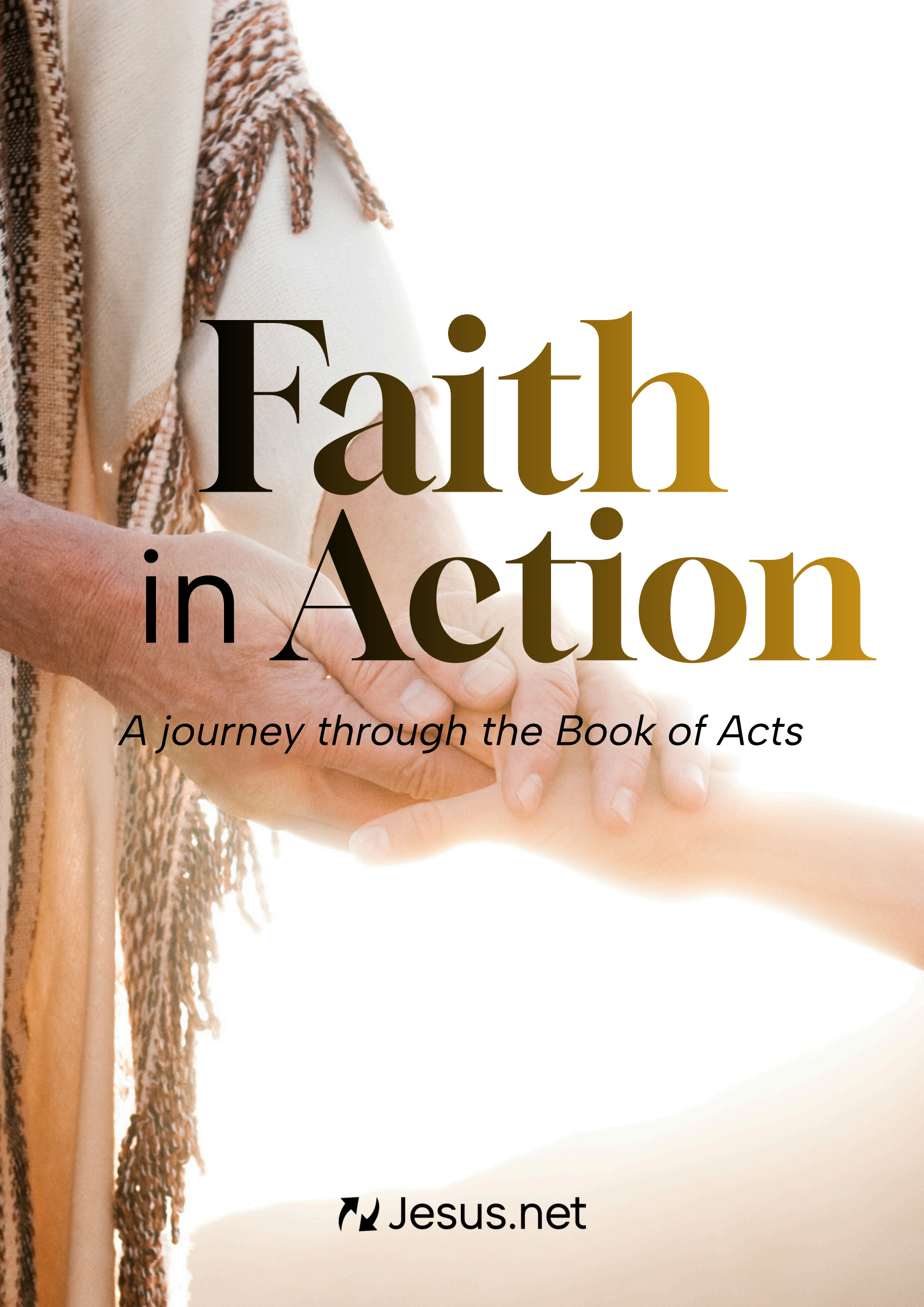


The background of the entire image shows two hands clasped together in a prayerful gesture. Behind the hands, a Bible is visible, its cover featuring a woven, fringed fabric in shades of brown and tan. The lighting is soft and warm, creating a sense of peace and devotion.

Faith in Action

A journey through the Book of Acts



Hello there!

The book of Acts isn't just a story from long ago. What started with a small group of followers, spread across the world, and it hasn't stopped since.

In Acts, we see what happened after Jesus rose from the dead and returned to heaven. We read about God's Spirit coming in power. Bold faith, powerful miracles, lives changed and real challenges. The story of Acts reminds us of a simple, beautiful truth: **God works through ordinary people.**

And that isn't just history. It's an invitation. As you read through this **reading plan, created by Jesus.net**, don't just look at what God has done in the past. Open your heart to what He wants to do in and through you **today**.

You're part of the story! Will you step into it?



**Cameron & Jenny
Mendes**

Authors of Chamatkar Every Day



The book of Acts at a glance

Luke is the author of the Gospel of Luke, in which he writes carefully about Jesus' life, death, resurrection, and ascension.

But it is highly likely that Luke also wrote yet another book, a sequel known as the Acts of the Apostles. In this, we discover **how Jesus' work continues through the Holy Spirit**.

Acts begins with a moving encounter between the risen Jesus and His disciples. For forty days, He speaks with them about the Kingdom of God and about the new world that has begun through His death and resurrection. The disciples are eager to go out. **But Jesus asks them to wait first**. They need strength—the power of the Holy Spirit—to truly be His witnesses.

The commission is clear: begin in Jerusalem, continue to Judea and Samaria, and eventually go out into the whole world.



That is exactly what we see happening in Acts. The gospel spreads like wildfire.

Everywhere, **lives are being changed**, and new communities are emerging of people living under the authority of Jesus. Acts shows that the story of Jesus does not end at His ascension. It continues through people just like back then.

And perhaps through us, too.

Want a biblical encouragement in your inbox every day?



1 Waiting for strength

Read: Acts 1

The first chapter of the Acts of the Apostles feels like a new beginning. In verse 1 Luke writes that his earlier book was about everything Jesus began to do and teach. That word “began” in the original text is significant because **Jesus is not finished**. Even after His resurrection and just before His ascension, He continues to speak and teach.

For forty days, Jesus speaks with His disciples about the Kingdom of God. But the disciples still think it’s about a worldly, political kingdom. “Lord, are you at this time going to restore the kingdom to Israel?”, they ask (verse 6). Jesus directs their gaze to something greater. **The Kingdom is coming, but differently than they expect**. And not Jesus, but **they themselves will play an important role in it, through the power of the Holy Spirit**.

Jesus promises them that they will receive power through the Holy Spirit and will bear witness (verse 8). He gives no explanation or action plan in doing so. He tells them to wait. The disciples start to pray in expectation.

We often live the other way around. We organize and make plans, and then ask God to bless them. **But God’s work begins with dependence**. The church is not born of enthusiasm, but of obedience. Not of talent, but of being filled with the Spirit. Not of human ambition, but of divine power.

Witnessing does not begin with speaking, but with receiving. Jesus invites us to first be still and allow ourselves to be filled by His Spirit. From that dependence arises true fruit.

Reflection questions:

1

Getting ahead of God's timing

Where are you inclined to get ahead of God's timing in your life?

2

God's power or yours?

Do you consciously take time to wait for God's strength, or do you rely primarily on your own insight?

3

Prophecy from the Old Testament

Centuries before the ascension of Jesus, the prophet Daniel saw a vision of the future King of Israel.

Read [Daniel 7:13-14](#) and compare it with [Acts 1:9-11](#). What do you see?

P.S.

Would you like to talk to someone about your answers and thoughts? Feel free to contact one of our e-coaches, free and anonymously!

Pray: "Jesus, help me to wait for you. Give me the courage and strength of the Holy Spirit to join your mission."

2 Fire that changes lives

Read: Acts 2

In Acts 2, what was awaited in the previous chapter happens. What began with people **praying** in an upper room culminates in a **breakthrough**: the outpouring of the Holy Spirit.

During the Jewish Feast of Pentecost, they suddenly hear the sound of a mighty wind. **Tongues as of fire** appear, and ordinary people begin to speak in languages they have never learned: **words inspired by the Holy Spirit**.

The international crowd outside hears it and is confused. Then Peter stands up. The same **Peter who denied Jesus weeks earlier now speaks with boldness**. And his message is clear: Jesus is Lord and Messiah.

The people who hear it are deeply touched in their hearts. Peter invites them to repentance, to baptism, to a new life. That day, 3,000 people decided to follow Jesus.

The new community of Christians interacts with one another like a large family. They share their lives, their possessions, and their time. Awe, joy, and simplicity characterise their daily existence.

Acts 2 shows what happens when God pours out His Spirit: hearts are touched, Jesus is placed at the centre, and a community is formed that makes His love visible.

Reflection questions:

1

What do you notice?

When you read Acts 2, which words or sentences draw your attention?

2

The symbol of fire

Compare the fire of God in Exodus 19:17-18, Numbers 9:15, and Acts 2:1-4. What do you notice?

3

Are you open to the Holy Spirit?

Would you allow God to change you — not only from within, but also in how you live with others?

4

Community in this day and age

What does Spirit-filled community look like in my context? For me and for the people around me?

Pray: “Holy Spirit, fill my heart and help me to put Jesus at the centre of my life. Mold me and our community into a living testimony of You.”

3 What I have, I give to you

Read: Acts 3

In Acts 3, we meet a man who has been paralyzed his entire life. Day in, day out, he is laid at the temple gate to beg. His expectation is small: a coin, enough to survive.

Then Peter and John pass by. When the man looks at them, Peter says something unexpected: “I have no silver and gold, but what I do have I give to you. In the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, rise up and walk!” (verse 6)

What follows is a miracle. The man jumps up, walks, and praises God. What he did not dare to hope for becomes reality.

Everyone is in awe, but Peter immediately shifts the focus. This is not their strength or piety, he says. This is Jesus. The crucified and risen Lord is the One who restores. Peter uses the opportunity to honestly confront his listeners with their part in Jesus’ death—and with God’s grace. “Repent,” he cries, “so that a time of refreshing may dawn if you live with the Lord.”

Here we see reflected what Jesus did: bringing our weaknesses and guilt to light and simultaneously opening the door to renewal and restoration.

We are sometimes like the paralysed man. We ask for small solutions or quick fixes, while God wants to bring deep restoration. We focus on temporary relief, while Jesus wants to lift us up towards a new life.

Reflection questions:

1

Your expectation

Where do you expect only “a coin”, while God might want to give complete renewal?

2

Do you remember?

In what specific ways has Jesus changed you or someone you know?

3

My attitude towards God

Are you willing for Jesus to also name painful truths in your life to restore you?

“Lord Jesus, teach me to give what I have received from You, even if it seems small in my eyes. Make me a channel of Your restoration, so that others may meet You through me.”

4 Boldness under pressure

Read: Acts 4

After the miracle and the powerful preaching in chapter 3, Peter and John are arrested. The religious leaders are irritated, not only because of the healing, but because Jesus is once again at the centre. The Name they thought they had silenced resounds through the streets of Jerusalem, again. The next day, Peter and John must answer to the Sanhedrin: the same leaders who condemned Jesus...

When Peter stands before the Sanhedrin, he speaks with remarkable boldness. He makes clear that the healing took place in the name of Jesus Christ, the crucified and risen Lord. What surprises the leaders most is that these men are “illiterate and simple.” Yet they recognise something—**Peter and John have been with Jesus.**

After their release, Peter and John neither complain nor withdraw. They seek out the congregation and pray together. Remarkably, they do not ask for safety, but for boldness. And once again, they are filled with the Spirit and speak the word of God with power.

Opposition is not a sign that God is absent. On the contrary. It is precisely under pressure that what lives within becomes visible. Their boldness does not stem from self-confidence, but from a connection with Jesus.

Perhaps you, too, sometimes experience tension when your faith becomes visible. The question is not whether pressure will arise, but where we seek our strength. Are we recognisable as people who have been with Jesus?

Reflection questions:

1 My attitude in the presence of others
How do I react when my faith comes under pressure?

2 Can people tell by looking at you?
Is it evident from my words and attitude that I live with Jesus?

3 Community in this day and age
Compare Peter's reaction to his interrogators before he receives the Holy Spirit ([Luke 22:54-62](#)) with his reaction after he has received the Holy Spirit ([Acts 4:5-14](#)). What do you notice?

Pray: "Lord, give me boldness when I experience tension or opposition. Let my life show that I have been with You."

5

This is serious

[Read: Acts 5](#)

The beginning of Acts 5 is shocking. Ananias and Sapphira sell a piece of land and pretend to give all the proceeds to the church, but secretly keep some for themselves. In itself, that was not the problem. Peter makes it clear: the money was theirs. The real problem was their lie. They wanted to appear more spiritual than they were. “You have not lied to men, but to God.” (Acts 5:4)

What follows is violent: both drop dead. Great fear comes over the congregation. This passage raises questions. Why is God’s judgment so direct and visible here? Why does God punish so excessively at all?

We must realise that the congregation is very new, still laying its foundation. God makes it clear that His holiness is non-negotiable. **The church is not a place for religious pretence, but for truth.**

This story shows that grace is not a cheap concept. The same Spirit that gives strength is also holy. God builds His church not only on enthusiasm, but on integrity.

Yet this chapter is not entirely dark. We also read that signs and wonders are increasing and that many are coming to faith. Holiness and growth go hand in hand. Perhaps this confronts us with an uncomfortable question: do we want the power of God, but without the holiness of God?

God does not seek perfect people. He seeks honest hearts.

Reflection questions:

1

(False) Holiness

Are there areas in your life where you want to appear spiritually better than you really are?

2

The Holiness of God

How do you respond to God's holiness—does it leave you indifferent, or does it fill you with awe?

3

Are you open to the Holy Spirit?

Do you allow God to change you—not only from within, but also in how you live with others?

Pray: “Holy God, teach me to live uprightly and honestly before Your face. Give me courage to remain faithful to You, whatever the cost.”

6 A heart for people

Read: Acts 6

As the congregation grows, tensions arise. Widows from the Greek-speaking group feel disadvantaged in the daily food distribution. Growth brings not only blessings but also challenges.

It is striking how the apostles react. They do not trivialise the problem, but acknowledge it. At the same time, they guard their calling of prayer and evangelisation. Therefore, seven men are appointed to handle the practical side. Their selection is not based on business experience, but the chosen men are “full of the Spirit and wisdom.” (Acts 6:3)

That is telling. **Practical tasks in God's Kingdom are also spiritual tasks.** Serving at tables is not a side issue. It is Kingdom work.

One of these men is Stephen, “full of faith and power” (Acts 6:8). What begins with table service ends in powerful proclamation. With God, there are no small tasks.

Acts 6 shows that a Spirit-filled life is not only visible on a stage, but even more so in the background and in faithful service. The Spirit works just as well in doing justice and in caring for the vulnerable as through ministry from a platform.

Perhaps we think that we are only truly meaningful when we do something great. But the early church shows that **God's power becomes visible in obedience** in the ordinary and mundane.

And the result? “The Word of God spread” (Acts 6:7). When everyone takes their place, the Kingdom of God grows.

Reflection questions:

- 1 How do you react to injustice or tensions within the community?
- 2 Are you willing to serve God in tasks that are not very visible?
- 3 Where could God use you today in something that seems “ordinary” but is spiritually meaningful?

Pray: “Lord, show me where and whom I can serve. Give me a heart for people and fill me with wisdom and grace for practical tasks.”

7 Faithful till the end

Read: Acts 7

Stephen stands before the same religious leaders as Peter did earlier. But instead of defending himself, he tells the story of Israel. From Abraham to Moses, from the desert to the temple. Time and again, he shows that while **God is faithful, the people resist.**

His words build up to a confronting conclusion: just as your ancestors rejected the prophets, so you have now rejected the Righteous One. Stephen delivers no easy message, but the truth, spoken with love and compassion.

The crowd is furious. When Stephen then tells them that he sees heaven opened and Jesus standing at God's right hand, they have had enough. They throw him out of the city to stone him. As the stones strike him, he prays: "Lord Jesus, receive my spirit" (Acts 7:59), and, "Lord, do not hold this sin against them" (Acts 7:60). **It is an echo of Jesus' words on the cross.**

Stephen loses his life, but his message remains unchanged. Saul is mentioned as the guy who guards the cloaks while others stone Stephen. He doesn't know it yet, but although he is currently a feared man and a forerunner for persecuting Christians, he, too, will soon become an apostle of Jesus. We don't know if the events of that day moved him in any way; all we know is that he approved.

But God was not unmoved; He turned this event, which must have been beyond traumatic for the early church, into one of the greatest testimonies of steadfast faith in the Bible. **God works through suffering.**

Reflection questions:

- 1 In which areas in your life are you challenged to stay faithful, even if it costs something?
- 2 How do you react when you are treated unfairly?
- 3 Stephen confronts the leaders with their hardness of heart. Are there areas in your life where you do not want to receive God's guidance?

Pray: "Give me a heart that remains faithful to You, no matter what happens. Soften my heart, Lord, and fix my gaze on Your glory."

8 Spread through persecution

Read: Acts 8

After the death of Stephen, severe persecution breaks out. Believers are dragged from their homes. The congregation is scattered throughout Judea and Samaria. It seems as if the young movement is being suffocated.

But what is meant to destroy, God uses to grow. “Those who were scattered everywhere went about and proclaimed the Word” (Acts 8:4). The promise from Acts 1 is beginning to visibly become a reality: the gospel is spread from Jerusalem to Judea and Samaria.

Philip preaches in Samaria, a place where Jews normally did not want to go. But the gospel breaks through old enmities. There is joy in the city. Unclean spirits depart. **People are set free.**

Later, Philip is sent by the Spirit onto a lonely road. There, he meets an Ethiopian courtier who is reading Isaiah. One conversation, one explanation, one baptism: and the gospel simply travels on to Africa.

Acts 8 teaches us that God's mission does not stop in the face of opposition. Sometimes, He actually uses our distractions to carry out His plan.

What feels like a loss to us can become multiplication in God's hand.

The question is: when our plans collapse, do we trust that God's plan will continue?

Reflection questions:

1 Philip follows God's guidance to unexpected places. Where do you sense that God might be inviting you to step out of your comfort zone?

2 The Ethiopian eunuch actively seeks to understand the Scriptures. How do you deal with parts of the Bible that you don't immediately understand?

3 How do you experience the role of the Holy Spirit in your spiritual life? Is it clear to you, or is it still vague?

Pray: "Lord, when our scattered attention keeps us from Your presence in our lives, gather us together in the palm of Your hand."

9 Completely changed

Read: Acts 9

Saul is determined. With letters in his pocket, he travels to Damascus to arrest followers of “the Way.” He believes he is serving God. His zeal is sincere, but his direction is wrong.

Then the light breaks through. A light from heaven casts him to the ground. “Saul, Saul, why do you persecute Me?” (Acts 9:4)

It is not only a confrontation, but a revelation. **Jesus lives!** And whoever touches His church, touches Him too. Saul becomes blind. The strong persecutor becomes dependent. For three days, he waits in darkness.

On the other side of the city, Ananias is ordered to go to Saul. Understandably, he protests. This man was having Christians arrested. But God says: “He is My chosen instrument.” (Acts 9:15)

Grace is radical here. And with the forgiveness, God also gives a radically new calling. Saul becomes Paul. The persecutor becomes a follower. Not because he deserves it, but because Christ seizes him.

Acts 9 shows that no one falls outside the reach of God’s grace. And that calling often begins with surrender. Perhaps we carry labels over people—or over ourselves—that God has already broken.

Reflection questions:

1 Ananias must overcome his fear in order to help Saul. Are there people you think are “too far away” from God?

2 Saul’s conversion was radical. In what ways has your faith changed your life?

3 How do you deal with change in people? Do you believe that someone can really change?

Pray: “Jesus, take my heart and change me where I go wrong. Make my life a powerful testimony of Your grace.”

10 A larger plan

Read: Acts 10

In chapter 10, we see a turning point in the story. Up until now, the gospel has been spreading primarily among the Jewish people. **But God has a greater plan.**

Cornelius, a Roman officer, is a God-fearing man. He prays, gives alms, and seeks God, but he does not yet know the Gospel. Then Peter receives a vision. A sheet descends from heaven, filled with animals that are unclean according to Jewish law. A voice says: “Kill and eat.” (Acts 10:13)

Peter refuses. All his life, he has made a distinction between clean and unclean. But God answers: “What God has declared clean, you must not consider unclean.” (Acts 10:15)

When Peter arrives at Cornelius’s, everything falls into place. God makes no distinction between people. While Peter is still speaking, the Holy Spirit falls upon all present, including gentiles. **It is not ancestry, culture, or religious background that determines access to God, but faith in Jesus Christ.**

We sometimes draw invisible boundaries: who fits in? Who belongs? But God’s heart is bigger than our frameworks. The church is not a closed circle, but an open invitation.

God breaks through boundaries that people have built up. The question is: do we dare to let our convictions be corrected by God’s heart?

Reflection questions:

1

Peter learned that he should not call anyone unclean. Are there people or groups that you keep at a distance?

2

Are you willing to let God correct your beliefs?

3

Peter goes along with Cornelius' men without knowing exactly what awaits him. Do you dare to obey blindly?

4

The Spirit is poured out before Peter finishes his sermon. How do you react when God acts differently than you had planned?

Pray: "Lord, break down the walls in our hearts, visible or invisible, conscious or unconscious. Teach us to live in the freedom You grant, through Jesus Christ."

11 A new name

Read: Acts 11

In Acts 11, what happened to Cornelius is repeated (some details even three times!) to emphasize that a decisive moment in God's plan takes place here. Just as with the conversion of Saul, it concerns a key moment in the book of Acts: the official admission of Gentiles into the church of God.

News is spreading rapidly that Gentiles are also accepting the gospel and converting. But not everyone is enthusiastic. Many believers still view Christianity as a Jewish heresy and find it difficult to accept that God works outside of Judaism. They find it hard to accept that the uncircumcised are also a full part of God's family.

Peter is criticised for entering the homes of Gentiles and allegedly eating with them (which, according to their thinking, is contrary to the law). Peter explains how the Spirit fell upon them, just as it had upon them in the beginning. His conclusion is simple and humble: "Who was I to think that I could stand in God's way?" (Acts 11:17) **Peter acknowledges that God's work is greater than his tradition.**

In Antioch, too, a new congregation is growing, consisting of both Jews and Greeks. Barnabas is sent to check on what's happening. But when he sees God's grace in action, he is glad and encourages them to remain faithful to the Lord. It is in Antioch that the disciples are called 'Christians' for the first time. Probably as a nickname—perhaps even meant mockingly—but it expresses something essential: they belong to Jesus.

Reflection questions:

1

Peter must answer to believers who take issue with his interactions with Gentiles. Are you willing to broaden your perspective when God does something new?

2

Do you recognize God's grace when it manifests itself outside your comfort zone—and do you dare to move along with it?

3

Barnabas calls Paul along to teach together. Are you willing to give others space and serve together?

Pray: “Lord, thank You that You are a God of relationships, a God who welcomes with open arms. Grant us the grace to be just as welcoming as You.”

12 Impossible prayer

Read: Acts 12

King Herod launches a targeted attack on the church. James is killed. Peter is imprisoned. The situation is more than terrifying.

The congregation does what it can and prays fervently. Meanwhile, Peter sits between two soldiers: chained and guarded. Humanly speaking, escape is impossible. But in the middle of the night, an angel appears. The chains fall off, the doors open by themselves, and Peter walks out as if there were no doors.

The miraculous thing is what happens next. When he knocks on the door of the house where believers pray, at first, they do not believe that it is really him. They pray for deliverance, but are nevertheless surprised when it actually takes place.

This chapter is honest: James is not set free, but Peter is. Why? That remains a mystery. **God's ways are not always explainable.** But what is clear is that prayer is not a last resort, but a powerful tool in God's plan.

At the end of the chapter, we read: "The Word of God increased and multiplied." (Acts 12:24) No king on earth can stop that. Acts 12 teaches us that even when doors seem closed, God is not limited and that prayer makes the impossible possible.

Reflection questions:

- 1** James is killed, Peter is set free. Can you continue to trust God when the outcomes are different?
- 2** Peter sleeps between two soldiers, heavily guarded. Where do you find inner peace when you are 'stuck'?
- 3** The congregation prays fervently, but is surprised when Peter actually stands at the door. Do you really expect God to intervene when you pray?

Pray: "God, when we feel trapped and locked up... teach us then that You are the God of Peter—of broken chains, open gates, and new freedom."

13 Start with worship

Read: Acts 13

A flourishing congregation has arisen in Antioch. Prophets and teachers serve together. While they fast and worship the Lord, the Holy Spirit speaks: “Set apart for Me Barnabas and Saul for the work to which I have called them.” (Acts 13:2) **Mission begins here, not with strategy, but with worship.**

The church lays its hands on Barnabas and Saul and lets them go. With this, the first missionary journey in history begins. In Cyprus and later in Pisidia, they proclaim Jesus as the fulfilment of God’s promises to Israel. Some listen with joy, others react with jealousy and resistance.

Paul speaks a decisive sentence: “We now turn to the Gentiles.” (Acts 13:46) **The gospel is not limited to one people, and what was once promised to Abraham—blessing for all nations—starts to take visible form.**

Acts 13 shows that the church not only gathers, but also sends. The Spirit calls, the congregation confirms, and people obey. Perhaps you think of distant lands when you hear the word “mission.” But at its core, it is about being available for God’s commission, wherever He places you.

God sends people. God sends you. The question is: are you willing to go?

Reflection questions:

1 Do you live available to God's calling, or primarily to your own plans?

2 What might be holding you back from being fully available?

3 How do I respond when spiritual opposition presents itself?

Pray: "God, our Father, Your love wants to reach all hearts. Make us willing to proclaim Your love and grace wherever we go. Through Jesus Christ."

14 Honored and reviled

Read: Acts 14

Paul and Barnabas move on and first go to the synagogue. The persecution in Antioch has not diminished their courage and desire to preach the gospel. **They speak in such a way that both Jews and gentiles come to faith.** But division also arises. Paul and Barnabas received the power from God to perform miracles.

In Lystra, Paul heals a paralyzed man. The reaction is striking: the crowd thinks that the gods have descended in human form. Paul and Barnabas are almost worshipped. But a moment later, the mood changes. Opponents convince the crowd, and Paul is stoned and left for dead.

From veneration to rejection—in one chapter.

Yet Paul gets up again and continues. Later, he even returns to the places where he was opposed to encourage the disciples. His message is realistic: “We must go through many hardships to enter the kingdom of God.” (Acts 14:22)

That is not a popular message. But it is honest. Success and suffering are sometimes close together. Being faithful to Jesus does not automatically mean an easy path. **But God’s Kingdom grows, even through hardship.**

Reflection questions:

1 Do you remain humble when people appreciate you? How?

2 Do you stay loyal when people reject you? How?

3 Do you expect faith to make life easier, or do you trust God even in troubled times?

4 In what areas does God ask you for perseverance today?

Pray: “Lord, help me to remain steadfast in trials, walk with perseverance, live hopefully, wait patiently in difficult times and remain faithful in prayer.”

15 Mercy over rules

Read: Acts 15

The growing number of believers among Gentiles raises an important question in Acts: must non-Jewish believers adhere to Jewish law, including circumcision?

The debate is heated. **Are people saved by grace alone, or by grace plus observance of religious rules?**

In Jerusalem, apostles and elders gather. Peter reminds them that God gave the Holy Spirit to the Gentiles without distinction. “Why do you try to test God by putting on the necks of Gentiles a yoke that neither we nor our ancestors have been able to bear?” (Acts 15:10) James confirms that this is in line with the prophets.

The conclusion is clear: salvation is by the grace of the Lord Jesus.

Without additional conditions. To preserve unity, some practical agreements are made, but the basis remains grace.

Acts 15 protects the heart of the gospel. As soon as we add conditions to grace in order to be accepted by God, we lose the freedom of Christ.

Even today, we can unconsciously create new “rules” for ourselves and others. Cultural expectations. Unspoken norms. The question we may continue to ask: **do we still truly live by grace?**

Reflection questions:

1

Can you distinguish between the heart of the gospel and human traditions?

2

Do you believe God's grace is enough for you, or are you inclined to add something else like good works as a basis for acceptance?

3

Where can legalism undermine your joy in Christ?

4

How can you contribute to a community that stands firm in truth and grace?

Pray: "Holy God, teach me to focus on your grace. Help me to let grace prevail where rules threaten to override."

16 “Come and help!”

Read: Acts 16

Paul embarks on his second missionary journey, and Timothy joins him. He is young, but dedicated. Together they travel through cities where congregations had previously been established. For them, it is a logical continuation of God's work.

But then something remarkable happens: the Holy Spirit prevents them from speaking in certain areas. Twice, plans are blocked. No explanation. No reason. The message is, simply, “not here.”

Until Paul has a vision at night: a man from Macedonia cries out, “Come over to Macedonia and help us.” (Acts 16:9) That is the breakthrough. The door that initially remained closed turns out to point towards Europe. But with a detour to Philippi.

In Philippi, they meet Lydia, an open-hearted businesswoman. Then Paul frees a slave from a divining spirit, which lands them in prison. And there, in the middle of the night, they sing songs of praise. After an earthquake and an open cell door, the jailer comes to faith. One chapter. Three totally different people. One gospel.

God's guidance sometimes comes via detours. Closed doors are not a failure, but signposts.

Perhaps you also don't always understand why something doesn't go ahead. But remember: God is at work in the “no” as well.

Reflection questions:

1

What do you do when obedience leads to difficulty instead of success?

2

Is your joy dependent on freedom—or on God's presence?

3

Looking back, where in your life do you see that a closed door led you to something better?

Pray: "Holy God, teach me to be receptive to the guidance of Your Spirit in my life. To follow Your will by open or closed doors."

17 Clear about Jesus

Read: Acts 17

In Thessalonica and Berea, we see two reactions to the gospel: resistance and inquiry. Some become angry, while others begin to examine the Scriptures themselves daily to see if what Paul says is true.

Then Paul arrives in Athens, a center of philosophy and culture. Everywhere he sees altars and statues. His mind is stimulated. But he does not react with contempt. **He engages in conversation.**

On the Areopagus, he speaks of the “unknown God” whom they worship. He aligns with their worldview, even quoting their poets, but does not deviate from the core: God is Creator, not an image. He calls people to repentance because God has established a day of judgment through the Man whom He raised from the dead.

The resurrection remains the breaking point. Some mock. Others want to hear more. And a few come to faith.

Acts 17 shows that the gospel is not separate from culture, but neither is it defined by it. It requires wisdom to connect—without diluting the message.

We, too, live in a culture full of ideas and beliefs. The question is: are we aware of this? And do we dare to remain clear about Jesus?

Reflection questions:

1 Do you know the culture around you well enough to share the gospel in an understandable way?

2 How do you deal with people who think differently about your faith?

3 Witnessing about Jesus goes better when you know what you are talking about. Do you regularly read and study the Bible yourself?

Need help with reading the Bible?

Pray: "Lord, help me to bear witness about You in a world full of seekers. Help me to lovingly build a bridge between cultural beliefs and faith in You."



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18 Building together

Read: Acts 18

In Corinth, Paul meets Aquila and Priscilla. They share the same profession—tentmakers—and work together. Paul's ministry is not separated from daily life. **Work and mission intertwine.**

Resistance in the synagogue grows, but so does the number of new believers. Even Crispus, a leader of the synagogue, comes to faith. God encourages Paul in a vision: "Do not be afraid, [...] I am with you." (Acts 18:9-10)

That promise is crucial. God's presence is the basis for perseverance.

Later, we see how Priscilla and Aquila teach Apollos. He speaks fervently but does not yet fully know the gospel. Instead of correcting him publicly, they take him aside and explain the way of God to him more accurately.

Acts 18 shows that God's Kingdom is teamwork. Apostles, entrepreneurs, teachers, new believers—everyone plays a role.

No one builds the church alone.

Perhaps we underestimate our place in the whole. But God's work grows through people who faithfully work together, complement each other, and sharpen one another.

Reflection questions:

1

Do you see your daily work as part of God's mission?

2

Do I work together, or do I try to carry everything alone?

3

Do I remain loyal when the work feels ordinary and invisible?

Pray: "Help me, God, to persevere and remain faithful, even when (mission) work feels invisible and ordinary. Help me to see Your calling in the everyday."

19 Power that changes

Read: Acts 19

In Ephesus, Paul meets disciples who have heard about John's baptism, but not about the Holy Spirit. **When he teaches them about Jesus and baptizes them in His name, they receive the Spirit.** It shows how important it is that faith is rooted in the full gospel: Jesus' death, resurrection, and the gift of the Spirit.

What follows is a period of powerful ministry. Paul teaches daily. Miracles happen. Even handkerchiefs that have touched him are used by God to heal people. But the chapter also shows a sharp contrast.

Some itinerant Jewish exorcists try to use the Name of Jesus as a formula. "In the name of the Jesus whom Paul preaches, I command you to come out." (Acts 19:13) But they do not really know Him. The demon answers: "Jesus I know, and Paul I know about, but who are you?" (Acts 19:15) **It is clear: the Name of Jesus is not a magic spell.** The power of His name lies in the relationship.

The impact in Ephesus is profound. People confess their sins. Expensive books on sorcery are publicly burned. The gospel touches hearts, the economy, and culture. Idols are unmasked; there is unrest. **Revival is not superficial. It confronts, cleanses, and reforms.**

The question is: may the gospel also touch your "idols"—that which seems to provide certainty or identity?

Reflection questions:

1

Is your relationship with Jesus personal, or do you use faith primarily functionally?

2

Are there things in your life that have taken God's place?

3

What "idols" would you have to let go of to truly give Jesus room?

4

What would happen in your surroundings if Jesus were truly Lord in your life?

Pray: "LORD, help me let go of what is necessary to truly give You room in my life. Let Your power touch my life in such a way that it influences those around me."

20 Loyal till the end

Read: Acts 20

Paul senses that his time of freedom is coming to an end. In Miletus, he summons the elders of Ephesus for a farewell speech. Paul kneels with them. They embrace him, kiss him, mourn, and tears flow. Especially over that one sentence: that they will no longer see his face.

But Paul does not leave them behind in fear. He entrusts them to God and to the word of His grace, which is powerful to build up. Not he, but God will preserve the church.

His last memory is striking: he did not covet anyone's silver or clothing. He worked with his own hands. And then reminds them of the words of Jesus: "It is more blessed to give than to receive." (Acts 20:35)

Here we see the core of spiritual leadership: a life that gives itself. **No grasping for possessions, position, or security, but surrender, generosity, and trust.**

Acts 20 leaves us with a penetrating question: If this were my farewell, could I say that I truly withheld nothing? That I ran my course with joy?

Reflection questions:

1 For which people has God given you the responsibility to care for?

2 Are you willing to let go and entrust others to God's care?

3 If you were to think about your farewell speech, what would you want people to remember?

4 What does my relationship with money and possessions say about my priorities?

Pray: "Lord, grant that I hold nothing back. Teach me to walk my way with joy. Not for myself, but for others and for You. Make me faithful in what You entrust to me. Amen."

21 Prepared to suffer

Read: Acts 21

As Paul travels toward Jerusalem, he is warned several times. Prophets speak of imprisonment. Friends beg him not to go. But Paul answers: “Why are you weeping and breaking my heart? I am ready not only to be bound, but also to die in Jerusalem for the name of the Lord Jesus.” (Acts 21:13)

That is not recklessness, but conviction. **He believes that obedience is more important than safety.**

In Jerusalem, Paul navigates between Jewish and Gentile believers. Nevertheless, unrest arises. False accusations lead to a violent mob, and Paul is arrested.

Once again, it seems as if the story is derailing. But in reality, it is moving toward Rome—exactly as Jesus had said in Acts 1. **The gospel will go to the ends of the earth.**

Obedience sometimes takes you exactly where you would rather not go. Not because God fails, but because His way is greater than our desire for rest and clarity. What feels like loss to bystanders can be progress in God’s hands. What appears to be stagnation is part of His plan.

Paul loses his freedom, but the gospel loses no ground. Obedience is not a leap in the dark—it is a step into the hands of a trustworthy God.

Reflection questions:

1

Where does God ask you for obedience that is challenging or precious?

2

Am I willing to pay a price for obedience?

3

Am I guided by caution or by conviction and obedience?

“Lord, show me Your ways, and lead me like a child who follows You. If I lack the courage to continue, please comfort me and encourage me again.”

22 Personal testimony

Read: Acts 22

In Jerusalem, Paul encounters a crowd that wants to kill him. Instead of hiding or defending himself, **he shares his story**. He tells of his life as a persecutor of the church, of the encounter with Jesus on the road to Damascus, and how he was called to be an apostle.

His words are powerful, but also honest. He shares not only his successes, but also his mistakes. He shows that God's grace brings radical change.

Whoever meets Jesus cannot remain the same.

Yet the atmosphere changes when he says that God is sending him to the Gentiles, and the crowd turns against Paul once again. **Grace is welcome, until it breaks boundaries**. But Paul trusts in God, not in his own safety. His testimony works: even a Roman centurion notices that Paul is being wronged and intervenes.

Our most powerful testimony is often our own story: told honestly, rooted in an encounter with Jesus. Not a theological treatise, but a life that has been transformed.

Ultimately, a witness is not someone who knows everything. It is someone who has a personal experience and cannot remain silent about it.

Reflection questions:

- 1 Are you able to clearly articulate what Jesus has done in your life?
- 2 How does God use your past, including your mistakes?
- 3 To whom could your testimony bring hope today?

Pray: “Thank You that You want to use us in Your Kingdom. In our weakness, You make us strong. Give me boldness and sensitivity to share my story. Use my story for Your glory.”

23 Closer than you think

Read: Acts 23

Paul stands before the Sanhedrin, once again surrounded by hostile leaders. The conversation escalates, but Paul sees through the division between Pharisees and Sadducees and plays to it. The situation is tense, chaotic, and getting out of hand.

And perhaps that is precisely what makes this chapter so human. Paul is not an untouchable hero. He reacts fiercely when he is unjustly beaten. He even has to retract his words when it turns out that he addressed the high priest. Holiness does not exclude humanity. God works through fragile people as well.

The situation escalates to such an extent that Roman soldiers have to take him to safety. And then, in the night, when the commotion subsides, and Paul is alone, the Lord passes by: “Take courage.” (Acts 23:11)

He offers no detailed explanation and points out no new route, but rather the comfort of His presence and the courage to continue. So, the mission continues, even in the midst of the threat.

Meanwhile, a group of men plots to murder Paul. More than forty people swear that they will not eat or drink until Paul is dead. God protects Paul through a young cousin and a Roman commander. He provides and protects in silence.

Reflection questions:

1

In what area of your life would you need God's encouragement today?

2

Do you trust that God is working behind the scenes?

3

How do you react to injustice done to you?

4

Can you find rest in God's greater plan, even when it brings you into tribulation?

Pray: "Lord, encourage me when I am afraid. Remind me of Your plan and that You are good and faithful."

24 With a clear conscience

Read: Acts 24

Paul stands trial again, this time before Governor Felix. Prosecutor Tertullus showers the proceedings with flattery and serious accusations: agitator, cult leader, troublemaker. Big words, little truth.

When Paul is allowed to speak, he remains remarkably calm. He denies the lies: “So I strive always to keep my conscience clear before God and man.” (Acts 24:16) Paul is not only concerned with acquittal, but with integrity. His life does not need to protect a perfect image—only a sincere heart for God. **He knows that he must ultimately answer to the righteous Judge.**

Felix and his wife Drusilla want to hear more about faith in Christ Jesus. Paul speaks of righteousness, self-control, and the coming judgment. Not light words, but rather confronting. Felix becomes afraid. And yet he postpones choosing Jesus and tells Paul: “That’s enough for now! You may leave. When I find it convenient, I will send for you.” (Acts 24:25)

Paul remains imprisoned for two years, while Felix has him visit regularly. Curious, but unwilling to surrender. What a contrast between the two men! **Paul is bound, yet inwardly free, while Felix is powerful, yet inwardly imprisoned.**

Acts 24 poses a question that is as quiet as it is penetrating: what do I do with the truth when it reaches me?

Reflection questions:

1

Who do you identify with more: Paul (bound, but inwardly free) or Felix (free, but inwardly imprisoned)?

2

Are there matters that burden your conscience?

3

Which truth are you postponing, out of convenience or fear?

Pray: “Lord, keep my conscience pure before You. Let Your truth be my anchor. Help me live according to Your will, to the blessing of others.”

25 Continue to trust

Read: Acts 25

Two years pass for Paul in prison. Then Felix is succeeded by Festus. The Jewish leaders urge Festus to transfer Paul to Jerusalem because they want to ambush and kill Paul on the way.

Luke writes that Festus “wanted to please the Jews.” (Acts 25:9) Sounds innocent, doesn’t it? But beneath those words lies a tension. As Roman governor, it is Festus’s duty to maintain peace in Judea. Festus knows that the accusations against Paul are weak: Paul is actually not guilty. Why, then, does he consider sending him to Jerusalem? Maybe because political peace is more important in his role than personal justice?

It is easy to be quick to condemn Festus. But how often do we not also seek consensus over truth? **How often do we water down our convictions to avoid conflict?**

Paul refuses to play along with that game. The accusations are serious, but unproven. And so he appeals to the emperor. In doing so, he not only protects his life—he moves, without fully understanding the consequences, toward God’s promise that he will bear witness in Rome.

Years earlier, God had said that Paul would testify in Rome. Paul’s desperate way out becomes a step toward God’s promise. Our lesson? **God’s plan is not disrupted by human power games.** He turns a lawsuit into a route and a delay into the preparation of His plan.

Reflection questions:

- 1 Have you ever had to deal with human power games?
- 2 How do you deal with personal, political, or societal pressure?
- 3 Do you believe that God also works through complex systems or difficult situations to carry out His plan?

Pray: “Thank You, Lord, that Your plan is never derailed by human action. Thank You that You can straighten crooked paths. Help me to seek justice in Your way and according to Your plan.”

26 Use the right moment

Read: Acts 26

Paul has to defend himself again, this time before King Herod Agrippa II and Festus. Two powerful men in a hall full of authority. And in the middle stands Paul. **He uses the moment to tell what God has done in his life.**

Paul tells his story: how he first persecuted Christians, but how he had an encounter with Jesus Christ on the way to Damascus. And how that moment changed everything. From a persecutor, he became a witness.

Paul is not ashamed of his faith. He speaks honestly and with conviction. His goal is not to excuse himself, but to show that the gospel is true. This is evident from King Agrippa's reaction: "Do you think that in such a short time you can persuade me to be a Christian?" (Acts 26:28)

Many people think that witnessing is only for preachers or missionaries. But Paul shows that it starts with something simple: telling what God has done in your life. In his story, Paul tells:

- Who he was
- How he met Jesus
- What changed afterwards

You can do that too! Maybe your "Damascus moment" is a lot less dramatic. **But your story is also a story that God can use.**

Reflection questions:

- 1 In what ways has God changed your life?
- 2 With whom could you share your story, your testimony?
- 3 Are you willing to speak honestly about your faith, just like Paul? What is holding you back?

Pray: “Thank You for changing lives, just as You did for Paul. Give me courage not to hide my faith, but to share what You have done in my life. Help me to be a witness in the place where You have placed me.”

27 Present in the storm

Read: Acts 27

In Acts 27, Paul is taken to Rome as a prisoner. The journey is difficult. Soon, the ship encounters a severe storm. The storm—often called Euroklydon—is so violent that the crew cannot see the sun or stars for days. The ship is tossed back and forth, and the people on board lose all hope of being saved.

In the midst of that chaos, Paul stands up. He recounts that an angel of God had told him that no one on the ship would die. The ship would perish, but the people would be saved. Paul says, “So take courage! For I believe God. It will be just as he said.” (Acts 27:25) Paul is a prisoner himself, but he becomes the leader of hope on the ship. While experienced sailors are afraid, he expresses confidence.

Everyone experiences storms in life. These can be difficult circumstances: uncertainty, loss, stress, or fear. We often pray that God stops the storm immediately. But in this chapter, we see something different: **God is not only the God who calms storms; He is also the God who walks through the storm with us.**

The storm does not disappear immediately. The ship even breaks down. But God keeps His promise: everyone survives. God’s faithfulness does not mean that everything becomes easy, but rather that He leads us through difficult times.

How can you, just like Paul, bring hope to others who are afraid?

Reflection questions:

1

Are you experiencing a storm in your life right now?

2

Who am I to others in times of crisis: a fearmonger or a beacon of hope?

3

Which promises of God keep me standing?

Pray: “Lord, help me to trust in You when the storm rages around me. Give me peace in my heart and help me to bring hope to the people around me. Thank You that You never leave me alone.”

28 God works until the end

Read: Acts 28

After the ship sinks, Paul and the other passengers finally wash ashore. The inhabitants of the island of Malta receive them kindly and build a fire to warm everyone in the cold.

As Paul helps put wood on the fire, a poisonous snake suddenly bites his hand. The people of the island immediately think this is a sign of punishment. **But to the surprise of onlookers, Paul shakes the snake off and remains unharmed.**

Later in the chapter, Paul also heals Publius's father, and afterward, more sick people come to him and are healed. **What began with a shipwreck thus becomes a moment when God's power becomes visible to many people on the island.**

Sometimes it seems as if setbacks are piling up. First a storm, then a shipwreck, and after that a snake as well. In life, problems can sometimes follow one another quickly. Just when you think you finally have solid ground under your feet, something new happens again.

Yet this chapter shows that God's work does not stop at disaster. The shipwreck was not the end of Paul's journey. Even the snake bite could not stop God's plan. What seemed intended as a danger ultimately became an opportunity for Paul to demonstrate God's power.

Reflection questions:

1

When have you personally experienced hospitality or kindness at an unexpected moment? How can you pass that on to others?

2

In what ways could God use you to encourage, help, or bring hope to others?

3

Acts ends without a real “conclusion”: Paul proclaims the Kingdom of God and the story continues. What role can you play in the rest of the story?

Pray: “Lord, thank You that Your work continues, even when everything is against me. Teach me to trust that Your plan does not stop and use my life to show Your strength to others.”

Acts in our lives

The book of Acts shows how God carries out His plan through ordinary people with power, wisdom, and grace. From the first Pentecost to Paul in Rome, we see a movement that is not held back by fear, opposition, or cultural boundaries.

God calls ordinary people to live extraordinarily, by continuing to pray in adversity, bearing witness in disorder, loving in division, and obeying no matter the cost. You too. Acts invites you to place your life in the light of God's plan.

The book of Acts is not merely a historical account. It is a **living invitation from God**: to step into His plan and allow God's Spirit to work through you.

Are you willing to accept that invitation?



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