

*Faith Baptist Fellowship Bible Reading Initiative for October 3 – October 23*

## **Reading Through Acts, By Dr. Luke – Part V**

We recommend you have a notebook and pen for answering questions and recording your thoughts and insights. Bring this notebook with you to Faith Group for discussions and prayer times. Select a quiet place and consistent time to read and pray. We also recommend you pray for a moment before you read God's word and ask for his illumination by the power of the Holy Spirit as you read. Be prepared to think carefully about what the author is conveying in the passage, what God's word is saying, and how you might apply it.

Abbreviations: TAI – *Think About It*      PP – *Prayer Point*

### **Monday, October 3 – Acts 25:1-12**

TAI: Dr. Luke includes the detail that an ambush was being laid out for Paul. What does this say about the character and motives of his accusers? After moving to Caesarea, why does Luke emphasize the accusers' inability to prove their charges? Why would Paul appeal to Caesar? Reflect on I Peter 3:13-17; how does this passage relate to Acts 25?

PP: Pray, asking God to help you respond to anyone who asks you the reason for the hope that is in you. Pray for anyone with whom you are currently discussing spiritual things. Ask God for wisdom as you "render to Caesar the things that are Caesar's, and to God that which is God's."

### **Tuesday, October 4 – Acts 25:13-22**

TAI: As you read this section, you see some glimpses of laws which were later embraced in our own country. How does the principle of v. 16 relate to our own court system in the U.S.? Why is this so important? What did Festus notice about the charges made against Paul? Even in this, the discussion turns immediately to Christ!

PP: Ask God to give you the skill to turn conversations toward Jesus Christ in a clear and compelling way! Thank God that you live in a land devoted to laws requiring fairness and human rights. Admit to God that not all laws are equitably or justly applied, and confess that sin is often the root cause of this injustice. Ask for God's help to live justly and wisely.

### **Wednesday, October 5 – Acts 25:23-27**

TAI: Who were Agrippa and Bernice? Why does Luke include the details about "military leaders and prominent men of the city"? Festus confesses that he doesn't even know what charges to send along with Paul to Caesar! What Scripture comes to mind when Festus admits Paul has done "nothing deserving of death"? [hint: Luke 23:13-16 is a passage you might recall reading]

PP: Thank God for courageous witnesses who speak the truth about Christ before all kinds of audiences, including the military and prominent politicians and society people. Thank God that Jesus died in our place, taking upon himself our sin and its punishment, even though he had done nothing wrong. Ask God for courage to witness for Jesus tomorrow at work or school.

### **Thursday, October 6 – Acts 26:1-11**

TAI: As Paul begins his defense, after first expressing himself “fortunate” to be before King Agrippa, he makes both an acknowledgement and an admission. What group does he acknowledge being part of? How does Paul once again make Jesus and his resurrection an issue? What does he admit doing in the days prior to his conversion to Christ? What do you think he means when he says he “tried to make them blaspheme”? [As I read this section, Philippians 3:3-6 came to mind.]

PP: It must have been very humbling for Paul to publicly acknowledge his persecution of the Christians. But all of us have committed sins for which we are now ashamed; of course, that is why God’s grace is amazingly sweet – it saved a wretch like me! Sing the hymn Amazing Grace (how many verses do you remember?). Pray a prayer of thanksgiving to God for his grace to save you from your sins through the cross of Christ.

### **Friday, October 7 – Acts 26:12-18**

TAI: What is meant by “hard for you to kick against the goads”? [answering that one might require a bit of research!] The statement Paul attributes to Jesus here is ripe with gospel insight. For what purpose did Jesus appear to Saul/Paul? What grand turn results when our eyes are opened to see the truth of Jesus Christ? What do we receive?

PP: Pray a prayer of thanks to God for the riches received in your great gospel turn from darkness to light, from Satan to God. Thank God for his grace in opening your blind eyes. Pray for lost people you know who are “kicking against the goads” in denying Jesus his rightful place as King and Lord and Savior (such as those on your S7 list).

### **Weekend, October 8-9 – Romans 8**

TAI: How is your memorizing of Romans 8:37-39 going? Say it to someone today. What do you think Paul means by “the whole creation has been groaning together in the pains of childbirth until now”? [Bonus question: which pastor’s wife celebrates her birthday this weekend, on her wedding anniversary, no less?]

PP: Pray for all our Faith University “professors” and children’s and youth teachers as well. Pray for our church to abound as a loving, caring environment, where people can come to know Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior and grow in their walk with him, nurtured in their faith by others.

### **Monday, October 10 – Acts 26:19-32   *We will spend 3 days on this passage.***

TAI: What does Paul mean by “I was not disobedient to the heavenly vision”? What was Paul’s challenge to both Jews and Gentiles? What are “deeds in keeping with repentance” do you think? Do you do them? Why would the Jews (their religious leaders, specifically) be so offended by this call to repentance and action?

PP: James says that we should be not just hearers but doers of the word. Pray that this would be so of us at Faith Baptist. Ask God to help you “live out” your faith and repentance in tangible evidence of a changed life. “Lord, help us not be hypocrites, but to live lives pleasing to you, lives of gospel witness to others, lives which give evidence of a transformed heart.”

**Tuesday, October 11 – Acts 26:19-32    *Once again. Review by reading.***

TAI: Paul’s testimony and call for response applies to everyone: small and great. What does he mean by that? How does Paul seek to tie the gospel message to the tradition of the Jewish people, in answer to the charges against him? Why would this cause Festus to say to Paul, “you are out of your mind”? How would you respond if someone, upon hearing your testimony, accused you of being out of your mind?

PP: Pray that our church would be no respecter of persons, but willing and happy to share Christ with all, both the wealthy and the poor, the prominent and the disadvantaged, the powerful and the “regular joes” of our community (see James 2:1-7). Pray for our Share Team, sharing the gospel with those in financial need, and for our Kingdom Opportunities Team, leading us into vital connections with needs in our community.

**Wednesday, October 12 – Acts 26:19-32    *Final time with this great text!***

TAI: Some believe that “faith” does not involve rational truth, by its very nature. How does Paul contradict that idea here? Paul shrewdly asks Agrippa, “Do you believe the prophets? I know that you believe.” Why was this wise? How did Agrippa respond, directly or indirectly? Why is it often helpful to ask questions when sharing the gospel?

PP: When it comes to “conversion” from believing what the prophets taught to actually believing in the Lord Jesus Christ as a Christian, Agrippa is someone who is only part of the way “home.” Who do you know in this situation? Pray that by a great work of the Holy Spirit these friends of yours would believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and be saved. Ask God to help you ask wise questions and share personally what Christ has done for you.

**Thursday, October 13 – Acts 27:1-12**

TAI: What helpful details does Dr. Luke include here to enrich our understanding of this journey? Who controls the winds and the waves? When Paul spoke, advising against sailing under those conditions, was he speaking from personal insight or prophetic (from the Lord)? Ponder Julius, who because of his kindness to Paul is remembered and read about to this day!

PP: Pray a prayer of praise, exalting God as the Lord of the wind and the waves. Ask God to help you be kind and caring to all you meet today, knowing that it might make a big difference in their lives, because God will use that kindness for his glory.

### **Friday, October 14 – Acts 27:13-26**

TAI: Yesterday, we thought about whether or not Paul's sailing advice was personal insight or prophetic. Today we ask the same question: personal insight or prophetic? How do you know? How does Paul give credit to God, so as to not take glory for himself? How could this passage encourage you when, due to life's difficulties, you are tempted to "abandon hope"?

PP: Pray for hopeless people: all those who have abandoned hope that God can take care of them and meet their needs. Do you know anyone in that condition? Pray that the grace and power and love and sovereignty of God would become evident to them. Pray that God would give you a message of hope in Christ for any hopeless people you come in contact with this week.

### **Weekend, October 15-16 – Romans 8    *Read. Reflect. Memorize. Pray.***

TAI & PP: Say from memory Romans 8:37-39. Reflect on 8:25. Express to God your hope in Christ and worship him. Thank God for your adoption as a child of God. Pray for others in your sphere of influence who feel hopeless, lost and afraid.

### **Monday, October 17 – Acts 27:21-44**

TAI: This chapter has taught us non-sailors a great deal about sailing! What new thing did you learn today about sailing? More importantly, what have you learned about Paul's remarkable walk with God? Why do you think Paul's leadership on the boat was not scorned at this time? Compare Luke 21:18 with v. 34 of our text. Do you think this parallel was intended by the writer, Dr. Luke? Is there one more parallel of a similar nature in the next verse?

PP: I believe Dr. Luke, by the way he fashions this passage, intends for us to think over and over again of Jesus. Thank God that because of Jesus, you do not need to fear the harming of your head (before its time!). Thank God for his Son, Jesus, the bread of life, and for his sacrifice on the cross for us. Thank God for saving your life from eternal shipwreck! Thank God for this chapter of his word!

### **Tuesday, October 18 – Acts 28:1-6**

TAI: This passage shows the fickle nature of people! First, they think Paul is a murderer trying to escape justice (or Justice, meaning a kind of personification of it). All that because of a snakebite! When it doesn't harm him, he becomes a god! Ponder this tendency to think this way. Why is it counter to the Christian faith? Extra credit: how does this relate to *animism*?

PP: Pray for those whose beliefs are ruled by superstitions. Ask God to set them free by his grace. When this type of superstition is tied to *spirits and demons*, in people's minds, it is called animism. Pray for missionaries trying to reach animistic people groups around the world. Ask God to protect your thinking from the harm of superstition, and instead trust fully in him.

### **Wednesday, October 19 – Acts 28:7-16**

TAI: The word *favorable* comes to mind in reading this passage: favorable treatment by the local people because of Paul's healing ministry, favorable winds after many months of hardship and shipwreck, favor in Paul's reception by the Christians in Rome, and favor with the magistrates who allowed Paul to stay with a guard rather than in prison. What *favor* have you experienced lately, by God's grace? Share the story with your Faith Group.

PP: Ask God to show his favor to us at Faith Baptist, with fruitful ministry and evident grace in reaching lost people with the gospel, as well as caring for the hurting. Pray for our Children's Pioneer Club workers, including leaders Sharyn Moe and Laura Rupp (club meets tonight).

### **Thursday, October 20 – Acts 28:17-28**

TAI: Why would the Jewish leadership perhaps be different here in Rome than it was in Jerusalem? Do you think it curious that these Jews had not received any specific word regarding Paul from their comrades in Jerusalem? When Paul does give his full explanation, what is very familiar about it? What is also familiar about the response? The Isaiah passage Paul quotes follows in context what very powerful and important passage in Isaiah?

PP: Pray a prayer based on the opening verses of this extraordinary Isaiah passage, chapter 6:1-10. Acknowledge that God is king and Lord of the universe, that he is holy, holy holy. Thank him that because of the blood of Christ, your sins have been cleansed and you are set free. As for God's call on your life, tell him "Here am I; send me."

### **Friday, October 21 – Acts 28:30-31     *And so our Acts journey ends! Wow!***

TAI: Imagine you are Dr. Luke, and you are writing your conclusion to your *magnum opus*, your two-part book, Luke-Acts. Why do you think you would conclude your book this way? Why have you chosen these specific details? To the very end, who is the focal point? This weekend, ponder all you have learned from this journey through Luke and Acts. How has this reading and prayer impacted your life? Your walk with Christ?

PP: Pray that our church would continue to proclaim Christ and his kingdom with all boldness and without hindrance. Pray that the same would be true for our missionaries across the nation and around the world. Ask God to give you courage and boldness to share Jesus Christ with others, and make Jesus the focal point of your life, family, and church.

### **Weekend, October 22-23 – Romans 8 plus reflection on Luke-Acts**

TAI & PP: How did these last few chapters of Acts line up with our memory verses from Romans 8? After all, the book of Acts closes with Paul arriving in Rome and staying two years! Isn't it amazing that through shipwreck, snakebite, murderous threats and accusations of murder, nothing could separate Paul from the love of Christ?!?!? Ponder all you have learned from reading Luke Acts over the past 13 months. Thank God for his word. Pray that your faith would be strengthened and your love for Christ and worship deepened because of this time in the word and prayer. To God be the glory!