



WEEKLY STUDY

Firm Foundation for the Future - Week One

This month we are looking at how our local church is positioned to carry out the work of the early church in Acts. Many are coming to faith in Jesus as their Lord and Savior. It's what Paul and his friends were doing in the early days with those who knew about God but did not yet know that He had come to dwell with us, to live and die, and raise to new life in a way that invites us to do the same. Jesus is our firm foundation and we will continue to build upon him!

Please note our prayer focus for the week in the box below. Join us in seeing what God will do as we unite in prayer.

Peace of Christ,
Pastor Mark Youngman

If you are studying with your Providence Small Group or Discipleship Group, you can share from your own daily reflections and consider the Group Discussion questions below. If you would like to get connected visit prov.church/smallgroups.

Prayer Focus:

- Join us for 28 days of prayer as we lay a firm foundation for our future. Text 'provchurch' to 855-615-7768 to receive daily prayer prompts.

DAILY STUDY

MONDAY: ACTS 19.1-7 (MSG)

Now, it happened that while Apollos was away in Corinth, Paul made his way down through the mountains, came to Ephesus, and happened on some disciples there. The first thing he said was, "Did you receive the Holy

Spirit when you believed? Did you take God into your mind only, or did you also embrace him with your heart? Did he get inside you?"

"We've never even heard of that—a Holy Spirit? God within us?"

³ *"How were you baptized, then?" asked Paul.*

"In John's baptism."

⁴ *"That explains it," said Paul. "John preached a baptism of radical life-change so that people would be ready to receive the One coming after him, who turned out to be Jesus. If you've been baptized in John's baptism, you're ready now for the real thing, for Jesus."*

⁵⁻⁷ *And they were. As soon as they heard of it, they were baptized in the name of the Master Jesus. Paul put his hands on their heads and the Holy Spirit entered them. From that moment on, they were praising God in tongues and talking about God's actions. Altogether there were about twelve people there that day.*

- This account puts into perspective how young this movement was. There were some who had heard about John's baptism of repentance, but had not yet heard about Pentecost and the indwelling of the Holy Spirit among followers of Jesus. Paul, for all of his theological prowess, was really just there to say, "there is more!" Jesus is the fulfillment of everything that has come before, including John's call to repentance. Do you recall a moment when you learned that the good news of Jesus was even better than you had thought?

- **Prayer Prompt: You, dear children, are from God and have overcome them, because the one who is in you is greater than the one who is in the world. (1 John 4.4)**
- *God, will you continue to reveal to me how life in Christ changes everything? Draw me closer to him today. Amen.*

TUESDAY: JOHN 7.39 (NIV)

By this he meant the Spirit, whom those who believed in him were later to receive. Up to that time the Spirit had not been given, since Jesus had not yet been glorified.

- It's hard to imagine that there was a time before the Spirit was given to followers of Jesus. When Jesus was walking around on earth, before his death and resurrection, he was the one who carried around the Spirit of God. Now it's up to us. Where do you see evidence of the stirring of the Spirit of God in your life today?

- **Prayer Prompt: Where can I go from your Spirit?
Where can I flee from your presence?**
⁸**If I go up to the heavens, you are there;
if I make my bed in the depths, you are there. (Psalm 139.7-8)**
- **God, I want to be surrounded by your Spirit. I want to live in such a way that I am constantly aware of this gift you have given me. Amen.**

WEDNESDAY: MATTHEW 3.11 (NIV)

“I baptize you with water for repentance. But after me comes one who is more powerful than I, whose sandals I am not worthy to carry. He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and fire.

- John was preparing the way. He drew large crowds, but kept his perspective. John was the kind of leader who knew that he was not the point. He wasn't pointing people to himself, he was always pointing to the one who was to come. How does your life (your words, your work, your actions) point others to Jesus?

- **Prayer Prompt: Live such good lives among the pagans that, though they accuse you of doing wrong, they may see your good deeds and glorify God on the day he visits us. (1 Peter 2.12)**
- **Heavenly Father, use me or lay me aside for your purpose. Whatever happens today or in all of my days, may Jesus Christ be glorified. Amen.**

THURSDAY: ROMANS 8.9 (NIV)

You, however, are not in the realm of the flesh but are in the realm of the Spirit, if indeed the Spirit of God lives in you. And if anyone does not have the Spirit of Christ, they do not belong to Christ.

- What does it mean to “have the Spirit of Christ”? What Paul was teaching the believers in Rome is that we operate on a different plane than the world. The world sees only the flesh, but followers of Jesus see also the realm of the Spirit. We react not just to the immediacy of the physical world, but we keep our sights set on things above. Do you ever find yourself focusing more on the realm of the flesh than the Spirit? What (or whom) helps you keep the perspective of Christ?

- **Prayer Prompt:** Those who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires.²⁵ Since we live by the Spirit, let us keep in step with the Spirit. (Galatians 5.24-25)
- Almighty God, guide my steps through the power of your Spirit today. I want to live by the Spirit because I belong to Christ. Amen.

FRIDAY: 1 CORINTHIANS 14.21-22 (NIV)

In the Law it is written:

“With other tongues
and through the lips of foreigners
I will speak to this people,
but even then they will not listen to me,
says the Lord.”

²² Tongues, then, are a sign, not for believers but for unbelievers; prophecy, however, is not for unbelievers but for believers.

- The new believers in Ephesus were praising God in tongues and talking about what God had done. The message of the Gospel goes beyond any one language or culture. According to Paul, the point of speaking with “other tongues” is for the sake of unbelievers. It had a purpose of communicating to an unbelieving world, to share the good things God has done. Do you recall a time that a message seemed to be put in such language that it seemed to be speaking directly to you?

- **Prayer Prompt:** And he who searches our hearts knows the mind of the Spirit, because the Spirit intercedes for God's people in accordance with the will of God. (Romans 8.27)
- God, I know that you can be trusted to translate the very cries of my heart for the sake of the world. Use my imperfect speech to share Jesus with the world. Amen.

SATURDAY: 1 CORINTHIANS 3.11 (NIV)

For no one can lay any foundation other than the one already laid, which is Jesus Christ.

- Our verse of the year at Providence Church is also a guiding principle for anything we do or build. Pastor Jacob shared the vision for an expansion of the physical church building as we discern together as a church. Take a moment to consider what gifts have already been given by others that allow you to build a life with Christ as the foundation.

- **Prayer Prompt: One generation commends your works to another; they tell of your mighty acts. (Psalm 145.4)**
- *God, I pray for the generations that are yet to come. May they stand on the firm foundation of Jesus Christ, and may your Kingdom come on earth as it is in heaven. Amen.*

GROUP DISCUSSION

In Sunday's message, we talked about a firm foundation of faith that could impact generations to come. Jacob shared about a possible expansion of the church building.

- Who paved the way for you to experience Jesus in the ways that you have? What are their names? What did they do to impact your walk of faith?
- How could your faithfulness now impact future generations? Why does it matter?