



FALL 2021 // WEEK 4

Life Group Questions

Acts: Daring To Be The Church // October 2/3, 2021

I Will Build My Church // Acts 15:36-16:40

Introduction

In this week's text, Paul begins his second missionary journey. The start of this endeavor is a rocky one with both internal and external challenges. But none of those obstacles will stop the spread of Jesus' Church.

To get the most out of your group time, we invite you to look over the questions below and write your thoughts down before you meet with your group.

Warm Up *(Suggested time: 20 min)*

Here are some suggestions to get your conversation started:

1. If you were put in prison for a week (yes, without access to your smart phone!), how would you spend your time? Why?
2. What do you think are one or two challenges with having freedom (religious freedom, freedom of speech, etc.)?

Getting Started

Transition into group discussion.

- 1) Open group discussion with prayer. Here are a few potential prayer items:
 - a. For the Spirit of God to lead you in truth
 - b. For the fruit of the Spirit to be cultivated in your lives
 - c. For grace to hear and apply what the Spirit says to you
 - 2) Invite someone to read the passage in the group.
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Study Questions *(Suggested time: 40 min)*

- 1) What did you find most convicting about this week's sermon? Why?
- 2) Paul and his companions face several obstacles at the start of their journey. **What do you think is the most difficult of these? Why do you think so?**
- 3) Jesus told His disciples that He would build His Church and the gates of Hades would not overcome it (*Matthew 16:18*). **How do you see Jesus' promise fulfilled in this week's text?**
- 4) At the Jerusalem Council (*Acts 15*) Paul insisted that circumcision was not required for entrance into God's family. Now he is going to take the message that allegiance to Jesus, not keeping the law of Moses (including circumcision), leads to salvation. **Why, then, do you think Paul circumcises his new companion, Timothy, before they leave on their journey? Is Paul being inconsistent?** (See *1 Corinthians 9:19-23*)

What are some rights you have as an American that you could, or should, lay aside for the sake of the gospel and the advancement of the Church?

- 5) Paul plans to travel to the province of Asia and to Bithynia. Each time he is prevented from doing so by the Holy Spirit and instead is directed to Macedonia (vv. 6-10). Later, in Philippi, Lydia responds to Paul's teaching because God opened her heart (vv. 13-15). **From these two accounts, who are we to conclude is the actual leader of this missionary journey? Why?**

Share a time when the logistics (timing, location, etc.) of sharing your faith with someone did not align with the Holy Spirit's promptings. How did you respond to those promptings?

What are some struggles you have in depending on the Holy Spirit instead of yourself when seeking to act on mission with the gospel?

- 6) Paul and his companions were persecuted because of their proclamation of the gospel—beaten, thrown in prison. **Why do you think people in Paul’s day, and in our day, react so strongly and violently against those who proclaim the gospel?**

What fears do you have about telling someone about Jesus? How can you not let those fears prevent you from proclaiming the gospel?

If the United States made proclaiming the gospel illegal and punished those who proclaimed it, what do you think would happen to the Church? Why?

Prayer *(Suggested time: 20 min)*

Prayer opens us up to the leading of the Holy Spirit which makes it an important part of the Christian life. We realize that everyone has their own comfort level with group prayer, and we want this to be a time of safety and care. You may verbalize your prayer or pray silently to yourself; that way everyone is a participant in sharing this time before God together.

Some things to consider during prayer time:

- What did the message or group discussion cause you to notice about your relationship with Jesus?
- How can you express gratitude for what God’s teaching you?
- What questions are stirring that only God can answer?
- Are there troubling things in your life that need to be confessed to God?
- Is there an unmet need that only God can fulfill?

Personal Spiritual Exercises

Each week we’re suggesting a couple of spiritual exercises. These are not required, but they may help us to actively live our faith and grow as followers of Jesus. Feel free to practice one or both. If a certain exercise is helpful for you, we encourage you to find a way to incorporate it into your daily life. **Next week in your Life Group, take a few moments to share how either of these exercises may have changed your outlook on your daily life.**

(1) Take some time every day this week to pray for Christians in other parts of the world who face serious persecution (including death) for proclaiming the gospel and making disciples.

(2) Make an effort this week to talk to one person about Jesus. Beforehand, ask the Holy Spirit (a) to guide you, (b) to calm any fears you might have and give you courage, and (c) to prepare the heart of the person you talk to.