

Acts

The Story of Us

Bible Reading Guide #2



Forresters Beach

Introduction

The Book of Acts is not just the story of the early church. It is the story of what happens when ordinary people are filled with the Spirit of God.

Over the next few weeks, we will journey together through Acts The Story of Us. Each Sabbath we will open a new chapter of this story in worship, and throughout the week you are invited to continue the journey through these daily devotionals.

Each sermon will be followed by a new week of guided reflections simple readings, short devotional thoughts, questions to consider, and prayers to help you listen for the Holy Spirit in your everyday life.

Acts does not end with a tidy conclusion. It ends with the story still unfolding.

That is because the story continues through us.

As you read, reflect, and pray this week, may you discover not just what the Spirit did then but what the Spirit is doing now.

The Story of Acts is not just our history. It is invitation to mission and ministry guided by the Holy Spirit.

Sunday

Listen to the song linked in the QR code or read the lyrics below. Reflect on sabbath's service and what the Holy spirit is doing today.

Yet Not I But Through Christ In Me

Words and music by Jonny Robinson, Rich Thompson & Michael Farren

What gift of grace is Jesus, my Redeemer
There is no more for Heaven now to give
He is my joy, my righteousness, and freedom
My steadfast love, my deep and boundless peace

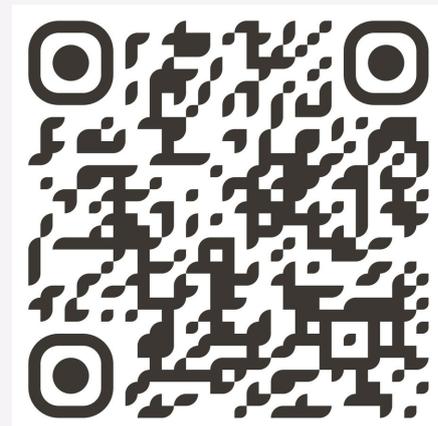
To this I hold, my hope is only Jesus
For my life is wholly bound to His
Oh, how strange and divine, I can sing, "All is mine"
Yet not I, but through Christ in me

The night is dark, but I am not forsaken
For by my side, the Savior, He will stay
I labor on in weakness and rejoicing
For in my need, His power is displayed

To this I hold, my Shepherd will defend me
Through the deepest valley, He will lead
Oh, the night has been won, and I shall overcome
Yet not I, but through Christ in me

No fate I dread, I know I am forgiven
The future's sure, the price, it has been paid
For Jesus bled and suffered for my pardon
And He was raised to overthrow the grave

To this I hold, my sin has been defeated
Jesus, now and ever is my plea
Oh, the chains are released, I can sing, "I am free"
Yet not I, but through Christ in me



Monday Faithfulness

Acts 6:6-8 (NRSV)

6 They had these men stand before the apostles, who prayed and laid their hands on them. 7 The word of God continued to spread; the number of the disciples increased greatly in Jerusalem, and a great many of the priests became obedient to the faith.

8 Stephen, full of grace and power, did great wonders and signs among the people.

Devotional Thought

Stephen's story begins with a simple description: he was full of grace, power, and the Holy Spirit.

His courage did not appear suddenly in Acts 7. It grew out of a life shaped by the Spirit. God moves in our lives long before we recognise how he is shaping and changing us.

Reflect:

What small habits help shape your faith each day?

Prayer:

Holy Spirit, shape my life so that faithfulness becomes my way of living.

Tuesday Visible Faith

Acts 6:9-12 (NRSV)

9 Then some of those who belonged to the synagogue of the Freedmen (as it was called), Cyrenians, Alexandrians, and others of those from Cilicia and Asia, stood up and argued with Stephen. 10 But they could not withstand the wisdom and the Spirit with which he spoke. 11 Then they secretly instigated some men to say, “We have heard him speak blasphemous words against Moses and God.” 12 They stirred up the people as well as the elders and the scribes; then they suddenly confronted him, seized him, and brought him before the council.

Devotional Thought

As Stephen spoke about Jesus, opposition began to grow. Not because he was doing something wrong, but because his faith had become visible.

When faith moves beyond private belief and becomes public witness, it can challenge the systems and assumptions around us.

Reflect:

Where might God be inviting you to live your faith more visibly?

Prayer:

Spirit of God, help me live with courage and integrity.

Wednesday Truth

Acts 7:51-52

48 Yet the Most High does not dwell in houses made with human hands; as the prophet says, 49 ‘Heaven is my throne, and the earth is my footstool. What kind of house will you build for me, says the Lord, or what is the place of my rest?

50 Did not my hand make all these things?’

51 “You stiff-necked people, uncircumcised in heart and ears, you are forever opposing the Holy Spirit, just as your ancestors used to do. 52 Which of the prophets did your ancestors not persecute? They killed those who foretold the coming of the Righteous One, and now you have become his betrayers and murderers.

Devotional Thought

Stephen tells the story of Israel and shows how God’s people had often resisted the work of God. Speaking truth is not always comfortable. But truth has a way of revealing where hearts have grown hard.

Stephen speaks boldly because he cares about the people listening. Truth spoken with love is always an invitation to turn back to God.

Reflect:

Where might God be inviting you to listen more carefully to His voice?

Prayer:

God, give me humility to hear Your truth and courage to follow it.

Thursday Looking Up

Acts 7:53–56 (NRSV)

⁵³ You are the ones that received the law as ordained by angels, and yet you have not kept it.”

⁵⁴ When they heard these things, they became enraged and ground their teeth at Stephen. ⁵⁵ But filled with the Holy Spirit, he gazed into heaven and saw the glory of God and Jesus standing at the right hand of God. ⁵⁶ “Look,” he said, “I see the heavens opened and the Son of Man standing at the right hand of God!”

Devotional Thought

In the middle of conflict and violence, Stephen lifts his eyes. Instead of focusing on the anger around him, he sees the glory of God and Jesus standing at His side. When life becomes overwhelming, where we look matters. Stephen reminds us that even in difficult moments, God is still present.

Reflect:

Where do you tend to look when life becomes difficult?

Prayer:

Lord, help me lift my eyes and see Your presence in every situation.

Friday Boldness

Acts 7:60–8:1. (NRSV)

⁶⁰ Then he knelt down and cried out in a loud voice, “Lord, do not hold this sin against them.” When he had said this, he died. ⁸ ¹ And Saul approved of their killing him.

That day a severe persecution began against the church in Jerusalem, and all except the apostles were scattered throughout the countryside of Judea and Samaria

Devotional Thought

Stephen’s final words echo the words of Jesus on the cross. In his final moments he responds not with anger, but with forgiveness. The Spirit does not only give courage to stand for truth. The Spirit also gives grace to respond with love. The greatest witness of the church is not power, but Christlike love.

Reflect:

Who might God be inviting you to extend grace toward today?

Prayer:

Jesus, help me respond with grace even when it is difficult.

Sabbath

Take 5–10 minutes today.

Re-read Acts 6:1-9 slowly. Sit quietly and ask: Holy Spirit, what are You already doing and how can I join You?

Write one word above that captures what this week has meant to you.

Acts 6:1–9 (NRSV)

Seven Chosen to Serve

6 Now during those days, when the disciples were increasing in number, the Hellenists complained against the Hebrews because their widows were being neglected in the daily distribution of food. 2 And the twelve called together the whole community of the disciples and said, “It is not right that we should neglect the word of God in order to wait on tables. 3 Therefore, friends, select from among yourselves seven men of good standing, full of the Spirit and of wisdom, whom we may appoint to this task, 4 while we, for our part, will devote ourselves to prayer and to serving the word.” 5 What they said pleased the whole community, and they chose Stephen, a man full of faith and the Holy Spirit, together with Philip, Prochorus, Nicanor, Timon, Parmenas, and Nicolaus, a proselyte of Antioch. 6 They had these men stand before the apostles, who prayed and laid their hands on them.

7 The word of God continued to spread; the number of the disciples increased greatly in Jerusalem, and a great many of the priests became obedient to the faith. 8 Stephen, full of grace and power, did great wonders and signs among the people. 9 Then some of those who belonged to the synagogue of the Freedmen (as it was called), Cyrenians, Alexandrians, and others of those from Cilicia and Asia, stood up and argued with Stephen.

References

Lyrics: Words and music by Jonny Robinson, Rich Thompson
& Michael Farren

Scripture: The Holy Bible: New Revised Standard Version
(Nashville: Thomas Nelson Publishers, 1989)

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