



Devotional

Oct. 4 - Dec. 30

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The transition through the familiar, and still always upsetting resurrection holds us spellbound to the text. Jesus' demonstrates his ultimate love and sacrifice for us, while simultaneously following the will of God. Incredible. Imagine if God asked you to do the same thing?

Despite the tragic loss of their leader, the newly inspired and empowered disciples begin to preach confidently and passionately about the one true God, and His son Jesus.

Perhaps as we reflect on these familiar texts this weekend, we should challenge ourselves with this question: Am I doing enough as a believer to spread the word about Jesus?

Prayer: God in Heaven, Thank you for the amazing gift of your Son. May we spend time today quietly considering His life, teachings, example, love and sacrifice. We will not speak, but instead listen with our hearts and let our minds wander along with Jesus as he showed us the ultimate path to You. In Jesus' name we pray. Amen.

WEEK FOUR (OCTOBER 25–31)

Day 299: October 25, 2020

Full Plan: Acts 5:17–7:60

Abbreviated Plan: Acts 3:1–26

Acts 5-7 contains a biblical basis for civil disobedience. When the

laws of the land, and even of institutional religion, contradict the values and work of God's mission, Peter offers this word: "We must obey God rather than any human authority." (5:29)

What God is revealing to me today, and how I will apply it to my life:

Day 300: October 26, 2020

Full Plan: Acts 8:1–9:43

Abbreviated Plan: Acts 4:1–37

Acts starts with crowds becoming believers, but shifts to the stories of individuals. In Acts 8-9, each person is transformed because of a friend. Simon (Phillip), the eunuch (Phillip), Saul (Ananias), Dorcas (Lydia). We are to be that friend for someone else.

What God is revealing to me today, and how I will apply it to my life:

Day 301: October 27, 2020

Full Plan: Acts 10:1–12:25

Abbreviated Plan: Acts 8:1–40

Acts 10-12: 3pm is an important time in the Bible. It's when Jesus

died, when Saul became Paul, and when Peter received his vision. Do we take time for God in the middle of the day? Also, the city of Joppa is significant. It's where God called Jonah, and where Peter received his vision. On both occasions, God gave Jonah and Peter a wider vision of God's love for all people, not just a select few. What is my "Joppa" moment? Whom does God include whom I would rather exclude?

What God is revealing to me today, and how I will apply it to my life:

Day 302: October 28, 2020

Full Plan: Acts 13:1–15:21

Abbreviated Plan: Acts 9:1–43

Acts 13-15. God's love is not proprietary. It does not belong to us, for us to determine who is "in" and who is "out." The circle is wider than we think it is, and it doesn't just include us.

What God is revealing to me today, and how I will apply it to my life:

Day 303: October 29, 2020

Full Plan: Acts 15:22–17:34

Abbreviated Plan: Acts 10:1–48

Acts 15-17. Paul shows us what it means to be "evangelical" in the best sense: Meeting people where they are (Lydia), pursuing social justice (slave girl), speaking the language of the culture (Areopagus), and "turning the world upside down." (17:6)

What God is revealing to me today, and how I will apply it to my life:

Day 304: October 30, 2020

Full Plan: Acts 18:1–20:38

Abbreviated Plan: Acts 12:1–25

Acts 18-20. Just like the Parable of the Sower, Paul's efforts had mixed results. Sometimes people were responsive, and other times they rejected him. It is a reminder that we are not called to be successful, but simply to be faithful (Mother Theresa).

What God is revealing to me today, and how I will apply it to my life:

Day 305: October 31, 2020

Full Plan: Acts 21:1–23:35

Abbreviated Plan: Acts 13:1–52

Acts 21-23. Paul tapped into his Jewishness to speak to Jews, his Roman citizenship to speak to Gentiles, and his legal background to speak to religious officials. We need to be theologically multilingual, sharing Jesus by meeting people where they are.

What God is revealing to me today, and how I will apply it to my life:

October 25–31, 2020: Weekly Devotion by Susan Northcutt

The Books of Acts is the narrative bridge between the Gospels and the books of the New Testament. It is a sweeping account of how the word of God was spread and how the early Christian church was established. It took many decades in several locations (from Jerusalem to Rome) to plant the seeds of “The Way.”

Most important of all was the evangelistic work of steadfast apostles and disciples as outlined in the Book of Acts. Peter’s magnificent and powerful ministry, or Stephen’s valuable efforts which ended in tragedy, or Paul’s compelling journeys to the far-flung regions of the Roman Empire. These early apostles faced challenges, conflict, persecution, imprisonment. The descriptions, contained in many chapters, are vivid.

It is Paul’s story that dominates the Book of Acts, from his conversion as Saul that began on the road to Damascus and then to his “call” to speak in the name of Jesus throughout Asia Minor and into Europe. He witnessed in synagogues, marketplaces,

lecture halls, and public squares, bringing the word of God to Jews and non-Jews, the Gentiles.

I took a trip in 2015 “The Journeys of Paul.” Sponsored by the Florida Conference, the trip was led by Bishop Ken Carter and attracted over one hundred people. We flew to Rome and then boarded a cruise ship. Visiting Athens, Corinth, Malta, and Rhodes (among other places), we learned more about Paul’s ministry and his missionary journeys. For me, the highlight of the trip was a worship service in the amphitheater of Ephesus. Communion was served in this ancient Roman theater, the exact place where Paul witnessed.

All in all, the Book of Acts is an account of how Jesus began to spread across the world.

WEEK FIVE (NOVEMBER 1–7)

Day 306: November 1, 2020

Full Plan: Acts 24:1–26:32

Abbreviated Plan: Acts 14:1–28

Acts 24-26. Paul was bounced from trial to trial, getting into trouble for preaching about “justice, self-control, and the coming judgment.” (24:25) And he was accused of “too much learning.” (26:24) Would that we would each be found guilty of such things.

What God is revealing to me today, and how I will apply it to my life: