

Faith Baptist Fellowship Bible Reading Initiative for August 8 – September 5

Reading Through Acts, By Dr. Luke – Part III

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, August 8 – Acts 16:1 – 5

TAI: What is interesting about Timothy's family situation? How does that relate to Paul's decision to circumcise him (coming right after the decision in Acts 15 that this was NOT required). Was Paul being hypocritical?

PP: Ask God to help you make His KINGDOM the top priority in your life. What steps are we taking to strengthen the faith of our church family?

Tuesday, August 9 – Acts 16:6 – 10

TAI: Take a moment to ponder *how* the Holy Spirit might have re-directed the apostles in this passage. Why do you think Dr. Luke does not tell us exactly how the Holy Spirit did this? On what basis did God redirect the team from Asia to Macedonia? What can we learn from this passage about God guiding us in our lives?

PP: Ask God to guide and direct your life, and that of your family, showing you clearly where you might best serve with your gifts and ability. Ask God's blessing on areas of ministry where you are serving.

Wednesday, August 10 – Acts 16:11 – 15

TAI: What three things does Dr. Luke tell us about Lydia? Why do you suppose people would gather at the riverside to pray? How did God work in Lydia's life? Did God do the same thing for you? What evidence is cited to show that Lydia truly believed the gospel of Jesus Christ?

PP: We long to be fruitful at Faith Baptist Fellowship, with people being born again through faith in Christ. Pray earnestly that "the Lord would open the hearts" of many to believe the gospel and follow Jesus through the preaching and testimony of our church. *Pray for those on your Sacred Seven list.*

Thursday, August 11 – Acts 16:16 – 24

TAI: Why would Paul become annoyed by the slave girl's cries, which were the truth? What does this passage teach us about Christ's power compared with the power of evil? Why did Paul command "in the name of Jesus Christ" come out of her? Were the charges against the men

accurate?

Friday, August 12 – Acts 16:25 – 34

TAI: What were Paul and Silas doing while in jail? What effect was it having? What is the difference between this passage and the one in Acts 12 where Peter walked out of the jailhouse with the angel? Why would the jailer threaten to harm himself? How did God use the response of Paul and Silas (refusing to escape when they had the opportunity) to bring the jailer and his family to Christ? Reflect on what we might learn from this about our own testimony.

PP: Ask God for great wisdom and discernment in your daily life, so that in opportunities of profound witness to others, you will follow God's direction and influence others to Christ.

Weekend, August 13-14 – Acts 16:35 – 40

TAI: This whole chapter is truly amazing! What statement of Paul led the authorities to apologize to him and to Silas? Why were the apostles so committed to encouraging the believers at every opportunity? What can we learn from this? Review the chapter to prepare for Sunday.

PP: Ask God to help you trust Him (Proverbs 3:5,6) in every circumstance. Pray for grace to trust even when the tide seems to have turned against the gospel. Pray for Pastor Dana preaching on Sunday, and for the special Faith U. hour report on missions teams this summer.

Monday, August 15 – Acts 17:1 – 9

TAI: By now the pattern of preaching in the synagogue should be rather clear to us: place Jesus Christ in the context of OT promises and prophecy, and then proclaim him to be the Christ. Why was it so important to preach this way in the place of Jewish worship? Describe the response to Paul's preaching. Why did it cause such an uproar?

PP: Pray for our missionaries who proclaim Christ in a wide variety of contexts around the world. Pray for their faithfulness to the gospel message, for the grace that they need to persevere, and for doors of opportunity to open in the hearts of the people.

Tuesday, August 16 – Acts 17:10 – 15

TAI: What was different about the Jews who heard Paul's message in Berea? How should we all be "good Bereans"?

PP: Ask God to help you remain diligent in searching for truth in the Scriptures, and to seek to live by the great truth which you find there. Ask God to grow our church stronger as we faithfully read and study and pray the Bible.

Wednesday, August 17 – Acts 17:16 – 21

TAI: Jot down all that you learn in this passage about the scene in Athens. How is it similar to many situations common in our own time? Who were the Epicureans? The Stoics? What should we say when we find ourselves in a situation where we don't know what to say?

PP: Ask God to help you speak clearly of Jesus in every situation, wisely, openly, and with conviction. Ask God to spare you from *the constant need for something new*.

Thursday, August 18 – Acts 17:22 – 28

TAI: Thinking about Paul's message here on the Areopagus, what seems to be Paul's strategy? How can we learn from his approach? Can you think of a situation where you might use the same approach? What are the implications of this statement in v. 25: "nor is he served by human hands, as though he needed anything..."? What hope is in his message thus far?

PP: Pray for our witness to lost people. Pray for those on your Sacred Seven list. Ask God to help you point them to Jesus!

Friday, August 19 – Acts 17:29 – 34

TAI: How does Paul's first statement in today's reading relate to the 10 Commandments? What is Paul's central message to the listeners, in one word? What does it mean to *repent*? Whom did God appoint to judge the world? How do you know? What do we learn from the response to Paul the last paragraph?

PP: Boldness! That's what we need! Ask God to give us boldness to speak forcefully and truthfully and plainly of Jesus Christ. We can be neither rejected nor fruitful unless we speak of Christ with great boldness and passion to those who need to hear. Ask God to give you strategic wisdom for how best to speak of Christ with the variety of people you meet.

Weekend, August 20-21 – review by rereading Acts 17, especially Paul's sermon

TAI: What are some creative ways we could encounter lost people in order to speak plainly to them of Jesus Christ? Reflect on times in the near future when God may open a door for you to speak of Christ.

PP: Pray for the Holy Spirit to help us and fill us for speaking the gospel plainly to lost people. Pray again for your Sacred Seven. Pray for Pastor Dana, preaching Sunday at Faith on Acts 17.

Monday, August 22 – Acts 18:1 – 5

TAI: Today we often speak of missionaries who are "tentmakers." What does this mean, when you consider what this passage says about Paul? What do you think it means to be "occupied with the word" (v. 5 in ESV)? Would you say you are "occupied with the word"?

PP: Pray for those who are living in difficult places around the world, "tentmaking" (that is, making a living through some local business) and seeking to be a witness and presence for Christ. Since it is Ramadan right now, pray especially for those seeking to bear witness to Christ in the Islamic world. Break for spiritual breakthroughs during this time.

Tuesday, August 23 – Acts 18:6 – 11

TAI: Wow! What a passage! What does Paul mean when he says, “I am innocent”? Why was the conversion of Crispus such an important event? What does it mean when the Lord said, “I have many in this city who are my people”?

PP: Ask God to help us “not be silent” (v. 9). Pray that God would help us find those in Sioux Falls “who are my people.” Ask God to give us a “Crispus” convert!

Wednesday, August 24 – Acts 18:12 – 17

TAI: Why does Gallio refuse to hear the complaints of the Jews? Why do you think they beat Sosthenes (ref. I Cor. 1:1)? What does this passage tell us about our sinful nature apart from Christ? Can you think of a more recent example of confusion over Christianity in the human courts of law?

PP: Pray for Christians serving in public office, including two men from our own church serving in the legislature at Pierre, SD, Roger Hunt and Sean Tornow. Pray for justice to be served in current legal cases, and for wisdom to rule the day in the current financial crisis.

Thursday, August 25 – Acts 18:18 – 23

TAI: Now Paul takes along Priscilla and Aquila. What have we learned about how Paul operates when it comes to mentoring and discipling others? Based on all we have learned, how do you suppose Paul went about “strengthening all the disciples” (v. 23)?

PP: Pray that our Faith Groups would be a place where effective mentoring and discipling takes place. Pray for those who have mentored you in the faith, and pray about whether there is someone you ought to be mentoring soon!

Friday, August 26 – Acts 18:24 – 28

TAI: Describe all that we know about Apollos. What characteristics do you admire in Apollos? Lesson: even the most eloquent person still has a lot to learn when it comes to the Scriptures!

PP: Pray that our teaching of the Scriptures would be accurate and faithful for the building up of the body of Christ. Ask God for humility when it comes to the Bible, that you would humbly be ready to learn new things and grow in grace and understanding.

Weekend, August 27-28 – Acts 18 (reread for the sake of review)

TAI: What verse (or passage) in Acts 18 had the greatest impact on you this week? How has that thought impacted your prayers?

PP: Thank God for the boldness, wisdom, courage, and fruitfulness of the Apostle Paul. Ask God to help us continue to grow in grace, pointing people always to Jesus Christ. Pray for Pastor Dana, preaching this Sunday at Faith Baptist, and for those preparing to teach in September.

Monday, August 29 – Acts 19:1 – 7

TAI: How is this incident in Ephesus further proof of the ongoing transition which was taking place in the early church? Why was there such a clear emphasis on baptism? Why do you think some churches today deemphasize baptism? Why do you think *tongues and prophecy* resulted when the Holy Spirit came on these men at Ephesus?

PP: Ask God to give us the fruit of new believers at Faith, and pray that many new believers would follow the Lord Jesus in baptism. Pray for our bold prayer requests for the year.

Tuesday, August 30 – Acts 19:8 – 10

TAI: Why did Paul move his talks on the kingdom of God and Jesus to the Hall of Tyrannus? How could it be that “all the residents of Asia” heard the word of the Lord because of his speaking there? What should we learn about evangelism from this nugget of truth?

PP: Pray for wisdom in shaping an effective strategy for evangelism in the life of our church. Where might the “Hall of Tyrannus” be for us? Pray about this. Pray for outreach at Lighthouse this upcoming weekend in the Sioux Falls region.

Wednesday, August 31 – Acts 19:11 – 20

TAI: Sometimes TV healers will offer to send something, like a handkerchief, to those who will write them (and usually, send money!). One preacher was evidently having the letters sent straight to the bank for processing, with the prayer requests dumped in the trash. How is this kind of thing different from what was happening “by the hands of Paul” in this passage? Why did the seven sons of Sceva fail? What should we learn from this?

PP: “God, forgive us our sins, and cleanse us of all unrighteousness.” Confess to God any practices in your life not in accord with biblical faith and following Jesus Christ as Lord. Pray that “the word of the Lord continue to increase and mightily prevail.”

Thursday, September 1 – Acts 19:21 – 29

TAI: What was the complaint from Demetrius and his ilk? What seems to be the true issue behind his complaint? Can you think of a present-day example of how some people might get angry when the church grows and many people become followers of Jesus? In other words, is this kind of complaint still a possibility today? *How would you respond?*

PP: Pray for believers who will stand true to their gospel convictions, no matter what the price. Pray for suffering, persecuted believers around the world who are constantly threatened because of their faith. Continue to pray for an effective outreach this weekend at Lighthouse, and for those from Faith who will be out there striking up conversations and sharing their faith.

Friday, September 2 – Acts 19:30 – 41

TAI: Why do you think the town clerk was so effective in quieting this rioting crowd? Have we not seen the hand of God, working providentially behind the scenes, in many of these kinds of situations in the book of Acts? Why do you think Dr. Luke gave such a lengthy, detailed account

of this scene in his book?

PP: Pray that our witness for Christ would be so bold as to awaken a rioting crowd of those opposed to the gospel! Pray for the witness of the gospel at Lighthouse this weekend. Pray for those who will preach, like Francis Chan. Pray that bands would focus on Christ and not themselves.

Weekend, September 3-4 – I Corinthians 11:17 – 34

TAI: We will partake of the Lord's Supper at Faith this Sunday at 8 a.m. Since it is Lighthouse Sunday, there will be just one service. Ponder this well-known text concerning communion, and prepare your heart for this profound act of worship.

PP: Lighthouse closes today. Pray for a powerful impact through the proclamation of the gospel. Pray for those from our church who are serving, volunteering and also sharing the gospel.

Monday, September 5 – Labor Day – I Corinthians 10:31 & Colossians 3:17

TAI: Do you do your daily work for the Lord? Or for money? Or for people? Are you thankful to God for your work, not just the financial part but also the opportunities it gives you to live for Jesus?

PP: Thank God for your job. If you need a job, ask God for one! He is our Provider! If you have difficulties "on the job," then pray about those right now. Ask God to help you be a testimony for Christ in your daily work.