



WEEKLY STUDY

WEEK 1

We began a three week exploration of the first two chapters of the book of Acts. On May 28, we will celebrate Pentecost Sunday. The first Pentecost described in Acts was the day God first poured out his Spirit on his people. During this series, we will pray for and anticipate God doing it again with us in our time. Will you join in that prayer?

Peace of Christ,
Dr. Mark Youngman
Pastor of Discipleship

If you are studying with your Providence Small Group or Discipleship Group, you can share from daily readings as well as the additional questions at the bottom of this guide. If you would like to get connected visit prov.church/smallgroups.

Find a time each day to read the passage of scripture and follow the daily prayer prompt.

DAILY STUDY

MONDAY: ACTS 1.1-3

In my former book, Theophilus, I wrote about all that Jesus began to do and to teach² until the day he was taken up to heaven, after giving instructions through the Holy Spirit to the apostles he had chosen.³ 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.

- Jesus appeared to his disciples over a 40 day period and spoke about the kingdom of God, providing proof that he was alive. That had to be an intense several weeks. Was it consistent with how their life together had been before his resurrection or was this an intensive course from Jesus before he departed? **Can you imagine what that season would be like for you? Would you take notes? Pray? Weep?**
- *Jesus, your faithfulness to your disciples is inspiring and humbling. Speak to me today and show me that you are indeed alive. Amen.*

TUESDAY: ACTS 1.4-5

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. ⁵ For John baptized with water, but in a few days you will be baptized with the Holy Spirit.”

- The mission began to take focus, but it wasn't yet time to act. What the disciples experienced was something like getting the playbook and waiting for a pre-game meal and the starting whistle. When we baptize someone today, we baptize with water and then pray for the Holy Spirit. We have a shorter time frame between the two than the original followers of the Way of Jesus. After Pentecost, baptism took on a whole new significance for the individuals and families we read about in Acts. **Have you ever felt like you were in a period of waiting for God to show up?**
- *God, by water and Spirit, you have given me a calling and a purpose. You do not call us to something that you don't also equip us for. Equip me with your Spirit. Amen.*

WEDNESDAY: ACTS 1.6-8

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

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

- The disciples were looking ahead to the promised return of Jesus. We do the same. We wonder what it will look like, and what it will mean for Jesus to come back to earth and usher in the fullness of the Kingdom of God. Will the whole earth suddenly know and proclaim that Jesus, the Son of God is king? **In what ways do you see witnessing for Jesus taking place around the world?**
- *Father God, you have set in motion a movement that one day will encompass the whole earth. I want to join in as a witness that reaches out as far as you would have me to go. Amen.*

THURSDAY: JOHN 16.4b-11

I did not tell you this from the beginning because I was with you, ⁵ but now I am going to him who sent me. None of you asks me, ‘Where are you going?’ ⁶ Rather, you are filled with grief because I have said these things. ⁷ But very truly I tell you, it is for your good that I am going away. Unless I go away, the Advocate will not come to you; but if I go, I will send him to you. ⁸ When he comes, he will prove the world to be in the wrong about sin and righteousness and judgment: ⁹ about sin, because people do not believe in me; ¹⁰ about righteousness, because I am going to the Father, where you can see me no longer; ¹¹ and about judgment, because the prince of this world now stands condemned.

- Jesus was clear that his impending departure was necessary for the Kingdom of God to expand around the world. It's normal to grieve when a loved one passes away or everything around you seems to shift suddenly. Jesus helps us to focus on the big picture. The Holy Spirit is required for the movement of God to go beyond the physical and spatial limitations of one man. **When has an absence or loss made way for something even bigger?**

- *Jesus, your entire life has been a display of selflessness. Thank you for sacrificing so that we might have life and for sending your empowering Spirit. Amen.*

FRIDAY: EPHESIANS 1.22-23

And God placed all things under his feet and appointed him to be head over everything for the church,²³ which is his body, the fullness of him who fills everything in every way.

- On Sunday, we wondered if Paul might have been picturing the ascension of Jesus up into the air and to the right side of God the Father when he wrote these words. All things are under Jesus' feet and we, the church, are his body now. Jesus is the head of the church, and we have the mission and calling to witness to his life through our own. **What does it mean for you that the church is the body of Christ?**
- *Jesus, it seems strange to say that I am a part of your body. But it is now up to me, empowered by your Spirit to witness to your life. I place myself under your feet. Amen.*

SATURDAY: PSALM 126 (MSG)

*It seemed like a dream, too good to be true,
when GOD returned Zion's exiles.*

*We laughed, we sang,
we couldn't believe our good fortune.*

*We were the talk of the nations—
"GOD was wonderful to them!"*

*GOD was wonderful to us;
we are one happy people.*

*⁴⁻⁶ And now, GOD, do it again—
bring rains to our drought-stricken lives
So those who planted their crops in despair
will shout "Yes!" at the harvest,
So those who went off with heavy hearts
will come home laughing, with armloads of blessing.*

- This psalm highlights God's desire to "do it again". As we consider the outpouring of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost this month, we will pray for another outpouring. What that even means is up to God, but we know that God hears our cries so make this Psalm your prayer today.
- *God, do it again. Bring rains to my drought-stricken life. Let me see the harvest coming, and the joy and blessing of being your child. Amen.*

SMALL GROUP DISCUSSION

Use Psalm 129 from the Message version (listed for Saturday's study) as a way of telling the story of what God has done in your life.

- When and where has God faithfully shown up in a difficult time in your life?
- Where do you need God to show up now? What are the “droughts” you are going through? What is making your heart heavy?
- Write your own prayer asking God to do it again.