



## The First Act Study Guide

### Week 1 — Acts 1:1-11

In my former book, Theophilus, I wrote about all that Jesus began to do and to teach <sup>2</sup> until the day he was taken up to heaven, after giving instructions through the Holy Spirit to the apostles he had chosen. <sup>3</sup> After his suffering, he presented himself to them and gave many convincing proofs that he was alive. He appeared to them over a period of forty days and spoke about the kingdom of God. <sup>4</sup> On one occasion, while he was eating with them, he gave them this command: “Do not leave Jerusalem, but wait for the gift my Father promised, which you have heard me speak about. <sup>5</sup> For John baptized with water, but in a few days you will be baptized with the Holy Spirit.”

<sup>6</sup> Then they gathered around him and asked him, “Lord, are you at this time going to restore the kingdom to Israel?”

<sup>7</sup> He said to them: “It is not for you to know the times or dates the Father has set by his own authority. <sup>8</sup> 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.”

<sup>9</sup> After he said this, he was taken up before their very eyes, and a cloud hid him from their sight.

<sup>10</sup> They were looking intently up into the sky as he was going, when suddenly two men dressed in white stood beside them. <sup>11</sup> “Men of Galilee,” they said, “why do you stand here looking into the sky? This same Jesus, who has been taken from you into heaven, will come back in the same way you have seen him go into heaven.”

“I have no idea what I’m doing what I’m doing, but I know I’m doing it really, really well...” Andy Dwyer, Parks and Recreation

Can you relate? Have you ever felt that way? Where you were pretty sure everyone thought you should know how to do what you were supposed to do but you really had no idea?

Can you imagine the situation the early church faced? The role they had played at this point was just to follow Jesus. Do what He said and learn from Him. There was a guide, someone to encourage them. Someone to fall back on when mistakes were made or fear took over. Now, Jesus is preparing them for His leaving.

And understandably they are uncomfortable to say the least. They still didn't understand all that Jesus had come to do. They asked, "Lord, are you at this time going to restore the kingdom to Israel?"

Jesus didn't come to restore the kingdom of Israel. He came to establish the Kingdom of God on earth. And the guys who had walked with Jesus for 3 1/2 years didn't understand the job minutes before Jesus left for good.

Jesus left though with confidence because He knew who He was leaving to help them, the Holy Spirit. The job was made really clear in verse 8.

"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."

As a follower of Jesus, we get the Holy Spirit. That's huge. Probably bigger than any of us can really understand. He's our rock who will guide us and give us strength. And we will need it because the task Jesus has given us is challenging.

Jesus tells us we need to be His witnesses. Jesus is going away, so the mantle of the life of following Jesus is passed to His believers, that's us. The place we are supposed to do this work is important too. We are supposed to be witnesses where we live.

First things first, God has placed us where we are on purpose, for a purpose. You aren't where you are on accident. Remember that. This causes us to be present where we are.

Next, Jesus asks us to go to places we don't want to go. For the first readers of the book of Acts, they would have been appalled to see that Jesus expects them to go to the Samaritans and witness to them. To make the Samaritans like they are. That wouldn't have been wonderfully received.

But this is just how Jesus works. Jesus is bringing the people to himself we would not expect. It happens in modern times too. Who God brings into our path can be people we didn't plan on. God gives us opportunities to love like Him.

Finally the call to the ends of the earth remains. This is good to point out, because often we can think these are options that God is giving us. You can do this or this or this. The problem is in the actual passage where Jesus gives us our marching orders the word and is used.

We are to witness where we live AND in places we don't want to go AND the ends of the earth. All are in play and all are accessible for us.

**Discuss:**

1. When was the last time you shared what you've seen God do in your life? Where were you? Who did you share it with? Why did you share?
2. Samaria was a place all Jews avoided, Jesus said his followers had to be witnesses there. Where is a place you don't want to go? Why don't you want to go there? Do you think the people there deserve to hear about the saving power of Jesus?
3. In your mind, where is the end of the earth? Have you been there? What would convince you to go there?

## Week 2 - Acts 2:14-41

<sup>14</sup> Then Peter stood up with the Eleven, raised his voice and addressed the crowd: “Fellow Jews and all of you who live in Jerusalem, let me explain this to you; listen carefully to what I say. <sup>15</sup> These people are not drunk, as you suppose. It’s only nine in the morning! <sup>16</sup> No, this is what was spoken by the prophet Joel:

<sup>17</sup> “In the last days, God says, I will pour out my Spirit on all people. Your sons and daughters will prophesy, your young men will see visions, your old men will dream dreams.

<sup>18</sup> Even on my servants, both men and women, I will pour out my Spirit in those days and they will prophesy.

<sup>19</sup> I will show wonders in the heavens above and signs on the earth below, blood and fire and billows of smoke.

<sup>20</sup> The sun will be turned to darkness and the moon to blood before the coming of the great and glorious day of the Lord.

<sup>21</sup> And everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved.’

<sup>22</sup> “Fellow Israelites, listen to this: Jesus of Nazareth was a man accredited by God to you by miracles, wonders and signs, which God did among you through him, as you yourselves know. <sup>23</sup> This man was handed over to you by God’s deliberate

plan and foreknowledge; and you, with the help of wicked men, put him to death by nailing him to the cross. <sup>24</sup> But God raised him from the dead, freeing him from the agony of death, because it was impossible for death to keep its hold on him. <sup>25</sup> David said about him:

“I saw the Lord always before me.

Because he is at my right hand, I will not be shaken.

<sup>26</sup> Therefore my heart is glad and my tongue rejoices;

my body also will rest in hope,

<sup>27</sup> because you will not abandon me to the realm of the dead,

you will not let your holy one see decay.

<sup>28</sup> You have made known to me the paths of life;

you will fill me with joy in your presence.’

<sup>29</sup> “Fellow Israelites, I can tell you confidently that the patriarch David died and was buried, and his tomb is here to this day. <sup>30</sup> But he was a prophet and knew that God had promised him on oath that he would place one of his descendants on his throne. <sup>31</sup> Seeing what was to come, he spoke of the resurrection of the Messiah, that he was not abandoned to the realm of the dead, nor did his body see decay. <sup>32</sup> God has raised



this Jesus to life, and we are all witnesses of it. <sup>33</sup> Exalted to the right hand of God, he has received from the Father the promised Holy Spirit and has poured out what you now see and hear. <sup>34</sup> For David did not ascend to heaven, and yet he said,

“The Lord said to my Lord:

“Sit at my right hand

<sup>35</sup> until I make your enemies a footstool for your feet.”

<sup>36</sup> “Therefore, let all Israel be assured of this: God has made this Jesus, whom you crucified, both Lord and Messiah.”

<sup>37</sup> When the people heard this, they were cut to the heart and said to Peter and the other apostles, “Brothers, what shall we do?”

<sup>38</sup> Peter replied, “Repent and be baptized, every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins. And you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. <sup>39</sup> The promise is for you and your children and for all who are far off—for all whom the Lord our God will call.”

<sup>40</sup> With many other words he warned them; and he pleaded with them, “Save yourselves from this corrupt generation.” <sup>41</sup> Those who accepted his

message were baptized, and about three thousand were added to their number that day.

Admitting when we've made a mistake is really difficult. It's the last thing anyone wants to do. Especially if your mistake was made publicly. Add to that getting called out in your mistake publicly.

How do you respond?

It's hard to say that Jesus can be an example because He never made any mistakes. Jesus was perfect, but we can see what happened with early followers and the early church.

The early church went to those who had made the mistake and gave them a chance to repent. This is an example that Jesus has given us. Jesus gives second chances. He doesn't curse sinners. He identifies them and gives them a chance to repent and surrender to Him.

God is the God of second chances. So while we might think we want revenge on who killed our friend, Jesus' disciples offered grace and a chance to change and turn towards Jesus.

What would it take for us to get to the same place as Jesus' early followers?

Think about what they have gotten to see. They went through the arrest and death of Jesus. Had to be difficult to impossible for them. But they also got to experience the resurrection of their friend. Which had to be absolute jubilation. Celebrating your friend is back and celebrating the miracle that God did.

This God you have been worshipping is capable of more than you can imagine. Then Jesus leaves again. And sets you up to take over the mission for Him.

Following is easier than leading. Changing positions from followers to leaders takes a massive risk. That was the position the early church was put in.

Peter went from a fisherman, in charge of himself and his nets, to the de facto leader of the Jesus movement in just a couple of years.

That means we don't have any excuses to disqualify ourselves from leading. We are better equipped for growing the Church today than ever. We are more educated, more resourced, more accessible and more mobile than at any point in human history.

What are we doing with it?

Do we have a sense of urgency around what our role in the Kingdom of God is?

Peter got right to work. Got right to sharing the Gospel of Jesus. He got to it right where he was. He didn't wait for ideal conditions. He got to work.

**DISCUSS:**

1. What word would you use to describe how you feel about leading in the Church? Why did you choose that word? What would it take for you to get to excited to lead?

### **Week 3 - Acts 2:42-47**

<sup>42</sup> They devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and to fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer. <sup>43</sup> Everyone was filled with awe at the many wonders and signs performed by the apostles. <sup>44</sup> All the believers were together and had everything in common. <sup>45</sup> They sold property and possessions to give to anyone who had need. <sup>46</sup> Every day they continued to meet together in the temple courts. They broke bread in their homes and ate together with glad and sincere hearts, <sup>47</sup> praising God and enjoying the favor of all the people. And the Lord added to their number daily those who were being saved.

The most interesting part of this passage is the posture of the believers as we read this. There are two prevailing things that we see, Jesus is sufficient and they were living as if the Kingdom of God was at hand.

Sufficient means enough. This is something we all struggle with. The concept of enough is one that's pretty hard for us to grasp. Rarely do we agree that we have enough. We can get stuck in a scarcity mindset.

The reality is our freezers are full to overflowing. We have months of food in our pantries. We have

savings accounts, retirement accounts and cash on hand. Is it enough? Have you ever answered the question what is enough?

Mark Batterson is a pastor and an author. When he started writing books he and his wife sat down and wrote down what enough money would be for them to live on. They wrote it down and committed to giving any income over that away for the rest of their working days. And they had a goal of someday being able to write a single check of one million dollars to give away to a mission opportunity on their own.

They committed to what is enough and they made a plan of what to do with the excess. Society wants us to believe there is no such thing as enough. Marketing executives, TV stations, financial advisors all want you to believe there is no such thing as enough. Whole industries exist because we don't think it's possible.

What's true is the entire idea of having enough stuff is missing the point entirely. It's trying to climb the mountain of mammon. Mammon is the worship of wealth in place of God. The problem with mammon is that it's

insatiable. There is never enough and you can never reach the top.

The opposite of that is the sufficiency of God himself. Just Him. He's sufficient. We don't need Him to do anything, we just need Him.

The second part to look at here is they lived as if the Kingdom of God was at hand.

Their focus wasn't muddled by anything. They were singularly committed to just being with each other and doing the things that Jesus had shown them.

They were meeting together, eating together, teaching, sharing the Gospel, loving each other and not thinking about it. They living as if they believed that Jesus was coming back soon and they wanted to be caught doing what He taught them when He did.

It is hard for us to have that sort of urgency because we have been waiting 2000 years. But what was true then, is still true now. We don't know when Jesus is coming back, no one does. They didn't know then either. Jesus talked about how important it was to be ready for Him to come back at any moment.

What does that mean for us?

**DISCUSS:**

1. Is God sufficient for you? If someone was looking at your life, how could they tell?
2. Go through your calendar, where do you invest most of your time? This is likely where Jesus will catch you when He comes back.
3. Since work or school are part of our worlds, how can we add some Jesus into our lives at work and school so we are focused on Him all the time like the disciples?



## **Week 4 - Acts 3:1-26**

One day Peter and John were going up to the temple at the time of prayer—at three in the afternoon.<sup>2</sup> Now a man who was lame from birth was being carried to the temple gate called Beautiful, where he was put every day to beg from those going into the temple courts.<sup>3</sup> When he saw Peter and John about to enter, he asked them for money.<sup>4</sup> Peter looked straight at him, as did John. Then Peter said, “Look at us!”<sup>5</sup> So the man gave them his attention, expecting to get something from them.

<sup>6</sup> Then Peter said, “Silver or gold I do not have, but what I do have I give you. In the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, walk.”<sup>7</sup> Taking him by the right hand, he helped him up, and instantly the man’s feet and ankles became strong.<sup>8</sup> He jumped to his feet and began to walk. Then he went with them into the temple courts, walking and jumping, and praising God.<sup>9</sup> When all the people saw him walking and praising God,<sup>10</sup> they recognized him as the same man who used to sit begging at the temple gate called Beautiful, and they were filled with wonder and amazement at what had happened to him.

<sup>11</sup> While the man held on to Peter and John, all the people were astonished and came running to them

in the place called Solomon's Colonnade.<sup>12</sup> When Peter saw this, he said to them: "Fellow Israelites, why does this surprise you? Why do you stare at us as if by our own power or godliness we had made this man walk?"<sup>13</sup> The God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, the God of our fathers, has glorified his servant Jesus. You handed him over to be killed, and you disowned him before Pilate, though he had decided to let him go.<sup>14</sup> You disowned the Holy and Righteous One and asked that a murderer be released to you.<sup>15</sup> You killed the author of life, but God raised him from the dead. We are witnesses of this.<sup>16</sup> By faith in the name of Jesus, this man whom you see and know was made strong. It is Jesus' name and the faith that comes through him that has completely healed him, as you can all see.

<sup>17</sup> "Now, fellow Israelites, I know that you acted in ignorance, as did your leaders.<sup>18</sup> But this is how God fulfilled what he had foretold through all the prophets, saying that his Messiah would suffer.<sup>19</sup> Repent, then, and turn to God, so that your sins may be wiped out, that times of refreshing may come from the Lord,<sup>20</sup> and that he may send the Messiah, who has been appointed for you—even Jesus.<sup>21</sup> Heaven must receive him until

the time comes for God to restore everything, as he promised long ago through his holy prophets. <sup>22</sup> For Moses said, 'The Lord your God will raise up for you a prophet like me from among your own people; you must listen to everything he tells you. <sup>23</sup> Anyone who does not listen to him will be completely cut off from their people.'

<sup>24</sup> "Indeed, beginning with Samuel, all the prophets who have spoken have foretold these days. <sup>25</sup> And you are heirs of the prophets and of the covenant God made with your fathers. He said to Abraham, 'Through your offspring all peoples on earth will be blessed.'<sup>26</sup> When God raised up his servant, he sent him first to you to bless you by turning each of you from your wicked ways."

Can you remember a time in your life where you felt free to speak boldly about something you believed in? Choosing to be bold especially in the face of opposition it really difficult.

Peter wasn't an educated man. He wasn't the picture-perfect follower of a rabbi in the days of Jesus. He was too old, had a family, had a job and a responsibility. But he put that all on hold once he encountered Jesus. The encounter he had with Jesus on the shore of the Sea of Galilee changed everything for him.

This unlikely guy became the leader of a movement after Jesus left. He wasn't prepared, he had seen everything that Jesus had done and said, but he didn't feel prepared.

Unprepared and scared for their lives they were stuck until the Holy Spirit arrived. He gave them a spirit of boldness and the willingness to risk on behalf of the Kingdom of God.

It's surprising that in a few short days they all moved from hiding in fear to boldly standing in the temple courts sharing about Jesus. They spoke without fear to and in front of the same people who killed Jesus.

Once they were willing to go out and speak, they met the people where they were. The first people they went to were the ones responsible for Jesus' death. They didn't condemn them but they showed them the way back to God.

What is your response when you catch someone doing something wrong? Is your first response grace? Forgiveness?

The unbelievable power of the grace of God is on full display in this passage. That power is revealed in healing. The beggar was healed from his infirmity. Some of the people of Jerusalem were healed of their hatred for Jesus. The grace of God heals well beyond our capabilities.

**DISCUSS:**

1. Where in your life do you need the boldness of the Holy Spirit in you to help you out?
2. What do you need the power of God's grace to heal in you?
3. How have you responded in the past when you've caught someone doing something wrong? Why that way? How has Jesus responded to you? Does that change anything in you?

## **Week 5 - Acts 4:1 – 31**

The priests and the captain of the temple guard and the Sadducees came up to Peter and John while they were speaking to the people. <sup>2</sup> They were greatly disturbed because the apostles were teaching the people, proclaiming in Jesus the resurrection of the dead. <sup>3</sup> They seized Peter and John and, because it was evening, they put them in jail until the next day. <sup>4</sup> But many who heard the message believed; so the number of men who believed grew to about five thousand.

<sup>5</sup> The next day the rulers, the elders and the teachers of the law met in Jerusalem. <sup>6</sup> Annas the high priest was there, and so were Caiaphas, John, Alexander and others of the high priest's family. <sup>7</sup> They had Peter and John brought before them and began to question them: "By what power or what name did you do this?"

<sup>8</sup> Then Peter, filled with the Holy Spirit, said to them: "Rulers and elders of the people! <sup>9</sup> If we are being called to account today for an act of kindness shown to a man who was lame and are being asked how he was healed, <sup>10</sup> then know this, you and all the people of Israel: It is by the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth,

whom you crucified but whom God raised from the dead, that this man stands before you healed. <sup>11</sup>

Jesus is

“the stone you builders rejected,  
which has become the cornerstone.’ <sup>a</sup>

<sup>12</sup> Salvation is found in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given to mankind by which we must be saved.”

<sup>13</sup> When they saw the courage of Peter and John and realized that they were unschooled, ordinary men, they were astonished and they took note that these men had been with Jesus. <sup>14</sup> But since they could see the man who had been healed standing there with them, there was nothing they could say. <sup>15</sup> So they ordered them to withdraw from the Sanhedrin and then conferred together. <sup>16</sup> “What are we going to do with these men?” they asked. “Everyone living in Jerusalem knows they have performed a notable sign, and we cannot deny it. <sup>17</sup> But to stop this thing from spreading any further among the people, we must warn them to speak no longer to anyone in this name.”

<sup>18</sup> Then they called them in again and commanded them not to speak or teach at all in the name of Jesus. <sup>19</sup> But Peter and John replied, “Which is right in God’s eyes: to listen to you, or to him? You be the judges! <sup>20</sup> As for us, we cannot help speaking about what we have seen and heard.”

<sup>21</sup> After further threats they let them go. They could not decide how to punish them, because all the people were praising God for what had happened. <sup>22</sup> For the man who was miraculously healed was over forty years old.

<sup>23</sup> On their release, Peter and John went back to their own people and reported all that the chief priests and the elders had said to them. <sup>24</sup> When they heard this, they raised their voices together in prayer to God. “Sovereign Lord,” they said, “you made the heavens and the earth and the sea, and everything in them. <sup>25</sup> You spoke by the Holy Spirit through the mouth of your servant, our father David:

“Why do the nations rage  
and the peoples plot in vain?

<sup>26</sup> The kings of the earth rise up  
and the rulers band together  
against the Lord  
and against his anointed one.’

<sup>27</sup> Indeed Herod and Pontius Pilate met together with the Gentiles and the people of Israel in this city to conspire against your holy servant Jesus, whom you anointed. <sup>28</sup> They did what your power and will had decided beforehand should happen. <sup>29</sup> Now, Lord, consider their threats and enable your



servants to speak your word with great boldness.<sup>30</sup> Stretch out your hand to heal and perform signs and wonders through the name of your holy servant Jesus.”

<sup>31</sup> After they prayed, the place where they were meeting was shaken. And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and spoke the word of God boldly.

Have you ever heard a great storyteller tell a story? They are so engaged with the story that they also pull you into it. You laugh when they laugh and you cry when they cry. How does that happen? You aren't part of the story yet feel like you are. Peter and John had a story to tell and their story not only touched people but changed them. What made them great storytellers?

In Acts 3, Peter heals the lame man. What a wonderful thing to do for a man who had been lame since birth! Peter used the power of the Holy Spirit within him to do what he had seen Jesus do many times over the last 3 years. Peter had learned from Jesus by being with Him and observing exactly what Jesus had done. The people in the city were excited. The religious leaders...not so much. Acts 4:2 says “They (the religious leaders) were disturbed.” Another version of this passage says the religious leaders were “grieved”. Why would you grieve over a person being healed? They had Peter

and John arrested and put in jail overnight. In the morning, they demanded answers from them. “By what power or what name did you do this?” After some investigating, they realized Peter and John were “unschooled, ordinary men”. Yet these men stood before them and spoke eloquently. How could this be?

The leaders answered their question. In verse 13 it says “they took note that these men had been with Jesus”. Peter and John had been with Jesus and observed all He had done. They had seen Him die, and then spent time with Him after His resurrection. They had a story to tell to everyone. They told the Truth about Jesus and who He was in their lives. It was the story of their experience with Jesus. We can be awed by their experience, but Jesus gives us all the power and courage to do the same thing that Peter and John did. Jesus offers us the Holy Spirit to give us the words to say and if we are a believer...a true follower of Jesus, we have a story to tell. Jesus expects us to tell our story to the world...how He changed our lives and how He is our strength and joy. We can start with the people around us and branch out to whomever God puts in our path. All we need to do is make ourselves available to God and

willing to obey His command to Make Christ Known.

After their experience with the religious leaders, Peter and John went back to their own people and praised God for all He had done. Notice in verse 29, that they don't pray for the threats of the religious leaders to go away. Instead, they pray for boldness to continue to speak God's words. God assures them He is for them. Verse 31 says "After they prayed, the place where they were meeting was shaken. And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and spoke the word of God boldly." They had the Holy Spirit, used it, and were granted more of it. That is how it works in God's economy. We don't run out of the Holy Spirit's power, instead, we are granted more.

**Discuss:**

1. Have you ever heard a great storyteller or do you know someone who is a great storyteller? What makes their storytelling so compelling?
2. Why do you think the religious leaders were grieved when Peter and John were proclaiming Jesus as resurrected from the dead?
3. In verse 20, Peter and John give the reason for their boldness. Have you had an opportunity to

boldly tell your story of your experience with Christ? Do you feel compelled to? Relate the experience to your group.

4. Why do you think it was important for Peter and John to go back to their own people after being released from the religious leaders?

## **Week 6 - Acts 4:32-5:11**

“Misappropriation of funds” is a type of theft that occurs when someone illegally uses another person’s money or property for their personal gain.

Stories like this appear in our news feeds on a regular basis, don’t they? For example, it’s the CEO who uses company funds to pay their personal credit card bills who could be charged with misappropriation of funds.

We will circle back around to the concept of misappropriation of funds in a few paragraphs. But first, read this week’s account of The First Act:

<sup>32</sup> All the believers were one in heart and mind. No one claimed that any of their possessions was their own, but they shared everything they had. <sup>33</sup> With great power the apostles continued to testify to the resurrection of the Lord Jesus. And God’s grace was so powerfully at work in them all <sup>34</sup> that there were no needy persons among them. For from time to time those who owned land or houses sold them, brought the money from the sales <sup>35</sup> and put it at the apostles’ feet, and it was distributed to anyone who had need.

<sup>36</sup> Joseph, a Levite from Cyprus, whom the apostles called Barnabas (which means “son of

encouragement”),<sup>37</sup> sold a field he owned and brought the money and put it at the apostles’ feet.

5<sup>1</sup> Now a man named Ananias, together with his wife Sapphira, also sold a piece of property. <sup>2</sup> With his wife’s full knowledge he kept back part of the money for himself but brought the rest and put it at the apostles’ feet.

<sup>3</sup> Then Peter said, “Ananias, how is it that Satan has so filled your heart that you have lied to the Holy Spirit and have kept for yourself some of the money you received for the land? <sup>4</sup> Didn’t it belong to you before it was sold? And after it was sold, wasn’t the money at your disposal? What made you think of doing such a thing? You have not lied just to human beings but to God.”

<sup>5</sup> When Ananias heard this, he fell down and died. And great fear seized all who heard what had happened. <sup>6</sup> Then some young men came forward, wrapped up his body, and carried him out and buried him.

<sup>7</sup> About three hours later his wife came in, not knowing what had happened. <sup>8</sup> Peter asked

her, "Tell me, is this the price you and Ananias got for the land?"

"Yes," she said, "that is the price."

<sup>9</sup> Peter said to her, "How could you conspire to test the Spirit of the Lord? Listen! The feet of the men who buried your husband are at the door, and they will carry you out also."

<sup>10</sup> At that moment she fell down at his feet and died. Then the young men came in and, finding her dead, carried her out and buried her beside her husband. <sup>11</sup> Great fear seized the whole church and all who heard about these events.

As is usually the case when we read the Scriptures, there is a lot going on here. In 21<sup>st</sup> Century North America, the opening portion of the reading is almost impossible to make sense of.

Luke tells us that the first followers regard their money and their possessions as not being their own but belonging to everyone. Since what was theirs was everyone's, nobody was in need. In fact, the text is quite clear that "God's grace was so powerfully at work in them all that there were no needy persons among them." They took care of one another.

At times, the first followers even looked outside of their needs and met the needs of others. The text

tells us that on some occasions, people would sell land or homes, give the money to the leaders, and they would then distribute those proceeds to people who needed it.

For these people, this was what it meant to be good stewards of the resources God had provided them. The first followers didn't view their resources as their own, but rather as a gift from God.

It is also fair to say that they knew the truth that God loves a cheerful giver.

At least most of them did.

It may be understood that Ananias and Sapphira were also among the first believers. Given the fact that they sold a piece of property and set money at the apostles' feet like the believers in Acts 4 did, that would stand to reason.

There is, however, a notable difference in Ananias and Sapphira's giving. Whereas the believers "brought the money from the sales and put it at the apostles' feet," Ananias "kept back part of the money for himself" with Sapphira's full knowledge.



Ananias put some of the money at the apostles' feet but kept back money for himself. That phrase in the Greek, kept back, means misappropriation.

Ananias and Sapphira apparently had a different understanding of their financial resources than the rest of the tribe did. They used the sale of some of the property they possessed for their own person gain. In essence, they stole from God and from the community.

Later in history, the Apostle Paul would tell the church in Rome that all have sinned and fallen short of the glory of God. Paul would also say, "the wages of sin is death."

Ananias and Sapphira experienced this immediately. When Peter confronted Ananias, he asked how he could have lied – "not just to human beings but to God." Acts 5:5 reports, "When Ananias heard this, he fell down and died."

A few hours later, Sapphira came in, was confronted, too. Sapphira lied to Peter and to God. She fell at his feet and died, too.

As we live and move and have our being in 21<sup>st</sup> Century North America, and more particularly in the part of the world that Centerpoint Church of Hawarden and Sioux Center are situated, we don't

share the same mental models of financial resources. It is not the expectation that everything we have is shared with the community.

However, our beliefs do align with the first followers in that misappropriating funds leads to death. You may not drop dead on the spot like Ananias and Sapphira but withholding from God and not being generous with our resources will lead to a slow spiritual death.

**Discuss:**

1. Think about a time when someone shared something with you. What did they share and how did you feel about them sharing what they shared with you?
2. Think about a time when you willingly gave something away, i.e. you bought someone coffee, paid for their lunch, or took them a meal. Share that experience, too.
3. Have you ever experienced a prompting from the Holy Spirit to give to someone else that you didn't respond to? As shame-free as you are able, recall that share with the group

the feelings that stirred in you both then and now as you retell it.

4. What is one faithful step you can take to increase your generosity or to give back to God more of what he has given you?

## **Week 7 - Acts 5:17-42**

<sup>17</sup>Then the high priest and all his associates, who were members of the party of the Sadducees, were filled with jealousy. <sup>18</sup>They arrested the apostles and put them in the public jail. <sup>19</sup>But during the night an angel of the Lord opened the doors of the jail and brought them out. <sup>20</sup>“Go, stand in the temple courts,” he said, “and tell the people all about this new life.”

<sup>21</sup>At daybreak they entered the temple courts, as they had been told, and began to teach the people.

When the high priest and his associates arrived, they called together the Sanhedrin—the full assembly of the elders of Israel—and sent to the jail for the apostles. <sup>22</sup>But on arriving at the jail, the officers did not find them there. So they went back and reported, <sup>23</sup>“We found the jail securely locked, with the guards standing at the doors; but when we opened them, we found no one inside.” <sup>24</sup>On hearing this report, the captain of the temple guard and the chief priests were at a loss, wondering what this might lead to.

<sup>25</sup> Then someone came and said, “Look! The men you put in jail are standing in the temple courts teaching the people.” <sup>26</sup> At that, the captain went with his officers and brought the apostles. They did not use force, because they feared that the people would stone them.

<sup>27</sup> The apostles were brought in and made to appear before the Sanhedrin to be questioned by the high priest. <sup>28</sup> “We gave you strict orders not to teach in this name,” he said. “Yet you have filled Jerusalem with your teaching and are determined to make us guilty of this man’s blood.”

<sup>29</sup> Peter and the other apostles replied: “We must obey God rather than human beings! <sup>30</sup> The God of our ancestors raised Jesus from the dead—whom you killed by hanging him on a cross. <sup>31</sup> God exalted him to his own right hand as Prince and Savior that he might bring Israel to repentance and forgive their sins. <sup>32</sup> We are witnesses of these things, and so is the Holy Spirit, whom God has given to those who obey him.”

<sup>33</sup> When they heard this, they were furious and wanted to put them to death. <sup>34</sup> But a Pharisee named Gamaliel, a teacher of the law, who was honored by all the people, stood up in the Sanhedrin and ordered that the men be put outside for a little while. <sup>35</sup> Then he addressed the

Sanhedrin: “Men of Israel, consider carefully what you intend to do to these men. <sup>36</sup> Some time ago Theudas appeared, claiming to be somebody, and about four hundred men rallied to him. He was killed, all his followers were dispersed, and it all came to nothing. <sup>37</sup> After him, Judas the Galilean appeared in the days of the census and led a band of people in revolt. He too was killed, and all his followers were scattered. <sup>38</sup> Therefore, in the present case I advise you: Leave these men alone! Let them go! For if their purpose or activity is of human origin, it will fail. <sup>39</sup> But if it is from God, you will not be able to stop these men; you will only find yourselves fighting against God.”

<sup>40</sup> His speech persuaded them. They called the apostles in and had them flogged. Then they ordered them not to speak in the name of Jesus, and let them go.

<sup>41</sup> The apostles left the Sanhedrin, rejoicing because they had been counted worthy of suffering disgrace for the Name. <sup>42</sup> Day after day, in the temple courts and from house to house, they never stopped teaching and proclaiming the good news that Jesus is the Messiah.

If there were one word to describe Peter and the apostles in Acts 5, it would be bold. According to Webster's Dictionary, bold is defined as:

1. Forward to meet danger; venturesome; daring; not timorous or shrinking from risk; brave; courageous.
2. Standing prominently out to view; markedly conspicuous; striking the eye; in high relief.
3. Steep; abrupt; prominent.  
(from Webster's Revised Unabridged Dictionary of the English Language, PC Study Bible formatted electronic database Copyright © 2011 by Biblesoft, Inc. All rights reserved.)

In Acts 4:17, the religious leaders confronted the apostles and told them to stop speaking to anyone "in this name". They didn't even acknowledge that "this name" was the name Jesus. This didn't stop the apostles. As the definition of bold tells us, they went forward to meet danger, knowing the religious leaders would continue to oppose them. They did not shrink from risk. Instead, they were prominently in view...at the temple daily, preaching and healing people.

This bold behavior led them to be brought before the religious leaders a second time. This time included an overnight in a public jail first...put there to shame them. God's angel rescued them from the jail and gave them direct orders. "Go, stand in

the temple courts and tell the people the full message of this new life.” Again, the definition of boldness describes what happened next. They fully obeyed the angel’s command to go, stand in public, and tell the people about Jesus’ death and resurrection.

When confronted by the Sanhedrin, the religious leaders, a second time and told to stop preaching and healing people, the bold reply from Peter was, “We must obey God rather than men.” But these men Peter was challenging were their leaders, people they were obliged to obey. On what grounds could they oppose their leaders? On the Truth of the Gospel. These leaders had put Jesus to death, even though they denied that fact. In verse 32, Peter reminds them, “We are witnesses of these things, and so is the Holy Spirit, whom God has given to those who obey Him.” In Jewish culture, it took a minimum of 2 witnesses to verify a truth in court. The apostles are in a court of sorts...in front of the Sanhedrin, the religious ruling body in Jerusalem...and their testimony as witnesses to Jesus' death and resurrection is not upheld as truth. Yet the Truth they professed was the foundation of the apostle’s boldness. They had witnessed Jesus dying and coming back to life and had received the



promised Holy Spirit as the source of power and confidence they needed to be bold.

As this chapter ends, the apostles have been flogged for their testimony. Flogging in Bible times involved being beaten, usually with a whip made of leather strips. In our human minds, this doesn't seem fair. They obeyed God, didn't shrink from risk, and stood boldly for the Truth. Why were they flogged? Shouldn't God have blessed them instead? This is another example of how God's ways are very different from human ways. God does not promise we will be free from persecution or suffering in this world when we Make Christ Known. He allowed His own Son to be persecuted and put to death. Should we expect any less? What He does promise is that He will walk with us through it, as He did the apostles. The apostles were rejoicing that they were worthy to suffer for the sake of Christ and they continued to go to the temple courts day after day to Make Christ Known.

**Discuss:**

1. How do you define the word bold? What would a bold behavior look like to you? How bold are you for Christ?
2. Have you ever been in a situation where you needed to obey God and go against the ideas of the culture, of men? How did that go for you?

3. Have you ever been treated unfairly because of your religious beliefs? Shunned or forsaken by friends, lost a job, shamed in front of others? Were you able to rejoice in the suffering?
4. What would living as a bold Christian look like in your life? What are some of the different ways to be bold for Christ?
5. In what areas do you feel the Holy Spirit prompting you to be bold...to go, be markedly conspicuous, and Make Christ Known?

## **Week 8 - Acts 6:8-8:1**

Now Stephen, a man full of God's grace and power, performed great wonders and signs among the people. <sup>9</sup> Opposition arose, however, from members of the Synagogue of the Freedmen (as it was called)—Jews of Cyrene and Alexandria as well as the provinces of Cilicia and Asia—who began to argue with Stephen. <sup>10</sup> But they could not stand up against the wisdom the Spirit gave him as he spoke.

<sup>11</sup> Then they secretly persuaded some men to say, "We have heard Stephen speak blasphemous words against Moses and against God."

<sup>12</sup> So they stirred up the people and the elders and the teachers of the law. They seized Stephen and brought him before the Sanhedrin. <sup>13</sup> They produced false witnesses, who testified, "This fellow never stops speaking against this holy place and against the law. <sup>14</sup> For we have heard him say that this Jesus of Nazareth will destroy this place and change the customs Moses handed down to us."

<sup>15</sup> All who were sitting in the Sanhedrin looked intently at Stephen, and they saw that his face was like the face of an angel.

Then the high priest asked Stephen, "Are these charges true?"

<sup>2</sup> To this he replied: “Brothers and fathers, listen to me! The God of glory appeared to our father Abraham while he was still in Mesopotamia, before he lived in Harran. <sup>3</sup> ‘Leave your country and your people,’ God said, ‘and go to the land I will show you.’

<sup>4</sup> “So he left the land of the Chaldeans and settled in Harran. After the death of his father, God sent him to this land where you are now living. <sup>5</sup> He gave him no inheritance here, not even enough ground to set his foot on. But God promised him that he and his descendants after him would possess the land, even though at that time Abraham had no child. <sup>6</sup> God spoke to him in this way: ‘For four hundred years your descendants will be strangers in a country not their own, and they will be enslaved and mistreated. <sup>7</sup> But I will punish the nation they serve as slaves,’ God said, ‘and afterward they will come out of that country and worship me in this place.’ <sup>8</sup> Then he gave Abraham the covenant of circumcision. And Abraham became the father of Isaac and circumcised him eight days after his birth. Later Isaac became the father of Jacob, and Jacob became the father of the twelve patriarchs.

<sup>9</sup> “Because the patriarchs were jealous of Joseph, they sold him as a slave into Egypt. But God was with him <sup>10</sup> and rescued him from all his troubles. He gave Joseph wisdom and enabled him to gain the goodwill of Pharaoh king of Egypt. So Pharaoh made him ruler over Egypt and all his palace.

<sup>11</sup> “Then a famine struck all Egypt and Canaan, bringing great suffering, and our ancestors could not find food. <sup>12</sup> When Jacob heard that there was grain in Egypt, he sent our forefathers on their first visit. <sup>13</sup> On their second visit, Joseph told his brothers who he was, and Pharaoh learned about Joseph’s family. <sup>14</sup> After this, Joseph sent for his father Jacob and his whole family, seventy-five in all. <sup>15</sup> Then Jacob went down to Egypt, where he and our ancestors died. <sup>16</sup> Their bodies were brought back to Shechem and placed in the tomb that Abraham had bought from the sons of Hamor at Shechem for a certain sum of money.

<sup>17</sup> “As the time drew near for God to fulfill his promise to Abraham, the number of our people in Egypt had greatly increased. <sup>18</sup> Then ‘a new king, to whom Joseph meant nothing, came to power in Egypt.’ <sup>19</sup> He dealt treacherously with our people and oppressed our ancestors by forcing them to

throw out their newborn babies so that they would die.

<sup>20</sup> “At that time Moses was born, and he was no ordinary child. For three months he was cared for by his family. <sup>21</sup> When he was placed outside, Pharaoh’s daughter took him and brought him up as her own son. <sup>22</sup> Moses was educated in all the wisdom of the Egyptians and was powerful in speech and action.

<sup>23</sup> “When Moses was forty years old, he decided to visit his own people, the Israelites. <sup>24</sup> He saw one of them being mistreated by an Egyptian, so he went to his defense and avenged him by killing the Egyptian. <sup>25</sup> Moses thought that his own people would realize that God was using him to rescue them, but they did not. <sup>26</sup> The next day Moses came upon two Israelites who were fighting. He tried to reconcile them by saying, ‘Men, you are brothers; why do you want to hurt each other?’

<sup>27</sup> “But the man who was mistreating the other pushed Moses aside and said, ‘Who made you ruler and judge over us?’ <sup>28</sup> Are you thinking of killing me as you killed the Egyptian yesterday?’ <sup>29</sup> When Moses heard

this, he fled to Midian, where he settled as a foreigner and had two sons.

<sup>30</sup> “After forty years had passed, an angel appeared to Moses in the flames of a burning bush in the desert near Mount Sinai. <sup>31</sup> When he saw this, he was amazed at the sight. As he went over to get a closer look, he heard the Lord say: <sup>32</sup> ‘I am the God of your fathers, the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob.’ Moses trembled with fear and did not dare to look.

<sup>33</sup> “Then the Lord said to him, ‘Take off your sandals, for the place where you are standing is holy ground. <sup>34</sup> I have indeed seen the oppression of my people in Egypt. I have heard their groaning and have come down to set them free. Now come, I will send you back to Egypt.’

<sup>35</sup> “This is the same Moses they had rejected with the words, ‘Who made you ruler and judge?’ He was sent to be their ruler and deliverer by God himself, through the angel who appeared to him in the bush. <sup>36</sup> He led them out of Egypt and performed wonders and signs in Egypt, at the Red Sea and for forty years in the wilderness.

<sup>37</sup> “This is the Moses who told the Israelites, ‘God will raise up for you a prophet like me from your own people.’ <sup>38</sup> He was in the assembly in the wilderness, with the angel who spoke to him on Mount Sinai,

and with our ancestors; and he received living words to pass on to us.

<sup>39</sup> “But our ancestors refused to obey him. Instead, they rejected him and in their hearts turned back to Egypt. <sup>40</sup> They told Aaron, ‘Make us gods who will go before us. As for this fellow Moses who led us out of Egypt—we don’t know what has happened to him!’ <sup>41</sup> That was the time they made an idol in the form of a calf. They brought sacrifices to it and reveled in what their own hands had made. <sup>42</sup> But God turned away from them and gave them over to the worship of the sun, moon and stars. This agrees with what is written in the book of the prophets:

“Did you bring me sacrifices and offerings forty years in the wilderness, people of Israel?

<sup>43</sup> You have taken up the tabernacle of Molek and the star of your god Rephan, the idols you made to worship. Therefore I will send you into exile’ beyond Babylon.

<sup>44</sup> “Our ancestors had the tabernacle of the covenant law with them in the wilderness. It had been made as God directed Moses, according to the pattern he had seen. <sup>45</sup> After



receiving the tabernacle, our ancestors under Joshua brought it with them when they took the land from the nations God drove out before them. It remained in the land until the time of David,<sup>46</sup> who enjoyed God's favor and asked that he might provide a dwelling place for the God of Jacob.<sup>47</sup> But it was Solomon who built a house for him.

<sup>48</sup> "However, the Most High does not live in houses made by human hands. As the prophet says:  
<sup>49</sup> "Heaven is my throne, and the earth is my footstool. What kind of house will you build for me? says the Lord. Or where will my resting place be?  
<sup>50</sup> Has not my hand made all these things?"

<sup>51</sup> "You stiff-necked people! Your hearts and ears are still uncircumcised. You are just like your ancestors: You always resist the Holy Spirit!<sup>52</sup> Was there ever a prophet your ancestors did not persecute? They even killed those who predicted the coming of the Righteous One. And now you have betrayed and murdered him—<sup>53</sup> you who have received the law that was given through angels but have not obeyed it."

<sup>54</sup> When the members of the Sanhedrin heard this, they were furious and gnashed their teeth at him.<sup>55</sup> But Stephen, full of the Holy Spirit, looked up to heaven and saw the glory of God, and Jesus standing at the right hand of God.<sup>56</sup> "Look," he said,

“I see heaven open and the Son of Man standing at the right hand of God.”

<sup>57</sup> At this they covered their ears and, yelling at the top of their voices, they all rushed at him, <sup>58</sup> dragged him out of the city and began to stone him. Meanwhile, the witnesses laid their coats at the feet of a young man named Saul.

<sup>59</sup> While they were stoning him, Stephen prayed, “Lord Jesus, receive my spirit.” <sup>60</sup> Then he fell on his knees and cried out, “Lord, do not hold this sin against them.” When he had said this, he fell asleep.

And Saul approved of their killing him.

Do you remember when you were a kid there was a Looney Tunes cartoon where someone started a small snowball at the top of a hill and by the time it hit the bottom of the hill the snowball was all consuming. What started out small and unassuming became overpowering.

Stephen wasn't the most important follower of Jesus when he is first mentioned in this passage. In fact, most casual readers may not

remember him being mentioned before this right here.

Seizing Stephen was a measured risk by the council hoping to intimidate other followers of Jesus by roughing him up. The plan didn't go great. Stephen, when given an audience, shared the entire history of Jewish people with the Council. Which is funny. The group in charge of teaching and protecting the Jewish law was being told by a fairly uneducated man all of their history.

Needless to say, that didn't go well for Stephen. But in reality, their response didn't go well for the Council.

Back to your cartoon history. Do you remember the cartoon where a character is in a boat and it sprung a leak? The character uses their finger to plug the hole to stop the water from coming in. It works for a moment, but then new leaks spring up from all over. Eventually, it becomes overwhelming and the boat sinks.

The Council believed silencing Stephen would cause the rest of Jesus' followers to think twice before they spoke out for the Gospel. What they missed out on was the Holy Spirit and the boldness He brought to that group. Instead of intimidating them, it sparked an absolute fire.

Not in Jerusalem. And maybe they thought, out of sight, out of mind and their problem would be solved. The reality is, as the disciples left Jerusalem they took the Gospel of Jesus with them and it went wild around the world. A proverbial, win the battle but lose the war for the Council. They silenced Stephen but they were engulfed by the Gospel.

Stephen, in the face of unbelievable difficulty, kept the main thing the main thing. He never lost sight of Jesus and the Gospel. His faithfulness was a catalyst for the first Gospel movement.

**DISCUSS:**

1. Can you think of a time in your life when something small and unassuming took on a life of it's own?
2. How do you need to prepare yourself to be used like Stephen?
3. Given the same opportunity what would you say to in front of the Council?

## **Week 9 - Acts 8:26-40**

How far are you willing to travel in search of something you desire? Does the distance you are willing to travel diminish if you are not guaranteed admission?

Would you be willing to drive, say, 1500 miles to Disney if you weren't guaranteed entrance? Orlando, FL is about 1,560 miles from Sioux County, IA and likely requires 22-24 hours of travel time. Don't consider the financial side of the excursion, just answer the question – if there is no guarantee, would you do it?

This week's First Act Scripture is found in Acts 8. Say a word of prayer and then read the Luke's account of Philip and the Ethiopian eunuch.

<sup>26</sup> Now an angel of the Lord said to Philip, "Go south to the road—the desert road—that goes down from Jerusalem to Gaza." <sup>27</sup> So he started out, and on his way, he met an Ethiopian eunuch, an important official in charge of all the treasury of the Kandake (which means "queen of the Ethiopians"). This man had gone to Jerusalem to worship, <sup>28</sup> and on his way, home was sitting in his chariot reading the Book of Isaiah the prophet. <sup>29</sup> The Spirit told Philip, "Go to that chariot and stay near it."

<sup>30</sup> Then Philip ran up to the chariot and heard the man reading Isaiah the prophet. “Do you understand what you are reading?” Philip asked.

<sup>31</sup> “How can I,” he said, “unless someone explains it to me?” So, he invited Philip to come up and sit with him.

<sup>32</sup> This is the passage of Scripture the eunuch was reading: “He was led like a sheep to the slaughter, and as a lamb before its shearer is silent, so he did not open his mouth. <sup>33</sup> In his humiliation he was deprived of justice. Who can speak of his descendants? For his life was taken from the earth.”

<sup>34</sup> The eunuch asked Philip, “Tell me, please, who is the prophet talking about, himself or someone else?” <sup>35</sup> Then Philip began with that very passage of Scripture and told him the good news about Jesus.

<sup>36</sup> As they traveled along the road, they came to some water and the eunuch said, “Look, here is water. What can stand in the way of my being baptized?” <sup>[37]</sup>

<sup>38</sup> And he gave orders to stop the chariot. Then both Philip and the eunuch went down into the water and Philip baptized him.

<sup>39</sup> When they came up out of the water, the Spirit of the Lord suddenly took Philip away, and the eunuch did not see him again, but went on his way rejoicing. <sup>40</sup> Philip, however, appeared at Azotus and traveled about, preaching the gospel in all the towns until he reached Caesarea.

Chances are you've read this account before and have some understanding of the significance of this story in the First Act.

The Ethiopian eunuch was an important person in his culture. He was wealthy and in charge of the finances the queen of the Ethiopians. The text is clear about these two things.

A couple of things are less clear and worth noting here. We do not know why this person was made a eunuch. We don't need to get into the gory details, but he was disfigured in such a way as to not be able to have children. The other thing of note is the fact that eunuchs were not allowed in the assembly.

The Ethiopian eunuch was a worshiper, and he loved the Lord enough to drive from Sioux County to Orlando, metaphorically speaking. The distance from Ethiopia to Jerusalem was more than 1500 miles, and it certainly took more than 22-24 hours to make that journey. But make the journey he did.

We aren't told if he was allowed into the assembly or not, but the text does tell us he went to Jerusalem to worship and was sitting in his chariot on his way home, reading the Scriptures.

The object of the Ethiopian eunuch's desire was well worth the trip!

Check out these three things we can take away from this story. First, God draws unlikely people. Secondly, obedience creates opportunity for growth. And finally, there is an invitation to all of humanity to be open to the Spirit.

Our Reformed theology tells us that the assembly - or the gathering of the people of God for worship - is an act of God. God is the one who draws people to worship through the power of the Holy Spirit. God, in the person of the Holy Spirit, is the one who makes sense of the Scriptures, and it is God who brings about transformation in the lives of people.

Here in Acts 8, God drew a wealthy man from Ethiopia – albeit a eunuch – to Jerusalem to worship. Additionally, the Spirit



is the one who told Philip to go to his chariot and to stay near it. And it was the Spirit who enabled the eunuch to go away rejoicing after being baptized.

Coming up out of the waters of baptism, the eunuch's old life was gone, and a new creation was formed, evidence that obedience creates opportunity for growth.

The wealthy Ethiopian's obedience to make the journey to Jerusalem, even though he had no promise of admission, set the stage for the Spirit to do some work in his life.

Philip's obedience played a part, too! Willing to stay near the chariot, he eventually heard the eunuch reading, and then the Spirit used Philip to explain the Scriptures to this man from another land.

With both of their eyes open to the work that God was doing in them, with them, and through them, the two came to some water on their journey. This is one way that being open to the Spirit's leading has effect. Seeing the water, they had the chariot pull over, they both got down and went into the water.

As soon as they came up out of the water, the Spirit took Philip away and the eunuch went on his way rejoicing.

It's an amazing story, isn't it? God draws unlikely people. Obedience creates opportunity for growth for each of them (and us). And being open to the Spirit set the stage for great things in their lives.

**Discuss:**

1. What lengths are you willing to go to in search of the Lord?
2. Do you have recollection of a time when God called you, unlikely as it may have seemed?
3. Can you think of a place in your life where you may experience growth if you are increasingly obedient?
4. Is there anything keeping you from being open to the Spirit?