

90 DAY CHALLENGE

the Acts of the Holy Spirit

90 Day Challenge

The Acts of the Holy Spirit

Journal

Spring 2015

Chapel Hill Presbyterian Church

90 Day Challenge: The Acts of the Holy Spirit Introduction

The 90 Day Challenge has been incredibly impactful in our congregation. If you missed it, we started reading Matthew 1 on January 5th and have been reading one chapter of one gospel (Matthew, Mark, Luke, John) every day. There are 89 chapters in those four books, so in 90 days you can read a comprehensive account of Jesus' life, ministry, death and resurrection. As we prepared to conclude this challenge, our pastoral team dared to think "What if we do it again? **What if we ask our Chapel Hill family to continue diving into Scripture together every day?**" But sequels are tricky things, we are well-aware that trying to replicate a good thing doesn't always end well.

We don't think the 90 Day Challenge was just a good thing. We believe it was transformative. That it was unifying, and inspiring, and challenging. We also believe it's nearly impossible to finish reading John 21 and not ask "What happened next?". Enter the book of Acts, written by our now familiar companion, Luke; this book picks up where the gospels end and tells the story of Jesus' disciples. **We would like to invite you to begin another 90 Day Challenge with us, this time looking specifically at the Holy Spirit and the Spirit-filled community that would become the Church.**

Last fall, we studied the Sermon on the Mount (found in Matthew 5-7) and asked what it looks like to imitate Jesus. This winter, we studied all four gospels and asked how Jesus went about making disciples. **Now, we're going to look at the next generation of disciple-makers;** and we shouldn't be surprised to discover that the same qualities that describe Jesus and the way He made disciples in the gospels are echoed in the lives of the men and women who followed Him. Nor should we be surprised that now, by the power of the Spirit, we too can be disciple-makers.

90 Day Challenge: The Acts of the Holy Spirit Daily S-P-I-R-I-T Prompts

S - Study (Monday)

Study is a great way to engage scripture — we seek to understand what God is up to by looking at the context and asking questions. Study Bibles, commentaries and additional resources can make this easier. Remember that information alone isn't the goal here; transformation is. Participating in all the disciplines in this journal helps us move head-knowledge to the heart for transformation by God's Spirit.

P- Parallel (Tuesday)

The book of Acts is one part of a bigger story, God's story of salvation... and God's story is consistent. Learning about the Holy Spirit and Spirit-filled communities will occur in other parts of the big-picture story. This discipline of remembering, looking for common themes throughout the story, will help tie all the chapters of this story together. (We studied these themes September 2014 — March 2015.)

I- Invite (Wednesday)

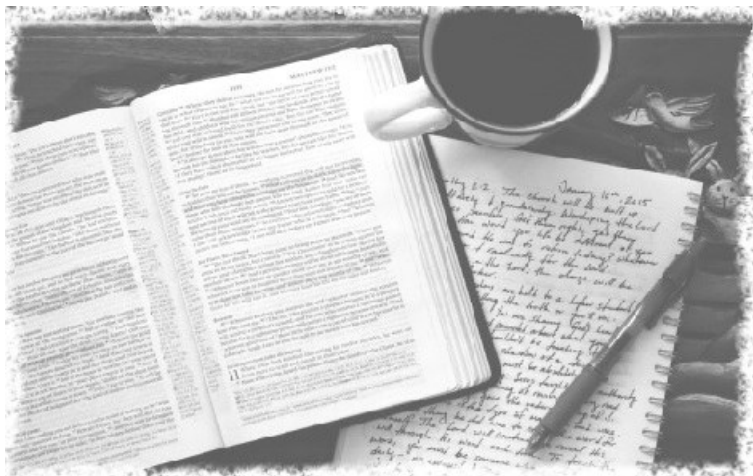
Although we often think of prayer as talking to God, listening is an under-practiced spiritual discipline. Imagine going to a friend to ask for advice and wisdom and then spending the entire time talking about your problems. You never get the benefit of hearing what they have to say... what you sought out in the first place! If we learn anything from Acts it is that the Spirit of God is alive and at work! Surely He will speak to you, if only you can create quiet space — physically, emotionally, spiritually — to listen.

As we start this 90 Day Challenge **we will be specifically looking at the work of the Holy Spirit and the marks of the Spirit-filled community.** A brief introduction to these topics can be found at the back of this booklet. **Each week, we will be looking at one chapter of the book of Acts and one theme.** Each day, we're asking everyone to read that week's assigned chapter and then to engage with that chapter in one of six ways. (We've given ourselves a catch-up day each week.) **This booklet will provide the prompts for each day and we're asking everyone to record your thoughts and responses in your own journal.**

The following pages are some thoughts on how to use the daily journal prompts, which spell out S-P-I-R-I-T. **Our hope is that the Word of God would take deep root in your heart and that you might begin to share this transformative Word with others.** You will need:

- Your Bible
- Your own journal
- A willingness to dig deeper

Let's get started!



R- Ruminare (Thursday)

The idea of memorizing can be daunting. But how many can finish “*For God so loved the world...*” without thinking about it? These words are imprinted on the heart and bubble out without conscious thought. That’s the fruit of memorization/meditation. If you have space in your memory for song lyrics you have space for scripture. Be gracious with yourself, but do give it some effort... you won’t be disappointed.

I- Initiate (Friday)

Remember that transformation rather than merely information is the goal of this journal. Here’s a chance to let the rubber meet the road. If you need help getting started on something, ask! There are a myriad of opportunities to serve and people who would love to help you get started. This might be a tiny something or a major life-shift. Either way, we just want you to get moving!

T- Talk (Floating Day)

We have not assigned a day for this prompt so that you have the opportunity to tailor each week’s chapter to your own life. Share with your community (your Life Group, your family, the co-worker you eat lunch with, your squash partner, etc.) what the Spirit is stirring in you. It will benefit both you and the person you share with. This might be uncomfortable, but again, give it some effort.

The second-generation disciples in Acts were constantly sharing what God had done and was doing. This is our chance to imitate them, as they imitated Christ.

Each day, read Acts 1 and engage with one of the prompts:

S—STUDY

What did you learn about the Holy Spirit?
What did you learn about the Spirit-filled community?

P — PARALLEL

In Acts 1 we see the disciples receive the gift of the Holy Spirit because they obeyed Jesus’ call to wait in Jerusalem. As a parallel to this, in Matthew 7:21-29, we see Jesus teach His disciples the importance of obedience. Read both passages and reflect upon what it means to be an obedient disciple.

I—INVITE

The Holy Spirit is still at work today. Read the chapter out loud and invite the Holy Spirit to speak to you this week. Then carve out 5 minutes today to listen.

R—RUMINATE

Meditate on or memorize the passage at the bottom of this page.

I—INITIATE

How did the Holy Spirit speak to you this week?
What is the Holy Spirit asking you to do? How will you start right now?

T—TALK

Share with someone else what the Holy Spirit is teaching you. This can be as easy as asking someone, “May I tell you what I’m learning right now?”
Record in your journal who you shared with this week.

Memorize:

“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.”
Acts 1:8

Week of April 20—26, 2015
Acts 2:1-41 Theme: FILLED

Each day, read Acts 2:1-41 and engage with one of the prompts:

S—STUDY

What did you learn about the Holy Spirit?
What did you learn about the Spirit-filled community?

P — PARALLEL

In Acts 2:1-41 we see the disciples being filled with the Holy Spirit. As a parallel to this, in Matthew 3:13-17, we see the Spirit descending upon Jesus like a dove. Read both passages and reflect upon what it means to be filled with the Holy Spirit.

I—INVITE

The Holy Spirit is still at work today. Read the chapter out loud and invite the Holy Spirit to speak to you this week, and then carve out 5 minutes today to listen.

R—RUMINATE

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I—INITIATE

How did the Holy Spirit speak to you this week?
What is the Holy Spirit asking you to do? How will you start right now?

T—TALK

Share with someone else what the Holy Spirit is teaching you. This can be as easy as asking someone, “May I tell you what I’m learning right now?”
Record in your journal who you shared with this week.

Memorize:

“Peter replied, “Repent and be baptized, every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins. And you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. The promise is for you and your children and for all who are far off—for all whom the Lord our God will call.” Acts 2:38-39

Week of April 27— May 3, 2015
Acts 2:42-Acts 3 Theme: CONSPICUOUS

Each day, read Acts 2:42-Acts 3 and engage with one of the prompts:

S—STUDY

What did you learn about the Holy Spirit?
What did you learn about the Spirit-filled community?

P — PARALLEL

In Acts 2:42-3 we see the disciples living lives that are conspicuous to their community. As a parallel to this, in Matthew 5:13-16, Jesus teaches about salt and light. Read both passages and reflect upon what it means to be a conspicuous disciple.

I—INVITE

The Holy Spirit is still at work today. Read the chapter out loud and invite the Holy Spirit to speak to you this week, and then carve out 5 minutes today to listen.

R—RUMINATE

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I—INITIATE

How did the Holy Spirit speak to you this week?
What is the Holy Spirit asking you to do? How will you start right now?

T—TALK

Share with someone else what the Holy Spirit is teaching you. This can be as easy as asking someone, “May I tell you what I’m learning right now?”
Record in your journal who you shared with this week.

Memorize:

“They devoted themselves to the apostles’ teaching and to fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer. All the believers were together and had everything in common.”
Acts 2:42,44

Week of May 4—10, 2015
Acts 4 Theme: PLENTY-FULL

Each day, read Acts 4 and engage with one of the prompts:

S—STUDY

What did you learn about the Holy Spirit?
What did you learn about the Spirit-filled community?

P — PARALLEL

In Acts 4 we see the disciples sharing everything they have. As a parallel to this, in Matthew 6:19-34, we see Jesus teach about possessions, money, and worry. Read both passages and reflect upon what it means to be a "plenty-full" disciple.

I—INVITE

The Holy Spirit is still at work today. Read the chapter out loud and invite the Holy Spirit to speak to you this week, and then carve out 5 minutes today to listen.

R—RUMINATE

Meditate on or memorize the passage at the bottom of this page.

I—INITIATE

How did the Holy Spirit speak to you this week?
What is the Holy Spirit asking you to do? How will you start right now?

T—TALK

Share with someone else what the Holy Spirit is teaching you. This can be as easy as asking someone, "May I tell you what I'm learning right now?"
Record in your journal who you shared with this week.

Memorize:

"All the believers were one in heart and mind. No one claimed that any of their possessions was their own, but they shared everything they had."

Acts 4:32

Week of May 11—17, 2015
Acts 5 Theme: BLESSED

Each day, read Acts 5 and engage with one of the prompts:

S—STUDY

What did you learn about the Holy Spirit?
What did you learn about the Spirit-filled community?

P — PARALLEL

In Acts 5 we see the disciples rejoicing in the midst of suffering. As a parallel to this, in Matthew 5:1-12, we see Jesus teach about the upside-down nature of blessings in His kingdom. Read both passages and reflect upon what it means to be a blessed disciple.

I—INVITE

The Holy Spirit is still at work today. Read the chapter out loud and invite the Holy Spirit to speak to you this week, and then carve out 5 minutes today to listen.

R—RUMINATE

Meditate on or memorize the passage at the bottom of this page.

I—INITIATE

How did the Holy Spirit speak to you this week?
What is the Holy Spirit asking you to do? How will you start right now?

T—TALK

Share with someone else what the Holy Spirit is teaching you. This can be as easy as asking someone, "May I tell you what I'm learning right now?"
Record in your journal who you shared with this week.

How would you say this in your own words?

"The God of our ancestors raised Jesus from the dead—whom you killed by hanging him on a cross. God exalted him to his own right hand as Prince and Savior that he might bring Israel to repentance and forgive their sins. We are witnesses of these things, and so is the Holy Spirit, whom God has given to those who obey him." Acts 5:30-32

Week of May 18—24, 2015
Acts 6 Theme: ENTRUSTING

Each day, read Acts 6 and engage with one of the prompts:

S—STUDY

What did you learn about the Holy Spirit?
What did you learn about the Spirit-filled community?

P — PARALLEL

In Acts 6 we see the apostles entrusting ministry to 7 men. As a parallel to this, in Mark 6:7-13, we see Jesus entrust the work of ministry to the disciples. Read both passages and reflect upon what it means to be an entrusting disciple.

I—INVITE

The Holy Spirit is still at work today. Read the chapter out loud and invite the Holy Spirit to speak to you this week, and then carve out 5 minutes today to listen.

R—RUMINATE

Meditate on or memorize the passage at the bottom of this page.

I—INITIATE

How did the Holy Spirit speak to you this week?
What is the Holy Spirit asking you to do? How will you start right now?

T—TALK

Share with someone else what the Holy Spirit is teaching you. This can be as easy as asking someone, “May I tell you what I’m learning right now?”
Record in your journal who you shared with this week.

Review the previous verses you have memorized.

Week of May 25—31, 2015
Acts 7 Theme: UNFLAPPABLE

Each day, read Acts 7 and engage with one of the prompts:

S—STUDY

What did you learn about the Holy Spirit?
What did you learn about the Spirit-filled community?

P — PARALLEL

In Acts 7 we see Stephen remaining unflappable in the face of an enraged crowd. As a parallel to this, in Luke 22:63-23:12, we see Jesus remaining unflappable in the face of opposition. Read both passages and reflect upon what it means to be an unflappable disciple.

I—INVITE

The Holy Spirit is still at work today. Read the chapter out loud and invite the Holy Spirit to speak to you this week, and then carve out 5 minutes today to listen.

R—RUMINATE

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I—INITIATE

How did the Holy Spirit speak to you this week?
What is the Holy Spirit asking you to do? How will you start right now?

T—TALK

Share with someone else what the Holy Spirit is teaching you. This can be as easy as asking someone, “May I tell you what I’m learning right now?”
Record in your journal who you shared with this week.

Mental draw or paint a picture of this scene:

“When the members of the Sanhedrin heard this, they were furious and gnashed their teeth at him. But Stephen, full of the Holy Spirit, looked up to heaven and saw the glory of God, and Jesus standing at the right hand of God.” Acts 7:54-55

Week of June 1—7, 2015
Acts 8 Theme: INTENTIONAL

Each day, read Acts 8 and engage with one of the prompts:

S—STUDY

What did you learn about the Holy Spirit?
What did you learn about the Spirit-filled community?

P — PARALLEL

In Acts 8 Philip shows us how to be an intentional disciple-maker. As a parallel to this, in Matthew 4:18-22, we see how intentional Jesus was in calling His first disciples. Read both passages and reflect upon what it means to be an intentional disciple.

I—INVITE

The Holy Spirit is still at work today. Read the chapter out loud and invite the Holy Spirit to speak to you this week, and then carve out 5 minutes today to listen.

R—RUMINATE

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I—INITIATE

How did the Holy Spirit speak to you this week?
What is the Holy Spirit asking you to do? How will you start right now?

T—TALK

Share with someone else what the Holy Spirit is teaching you. This can be as easy as asking someone, “May I tell you what I’m learning right now?”
Record in your journal who you shared with this week.

Muse upon the scene in Acts 8:4-8. What would bring joy to our city?

“So there was great joy in that city.”
Acts 8:8

Week of June 8—14, 2015
Acts 9 Theme: GRACE-FULL

Each day, read Acts 9 and engage with one of the prompts:

S—STUDY

What did you learn about the Holy Spirit?
What did you learn about the Spirit-filled community?

P — PARALLEL

In Acts 9 we see Saul’s conversion through God’s grace. As a parallel to this, in John 8:1-12, we see Jesus extend grace to a woman caught in adultery. Read both passages and reflect upon what it means to be a "grace-full" disciple.

I—INVITE

The Holy Spirit is still at work today. Read the chapter out loud and invite the Holy Spirit to speak to you this week, and then carve out 5 minutes today to listen.

R—RUMINATE

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I—INITIATE

How did the Holy Spirit speak to you this week?
What is the Holy Spirit asking you to do? How will you start right now?

T—TALK

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Record in your journal who you shared with this week.

Review the previous verses you have memorized.

Week of June 15—21, 2015
Acts 10 Theme: DIVERSE

Each day, read Acts 10 and engage with one of the prompts:

S—STUDY

What did you learn about the Holy Spirit?
What did you learn about the Spirit-filled community?

P — PARALLEL

In Acts 10 God reveals to Peter that His kingdom is more diverse than he imagined. As a parallel to this, in John 4:7-30, we see Jesus welcoming outsiders into His kingdom. Read both passages and reflect upon what it means for the Spirit-filled community to be diverse.

I—INVITE

The Holy Spirit is still at work today. Read the chapter out loud and invite the Holy Spirit to speak to you this week, and then carve out 5 minutes today to listen.

R—RUMINATE

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I—INITIATE

How did the Holy Spirit speak to you this week?
What is the Holy Spirit asking you to do? How will you start right now?

T—TALK

Share with someone else what the Holy Spirit is teaching you. This can be as easy as asking someone, “May I tell you what I’m learning right now?”
Record in your journal who you shared with this week.

Muse upon this summary of Jesus’ mission and ours in Acts 10:34-43.

Week of June 22—28, 2015
Acts 11 Theme: RESTORING

Each day, read Acts 11 and engage with one of the prompts:

S—STUDY

What did you learn about the Holy Spirit?
What did you learn about the Spirit-filled community?

P — PARALLEL

In Acts 11 Barnabas restores Saul to ministry. As a parallel to this, in John 21:15-19, we see Jesus restore Peter. Read both passages and reflect upon what it means to be a restoring disciple.

I—INVITE

The Holy Spirit is still at work today. Read the chapter out loud and invite the Holy Spirit to speak to you this week, and then carve out 5 minutes today to listen.

R—RUMINATE

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I—INITIATE

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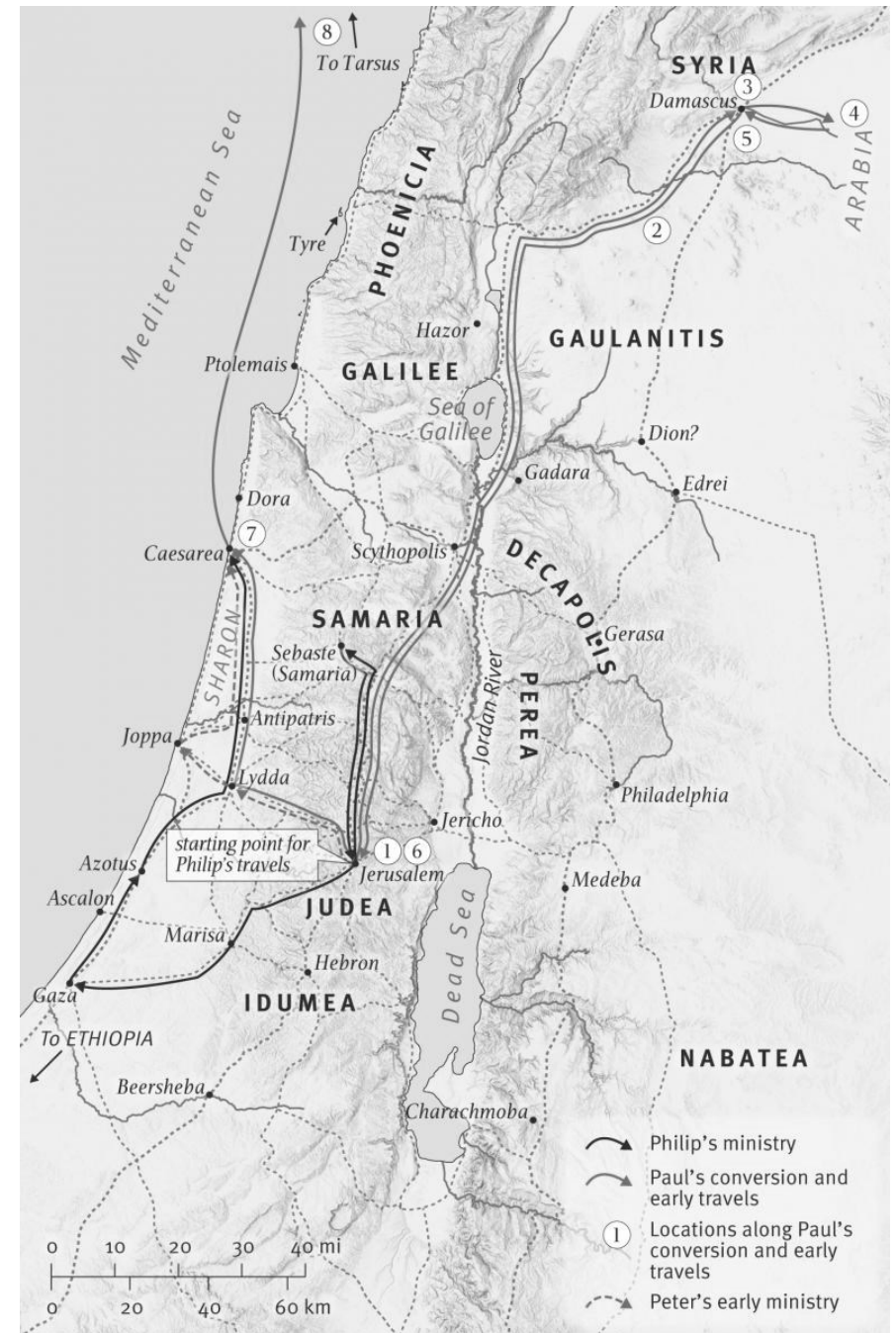
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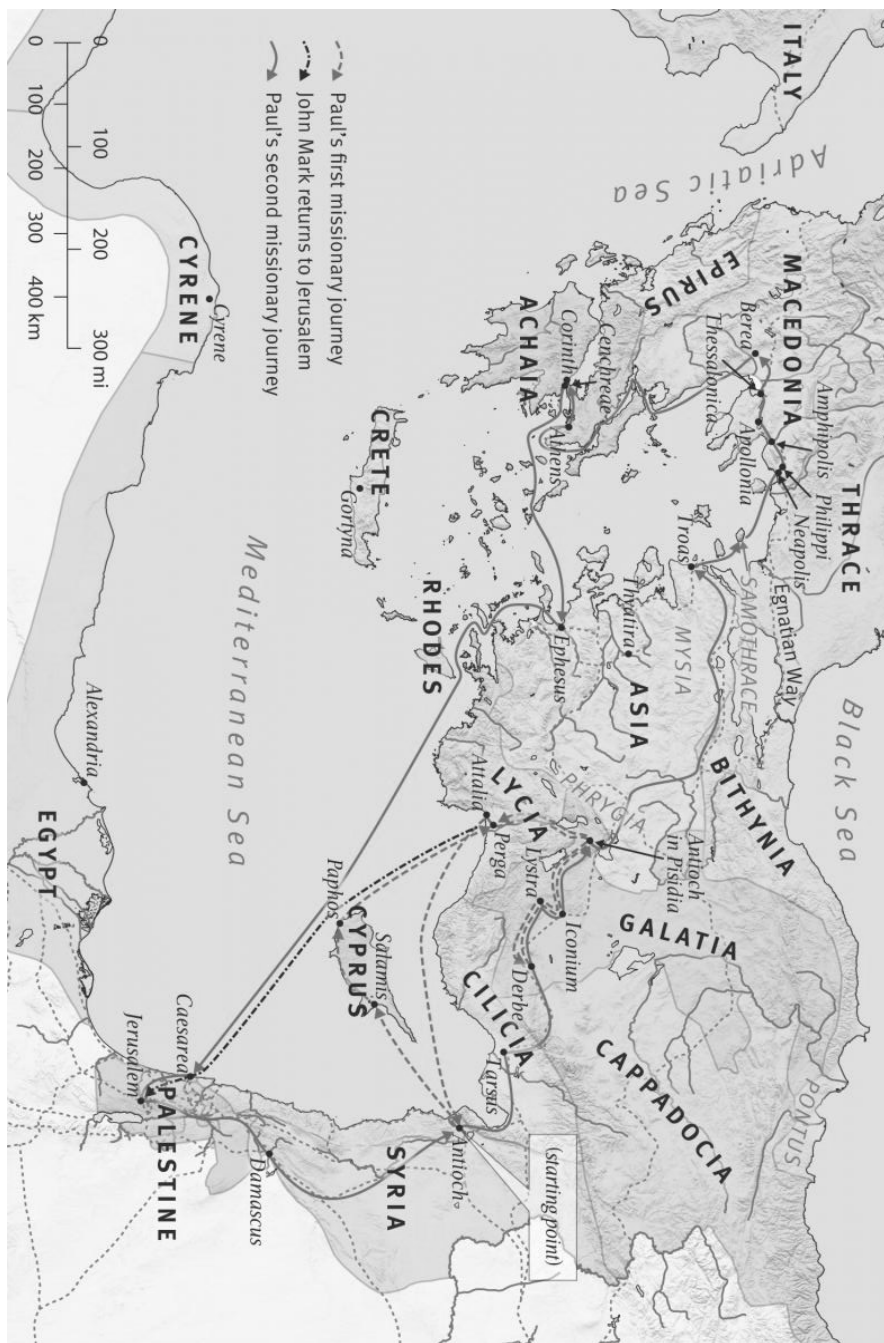
Memorize:

“When he arrived and saw what the grace of God had done, he was glad and encouraged them all to remain true to the Lord with all their hearts.”
Acts 11:23

Notes:



Map of Israel — First Century Church



Map of the Setting of Acts — First Century Church

The Holy Spirit and the Church

The Evangelical Presbyterian Church (EPC) articulates our faith in “The Essentials.” This document is the bullet points of what we believe. Two of the seven statements refer to our recurring themes in Acts: The Holy Spirit and the Spirit-filled community, also known as the Church. Here are some summary thoughts about the Holy Spirit and the Church.

HOLY SPIRIT IN ACTS

Luke wrote Acts as a sequel to the Gospel of Luke to tell the stories of what happened after Jesus was raised from the dead. Jesus sent the Holy Spirit to us, as promised:

Jesus said, “I will ask the Father, and He will give you another Helper, that He may be with you forever; that is the Spirit of truth...” (John 15:17)

And in the Old Testament God’s Spirit was promised to all:

“...I will pour out my Spirit on all flesh... in those days I will pour out my Spirit.” (Joel 2:28,29).

Now in the book of Acts we see the promise fulfilled! God’s Spirit is poured out on all people.

- ◇ First, we see the Spirit come upon the disciples of Jesus (Acts 2:1-4) who then speak the Gospel to Jews of every nation and language (Acts 2:4-12).
- ◇ Then the Spirit of God is poured out upon the Gentiles (that is, non-Jews). Peter witnesses the Samaritans receive the Holy Spirit (Acts 8:17), then a Gentile community (Acts 10:44), and finally out to the ends of the earth (Acts 19:6).

Every time we see the Holy Spirit poured out afresh in Acts, it is to affirm this promise of God: that His Holy Spirit would be poured out on all flesh in order that the presence of God might be with us forever.

THE EPC ESSENTIAL ON THE HOLY SPIRIT

The Holy Spirit has come to glorify Christ and to apply the saving work of Christ to our hearts. He convicts us of sin and draws us to the Savior. Indwelling our hearts, He gives new life to us, empowers and imparts gifts to us for service. He instructs and guides us into all truth, and seals us for the day of redemption.

THE CHURCH IN ACTS

Each new outpouring of the Holy Spirit demonstrates the fulfillment of Jesus' command in Acts 1:8:

“But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you, and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem and in all Judea and Samaria, to the end of the earth.”

With every geographic extension of the Holy Spirit, the Gospel was proclaimed and a community of Spirit-filled believers was formed. That Spirit-filled community came to be known as the Church. Acts even records when people were first called Christians in Acts 11:26. (The capitalized word, Church, is used intentionally. The “church” refers to a local body of believers.) Here is what we affirm about the Church:

THE EPC ESSENTIAL ON THE CHURCH

The true Church is composed of all persons who through saving faith in Jesus Christ and the sanctifying work of the Holy Spirit are united together in the body of Christ. The Church finds her visible, yet imperfect, expression in local congregations where the Word of God is preached in its purity and the sacraments are administered in their integrity; where scriptural discipline is practiced, and where loving fellowship is maintained. For her perfecting, she awaits the return of her Lord.

