

ACTS

LIFE IN THE SPIRIT

Young Adults United Studies – the book of Acts

Intro – Acts is the powerful bridge between the ministry of Jesus and the mission of the church throughout history. In Acts, we see Jesus faithfully building His church just as He promised, and we watch that work ripple out from Jerusalem to the ends of the earth. The same Spirit who empowered the first believers empowers us today.

- **4/15: Acts 2** – The Spirit Comes and the Church Begins
- **4/22: Acts 4** – Bold Witness in the Face of Opposition
- **4/29: Acts 9** – Saul’s Conversion
- **5/6: Acts 10** – The Gospel Breaks Barriers
- **5/13: Acts 15** – Church Conflict
- **5/20: Acts 28** – The Mission Continues Unhindered

Review – Last week we discussed these things from Acts 9...

- **Saul the persecutor** seeks to imprison followers of Jesus (vv. 1–2)
- **Jesus confronts Saul** on the road to Damascus in a blinding encounter (vv. 3–6)
- Saul is **blinded and humbled**, led by hand into the city (vv. 7–9)
- **God speaks to Ananias** and calls him to go to Saul (vv. 10–12)
- Ananias hesitates but obeys, calling Saul **“Brother”** (vv. 13–17)
- Saul’s sight is restored, he is **filled with the Spirit**, baptized, and regains strength (vv. 18–19)

Remember

- No one is beyond God’s reach (vv. 1–4)
- A personal encounter with Jesus changes everything (vv. 5–6)
- God uses unexpected people and means (vv. 10–17)
- Spiritual blindness must be healed (vv. 8–18)
- True conversion leads to transformation and mission (v. 19)

Acts 10 - 9 The next day as Cornelius's messengers were nearing the town, Peter went up on the flat roof to pray. It was about noon, 10 and he was hungry. But while a meal was being prepared, he fell into a trance. 11 He saw the sky open, and something like a large sheet was let down by its four corners. 12 In the sheet were all sorts of animals, reptiles, and birds. 13 Then a voice said to him, "Get up, Peter; kill and eat them."

14 "No, Lord," Peter declared. "I have never eaten anything that our Jewish laws have declared impure and unclean." 15 But the voice spoke again: "Do not call something unclean if God has made it clean." 16 The same vision was repeated three times. Then the sheet was suddenly pulled up to heaven.....

34 Then [Later] Peter replied, "I see very clearly that God shows no favoritism. 35 In every nation he accepts those who fear him and do what is right. 36 This is the message of Good News for the people of Israel—that there is peace with God through Jesus Christ, who is Lord of all. 37 You know what happened throughout Judea, beginning in Galilee, after John began preaching his message of baptism. 38 And you know that God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Spirit and with power. Then Jesus went around doing good and healing all who were oppressed by the devil, for God was with him.

39 "And we apostles are witnesses of all he did throughout Judea and in Jerusalem. They put him to death by hanging him on a cross, 40 but God raised him to life on the third day. Then God allowed him to appear, 41 not to the general public, but to us whom God had chosen in advance to be his witnesses. We were those who ate and drank with him after he rose from the dead. 42 And he ordered us to preach everywhere and to testify that Jesus is the one appointed by God to be the judge of all—the living and the dead. 43 He is the one all the prophets testified about, saying that everyone who believes in him will have their sins forgiven through his name."
The Gentiles Receive the Holy Spirit

44 Even as Peter was saying these things, the Holy Spirit fell upon all who were listening to the message. 45 The Jewish believers who came with Peter were amazed that the gift of the Holy Spirit had been poured out on the Gentiles, too. 46 For they heard them speaking in other tongues and praising God.

Then Peter asked, 47 "Can anyone object to their being baptized, now that they have received the Holy Spirit just as we did?" 48 So he gave orders for them to be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ. Afterward Cornelius asked him to stay with them for several days.

Summary – Bible scholars have stated, “Acts 10 marks a turning point in redemptive history—where the gospel of Jesus Christ crosses a major boundary and fully embraces the Gentile world. Until now, the early church had largely been a movement within Judaism. But through a divine vision to the apostle Peter and the faithful seeking heart of a Roman centurion named Cornelius, God makes it unmistakably clear that His saving grace is not limited by ethnicity, culture, or background. This chapter is not just about a change in dietary laws—it’s about the breaking down of walls between people, the unifying work of the Holy Spirit, and the unstoppable spread of the gospel to all nations. Acts 10 reminds us that the gospel is for everyone and that God often works on both sides of a divine appointment to bring about His mission.”

Questions –

1. It seems like maybe the good news of salvation through grace is more directed to some people, rather than others? After all, aren't the Jews God's chosen people?
2. But, doesn't God show some favoritism? In verse 35 it says God accepts those who fear Him. Isn't that showing favoritism towards those people instead of those who don't fear God?
3. When Peter starts sharing the gospel in v36-40, he presents a very Christ-centered message. I thought the gospel was for us, not just about what Jesus did?
4. Doesn't the Bible say that a Christian is one who believes, repents and is baptized? Why is it that the Holy Spirit indwells people before they are baptized like it says in v39-42?
5. Should a person be baptized into God's family or should it be in response to God's saving work in their life like we see in v47-48?

Small Groups Discussion –

Ice-breaker – If God assured you that you can eat all animals, nothing is really out of bounds, what is one animal that other people might consider eating, that you would prefer not to?

Historical/Cultural – Jews were separated by their neighbors through dietary laws. For instance, turn to Leviticus 11, let your eyes skim over some of the examples. Maybe read one or two of the verses, then read verses 44-45. Why would God command this? What might the negative side-effects have been regarding how Jews saw themselves compared to others?

Examples – What do you like or not like about Christians today choosing to not participate in some actions, activities, or practices that non-Christians participate in? Can you give any examples?

Unity – Read Ephesians 2:13-16. What does this type of unity look like in the church, or at least what should it look like.... Not just between Jews and Gentiles, but between all followers of Jesus?

Faith – Read Romans 3:29-30 and Galatians 2:16. In what ways is it easier of focus on external things vs the internal? How do we seek, develop and find an even deeper faith as opposed to a shallow or weak faith?

Community – Here are a lot of passages that might help us clarify or develop a greater intentionality towards each other. Read each verse, pause for just a moment, read another one. Then when you have read all of them discuss how we put these things into practice. Give examples of what we can do.

- Romans 15:5-7
- Ephesians 4:2-3
- Colossians 3:13-14
- Hebrews 10:24-25
- 1 Thessalonians 5:11
- Galatians 6:2
- Romans 14:19
- Ephesians 4:15-16

Holy Spirit – There is an emphasis on the Holy Spirit in this chapter. Read, Titus 3:5-6, and Romans 8:9 and Galatians 5:25. How do we walk in the Spirit, staying in step with Him and letting Him illuminate our path?

Prayer Time – Pray for these things we've discussed – unity, love, and keeping Jesus at the center of our faith.