

## Acts 29 – Week 1 – Lighting the Fire – Bible Study Helps

**Sermon Summary:** This sermon examines the early chapters of Acts, focusing on the transition of ministry from Jesus to the apostles and the early church. It emphasizes the importance of reading and understanding Acts in its historical context, the power of the Holy Spirit in empowering believers, and the call for Christians today to continue the work of spreading the Gospel with boldness and conviction.

### Key Points:

- Acts is a transitional book – from Jew to Gentile, from Jerusalem to Antioch, from Peter to Paul, etc
- The Holy Spirit empowers believers to witness
- The early church faced opposition but remained steadfast in preaching Christ
- Christians today are called to take ownership of the Gospel ministry
- The importance of reading and understanding Acts in its proper context
- The power of prayer and unity in the early church
- The need for boldness in sharing the Gospel message

### Scripture Reference:

- Acts 1-4

### Stories:

- Peter and John healing the lame man at the temple gate
- The apostles being questioned by the religious leaders
- Barnabas selling his land and giving the proceeds to the apostles

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Discipleship and Small Group Guide: Lighting the Fire - Acts 1-4

Opening Discussion:

1. What stood out to you most from the sermon on Acts 1-4?
2. How familiar were you with the book of Acts before this sermon? Has your perspective changed?

Key Takeaways:

1. The book of Acts shows the transition of ministry ownership from Jesus to the apostles and early church.
2. The Holy Spirit empowered believers to preach the gospel boldly.
3. The early church faced opposition but remained committed to spreading the Gospel of Christ.
4. The apostles' preaching focused on Jesus' death, burial, resurrection, and a need for repentance.
5. Unity and generosity characterized the early Christian community.

Discussion Questions:

1. How does understanding Acts as a "transitional book" help us interpret its contents?
2. What similarities and differences do you see between the early church in Acts and the church today?
3. How did Peter's boldness change after receiving the Holy Spirit? How can we cultivate that kind of boldness?
4. What can we learn from the apostles' response to opposition and threats?
5. How does the unity and generosity described in Acts 4:32-37 challenge our current church practices?

Practical Applications:

1. Commit to reading through the entire book of Acts in the next month.
2. Identify one area where you can be more intentional about sharing your faith this week.
3. Pray for increased boldness in speaking about Jesus to others.
4. Look for an opportunity to be generous to someone in your church community this week.
5. Discuss with the group how you can foster greater unity in your local church.

Closing Prayer: Spend time praying together, asking God to light a fire in each group member to advance the gospel message, just as the early church did in Acts.

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### Discipleship Questions

How does the concept of 'ministry ownership change' challenge us to take personal responsibility for sharing the Gospel in our daily lives?

In what ways can we cultivate the same boldness and conviction demonstrated by Peter and John when facing opposition to our faith?

How might our understanding of the Holy Spirit's role in the early church impact our expectations and reliance on the Spirit today?

What lessons can we draw from the early believers' unity and willingness to share resources as described in Acts 4?

How does the apostles' focus on preaching 'Jesus Christ crucified' inform our approach to evangelism in a modern context?

In what ways might we be misinterpreting or misapplying Acts 2:38 in our understanding of salvation and baptism?

How can we balance our desire for miraculous signs with the primary mission of proclaiming the Gospel message?

What parallels can we draw between the religious opposition faced by the early church and challenges to Christianity in our current society?

How does the apostles' response to threats and persecution challenge our own reactions when facing adversity for our faith?

In what ways can we cultivate a sense of urgency and expectancy for Christ's return, as exhibited by the early church, without neglecting our present responsibilities?

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A 5-day Bible reading plan and devotional guide

## **Day 1: Empowered Witnesses**

Reading: Acts 1:1-11

Devotional: As we begin our journey through Acts, we see Jesus giving His final instructions to the disciples before ascending to heaven. He promises them the Holy Spirit and commands them to be His witnesses "unto the uttermost part of the earth" (v.8). This passage reminds us that our mission as believers is to share the Gospel of Jesus Christ with everyone we meet. Just as the disciples were empowered by the Holy Spirit, we too have been given the same Spirit to guide and strengthen us in our witness.

Reflect on how you can be a more effective witness for Christ in your daily life. Are there areas where you need to rely more on the Holy Spirit's power? Pray for opportunities to share your faith and for boldness to seize those moments.

## **Day 2: The Power of Pentecost**

Reading: Acts 2:1-21

Devotional: The dramatic events of Pentecost mark the fulfillment of Jesus' promise to send the Holy Spirit. The disciples began to speak in other languages (that they did not know), demonstrating that God was doing something supernatural and pointing the hearers to the message coming from Peter. The Bible says that the Jews require a sign, and this was a sign to the unbelieving Jews so that they would hear God's message.

Consider how the Holy Spirit is working in your life today. Are you open to His leading and empowerment? Ask God to lead you by His Spirit and use you as a vessel to reach others with the gospel. Pray for the courage to step out of your comfort zone and share God's love with someone from a different background or culture.

## **Day 3: Healing in Jesus' Name**

Reading: Acts 3:1-16

Devotional: The healing of the lame man at the Beautiful Gate demonstrates the power of Christ and the faith of the apostles. Peter and John didn't rely on their own abilities but on the authority of Christ. This miracle opened the door for Peter to preach the gospel and point people to Jesus as the source of true healing and salvation.

Reflect on areas in your life where you need healing - physically, emotionally, or spiritually. Bring these needs before God in faith, trusting in the power of Jesus' name. Also, consider how God might use your testimony of His work in your life to draw others to Him. Pray for opportunities to share your story and for eyes to see the needs of those around you.

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### **Day 4: Boldness in the Face of Opposition**

Reading: Acts 4:1-22

Devotional: As the apostles faced opposition from religious leaders, they remained steadfast in their commitment to preaching the gospel. Their bold declaration, "For we cannot but speak the things which we have seen and heard" (v.20), challenges us to examine our own commitment to sharing the truth about Jesus, even when it's difficult or unpopular.

Ask yourself: What fears or hesitations hold me back from speaking boldly about my faith? Pray for the courage to stand firm in your convictions and for wisdom to know how to respond to those who oppose the gospel. Remember that the same Holy Spirit who empowered the apostles is also at work in you.

### **Day 5: United in Purpose and Prayer**

Reading: Acts 4:23-37

Devotional: After facing threats, the early believers gathered to pray for boldness and for God's power to be displayed. Their unity in purpose and their reliance on God's strength resulted in continued growth in the church. The generosity and sacrificial giving of believers like Barnabas demonstrate the transformative power of the gospel in their lives.

Consider how you can contribute to the unity and mission of your local church. Are there ways you can be more generous with your time, talents, or resources? Pray for a spirit of unity among believers in your community and for God's power to be evident in your church's ministry. Ask God to show you how you can be part of His work in building His kingdom.