fellow believers functioned as one, as their main goal was to bear witness to the resurrection of Jesus himself.

What does the following verses teach us about unity in the church?

1 Corinthians 1:10	
2 Corinthians 13:11	
Ephesians 4:1-3	
Philippians 2:1-4	

Part of Christian obedience, right from the beginning, was the call to play different parts without pride and without shame. There are, of course, no passengers in the kingdom of God, and no 'great' and 'small' parts to be played either. The different tasks and roles to which God calls us are His decision, not ours. Therefore, unity between leaders and believers are of the utmost importance and possible, because their focus should be on their task of spreading the Gospel.

The church is either the movement which announces God's new creation and proclaims Jesus Christ the crucified Messiah, or it is just another irrelevant religious sect, focused on themselves.

End today's study by returning to the Lord in prayer.

CHRIST OUR PERFECT VISION

Day 5: Praying in Spirit and in Truth

Begin today's study with prayer.

Read Acts 4:29-31

What did the apostles finally request of God in the last part of their prayer?

The apostles do not pray for safety, but for boldness to speak the Word.

What happened after the prayer?

This does not refer to a second outpouring of the Spirit, but it is evidence of God's presence and power. The power of God is not in our possession but, because of Jesus, will continue to be at work to set up signposts pointing people to the new dispensation which is happening through Him.

Read John 4:23-24 and John 14:6-7

What does it mean to pray in Spirit and in Truth?

True prayer and worship are empowered by the Spirit of truth and is in accordance with Truth. It can only occur in and through Jesus, who is the truth. God is not confined to one space; therefore, people can worship Him anywhere, in Spirit and in Truth.

In his book, *Lord, Teach us to Pray*, Andrew Murray says: “Let our attitude in prayer be the deep confession of our inability to bring God the worship that is pleasing to Him, the childlike teachableness that waits for Him to instruct us, and the simple faith that yields itself to the breathing of the Spirit. Above all, let us hold on tightly to this blessed reality – the secret of prayer in spirit and truth is in the knowledge of the Fatherhood of God, the revelation of His infinite fatherliness in our hearts, and the faith in His infinite love for us as His children.”

End today’s study by returning to the Lord in prayer.

CHRIST OUR PERFECT VISION

GROUP DISCUSSION

Prayer

Memory verse:

They all joined together constantly in prayer...

Acts 1:14(a) (NIV)

Reflection:

Share with the group members how God worked in your life during this week.

Scripture Reading:

Read Acts 1:12-26 and Acts 4:23-31

Discussion questions

Discuss the importance of corporate prayer in the church. Do you think your church is doing enough? What could be done to change that?

Evaluate the leadership in your congregation. Do you agree that the leaders are chosen by God? How often do you pray for the leadership in your church? Discuss.

How does your church function? Is unity visible between leadership and members? Do you think that the spreading of the Gospel is at the centre of all the actions in the church? Discuss.

Close in prayer

HIS CHURCH IN ACTION

Week **3**

Filled with the Spirit

Memory verse:

And all of them were filled with the Holy Spirit...

Acts 2:4a (NIV)



CHRIST OUR PERFECT VISION

Day 1: The Meaning of Pentecost

Begin today's study with prayer.

Read Acts 2:1-13

The day called "Pentecost" is named after the Greek word *pentekostos*, which means "fiftieth." It was the only Old Testament festival determined by counting. On the day after the Sabbath after Passover, the ancient Israelites selected a sheaf of the first grain that had been harvested in the spring. This grain became an offering, and the priest waved it "before the Lord" (refer to Leviticus 23:11-12). Pentecost was observed in ancient Israel on the 50th day after this. Since seven weeks elapsed between the day of the first grain offering and the beginning of Pentecost, this holy day was sometimes called the Feast of Weeks. (refer to Exodus 34:22, Leviticus 23:15, Numbers 28:26 and Deuteronomy 16:9-12.)

For the Jews Pentecost had also come to signify the commemoration of the giving of the Law at Sinai, fifty days after the Exodus Passover. For Luke this, too, would be seen as having a Christian fulfillment in the giving of the Spirit fifty days after the Christian Exodus Passover, the Crucifixion and Resurrection.

Why do you think the disciples were all together in one place?

They were gathered sharing the same heart, the same love for God and the same trust in His promise. Christ has promised the apostles the reminding and teaching ministry of the Holy Spirit. Pentecost brought to them what they needed for their special role.

Describe in your own words, as if you were a reporter, what happened on the day of Pentecost.

John Stott, in his book *Seeing the Spirit at Work*, said: *Pentecost was the inauguration of the new era of the Spirit. Although his coming was a unique and unrepeatable historical event, all the people of God can now always and everywhere benefit from His ministry.*

The fullness of the Spirit in God's people is to empower them for witness to all the nations. Thus, the meaning of Pentecost is God's equipping His church with the power of His Spirit, so that He will be glorified among the nations.

End today's study by returning to the Lord in prayer.

CHRIST OUR PERFECT VISION

Day 2: Symbols of the Spirit's Presence

Begin today's study with prayer.

Read Acts 2:2-4

What manifestations did the apostles hear and see?

In Scripture different symbols are used to describe the Holy Spirit.

Read Ezekiel 37:9 and John 3:8

What is the meaning of the violent wind?

Both the Hebrew and Greek words used for "Spirit" can also mean "wind" or "breath". The sound of the violent wind from heaven is the sound of the Holy Spirit being poured out on the apostles.

Read Exodus 3:2, Isaiah 4:4 and Matthew 3:11

What is the meaning of the fire?

Fire often symbolizes God's presence. John the Baptist predicted that the Messiah would baptize with "the Holy Spirit and fire". The idea behind the symbol of fire is usually purification, as a refiner uses fire to make pure gold. Or fire can burn away what is temporary, leaving what will last. This is an excellent illustration of the principle that to be filled with the Holy Spirit is not just for abstract power, but for purity.

Under the Old Covenant, the Holy Spirit rested on God's people more as a nation, that is, on Israel. But under the New Covenant, the Holy Spirit rests upon God's people as individuals - the tongues of fire sat upon each of them. So, fire represents God's power and his presence. His power in us is inward because He purifies us and outward because He gives us His power and passion or zeal to be His witnesses.

While it would be wrong to expect a mighty wind or tongues of fire to be present today when the Holy Spirit is poured out; we, just as the apostles, can be filled with the Holy Spirit.

End today's study by returning to the Lord in prayer.

CHRIST OUR PERFECT VISION

Day 3: Filled with the Spirit

Begin today's study with prayer.

Read Acts 2:2-4, Joel 2:28-32 and Ephesians 1:13

Who, according to these verses, receives the Holy Spirit?

In Joel 2 we see that, although the Spirit was previously given to kings, prophets, priests, and others to enable them to minister in God's name, God now promises the Spirit to all people.

When Biblical prophecy is fulfilled, it is done so through the dynamic power of God in glorious fashion. When Jesus was born, shepherds heard angels singing (Luke 2). When Jesus breathed out his final breath, the earth shook from an earthquake and the sky darkened (Mathew 27:45-53). So, too, on the day of Pentecost when the prophecy of the outpouring of the Holy Spirit was fulfilled, it was in dramatic fashion. Because of this no-one could deny the power of God and the fulfilment of prophecy.

Read John 14:15-18 and Acts 1:4-5

Why was this event so important to the disciples? And to the Church?

When Jesus spoke to the disciples in John 14, He said He will be with them and now the disciples experienced that Jesus was with them through the Holy Spirit. Once again, they experienced His presence, they remembered His voice, His love, His guidance and His power. They realised they have everything they need for the task of proclaiming the gospel and making disciples, namely the Holy Spirit.

Do you believe and experience that the Holy Spirit is all you need to make disciples?

The Spirit indwells in the believers – therefore we have everything we need to communicate the truth about Jesus, who is the truth.

End today's study by returning to the Lord in prayer.

CHRIST OUR PERFECT VISION

Day 4: God Glorified by the Church

Begin today's study with prayer.

Read Acts 2:5-11, Acts 1:8 and Matthew 28:19

What special supernatural ability did the Holy Spirit give these believers?

Which different languages were the disciples speaking in? Languages they themselves have never learnt before.

When Luke mentioned the international nature of the crowd, he was speaking about the Greco-Roman world of that time – a world situated around the Mediterranean basin. In each of these nations, there were Jews.

What brought the huge cosmopolitan crowd together in front of the place where the believers were praying?

People from different nations heard the message of Jesus in their own native language which the disciples themselves had never learnt (*speaking in other tongues*). John Stott said: “This symbolized a new unity in the Spirit, transcending racial, national and linguistic barriers.”

What was the common topic of all the messages in the various languages, that the people heard? What “wonders of God” had the speakers recently witnessed?

The people heard the message of Jesus. The speaking in tongues (existing languages) was given so that God may be glorified through the message of Jesus and for no other reason.

End today’s study by returning to the Lord in prayer.

CHRIST OUR PERFECT VISION

Day 5: Effect on Society

Begin today's study with prayer.

Read Acts 2:12-13 and 1 Corinthians 14:23

What were the different reactions to the events on Pentecost?

The crowd was stunned. They were amazed and they were in awe as they could not believe what their ears were hearing.

Although God did great work through the power of the Spirit, there were still some who mocked them and refused to believe.

Why do you think some respond to the presence and the work of the Spirit and others remain hard-hearted and resistant to the Gospel?

Have you ever seen God work through the Spirit, but some people still refused to believe? Describe what happened.

What is the significance and real impact that the Spirit should have on individuals, the church and society?

Jesus came to earth to glorify His Father and to save us from eternal death. He lived by the truths of God and He revealed the truths of God. The Holy Spirit is the Spirit of truth who empowers us to be witnesses of God's truth and love in unity with all nations, bringing glory to God.

When the Spirit is at work in a follower of Christ, change happens! It can be slow and gradual, or sudden and radical, but transformation always takes place. We need to open our lives to the guidance and leadership of the Holy Spirit. We need to recognize His presence and welcome His power to change us more and more into the image of Jesus. God pours His Spirit out on human beings and we open ourselves to receive Him, primarily through prayer and surrender.

End today's study by returning to the Lord in prayer.

CHRIST OUR
GROUP DISCUSSION
PERFECT VISION

Prayer

Memory verse:

And all of them were filled with the Holy Spirit...

Acts 2:4a (NIV)

Reflection:

Share with the group members how God worked in your life during this week.

Scripture Reading:

Read Acts 2:1-13

Discussion questions

Read Acts 2:2-4 and Ephesians 1:13. According to these verses, who receives the Holy Spirit?

What is the significance of the event in Acts 2:1-13 and what should the real impact of the Holy Spirit on the individual believer and the church be? Do you experience this in your life? Discuss.

Share with each other about a time when the Spirit revealed Himself to you and brought you to a place of deep commitment and surrender to Jesus.

Close in prayer

HIS CHURCH IN ACTION

Week **4**

Preach the Gospel

Memory verse:

Then Peter stood up with the Eleven, raised his voice and addressed the crowd ...

Acts 2:14a (NIV)



DeoGloria
Family of Churches

Day 1: The 1st ever Sermon in the Church!

Begin today's study with prayer.

John MacArthur says: "Preaching is characteristic of Christianity. Nothing supplants the preaching of the Bible," and refers to a quote by the theologian Broadus: "*No other religion has ever made the regular and frequent assembling of the masses of men to hear religious instruction and exhortation an integral part of divine worship except Christianity. It is the genius of Christianity as so designed by the Holy Spirit. Others have copied it because of its power.*"

The Bible says that Jesus came to preach (Matthew 4: 17). And in Acts 2 we read the first ever activity of the Church was the sermon delivered by Peter, backed by the apostles - which resulted in the conversion of more than 3,000 people.

Read Acts 2:14-16, 22a and 36-37

Why do you think the audience was "cut to the heart"?

It is significant that, when the Spirit of God had filled them, the disciples stood up and they spoke the **Word with boldness**.

The Spirit of God beautifully set the scene for the sermon. By the sound that they all heard of the wind, and when the disciples began to speak in all their languages, the people were amazed and shocked and filled with wonder. They could not understand how these Galileans could speak all these languages. They could not understand what was going on. It was time for somebody who was not confused to come forward and eliminate the confusion.

Then Peter, compelled by the spirit, addressed this audience - by explaining Scripture. He explained the Gospel to them in a way that forever changed them. What was the result of Peter's address - refer to vs 37, 40-41?

Read John 21:15-17

Why do you think Peter was the spokesperson on that day?

End today's study by returning to the Lord in prayer.

Day 2: The Dawning of a New Age

Begin today's study with prayer.

Read Act 2:14-21

Peter explains the phenomenon described in verses 6-11. What did the crowd think happened? What really happened?

Peter realized what God was doing and seized the opportunity to enlighten the confused religious visitors from all over the world. He calls for their attention and explained that the joyful worship of the believers was not the result of too much wine; it was the evidence of the arrival of God's Holy Spirit to dwell in His people.

Led by the Spirit, Peter then applies the prophecy of Joel to the church. He said, "*This is that same Holy Spirit that Joel wrote about. He is here!*" Such an announcement would seem incredible to the Jews, because they thought God's Spirit was given only to a few select people (see Numbers 11:28–29). But here were 120 of their fellow Jews, men and women, enjoying the blessing of the same

Holy Spirit that had empowered Moses, David, and the prophets.

It was indeed the dawning of a new age, the “last days” in which God would bring to completion His plan of salvation for mankind. Jesus had finished the great work of redemption and nothing more had to be done except to share the Good News with the world, beginning with the nation of Israel.

What invitation is extended to all people in every generation? Refer to Acts 2:21?

Read Acts 1:8 and compare it with Acts 2:17b-18

Is there any person in this church who does not have an obligation to spread the Gospel?

Ask the Lord to give you an urgency to share the Gospel. Begin to trust Him to help you to lead someone who does not believe to become a Christian, because: everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved (Acts 2:21).

End today’s study by returning to the Lord in prayer.

CHRIST OUR PERFECT VISION

Day 3: The Sermon that Began the Church

Begin today's study with prayer.

Read Acts 2:13-41, with special attention to verses 14-16, 22a and 36-37

The same Peter who once vehemently denied Jesus three times is now boldly telling others about the Saviour. Were the contents of Peter's sermon his own smart personal thoughts, or was it an explanation of the message of the Bible?

Peter addressed his audience in the everyday Aramaic that they understood. The message was given by a Jew, to Jews, on a Jewish holy day, about the resurrection of the Jewish Messiah whom their nation had crucified. The Gentiles who were there, were proselytes to the Jewish religion and would also understand what he said. He confronted the audience with how misleading their solution was about what was happening: Jews would not drink before they have eaten - and they never ate before 9am in the morning. So, he directed them to Scripture to show them what really happened - God had fulfilled another of His promises! And then Peter guided them through

Scripture to confirm the authority of Jesus and the salvation that He brought - and confronted them with their guilt before God.

His sermon is the pattern and foundation of apostolic preaching. The preaching of the cross all through Acts, through the Epistles and even today should follow this pattern. The book of Acts gives a record of apostolic preaching.

Read the following verses and indicate how preaching was a priority in the early church:

Acts 3:12	
Acts 4:2	
Acts 5:42	
Acts 8:5	
Acts 9:20	

In the ministry of the church, Bible studies are important. It is important to have home groups and it is important to have Sunday school. However, nothing supplants the preaching of the Word. Preaching of the Word was and is the priority in the church.

End today's study by returning to the Lord in prayer.

CHRIST OUR PERFECT VISION

Day 4: JESUS is the Message!

Begin today's study with prayer.

Read Acts 2:22-24, 31-32 and 36

Who was the central focus of Peter's message?

Central to Biblical preaching is that Jesus is the message and the fulfillment of God's promises.

Peter's message was to proof from scripture that Jesus was the promised Messiah, and that He has risen and is alive and reigning! Peter gave them four proofs of the resurrection of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, and then he called on them to believe in Christ and be saved.

List the four proofs that Peter gave from Scripture:

1 st Proof (verses 22-24)	
---	--

2 nd Proof (verses 25-31)	
3 rd Proof (verse 33)	
4 th Proof (verses 33-35)	

The Holy Spirit took Peter's message and used it to touch the hearts of the listeners and Peter told them how to be saved: they had to repent of their sins and believe in Jesus Christ and be baptized in the name of Jesus.

Read Acts 2:36

Which two facts about Jesus do all people need to know beyond a shadow of a doubt?

God exalted Jesus to His right hand. The Messiah is now reigning as Lord of all.

End today's study by returning to the Lord in prayer.

CHRIST OUR PERFECT GOSPEL

Day 5: The Essence of the Preaching of the Word

Begin today's study with prayer.

Read 2 Timothy 4:2

What does it mean to preach the Word?

In his final epistle, Paul tells Timothy how to build up the church where he is ministering. He gives instructions that apply to all pastors and ultimately to all believers. The one thing of supreme importance that Paul wants to impress upon Timothy is his duty to “preach the word” whether it is easy and productive or not, even in the face of opposition.

Read Romans 10:13-15

Compare these verses with 2 Timothy 4:2. How much preference should preaching have in a Christ-centred, Word-based, Spirit-filled, disciple-making church?

The word translated as “*preach*” in both Romans 10:14-15 and 2 Timothy 4:2, is the Greek word *keyroxon*, which simply means “publish or proclaim openly.” When Paul tells Timothy and the Roman Church to preach the Word, the idea of a formal setting behind a pulpit or in a church service is not present. Nor does it mean a certain style of speech (preaching vs. teaching vs. normal conversation). Any presentation of the truth of God’s Word is “preaching.” Therefore, any Christian can and should do this.

To “preach the Word” simply means to communicate the truth of God’s Word. We should be ready to do this when it is convenient and when it is not. Perhaps one of the most convenient times is when faithful church members have gathered to hear their pastor “preach.” Perhaps one of the most inconvenient times is when a group of co-workers are gathered around the water cooler. Even when it is inconvenient, we must proclaim the Word with “great patience and careful instruction,” even when the situation calls for rebuke. All believers are called to preach the Word, to proclaim the good news about God’s intervention on behalf of all people in Christ.

End today’s study by returning to the Lord in prayer.

CHRIST OUR PERFECT VISION

GROUP DISCUSSION

Prayer

Memory verse:

Then Peter stood up with the Eleven, raised his voice and addressed the crowd ...

Acts 2:14a

Reflection:

Share with the group members how God worked in your life during this week.

Scripture Reading:

Matthew 4:17; Matthew 5:3, 17-20 and 1 Corinthians 2:1-5 and Ephesians 6:19-20

Discussion questions

Read Matthew 4:17; 5:3, 17-20. Here we find a recurring term. What would you say was Jesus' main message?

Read Acts 2:22, 24, 32, 36. What would you say was Peter's main message?

Read 1 Corinthians 2:1-5. What would you say was Paul's main message?

Read Ephesians 6:19-20. The focus of the teaching of the church should be Jesus - his life, ministry, commands, mission (the coming of the Kingdom) and salvation. Pray for your pastor(s). Ask each member to choose a day of the week that they will pray for the pastor(s) to preach the Gospel.

Close in prayer

HIS CHURCH IN ACTION

Week **5**

The Dynamics of Church Life

Memory verse:

All the believers devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching, and to fellowship, and to sharing in meals (including the Lord's Supper), and to prayer.

Acts 2:42 (NLT)

CHRIST OUR PERFECT VISION

Day 1: Devoted to the Word

Begin today's study with prayer.

Read Acts 2:38-47

In verse 38 Peter gives clear instructions on what you need to do to become part of the church of Christ. Write his instructions in your own words.

Luke loves to use the word *devoted* when speaking of the new community of God's people, the church.

How would you define the word *devoted*?

Devoted clearly gives the sense of a binding promise or a pledge, somewhat like marriage vows. It means that you are bound to that pledge or promise, even when it is tough.

Read Acts 2:42 again

List the 4 things the believers were devoted to:

What do think is meant by *the apostles' teaching*?

The apostles had only the Old Testament Scriptures as a guide, as well as their personal experiences with Christ and His teachings. The people that they were teaching were from many different locations and backgrounds. While most of them had some Biblical background, they were ignorant about the person and ministry of the Lord Jesus. The apostles had a massive job on their hands, to ground these people in their new faith before they returned home. They did with these people what Jesus had done with them: Beginning with Moses and with all the prophets, they explained to them the things concerning Jesus in all the Scriptures (see Luke 24:27).

Churches often struggle to be faithful to the apostolic gospel, when they try to tell it in a way which resonates with men and women today.

Do you think the teaching in your congregation is sound doctrine? Explain.

Does the teaching in your congregation equip you to change? Explain your answer.

As church, we have the responsibility to be devoted to telling the story of Jesus as fact, doctrine and gospel. Doctrine which is not applied to living can be devastating but living without doctrine will cause spiritual shipwreck.

We have the Bible readily available to us, and therefore in the church it is of utmost importance that we teach the 'full counsel' of God's Word and thus equip the believers for life.

End today's study by returning to the Lord in prayer.

CHRIST OUR PERFECT VISION

Day 2: Devoted to Fellowship

Begin today's study with prayer.

Read Acts 2:42, 44 and 46

How would you define the word *fellowship*?

The Greek word for fellowship *Koinōnia*, means to participate together towards a common goal. Fellowship can therefore be defined as a feeling of friendship, relatedness, or connection between people. It is a community of equals.

Read John 17:21 and Ephesians 2:11-18

What did Jesus and Paul pray for all believers?

Describe the kind of unity Christ longs for His people to experience.

True unity is the mark of a biblically functioning church. God has created us for unity, for fellowship.

Read Ephesians 4:3,13,16 and Hebrews 10:24-25

There are two levels of unity:

- Unity of the Spirit, (Ephesians 4:3) which Paul commands us to preserve since it already exists.
- Unity of the faith, which we obtain as we come into a deeper knowledge of Christ and grow to spiritual maturity (Ephesians 4:13 and 16).

The early church knew the importance of ‘staying’ in fellowship with brothers and sisters in Christ, for they realized that there is strength and a bond that is deeper than blood between believers. We in the church need each other in our lives. Often we seem to think that we are all alone in our struggles and that no one else can understand what we are going through, yet as we experience fellowship with brothers and sisters in Christ, we begin to realize that we are all going through the same types of struggles. Being devoted to fellowship is a commitment to grow together with fellow believers, who have joined God’s family when they were saved.

End today’s study by returning to the Lord in prayer.

CHRIST OUR PERFECT VISION

Day 3: Intentional Social Interaction!

Begin today's study with prayer.

Read Acts 2:42c, 46c, Acts 20:7

What does the term *breaking of the bread* refer to?

This term most likely refers to the fact that the believers enjoyed meals together and celebrated the Lord's supper. In accordance with the Greco-Roman practice, they ate the main meal of the day in the late afternoon. This meal consists of multiple dishes and the early church's meals were evidently organized as "potluck" dinners – where everyone brought some food to share.

Read 1 Corinthians 11:20-22

Why is Paul upset with the believers according to his letter to the Corinthians?

The problem was that the rich believers did not share their meals with the poor believers. Paul warns them to change

their behaviour, as it was not the way in which they should celebrate the Lord's supper.

How do you perceive the Lord's Supper? Is it something personal or is it an opportunity to share with all believers?

Part of the fellowship with one another was around the Lord's Table, which was designed to cause them to remember Christ. This is such a critical aspect of church life, for observing the Lord's Supper together brings us all together at the foot of the cross, and it is only at that place that the ground is truly level, for that is where we realize that we are all sinners saved by God's grace.

By sharing meals and the Lord's Supper, believers experience a loving unity based on their mutual relationship with Christ. As a spontaneous act of bonding, they take care of each other and share their possessions. It is one of the most powerful testimonies that can come from a congregation!

End today's study by returning to the Lord in prayer.

CHRIST OUR PERFECT VISION

Day 4: Devoted to Communication with God

Begin today's study with prayer.

Read Acts 2:42d and Acts 12:5

What is prayer and why do we pray?

Why do you think the believers devoted themselves to prayer? (Refer to verse 42d)

The First Christian Church of Jerusalem was a praying church. Prayer was a way of life with these early Christians, for they realised that it is the lifeblood of the church.

Do you think your church – and you personally – spend enough time in prayer? Explain.

In your personal and family life, prayer ought to be a normal, frequent response when a personal problem arises or when you talk about someone who is facing a problem. Prayer acknowledges our total dependence on the living Lord.

Read Acts 2:47a, Acts 16:25 and Ephesians 5:19.

In what way is worship and singing communication with God?

Praising and singing is a way of expressing our appreciation of God. Luke writes that the people were continually ‘praising God’ in the early church. They realized that they had to give thanks to the Lord for everything in their lives.

Do you think your church – and you personally – spend enough time in praising God? Explain.

A heart praising God is a heart full of gratitude to God. Prayer and praise and worship are ways that we can communicate with the living God and it should be part of who we are and how we live.

End today’s study by returning to the Lord in prayer.

CHRIST OUR
PERFECT VISION

Day 5: God's Holiness seen in the Church

Begin today's study with prayer.

Read Acts 43a, 47b and Acts 4:33

What was the people's reaction to the behaviour of believers and what they saw happening in the church?

In the community of Jerusalem, there was a sense of awe and wonder at what God was doing among the people who followed Christ.

God established His holiness in the church through the leaders and the people had reverence for God.

Read Acts 5:1-11

In this passage we find the first negative incident in the early church. What was the mistake Ananias and Sapphira made?

Why did it provoke such a strong response from the church leaders?

Ananias and Sapphira are severely judged by God. Their sin is not the smaller amount of their gift, it is their deception. Lying to the Holy Spirit (verse 9) is lying to God. In the church we are constantly in the presence of the holy God. This is His church, which He bought with His Son's blood and filled with His Spirit. God powerfully preserves His church's holiness.

Read Leviticus 11:44-45 and 1 Peter 1:16

What command does God give His children/His church in these verses?

This call to holiness means that the Church (and believers) must set themselves apart from the customs and values of the world and live by the character and standards of Jesus. God's holiness must be clearly visible in the church - then people will believe in God.

End today's study by returning to the Lord in prayer.

CHRIST OUR PERFECT VISION

GROUP DISCUSSION

Prayer

Memory verse:

All the believers devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching, and to fellowship, and to sharing in meals (including the Lord's Supper), and to prayer.

Acts 2:42 (NLT)

Reflection:

Share with the group members how God worked in your life during this week.

Scripture Reading:

Acts 2:42-47, Acts 5:1-11 and 1 Peter 1:16

Discussion questions

Read Acts 2:42. What attitudes and actions marked the heartbeat of the early church?

Read Acts 5:1-11 and 1 Peter 1:16. Why is the holiness of the church so important? Is the holiness of God seen in your church?

How does your congregation compare to the characteristics of the early church? How could you change or adapt? Discuss.

Close in prayer

HIS CHURCH IN ACTION

Week **6**

Will not be Silenced

Memory verse:

Judge for yourselves whether it is right in God's sight to obey you rather than God. For we cannot help speaking about what we have seen and heard.

Acts 4:19b-20 (NIV)

CHRIST OUR PERFECT VISION

Day 1: A Crippled Beggar Healed

Begin today's study with prayer.

Read Acts 3:1-10

The disciples continued their Jewish way of life. Jews prayed three times a day at the temple — at 9:00 a.m., noon, and at 3:00 p.m. The special feature of the first and last prayer time was the offering of the morning and evening sacrifices. John and Peter were on their way to the temple for the afternoon prayer.

What do you think the healing of the beggar demonstrates about the Holy Spirit?

The Holy Spirit worked through Peter and John to heal the beggar in the name of Jesus. The Spirit of the risen Christ was with Peter, and when he called on the name of Jesus, God healed the man.

God's church on a mission cannot do it on its own, the church always operates in the power of the Holy Spirit and

in the Name of Jesus, as His representative, His church, on earth.

Describe the reaction of the crowd? How did God use this miracle for His glory?

The people who saw the beggar healed, praised God and were filled with wonder and amazement. When the apostles healed the lame beggar, they were having the same spiritual authority and power as Jesus.

We can easily be excited by miracles but saving faith do not come from seeing or hearing about miracles. Faith rather faith comes from hearing the Word of God.

The lame man wanted money; but God wanted to give him something much greater. The Jewish people expected the Messiah in a certain form, but God wanted to give them something much greater. It is important for us to expect the right things from God. He has much more for us in mind.

End today's study by returning to the Lord in prayer.

CHRIST OUR PERFECT VISION

Day 2: Jesus the Author of Life

Begin today's study with prayer.

Read Acts 3:11-16

What is the essence of Peter's message to the crowd?

As the crowd converged on Solomon's Colonnade, Peter had an opportunity to preach the gospel. The outer court of the temple, called the Court of the Gentiles, was surrounded by porticoes. Solomon's Colonnade ran along the eastern portion of the outer court. The colonnades or porticos were busy places. Religious teachers debated there and taught their pupils there.

Peter focused on the proclamation of Jesus Christ as Saviour. Peter stressed the role of Jesus as the Suffering Servant and the "prophet to come" whom Israel was to obey.

Peter goes on and describes Jesus as the Holy and Righteous One, the Author of life. He continued and said

that the Jews disowned Jesus and killed the author of life, but that God raised Him from the dead.

Read Acts 3:15 and Hebrews 2:10

What do you think the description “author of life/author of salvation means?

The Greek word translated as “author” has a range of meanings, including *leader, founder, cause, originator, pioneer*. Jesus is the author of life. Life, out of nothing, began through Him. It was His idea; He was its Creator and Sustainer. The very breath we breathe is from Him.

He also paved the way by being the first to be resurrected and promises the resurrection to those who are children of God. Through Jesus, the Creator, God breathed life into man when He created him from the dust of the earth. Most importantly, at the day of the final resurrection, Jesus, the Author of Eternal Life, will breath eternal life into our dead bodies, because He gives eternal life to those who believe in Him.

End today’s study by returning to the Lord in prayer.

CHRIST OUR PERFECT VISION

Day 3: Repent and turn to God

Begin today's study with prayer.

Read Acts 3:17-26

What does it mean to “repent and turn to God”?

Throughout his sermon, Peter insisted that Jesus is the Saviour. He suffered according to God's plan as the prophets had foretold. Peter and the apostles are witnesses of Jesus' death and resurrection.

Most of the audience heard Jesus teach and would have seen Him heal the sick and saw Him die on the cross. Therefore, Peter says that the appropriate reaction should be that the people repent and turn to God, so that their sins may be wiped out.

Peter mostly talked to dedicated Jews who worshiped in the temple and kept the law. Although they lived according to the law, they had to understand and accept that even they sinned and lacked the glory of God.

All people must turn to God, even those who understood and tried to follow the Holy Scriptures. To experience reconciliation with God, everyone needs forgiveness, repentance, and the Holy Spirit.

For them and for us, “repentance” means to turn to God and accept Jesus as Lord, and as the Saviour of the world from sin and death.

What does “times of refreshing” in verse 19 mean to you?

Peter associated the forgiveness of sins with the “times of refreshing.” Acceptance of Jesus as your Saviour marks the beginning of a new era in the believer’s life. The Word talks about a “restoration” or “rebirth.” All this gives the believers a new relationship with God, which is refreshing. Obviously the “times of refreshing” that Peter spoke about is also something that will occur at Jesus’ return.

End today’s study by returning to the Lord in prayer.

CHRIST OUR PERFECT VISION

Day 4: We will not be Silenced

Begin today's study with prayer.

Read Acts 4:1-21

Why did Peter and John get arrested?

There is an irony in the apostles' arrest. Peter and John were arrested for teaching about Jesus' resurrection, but they were questioned about the healing. The Sanhedrin did not want to discuss the resurrection of Jesus, partly because Pharisees were a significant minority of the Sanhedrin, and they believed in a resurrection. Although they did not believe that Jesus had been resurrected, they could not disprove it. Too many strange events surrounding Jesus' life and death — including the empty tomb — would be sure to come up if they had this discussion.

It is particularly striking that the authorities did not think it was important to disprove the apostles' central affirmation — the resurrection of Jesus. The body of Jesus had vanished so completely that all the resources at their

disposal could not produce it. The disappearance of his body, to be sure, was far from proving his resurrection, but the production of his body would have effectively disproved it.

Read Acts 4:18-20

Why could Peter and John not keep quiet about what they had seen and heard?

The Greek word, “*dunama*” used here literally means “***we are absolutely not able not to speak.***” All of us need to follow Peter’s example and make our decisions based on what is right in the eyes of God and not what is popular or safe. However, we must be sure that we have the clear teaching of the Word of God on our side before we take a stand against people and authorities. Peter knew what the Lord had commanded the believers to do and he was going to obey Him at any cost.

To speak of what they had seen and heard is an excellent description of a witness. A witness tells what they have seen and heard.

End today’s study by returning to the Lord in prayer.

CHRIST OUR PERFECT VISION

Day 5: The Believers in Prayer

Begin today's study with prayer.

Read Acts 4:23-31

How do you handle difficult situations?

People react differently in difficult situations. Some panic, others are depressed, others suffer in silence. The response of the believers in Jerusalem, in the first century, was to pray about the crisis. They perceived the danger to themselves, and to their mission of spreading the gospel. They realized that they could not face the power of the Sanhedrin on their own. So, they put their faith in God as the Sovereign Lord and the Creator of all. The disciples appealed to his power to deliver the church.

Read Acts 4:25

We believe that Scripture is Holy Spirit inspired. Take note that this is exactly what we read here too. Luke refers to Psalm 2:1-2 and says that God has spoken it "by the Holy Spirit through the mouth" of David. David may have written the words, but they were guided by the Holy Spirit.

Read Acts 4:24-30

What kinds of requests did the disciples include in their prayer? What do you learn about prayer from these verses?

They begin to praise the "God of Creation" and follow it up with worship of the God of Revelation, the Holy Spirit. They acknowledge that God's Spirit inspired the written Word.

If you or our church want to see God do powerful things, we must acknowledge the Scriptures are inspired by God and is His Word. Prayer is us talking to God and the Scripture is God talking to us. When we prayerfully study God's Word and when, as obedient children of God, we may expect to see God do powerful things, in His church and through our lives.

Their prayer has a selfless aspect. They do not ask for relief from persecution nor judgment against their oppressors. Rather, the church wants the opportunity to preach the gospel boldly.

End today's study by returning to the Lord in prayer

CHRIST OUR GROUP DISCUSSION PERFECT VISION

Prayer

Memory verse:

Judge for yourselves whether it is right in God's sight to obey you rather than God. For we cannot help speaking about what we have seen and heard.

Acts 4:19b-20 (NIV)

Reflection:

Share with the group members how God worked in your life during this week.

Scripture Reading:

Acts 3:11-26 and 4:1-31

Discussion questions

Read Acts 3:11-16. What do you think “the author of life” means? Discuss its significance for you.

Read Acts 3:17-23. Discuss “repentance.” What does “times of refreshing” mean and what does it look like in your life?

Read Acts 4:1-21. How do you think you might affect unbelievers around you by your testimony? How can you strengthen your courage to be a Christian in your place of work?

Read Acts 4:24-30. Discuss this prayer. How can prayer help you to speak boldly to other people about Jesus?

Close in prayer

HIS CHURCH IN ACTION

Week **7**

A Sharing and Caring Community

Memory verse:

All the believers were one in heart and mind. No one claimed that any of his possessions was his own, but they shared everything they had.

Acts 4:32 (NIV)

CHRIST OUR PERFECT VISION

Day 1: To Belong is to Share

Begin today's study with prayer.

A Christ-centred church cannot help but care about people. After all, we are following the One who has given his life for other people. Therefore, our hearts, hands and purses must be open.

Read Acts 4:32-35

What examples of caring do you see in this passage?

For a second time in Acts (see also 2:37–41), Luke summarizes the general lifestyle of the Jerusalem congregation in a nutshell: they really cared about each other. One and the same heart beats in everyone. Therefore, they carried one another in their hearts. When a believer was hungry, others brought him food. Those who had possessions and land sold it and brought the money to the apostles to distribute it to the poor (4:34).

We should not think that every believer sold all his goods and brought the money to the Apostles. Acts 4:34 indicates that some of the members “from time to time” sold various pieces of property and donated to the common treasury. When the assembly had a need, the Spirit directed someone to sell something and meet the need.

Of course, we are not required by the Lord to give away all our possessions. No, it is rather about having new hearts in which there is plenty of room for other people with their grief and suffering.

Read 2 Corinthians 8:10-15 and 9:6-15

Evidence of the unity of the church was the way in which they sacrificed for and shared with one another. What principles of Christian giving do we find in 2 Corinthians 8 and 9?

What the believers did was purely voluntary and was motivated by love. No doubt many of the new believers were visitors in Jerusalem, having come for the feasts; and

they had to depend on their Christian friends to help meet their daily needs.

May the following testimony (from W. Wiersbe - The Bible Exposition Commentary) encourage you in your stewardship of the Lord's work:

"A lady sent a gift to a ministry and explained that it was money she had saved because she had turned off the hot water tank in her house. She also did without a daily paper so that she might have more to give to the Lord's work. When she took a bath, she heated the water on the stove, "just the way we did it when we were kids." The Lord may not call all of us to this kind of sacrifice, but her example is worthy of respect."

End today's study by returning to the Lord in prayer.

CHRIST OUR PERFECT VISION

Day 2: The Congregation and Care

Begin today's study with prayer.

Read Proverbs 3:9-10 and Ephesians 4:28b

The Bible does not teach that ownership of material things is wrong or evil. It does, however, teach that God provides material goods not for selfish personal use, but so that we can help others who are in need.

Read Malachi 3:10, Acts 4:35, 37b, Acts 5:2b and Acts 11:30

What do you believe? Does the church have a role to play in the administration and distribution of your monetary sacrifice for the Lord? Explain your answer.

Believers trust the church with managing their tithings and sacrifices according to God's will. What lesson is here for the stewardship of church government and leaders?

The dictionary defines stewardship as the responsible overseeing and protection of something considered worth caring for and preserving. Being a good steward is like being an ambassador. Like an ambassador, a good steward represents and acts on behalf of God. God blesses His church with many resources (people, time and money) and He expects us to be good stewards of what He provides.

Read Matthew 25:34-36, 40 and James 2:14-16

What do these verses show you about caring and sharing?

Someone who follows Jesus with all his heart, will always do something about or become involved in the alleviation of the misery of people in need. A sign of real faith is that it urges you to want to help and want to care, no matter the cost.

Helping others in their need is a way of expressing our love for God and our gratitude to Him.

End today's study by returning to the Lord in prayer.

CHRIST OUR PERFECT VISION

Day 3: Hypocrisy is Sin

Begin today's study with prayer.

Read Acts 4:36-5:10

So far, the young church has only experienced resistance and attacks against them from outside (via the Jewish leaders). How did sin attack the church from inside via the gracious donation of one couple?

Joseph, a Levite whom the apostles gave the nickname Barnabas (which means "son of comfort" or "son of exhortation") was a person who shook off the grip of selfishness and the sickly pursuit of possessions, and shined God's light in this dark world. He sold all his land and gave the apostles the profit from it. They then distributed it again to the poor.

Apparently, his sacrifice filled Ananias and Sapphira with envy, so that they attempted to impress the church with their giving: they withheld a portion of the money they received for the sale of their land while creating the

impression that they gave everything to the apostles. This couple's behaviour was so different from the unselfish conduct of Barnabas and the rest of the believers. They wanted to create the impression of religiousness by pretending to be terribly generous with their money. However, God unmasked their hypocrisy and let them die on the spot.

Hypocrisy goes against the grain of the gospel. God shows here He does not tolerate it. Just like the rest of the Jerusalem congregation, we must also have great reverence for God, especially when we see how serious He is about sin and how sternly He acts against it.

Read 2 Corinthians 9:6-8

Explain the Biblical way of giving?

Giving is an act of faith that helps us keep our priorities straight. It recognizes that God is our provider and is a symbol of your obedience. Therefore, giving is always because you want to – not because you must. It is between you and God.

End today's study by returning to the Lord in prayer.

CHRIST OUR PERFECTION

Day 4: Take Spiritual Care of each Other

Begin today's study with prayer.

Read Acts 11:19-26

After Stephan's death, the believers were scattered all over Asia and some of them ended up in Antioch, the third largest city in the Roman Empire. The main street was more than seven kilometers long, paved with marble, and lined on both sides by marble colonnades. It was the only city in the ancient world at that time that had its streets lighted at night. It had about 500,000 residents, of whom about 50,000 were Jews so we can assume there were many synagogues.

When the persecuted believers arrived in Antioch, the Word of God was on their lips and the hand of God was on their witnessing, and "a great number" of sinners repented and believed. It was a thrilling example of God's wonderful grace.

Read Acts 8:14 and 11:22

What was the practise of the church in Jerusalem when they became aware of new churches planted in Asia?

The church leaders in Jerusalem had a responsibility to “shepherd” the scattered flock, which now included Gentile congregations as far away as Syria. It seems that the Apostles were not ministering in Jerusalem at the time, so the elders commissioned one of their ordinary leaders, Barnabas, to go to Antioch to find out what was going on among the Gentiles. This proved to be a wise choice, for Barnabas lived up to his nickname, “son of encouragement”.

Read Acts 11:23-24

What do you learn from Barnabas’ presence in the young congregation?

New Christians and new churches need people like Barnabas to encourage them in their growth and ministry. Barnabas rejoiced at what he saw, and he did not look for things to criticize. It was the work of God, and Barnabas gave thanks for God’s grace.

End today’s study by returning to the Lord in prayer.

CHRIST OUR PERFECT VISION

Day 5: Take Financial Care of each Other

Begin today's study with prayer.

Read Acts 11:27-30

Because poverty was a major problem throughout the first century, a famine or a great drought was always a crisis. In such times, many people usually died of hunger. Luke tells of a Christian prophet named Agabus (see also Acts 21:10-11) who arrived from Jerusalem in Antioch and came to warn that a famine would soon strike the whole world (11:27).

What was the disciples' reaction to the word of God revealed to them by the prophet from Jerusalem?

Prophecy is a gift of the Spirit like the gift of speaking in tongues (see 1 Corinthians 14). Since Christians only had the Old Testament scriptures as sacred books during this time, Christian prophets revealed His will under the inspiration of God's Spirit. These prophets were not predictors of the future in that they communicated blueprints of world history to believers. They only revealed

what God wanted to share. The purpose of true prophecy is not to satisfy our curiosity about the future, but to stir up our hearts to do the will of God. The Antioch believers were determined to help their fellow Christians in Judea. They could not stop the famine from coming, but they could send relief to those in need.

Read Galatians 6:6

What important spiritual principle (as illustrated by the church in Antioch) do we find here?

If people have been a spiritual blessing to us, we should minister to them from our material possessions. The Jewish believers in Jerusalem sent Barnabas to encourage the new believers. The Gentiles in Antioch reciprocated and send material help to their Jewish brothers and sisters in Judea. The fact that the church elected Barnabas and Saul to take the relief offering to Jerusalem, is evidence that they had confidence in them. They had been working together in the teaching of the Word, and now they joined hands in the practical ministry of relieving the needs of the Jerusalem believers.

End today's study by returning to the Lord in prayer

CHRIST OUR PERFECT VISION

GROUP DISCUSSION

Prayer

Memory verse:

All the believers were one in heart and mind. No one claimed that any of his possessions was his own, but they shared everything they had.

Acts 4:32 (NIV)

Reflection:

Share with the group members how God worked in your life during this week.

Scripture Reading:

Ephesians 4:28b, 1 Timothy 5:8, Deuteronomy 26:12-13a, Proverbs 3:9, 1 Corinthians 16:2, 2 Corinthians 9:6-10, Matthew 25:34-36, 40 and James 2:14-16

Discussion questions

Read Ephesians 4:28b and 1 Timothy 5:8. Where does stewardship begin?

Read Deuteronomy 26:12-13a, Proverbs 3:9, 1 Corinthians 16:2 and 2 Corinthians 9:6-10. Discuss the principles that you find here about giving and the church as instrument of caring.

Read Matthew 25:34-36, 40 and James 2:14-16. What do these verses teach us about caring and sharing?

How does your congregation fulfil their duty in respect of sharing and caring? How can you become part of this?

Close in prayer

HIS CHURCH IN ACTION

Week **8**

Unstoppable in Spreading the Gospel

Memory verse:

The church then had peace throughout Judea, Galilee, and Samaria, and it became stronger as the believers lived in the fear of the Lord. And with the encouragement of the Holy Spirit, it also grew in numbers.

Acts 9:31 (NLT)

DeoGloria
Family of Churches

CHRIST OUR PERFECT VISION

Day 1: The Church and the Gospel opposed

Begin today's study with prayer.

The escalating hostility towards the believers, that we have noted in Acts, has finally come into the open, as Stephen is brought before the Sanhedrin. Stephen's speech is the longest speech in Acts, but clearly Luke thought it important, therefore he gave a full version of the speech in Acts 7:1-53. We can get a bit lost in the detail, but the main point Stephen is making, is that the coming of Jesus is in complete continuity with the Old Testament. The main charge against Stephen was that he was anti-Moses and anti-Law, but Stephen points out to them that they are in the wrong and disobedient to God. Jesus the risen Christ is the fulfilment of the Old Testament.

Read Acts 7:51-8:3

What did the Sanhedrin think of Stephen's message?
What did they do to Stephen?

How did their reaction prove the truth of Stephen's charge in Acts 7:51-53?

What strengthened Stephen during this crisis?

What was the positive result of Stephen's death? (refer to Acts 8:1b)

Who watched Stephen being martyred, and how did he feel about it?

Everything we know about Stephen is confined to Acts 6 and 7. Stephen appears briefly, shines brilliantly for a moment, and then he is gone. However, he was a flame in a bigger fire, the fire of the Spirit of the risen Christ. This fire cannot be contained and even today, burns through the hearts and minds of men, women and children. Stephen's martyrdom marks a new and devastating level of persecution, yet God uses this to advance His gospel.

End today's study by returning to the Lord in prayer.

CHRIST OUR PERFECT VISION

Day 2: Reaching out to the Outsiders

Begin today's study with prayer.

Even during persecution, the church of Christ still grows. The scattering of the Christians, because of this persecution has the effect of spreading the gospel even more!

Read Acts 8:4-8

What did the scattered believers do?

Read Acts 6:3-5

Who was Philip?

Like Stephen, Philip was part of the seven appointed to meet the needs of the Hellenistic widows in the church.

Read Luke 9:52-56

Why is it significant that Philip, a Jew, went to a city in Samaria and proclaimed the Messiah there?

The Jews hated the Samaritans as a half-breed race and as heretics, but for Luke they are examples of outsiders to whom the gospel is good news.

What was the people's reaction to Philip's teaching?

The "signs" Philip performed replicated Jesus' miracles and so demonstrated the presence and power of the kingdom of God. The gospel was welcomed by the Samaritans and they were incorporated in the church.

End today's study by returning to the Lord in prayer.

CHRIST OUR PERFECTION

Day 3: Following the Prompting of the Spirit

Begin today's study with prayer.

Read Acts 8:26-40

According to verse 26 Philip was instructed by an angel to go the desert road. What do you think would it have been like for Philip to leave a place where so many exciting things were happening to go down a desert road? What does his action show us about his faith?

What information about the Ethiopian do we discover in verse 27b and verse 28?

The Holy Spirit brought these two men together. What did the Ethiopian need and how could Philip meet that need?

What role did Scripture play in the eunuch's conversion?

Ethiopia was the extreme boundary of the habitable world in the hot south. In what way was Philip's ministry to the eunuch the beginning of "the witness to the ends of the earth"?

People refer to different kinds of evangelism, such as door-to-door, friendship, mass, and tract evangelism. What kind of evangelism do you observe in this passage?

Philip shared the good news with people from different racial origins, social ranks and religions. Yet, despite their differences, Philip presented them with the same good news about Jesus. Throughout Philip's mission we see the evidence of God's guiding hand. God's Spirit guided and empowered him to fulfil his calling.

End today's study by returning to the Lord in prayer.

Day 4:
Saul's Miraculous Conversion

Begin today's study with prayer.

Read Acts 9:1-19

Describe Saul according to verse 1 and 2

Luke has already mentioned Saul three times in Acts, each time as a bitter opponent of Christ and his church (Acts 7:58 and Acts 8:1,3). In these verses, Saul is still in the same mental condition of hatred and hostility.

Describe Saul's experience on the Damascus road in your own words.

In what ways does Saul's conversion demonstrate the marvellous grace of God?

If we ask what caused Saul's conversion, only one answer is possible. It is the sovereign grace of God through Jesus Christ. Saul did not decide to change and follow God – no, he was still persecuting Christ. It was Christ who called him and intervened in his life.

Sovereign grace is gradual and gentle grace. Gradually and without violence, Jesus pricked Saul's mind and conscience and then he revealed himself in a way that made it possible for Saul to make a free response.

What is the significance of Ananias's ministry to Paul? Why did he hesitate to do what God assigned him? How did his obedience demonstrate his faith?

The restoring of Saul's sight demonstrates the healing power of the kingdom of God and symbolizes Saul's transformation from spiritual darkness to spiritual light. Saul, the persecutor of the church, has now become Paul, the apostle to the gentiles. The man who was determined to stop Christ's ongoing word is now going to be used by Christ to achieve his ongoing work.

End today's study by returning to the Lord in prayer.

CHRIST OUR PERFECT VISION

Day 5: Spreading the Gospel

Begin today's study with prayer.

Read Acts 9:19b-31

Contrast Saul in Acts 9:1 with Saul in Acts 9:20-22 and 27. Is there a difference, and what made the difference?

In verse 20, Saul describes Jesus to the people. How would his previous knowledge of the Old Testament have been helpful to him?

Just as in Damascus, the believers in Jerusalem were afraid of Saul. What does Barnabas teach us about relating to new Christians?

By Paul's own testimony (Acts 26:16) Jesus appointed him on the road to Damascus as "a servant and a witness".

How does Paul show his responsibility to the world in Acts 9:19-31?

Read the summary statement made about the church in verse 31. Contrast this with Acts 8:1. How successful has the church's enemies been in stamping out Christianity? How can this account encourage Christians today who are persecuted for their faith?

The story of Saul's conversion in Acts 9 begins with him leaving Jerusalem with an official mandate to arrest fugitive Christians and ends with him leaving Jerusalem as a persecuted Christian himself. The church's greatest opponent is now the greatest advocate. As he left Jerusalem, a sense of awe and reverence at the mighty power of God resulted in worship and growth.

End today's study by returning to the Lord in prayer

CHRIST OUR PERFECT VISION

GROUP DISCUSSION

Prayer

Memory verse:

The church then had peace throughout Judea, Galilee, and Samaria, and it became stronger as the believers lived in the fear of the Lord. And with the encouragement of the Holy Spirit, it also grew in numbers.

Acts 9:31 (NLT)

Reflection:

Share with the group members how God worked in your life during this week.

Scripture Reading:

Acts 9:1-31, 1 Corinthians 15:3-11 and Galatians 1:11-24

Discussion questions

Read Acts 9:1-19. In what way do we see the sovereignty of God operating?

Read 1 Corinthians 15:3-11 and Galatians 1:11-24. Paul often writes about his conversion in his letters. What valuable lessons does Paul draw from his conversion?

In Acts, rejoicing and joy are often associated with conversions. Often, in our experience, this initial joy seems to subside with time. Why do you think that is and how can we help each other prevent this from happening?

In what way does Paul's conversion and ministry encourage you to remember that there are no limits to God's grace?

Close in prayer

HIS CHURCH IN ACTION

Week **9**

A Missional Church

Memory verse:

Therefore, go and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit. Teach these new disciples to obey all the commands I have given you. And be sure of this: I am with you always, even to the end of the age.

129 *Matthew 28:19-20 (NIV)*

CHRIST OUR PERFECT VISION

Day 1: Sent by Jesus Christ

Begin today's study with prayer.

The Church is not an end in itself. God has a mission that goes beyond the Church, which includes the Kingdom.

Read Acts 13-15

How would you define the word *Missional*?

Mark Driscoll says: "Missional living is the embodiment of the mission of Jesus in the world by incarnating the gospel. It is imperative that Christians be like Jesus, by living freely within the culture as missionaries who are as faithful to the Father and his gospel as Jesus was in his own time and place." Being missional includes embracing the posture, the thinking, behaviours, and practices of a missionary, to reach others with the message of the gospel.

Read Matthew 28:19-20 and John 20:21

What command has Jesus given to His followers?

Jesus was the first apostle. He was sent by his Father. He, in turn, sent His disciples on a mission. They went to people who would then take the gospel to the rest of the world. Whoever received it would understand that they, too, had been sent. With the gospel being what it is, the church as bearer of the gospel is bound to be apostolic. The church has a mission because Jesus had a mission.

Many churches classify themselves as either emerging, evangelistic (seeker-sensitive) or attractional. How would you define the different types of churches?

Emerging Church	
Evangelistic / Seeker-sensitive Church	
Attractional Church	

The “emerging” church is primarily a renewal movement that attempts to contextualize Christianity for a postmodern generation. The seeker-sensitive church tries to reach out to the unsaved person by making the church

experience as comfortable, inviting, and non-threatening as possible. The hope is that the person will believe in the gospel. The “attractional” church expects people to come to them, because of what they offer.

Though many churches have mission statements or talk about the importance of having a mission, where missional churches differ is in their attitude toward the world. A missional church sees the mission as both its originating impulse and its organizing principle. It is patterned after what God has done in Jesus Christ.

All believers and therefore all churches should be missional. Being missional represents a significant shift in the way one thinks about the church. It means we should engage the world the same way Jesus did—by going out to reach people rather than just expecting them to come to you to hear the Gospel.

Being Missional applies to the whole life of every believer. Every disciple of Christ should strive to be an agent, a representative of the kingdom of God; and every follower should try to carry the mission of God into every sphere of his life. We are all missionaries sent into the world.

End today’s study by returning to the Lord in prayer.

CHRIST OUR PERFECT VISION

Day 2: Sent with the Message of the Cross

Begin today's study with prayer.

Read Luke 19:10 and John 3:16-17

Why did Jesus come to earth?

Jesus accomplished salvation through the cross. By dying on the cross, He paid the penalty for sin and satisfied God's wrath. According to Scripture, without the cross, there is no salvation, no forgiveness, and no hope. Because of the cross, there is eternal life.

What does the following verses teach us about the cross?

1 Corinthians 1:18	
Ephesians 2:16 (see GNB translation)	
Colossians 2:14	

1 Peter 2:24	
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We often hear that people say they cannot be disciples, or they cannot do outreach or missions, because they feel that they are not equipped to do it.

We do not need training or special equipping. We only need to accept the Salvation that Jesus gained for us on the cross, make it our own, and share the wonder of it with every person we meet. God himself persuades sinners to come to faith in Jesus and be saved as the news of Jesus, the crucified Saviour, is proclaimed.

As a missional church, we are compelled to share the message of the Cross with others.

End today's study by returning to the Lord in prayer.

CHRIST OUR PERFECT VISION

Day 3: Sent into the Community

Begin today's study with prayer.

Jesus loves the Church and He gave His life to redeem the Church. The Church is now a new Community.

Read Acts 2:42, 44-46 and Acts 4:32-33

How did this new Community function?

Christians are to encourage and care for each other and bring the gospel to the rest of the people.

Read Matthew 5:13-16, Matthew 20:28 and Acts 5:42

How should believers impact the world?

Jesus' own mission was self-giving and not self-serving. Believers should therefore positively impact the world, not isolate themselves from other people, but model a living

relationship with Christ amid a fallen world and save others.

Read 2 Corinthians 5:14-18

What does Paul teach us about how we should see other people and how we should minister to them?

God intends to put the world to rights; He has dramatically launched this mission through Jesus. Alan Hirsch says: "Missional church is a community of God's people that defines itself, and organizes its life around, its real purpose of being an agent of God's mission to the world. In other words, the church's true and authentic organizing principle is mission. When the church is in mission, it is the true church."

Those who belong to Jesus are called, here and now, in the power of the Spirit, to become part of that mission. When a person becomes a Christian, God totally restructures their lives. God alters the way they think, feel, act, their whole being. They become part of the new community of believers and they feel the urgency for others to experience the same.

End today's study by returning to the Lord in prayer.

CHRIST OUR PERFECT VISION

Day 4: Sent to every Culture

Begin today's study with prayer.

Read Acts 17:22-34

What was is about seeing the idols that made Paul feel so distressed?

In your own words, describe what happened in this passage.

Read 1 Corinthians 9:19-23

In what way is Paul's approach as a missionary determined by the way his listeners live?

Does this mean that he lost his authenticity and that his message was wrong? Explain your answer.

George Peters notes, “If man is to be reached, he must be reached within his own culture.” This principle is observed when God became a man in the form of Jesus to come to earth and incarnate the gospel. As missionaries sent by Jesus, every Christian must learn to exegete their surrounding culture, uncovering the language, values, and ideas of the culture. Using this information, they take steps to reach people with the gospel message in the context of the surrounding culture.

Read Revelation 5:9 and Revelation 7:9-10

What recurring theme do we find here?

Jesus’s sacrificial death achieved salvation for all people. God’s universal people transcends ethnic, linguistic, cultural and national boundaries.

End today’s study by returning to the Lord in prayer.

CHRIST OUR PERFECT VISION

Day 5: Sent to Proclaim His Kingdom

Begin today's study with prayer.

Read Acts 28:23-31

Paul was teaching in Rome. According to verses 23 and 31, he taught about the Kingdom of God. What do you understand the Kingdom of God to be?

Read Matthew 13:31-33 and Revelations 11:15

How is the Kingdom described in these verses?

Broadly speaking, the kingdom of God is the rule of an eternal, sovereign God over all the universe. More narrowly, the kingdom of God is a spiritual rule over the hearts and lives of those who willingly submit to God's authority. The kingdom of God is entered only by the new birth.

The Book of Acts ends with Paul, under house arrest in Rome, “proclaiming the kingdom of God and teaching about the Lord Jesus Christ with all boldness and without hindrance” (Acts 28:31). It is universal and includes all believers.

Read Luke 4:43

What did Jesus see as His calling?

Read Matthew 10:6-7

In your own words, explain why it is important that the Church proclaim the gospel of the Kingdom, so that others may enter the Kingdom of God.

Christians are sent to proclaim the gospel of the kingdom so that others may enter the kingdom. Those who defy God’s authority and refuse to submit to Him are not part of the kingdom of God; in contrast, those who acknowledge the lordship of Christ and gladly surrender to God’s rule in their hearts are part of the kingdom of God.

End today’s study by returning to the Lord in prayer

CHRIST OUR GROUP DISCUSSION PERFECT VISION

Prayer

Memory verse:

Therefore, go and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit. Teach these new disciples to obey all the commands I have given you. And be sure of this: I am with you always, even to the end of the age.

Matthew 28:19-20 (NIV)

Reflection:

Share with the group members how God worked in your life during this week.

Scripture Reading:

John 20:21, Acts 13:1-3, Acts 14:21b-28

Discussion questions

Read John 20:21. Do you agree with the statement: *All believers and therefore all churches should be missional?* Explain your answer.

Read Acts 13:1–3. What do we learn from this church about the role of the leadership in reaching the lost?

Read Acts 14:21b–28. Do you think it is important for the people who are commissioned by a church to keep contact with their sending congregation? Why?

Do you think your congregation is a missional church? What can you / your group do to promote change?

Close in prayer

CHRIST OUR PERFECT VISION

Memory Verses

Week 1

But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth.

Acts 1:8 (NIV)

Week 2

They all joined together constantly in prayer...

Acts 1:14(a) (NIV)

Week 3

And all of them were filled with the Holy Spirit...

Acts 2:4(a) (NIV)

Week 4

Then Peter stood up with the Eleven, raised his voice and addressed the crowd ...

Acts 2:14(a) (NIV)

Week 5

All the believers devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching, and to fellowship, and to sharing in meals (including the Lord's Supper), and to prayer.

Acts 2:42 (NLT)

Week 6

Judge for yourselves whether it is right in God's sight to obey you rather than God. For we cannot help speaking about what we have seen and heard.

Acts 4:19b-20 (NIV)

Week 7

All the believers were one in heart and mind. No one claimed that any of his possessions was his own, but they shared everything they had.

Acts 4:32 (NIV)

Week 8

The church then had peace throughout Judea, Galilee, and Samaria, and it became stronger as the believers lived in the fear of the Lord. And with the encouragement of the Holy Spirit, it also grew in numbers.

Acts 9:31 (NLT)

Week 9

Therefore, go and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit. Teach these new disciples to obey all the commands I have given you. And be sure of this: I am with you always, even to the end of the age.

Matthew 28:19-20 (NIV)

CHRIST OUR PERFECT VISION

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