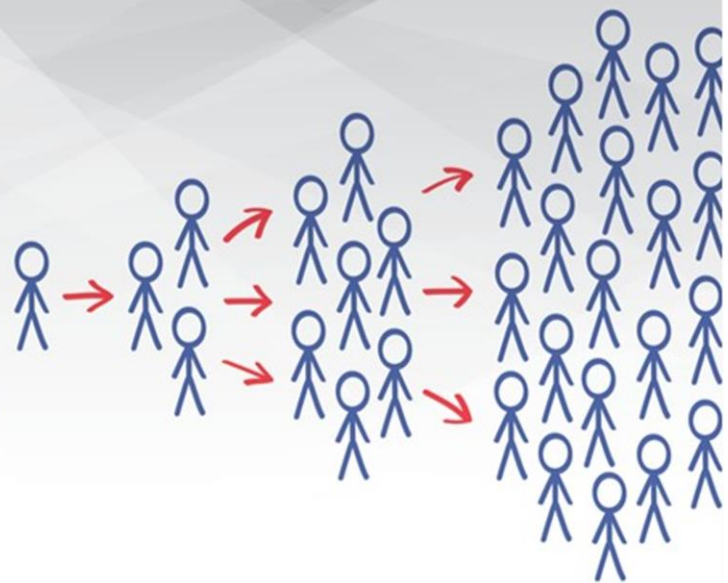


GOING VIRAL

A study of the book of Acts



DEVOTIONAL

August 14

Text: Acts 11:19-30

Event: The Church at Antioch is planted.

Big Idea: All genuine believers are part of the family of God regardless of their background.

Background: In Acts 10-11 it is very clear that all people have the same opportunity to repent of their sins and believe the gospel (see Acts 11:14-18). The Jews had always been God's chosen people, but it is very clear that everybody has access to eternal life through Christ. This reflects the words of Jesus (see Mark 1:38) where He explains He wants to preach also in "the other towns" where the non-Jews lived!

Questions for Further Discovery:

1. In verses 19-21 we see that Jews from Jerusalem preached the good news to other Jews and believers from Cyprus and Cyrene preached the gospel to Gentiles (non-Jews). Why do you think the author emphasizes this two part strategy for reaching people with the gospel?
2. In verses 22-26 we see Barnabas and Paul on the scene after the gospel had already reached Antioch. What does this teach us about God's plan for the spreading of the good news about Jesus?
3. In verse 26 we see that a new name was given to believers. What was the name that was give? Why was this significant?

Something Specific to Pray About This Week:

Please pray for someone you know personally who is lost and far away from God. Maybe even pray for a divine appointment that might give you the opportunity to share your faith with this person.



August 21

Text: Acts 12

Event: Peter's miraculous escape from prison and impending death

Big Idea: God's hand is on us when we are busy in His service and full of prayer.

Background: James the Apostle has been murdered by Herod and now Peter is in prison waiting for his fate as the church prays.

Questions for Further Discovery:

1. In verse 5 we see the church praying for Peter in this desperate situation. What does this situation teach us about our own dependence on God when we face difficulty?
2. Verses 6-19 tell an extraordinary story with the details needed to see ourselves in the position of each person who was there. How do you think you would have responded if you were Peter? How about Rhoda and the other believers? How about Herod and the guards?
3. Verse 24 gives us a clear picture of the end result of believers witnessing. What does this event tell us about God's protection when we are engaged in witnessing about our faith?

Something Specific to Pray About This Week:

Please pray for the persecuted church around the world. Many genuine believers face extraordinary persecution in many places here and abroad because of their testimony about Jesus.



August 28

Text: Acts 13

Event: Antioch becomes a sending church.

Big Idea: The Spirit of God and the believers in Antioch send Paul and Barnabas on a missionary journey.

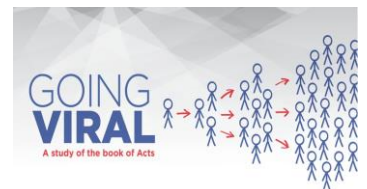
Background: The church has been planted in Antioch and is growing under the influence of godly teachers including Paul and Barnabas. God's plan was for the church to send these two on a missionary journey to spread the gospel to new places.

Questions for Further Discovery:

1. Verses 2-4 record the decision to send Paul and Barnabas out. Who made this decision and how was it carried out?
2. Verses 29-32, 38-39 provide a thumbnail sketch of the "Good News." What are the key aspects of the gospel in these verses?
3. Verses 26 and 46-47 indicate that the gospel is applicable to both Jews and non-Jews. What does this teach us about God's view of every person who is far away from Him?

Something Specific to Pray About This Week:

Please pray for the launch of the Lighthouse campus. Pray for the pastor who will lead, the Launch Team who will build the church with him and for the lost in the community who need a new church home.



September 4

Text: Acts 15:1-35

Event: Some leaders were adding aspects of law to the pure gospel of salvation by grace.

Big Idea: Eternal salvation from sin is based on grace alone.

Background: There were early struggles in the church by some who would try to reconcile the gospel to the old religious traditions of Judaism. While it is important to maintain unity in the church, we must not compromise the gospel in the process.

Questions for Further Discovery:

1. In verse 5 we see that some felt strongly about Gentiles being circumcised and following the Law of Moses. Why do you think they felt this way?
2. In verses 8-11 Peter addresses the church leaders in Jerusalem concerning salvation for both Jews and Gentiles. What important points did he make?
3. We see in verses 23-29 that the church at Jerusalem sent a letter to clarify their view of this controversy. Do you think the letter fostered unity among the believers?

Something Specific to Pray About This Week:

Please pray for continuing unity at Findlay E-Free church. Pray for the leadership at both campuses and for the combined congregation that we will be a bright light in the community for Christ.



September 11

Text: Acts 18:1-3, 18-28, 1 Corinthians 16:19

Event: Aquila and Priscilla were common people who made an extraordinary impact on the spread of the gospel.

Big Idea: God uses both tentmakers and preachers to spread the truth of the gospel.

Background: Aquila and Priscilla were believers from Rome who had left Italy due to persecution against Jews. Like Paul they made a living as tradesmen making tents and found themselves traveling and ministering together with him. Although these two were not educated like Paul, they had clarity concerning truth and were able to influence the powerful preacher, Apollos, in a positive way.

Questions for Further Discovery:

1. In verse 3 we find that Paul had some things in common with Aquila and Priscilla. What did they have in common? What is the significance of their relationship as we think about gospel ministry in today's context?
2. In verses 24-26 we see Aquila and Priscilla helping Apollos gain a better understanding of the gospel. What does this teach us about community in the church and the importance of truth and humility?
3. In verses 27-28 we see the impact of the ministry of Apollos. What was his primary message and how did Aquila and Priscilla influence this preacher for the good of the gospel?

Something Specific to Pray About This Week:

Please take a personal inventory of your investment in building His church and pray that God will lead you in how you should use your spiritual gifts in practical ways in coming days.

