



The Church

Continuing What Jesus Began

THE CHURCH: CONTINUING WHAT JESUS BEGAN
A journey through the book of Acts

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MISSIO DEI CHURCH
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PURPOSE:

Over the next year and a half, Missio Dei Church will be walking through the book of Acts. In writing these study guides, it is our hope that, you, your family, and your Missional Community will see Jesus Christ more clearly and the Holy Spirit will transform you and your group.

HOW TO USE THIS BOOKLET:

These study guides were designed and written to reflect what has been preached about on a Sunday morning. These study guides will be used by Missional Communities after the sermon. Knowing that not all Missional Communities meet throughout the summer months, this may be used by you and/or your family for your personal devotion time.

Please note that there is not too much more theological content or explanation as the sermon is supposed to have already done that. The list of questions within each section is not meant to be exhaustive, but to serve as a guide.

PRAYER REQUESTS:

In the back few pages, you will find some free space to write down prayer requests from throughout the week. Please take time to seriously and earnestly pray through these requests from week to week. When God answers that prayer, write down the date and what God did.

Sermons may be found at www.mdchurch.us/sermons

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The Church: Continuing What Jesus Began [Acts 1: 1-2]

Sermon 01

THEME: By the power of the Holy Spirit the church is obediently to continue to do and teach what Jesus began.

“Luke’s first two verses are, therefore, extremely significant. It is no exaggeration to say that they set Christianity apart from all other religions. These regard their founder as having completed his ministry during his lifetime; Luke says Jesus only began his. True, he finished the work of atonement, yet that end was also a beginning. For after his resurrection, ascension and gift of the Spirit he continued his work, first and foremost through the unique foundation ministry of his chosen apostles and subsequently through the post-apostolic church of every period and place.”

1. Read aloud the above Scripture and talk about what stood out to you. This could be Scripture alone or it could something that the sermon pointed out to you from Sunday.
2. How many people have ever read through the book of Acts from start to finish? We will be spending the next year and a half in the book of Acts. What are some of your hopes as we walk through this book?
3. Luke is able to articulate the Gospel in just a few short sentences (see Acts 1:1-2). He starts off with reminding his readers of the good news of Jesus Christ, which sets the tone for the rest of the book. If the question were to be asked among the room, “What is the Gospel?” would you be able to answer it?
4. So, what are we, as individuals and as a Missional Community, going to do with this section of Scripture? What is God calling us to be? What is God calling us to do?

This, then, is the kind of Jesus Christ we believe in: he is both the historical Jesus who lived and the contemporary Jesus who lives. The Jesus of history began his ministry on earth; the Christ of glory has been active through his Spirit ever since, according to his promise to be with his people ‘always, to the very end of the age’¹

¹ Stott, J. R. W. (1994). *The message of Acts : The Spirit, the church & the world*. The Bible speaks today (34). Leicester, England; Downers Grove, Ill.: Inter-Varsity Press.

THEME: To do Jesus' work, the church must have a solid foundation, sufficient power, a sharp focus, and a sure hope.

"It appears, then, that Jesus' two main topics of conversation between his resurrection and his ascension were the kingdom of God and the Spirit of God. It seems probable that he also related them to each other, for certainly the prophets had often associated them. When God establishes the kingdom of the Messiah, they said, he will pour out his Spirit; this generous effusion and universal enjoyment of the Spirit will be one of the major signs and blessings of his rule; and indeed the Spirit of God will make the rule of God a living and present reality to his people."²

1. Read aloud the above Scripture and talk about what stood out to you. This could be Scripture alone or it could something that the sermon pointed out to you from Sunday.
2. Looking at the theme for this week, what do you think the following means for the church first theologically then practically?
 - a. **Solid foundation**
 - b. **Sufficient power**
 - c. **Sharp focus**
 - d. **Sure hope**
3. When confronted about your beliefs, what does a witness do? How does a witness stand for what they believe in
4. As you look at the progression from Jerusalem to the ends of the earth, what is the responsibility of the church then to participate in mission? Where does this start?
5. Why is what the angles said important in verse 11? Why is this important for us that Jesus would come in the same way [talking about the end of time.
6. So, what are we, as individuals and as a Missional Community, going to do with this section of Scripture? What is God calling us to be? What is God calling us to do?

² Stott, J. R. W. (1994). *The message of Acts : The Spirit, the church & the world.* (40).

THEME: Christianity is credible because it is based on the witness of the apostles, who were godly men of integrity.

1. Read aloud the above Scripture and talk about what stood out to you. This could be Scripture alone or it could be something that the sermon pointed out to you from Sunday.
2. We read this week about the disciples and their prayer life. They prayed for ten days as Jesus told them to. The verb translated “joined ... constantly” (*proskartereō*) means to be ‘busy’ or ‘persistent’ in all activity. It was during this time, in the upper room, they prayed for the Holy Spirit to descend. How is your prayer life going?
 - a. Psalm 27:4 says “*One thing have I asked of the LORD, that will I seek after: that I may dwell in the house of the LORD all the days of my life, to gaze upon the beauty of the LORD and to inquire in his temple.*” What is the one thing that you continually pray to God.
3. Continuing on the idea of prayer, what are ways in which your Missional Community can be joined constantly in prayer for? Is there a family member, co-worker, neighbor that you or your house group has a burden for?
4. The death of Judas obviously decreases the number of disciples from twelve to eleven. The eleven current disciples, being good Jewish men, decided to cast lots, as was their custom. Casting lots for Matthias in the Bible could be compared to picking names out of a hat for an elder in today’s terms.
 - a. Why was there a need to replace Judas? Couldn’t the disciples just have gone on with the eleven?
 - b. Do we still need to cast lots today since we have the Holy Spirit who convicts us and calls people to ministry?
5. Is Christianity credible today? If so, what makes Christianity credible and causes others to refuse it?
6. So, what are we, as individuals and as a Missional Community, going to do with this section of Scripture? What is God calling us to be? What is God calling us to do?

THEME: The meaning of Pentecost is God's equipping His church with the power of His Spirit so that He will be glorified among the nations.

*"Without the Holy Spirit, Christian discipleship would be inconceivable, even impossible. There can be no life without the life-giver, no understanding without the Spirit of truth, no fellowship without the unity of the Spirit, no Christlikeness of character apart from his fruit, and no effective witness without his power. As a body without breath is a corpse, so the church without the Spirit is dead."*³

1. Read aloud the above Scripture and talk about what stood out to you. This could be Scripture alone or it could be something that the sermon pointed out to you from Sunday.
2. The Holy Spirit arrives in three different ways (sound, speech, and sight). What is significant about this?
3. Read Genesis 11:1-9
 - a. What is happening in Genesis, specifically in regards to speech?
 - b. What do we see happening in Acts 2 that is different than in Genesis 11? This about this quote from John Stott as you do so: *"...At Babel earth proudly tried to ascend to heaven, whereas in Jerusalem heaven humbly descended to earth"*.
 - c. What does this mean for us?
4. Think back to God's covenant with Abraham (Genesis 17), how is this covenant being fulfilled and carried out?
5. So, what are we, as individuals and as a Missional Community, going to do with this section of Scripture? What is God calling us to be? What is God calling us to do?

³ Stott, J. R. W. (1994). *The message of Acts : The Spirit, the church & the world*. The Bible speaks today (60).

The Sermon That Launched The Church [Acts 2:14-41]

Sermon 05

THEME: Spirit-led movements always rooted in God's story of redemption.

1. Read aloud the above Scripture and talk about what stood out to you. This could be Scripture alone or it could be something that the sermon pointed out to you from Sunday.
2. What difference do you see in Peter in this section of Acts compared to what we read of Peter in Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John? How do you see your story in Peter's story?
3. Peter cites Joel 2:28-32 as his defense for the arrival of the Holy Spirit. As you read this text, how do we hold it in unison with Titus 2 in regards to discipleship?
 - a. What does this mean for you as a Christian, a brother or sister, as a church?
4. In reading through Acts 2:22-35, how does Peter explain that Jesus is alive? Why does Peter include this in his sermon?
5. Why is it important that Peter tells people to "Repent and be baptized?" Why does Peter instruct people to be baptized and not just tell people to go out and tell people about the Spirit? Where else do we see this command?
6. Does baptism save us then from our sins? Use Scripture to support your answer.
7. So, what are we, as individuals and as a Missional Community, going to do with this section of Scripture? What is God calling us to be? What is God calling us to do?

THEME: A healthy church is marked by continual devotion to the Lord, to His people, and to His work in the world.

1. Read aloud the above Scripture and talk about what stood out to you. This could be Scripture alone or it could something that the sermon pointed out to you from Sunday.
2. Read aloud the above Scripture and talk about what stood out to you. This could be Scripture alone or it could something that the sermon pointed out to you from Sunday.
3. *"A Spirit-filled church is a New Testament church, in the sense that it studies and submits to New Testament instruction. The Spirit of God leads the people of God to submit to the Word of God."*⁴ What were these people learning at this time?
4. What are you currently learning in your walk with Christ through the local expression of Missio Dei Church?
5. In verses 44 & 45 we see that this early church not only hungry to learn, they were also living out what they were hearing and being taught. What are some of the ways we see these people living in light of the Gospel? Did these people sell all that they had all the time, or did they have guidelines on how they gave?
 - a. What are ways that you as an individual, family, co-worker, and Missional community strive to live out the Gospel in all your different contexts?
6. Often times this section of Scripture is used to negate the importance of the local church. As you read this section, what do you notice about this worshipping body? Where did they meet first, and where did they meet second? Why is this important?
7. So, what are we, as individuals and as a Missional Community, going to do with this section of Scripture? What is God calling us to be? What is God calling us to do?

⁴ Stott, J. R. W. (1994). *The message of Acts : The Spirit, the church & the world*. The Bible speaks today (82).

The Exuberant Joy of God's Salvation [Acts 3:1-10]

Sermon 07

THEME: God's miraculous gift of salvation should cause us to praise Him with exuberant joy so that others will marvel at His mighty power.

1. Read aloud the above Scripture and talk about what stood out to you. This could be Scripture alone or it could something that the sermon pointed out to you from Sunday.
2. Insert yourself into this story. Picture you and your spouse or best friend walking to church for the evening service. There is a man lying outside your church doors and cannot walk. This may or may not smell and he may or may not have all of his teeth. He has a wheel chair next to him with a sign that says, "Help, I need money for food." What would you do, honestly?
 - a. What was the reaction of the apostles?
 - b. How did they heal this man?
 - c. What did this man really need?
3. Read Mark 2: 1-12 and John 14: 15-30. What do you see Jesus doing Mark 2 and promising in John 14?
 - a. Were Peter and John more concerned with this man being able to walk and live in that society properly, or were they concerned with this mans eternal destiny?
 - b. As believers in Jesus Christ and having then received the Holy Spirit, what is our response then to be in question 2?
4. Read now, Ephesians 2: 1-10. What has Christ done for us who were dead, or lame from birth? What is the best news that we have received as Christians? In other words, how powerful is the Gospel and how important is it then that we share that good news?
5. So, what are we, as individuals and as a Missional Community, going to do with this section of Scripture? What is God calling us to be? What is God calling us to do?

THEME: To proclaim the gospel, we must exalt the Lord Jesus, confront sinners with their guilt and the danger of judgment, and offer God's grace to those who repent.

1. Read aloud the above Scripture and talk about what stood out to you. This could be Scripture alone or it could be something that the sermon pointed out to you from Sunday.
2. The title for the sermon and our theme for this week revolve around how to share the Gospel.
 - a. *How do we see Peter exalt the Lord Jesus in this passage?*
 - b. *How do we see Peter confront sinner with their guilt and danger of judgment?*
 - c. *How do we see Peter offer God's grace to those who repent?*
3. What change have you seen in Peter during our brief time in Acts since Jesus' death? What has the Gospel done for Peter? Is the same true in your life?
4. So, what are we, as individuals and as a Missional Community, going to do with this section of Scripture? What is God calling us to be? What is God calling us to do?

"This comprehensive testimony to Jesus as rejected by men but vindicated by God, as the fulfillment of all Old Testament prophecy, as demanding repentance and promising blessing, and as the author and giver of life, physically to the healed cripple and spiritually to those who believe, aroused the indignation and antagonism of the authorities. The devil cannot endure the exaltation of Jesus Christ."

THEME: We all should seek to be confident witnesses for the Lord Jesus Christ.

“The early church had none of the “advantages” that some ministries boast of and depend on today. They did not have big budgets provided by wealthy donors. Their pastors lacked credentials from the accepted schools, nor did they have the endorsement of the influential political leaders of that day. Most of their ministers had jail records and would probably have a hard time today joining our churches, let alone leading them. What really was the secret of their success? This chapter provides the answer: the Christians of the early church knew how to pray so that God’s hand could work in mighty power.”⁶

-Warren Wiersbe

1. Read aloud the above Scripture and talk about what stood out to you. This could be Scripture alone or it could be something that the sermon pointed out to you from Sunday.
2. Re-read verse 13. Would someone be able to look at your life and tell that you had been with Jesus? Why or why not?
3. How is verse 13 also an encouragement for you? Peter and John were uneducated people that were proclaiming the Word of God. Most pastors in the earlier church had longer jail records than they did in formal training in homiletics. God can use anything and anyone to accomplish his will. How does this encourage you?
4. Has there ever been a time in your life in which you had to stand up and refute error? If so, describe that experience.
5. After reading this text, what does it mean for you to be a confident witness? How does your idea then work itself out?
6. So, what are we, as individuals and as a Missional Community, going to do with this section of Scripture? What is God calling us to be? What is God calling us to do?

⁶ Wiersbe, W. W. (1996). *The Bible exposition commentary* (Ac 3:17). Wheaton, Ill.: Victor Books.

THEME: Respond to persecution by affirming our commitment to God, to His people, and to His work in the world.

1. Read aloud the above Scripture and talk about what stood out to you. This could be Scripture alone or it could be something that the sermon pointed out to you from Sunday.
2. As we read Scripture, it should lead us to prayer. As we pray, Scripture should be recalled and used during prayer (John 15:7). Read Psalm 2 and discuss why it was fitting that this was the prayer of the Apostles?
3. There is something striking about verses 29 & 30. Notice the content of what they are praying for. They are not asking for God to make their Missional journey easier but they are praying just the opposite. They are praying for boldness to stand up against the opposing force.
 - a. Where in your life do you need more boldness to share the Gospel with people? Is it with your wife, children, family, co-workers, friends?
4. Notice the way God answered their prayer. Was this a second Pentecost happening? Why or why not? Can there ever be a second Pentecost or a second Calvary?
5. While God does not always answer prayer like this, he always answers prayer. Sometimes he answers with a yes, no, or not yet. When you pray, do you believe God will answer in one of these ways?
6. So, what are we, as individuals and as a Missional Community, going to do with this section of Scripture? What is God calling us to be? What is God calling us to do?

“There is little sense of urgency and danger because most of us are comfortable in our Christian walk. If more of God’s people were witnessing for Christ in daily life, there would be more urgency and blessing when the church meets for prayer.”⁷

⁷ Wiersbe, W. W.

THEME: Because we are all prone to the deadly sin of hypocrisy, we should diligently pursue godly character.

“Half of the misery in the world comes from trying to *look*, instead of trying to *be*, what one is not.”⁸

1. Read aloud the above Scripture and talk about what stood out to you. This could be Scripture alone or it could something that the sermon pointed out to you from Sunday
2. After reading this section of Scripture, what is hypocrisy? Describe a time in your life where you have fallen into this deadly sin.
3. Consider your Sunday morning routine, do you mean everything that you pray in public? When we sing old hymns that are rich in content, do you really mean what you sing? As you listen to the sermon, are you listening to what the Holy Spirit is telling you and how you can repent after hearing the Gospel?

- If your answer is no to any of these questions, please explain why.

4. So, what are we, as individuals and as a Missional Community, going to do with this section of Scripture? What is God calling us to be? What is God calling us to do?

⁸ George MacDonald

Obeying God No Matter What [Acts 5:12-42]

Sermon 12

THEME: No matter what, we must obey God by proclaiming and teaching that Jesus Christ is the risen Savior and Lord.

1. Read aloud the above Scripture and talk about what stood out to you. This could be Scripture alone or it could something that the sermon pointed out to you from Sunday.
2. In verses 17-28 the council in Jerusalem attacked the Truth of Scripture. List the ways in which this happened. Have you ever attacked the Truth of Scripture, maybe in your days before being regenerate?
3. In verses 29-32 we see the apostles affirm the Truth's of Scripture. How was this done? Have you ever had the privilege of doing this?
4. In verses 33-39 we see Gamaliel avoid the Truth of the Gospel, how was this done? This is where we as Christians most often tend to gravitate towards. Avoiding the Truths of Scripture is easier than following it and standing up for it.
5. In verses 40-42 we see the Church announcing the Truth of Scripture. Why is the end of this story so exciting?
6. Can you identify with this story? Is there someone in your life that you are currently trying to share the good news with and make a disciple out of or help them to understand the Gospel? If not, why?
7. So, what are we, as individuals and as a Missional Community, going to do with this section of Scripture? What is God calling us to be? What is God calling us to do?

THEME: To solve problems in the local church, both leaders and people must be spiritual people in submission to God's Word.

“Church problems also give us an opportunity to exercise our faith, not only faith in the Lord, but also faith in each other. The leaders suggested a solution, and all the members agreed with it. The assembly selected seven qualified men, and the Apostles set them apart for ministry. The church was not afraid to adjust their structure in order to make room for a growing ministry. When structure and ministry conflict, this gives us an opportunity to trust God for the solution. It is tragic when churches destroy ministry because they refuse to modify their structure. The Apostles were not afraid to share their authority and ministry with others.”⁹

1. Read aloud the above Scripture and talk about what stood out to you. This could be Scripture alone or it could be something that the sermon pointed out to you from Sunday.
2. What was the issue at hand that the Hellenists were upset about?
3. What is the primary role of pastor, elder, or teacher within the church? Why?
4. What then is the role of Deacon and why is this important? Shouldn't this be the role of every church member?
5. As Christians, we are all called to serve and be like Christ. How specifically does a Deacon, a servant leader, serve in the way Christ has served us? Use Scripture to support your answer.
6. So, what are we, as individuals and as a Missional Community, going to do with this section of Scripture? What is God calling us to be? What is God calling us to do?

⁹ Wiersbe, W. W. (1996). *The Bible exposition commentary* (Ac 6:1). Wheaton, Ill.: Victor Books.

THEME: Godly character is the basis for courageous witness for Jesus Christ, no matter what the results.

1. Read through this section of Scripture aloud together as a group. In your initial reading, what pops out at you? Discuss. Why is this significant to you?
2. Why were the Jews so offended by Stephen when he spoke against the temple and the law (*see Mark 14:58 & Matthew 5:17*).
3. How godly should a person be before sharing the gospel? Do we have to “have it all together” to be a good witness?
4. Which of the character qualities that Stephen had do you most need to work on? How will you go about working on it?
5. If God must open the hearts of hardened sinners, then why can't they blame Him for not believing (*see Rom. 9:6-23*)?
6. How can we help religious people to see their need for forgiveness and eternal life? (Consider Jesus' approach in the Sermon on the Mount.)
7. So, what are we, as individuals and as a Missional Community, going to do with this section of Scripture? What is God calling us to be? What is God calling us to do?

“A person who understands and lives God's grace as seen in the cross also becomes a person who shows grace to others. An inward experience of grace flows outward into a gracious spirit toward others.”

THEME: Stephen's sermon points us to the sovereign, abundant grace of God toward rebellious sinners, but also to the danger of hardening our hearts against God's

1. Read through this section of Scripture aloud together as a group. In your initial reading, what pops out at you? Discuss. Why is this significant to you?
2. Keeping Acts 6:12-15 in mind, why does Stephen go back to Old Testament to prove his case? Why not just use the evidence of what Jesus did on his time on earth?
3. Do God's grace and patience have limits? Is there ever a time when we cannot offer His grace to rebellious sinners?
4. Since we all sin repeatedly in many ways, how can we know if we are presuming on God's grace?
5. How can we guard against outward Christianity? How can we keep our hearts genuinely close to God?
6. Was Stephen too confrontational in his indictment of his audience? How can we know how confrontational to be when we present the gospel to someone?
7. So, what are we, as individuals and as a Missional Community, going to do with this section of Scripture? What is God calling us to be? What is God calling us to do?

THEME: Whatever we suffer due to faithfulness to Jesus, we will be rewarded with His eternal acceptance and the encouragement that He will use our service for His purpose and glory.

1. Read through this section of Scripture aloud together as a group. In your initial reading, what pops out at you? Discuss. Why is this significant to you?
2. Agree/disagree: A good dose of persecution would be healthy for the American church.
3. How can we know if we're truly suffering for the gospel or if we're suffering because we're being obnoxious and insensitive?
4. There are a groups of Psalms called *Imprecatory Psalms*. Imprecatory psalms are those psalms that contain curses or prayers for the punishment of the psalmist's enemies. To imprecate means to invoke evil upon, or curse. Psalms 7, 35, 55, 58, 59, 69, 79, 109, 137 and 139 all contain prayers for God's judgment on the psalmist's enemies.
 - a. How do the imprecatory Psalms fit in with the idea of loving those who persecute you?
 - b. Do they apply today (see Rev. 6:10)?
5. Should every believer be "radical" for Jesus? How can we shake off the lethargy of worldliness and be fully committed to Christ?
6. So, what are we, as individuals and as a Missional Community, going to do with this section of Scripture? What is God calling us to be? What is God calling us to do?

Why We Must Proclaim the Gospel [Acts 8:4-25]

Sermon 17

THEME: Since the gospel is the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes, we should proclaim it in every situation where we find ourselves.

1. Read through this section of Scripture aloud together as a group. In your initial reading, what pops out at you? Discuss. Why is this significant to you?
2. What Peter has to say in verses 20-22 are pretty profound. He uses the same idea in Acts 3:1-10. What message is Peter trying to communicate to these new believers?
3. What fears keep you from proclaiming Christ as you should? How can you overcome them?
4. Since there is such a thing as faith that does not save, should we share assurance of salvation with a new believer?
5. Since we all struggle with sin and with doubts, how can a person know if his faith is genuine or false?
6. What are some ways that we can turn everyday conversations into opportunities to share the gospel?
7. So, what are we, as individuals and as a Missional Community, going to do with this section of Scripture? What is God calling us to be? What is God calling us to do?

How God Evangelizes the World [Acts 8:26-40]

Sermon 18

THEME: God evangelizes the world through obedient Christians who explain the gospel to seeking souls.

1. Read through this section of Scripture aloud together as a group. In your initial reading, what pops out at you? Discuss. Why is this significant to you?
2. We have been given two gifts from God. We have his trustworthy inerrant Word (2 Tim. 3:16) as well as teachers who open up, expound, and apply the Scriptures to our lives.
 - a. How has the very Word of God and the preaching of the Word transformed your life lately?
 - b. What, if anything, are you currently reading for your time in Scripture?
3. What are some practical ramifications of relying on God's sovereignty in the process of evangelism?
4. What fears keep you from proclaiming Christ as you should? How can you overcome them?
5. Is being a cross-cultural missionary a special gift? Are only some called to go to foreign lands with the gospel? How can a person know that call?
6. How can we know whether God is prompting us to talk to a particular person about Christ? How can we get into the topic?
7. How much pressure should we put on people to believe in Christ? Where's the balance between urgency and letting the Lord work in His time?
8. So, what are we, as individuals and as a Missional Community, going to do with this section of Scripture? What is God calling us to be? What is God calling us to do?

An Unlikely Conversion [Acts 9:1-19]
Sermon 19

THEME: God is able to convert the most unlikely of sinners and use them as His chosen instruments in the cause of the gospel.

1. Read through this section of Scripture aloud together as a group. In your initial reading, what pops out at you? Discuss. Why is this significant to you?
2. If sinners lack the ability to believe in Christ or repent, is it wrong to encourage/exhort them to do so? Why/why not?
3. Did Saul choose and curse God himself, or did God curse Saul? If so, what then does this mean for us as Christians in light of Ephesians 1:1-14.
4. Since it is easy to profess faith in Christ, but since many such professions are not genuine, should we immediately give assurance of salvation to someone who has just professed Christ?
5. Many say, "God has done all that He can to save sinners; the rest is up to the will of the sinner." Why is this a serious error?
6. Is every believer called to serve God, or just some with a special calling? Defend your answer biblically.
7. So, what are we, as individuals and as a Missional Community, going to do with this section of Scripture? What is God calling us to be? What is God calling us to do?

THEME: God wants all whom He has saved to serve Him in whatever situations He puts them.

1. Read through this section of Scripture aloud together as a group. In your initial reading, what pops out at you? Discuss. Why is this significant to you?
2. If sinners lack the ability to believe in Christ or repent, is it wrong to encourage/exhort them to do so? Why/why not?
3. Did Saul choose and curse God himself, or did God curse Saul? If so, what then does this mean for us as Christians in light of Ephesians 1:1-14.
4. Since it is easy to profess faith in Christ, but since many such professions are not genuine, should we immediately give assurance of salvation to someone who has just professed Christ?
5. Many say, "God has done all that He can to save sinners; the rest is up to the will of the sinner." Why is this a serious error?
6. Is every believer called to serve God, or just some with a special calling? Defend your answer biblically.
7. So, what are we, as individuals and as a Missional Community, going to do with this section of Scripture? What is God calling us to be? What is God calling us to do?

Breaking Down Our Prejudice [Acts 10:1-33]

Sermon 21

THEME: We all have built-in prejudices that God must break down if we are going to be effective in His service.

1. Read through this section of Scripture aloud together as a group. In your initial reading, what pops out at you? Discuss. Why is this significant to you?
2. What are some common evangelical Christian prejudices?
3. Church growth advocates argue that the church should target reaching its own kind. Is this biblical? Why/why not?
4. Should every Christian be seeking to reach those who are culturally different or is this just the gift of some?
5. What are some of the culturally different groups in our city that the Lord might want us to reach? What should you do?
6. So, what are we, as individuals and as a Missional Community, going to do with this section of Scripture? What is God calling us to be? What is God calling us to do?

Salvation for All Who Believe [Acts 10:34-48]

Sermon 22

THEME: Everyone who believes in Christ receives God's salvation.

1. Read through this section of Scripture aloud together as a group. In your initial reading, what pops out at you? Discuss. Why is this significant to you?
2. Why is verse 35 not teaching that good works merit God's favor?
3. What are some illustrations you can use to show people that salvation is not by human effort or good works?
4. Why must people hear and understand the bad news before they can truly receive the good news? Should we attempt to impress it on them or should we leave it to the Holy Spirit?
5. Some say that speaking in tongues is the sign of receiving the Holy Spirit. How would you refute this biblically?
6. So, what are we, as individuals and as a Missional Community, going to do with this section of Scripture? What is God calling us to be? What is God calling us to do?

How God Changes Our Thinking [Acts 11:1-11]

Sermon 23

THEME: To accomplish His sovereign purpose in salvation, God has to change the wrong thinking of His people.

1. Read through this section of Scripture aloud together as a group. In your initial reading, what pops out at you? Discuss. Why is this significant to you?
2. Discuss: Missions is not a program in the church; it is the program of the church.
3. Why is a mono-cultural church (Baby Boomers, Gen X, Gen Y, young marrieds, etc.) not biblical? Why should the church be multi-cultural/racial?
4. What are some American church traditions that may hinder our outreach to this culture?
5. Is there any wrong thinking that we as a church (or you as an individual) need to change to conform to God's Word?
6. So, what are we, as individuals and as a Missional Community, going to do with this section of Scripture? What is God calling us to be? What is God calling us to do?

The Unstoppable Gospel [Acts 12: 1-25]

Sermon 24

THEME: Since God is almighty, no force can stop the spread of His gospel according to His purpose.

1. Read aloud the above Scripture and talk about what stood out to you. This could be Scripture alone or it could something that the sermon pointed out to you from Sunday.
2. Is “why” a legitimate question to ask when tragedy strikes? Why/why not?
3. How can we pray in faith for deliverance if we do not know God’s will in advance?
4. A critic taunts, “How can a loving God allow so much evil and suffering in this world?” Your answer?
5. It would seem realistically that the world’s major religions have stopped the penetration of the gospel into much of the world for centuries. How, then, is the gospel unstoppable?
6. So, what are we, as individuals and as a Missional Community, going to do with this section of Scripture? What is God calling us to be? What is God calling us to do?

The Main Business of Church [Acts 13:1-3]

Sermon 25

THEME: The main business of the church is to obey the Holy Spirit in promoting God's glory among the nations by sending out workers called by God to preach the gospel.

1. Read aloud the above Scripture and talk about what stood out to you. This could be Scripture alone or it could be something that the sermon pointed out to you from Sunday.
2. Do you agree with John Piper: Either you're a goer, a sender, or disobedient? Why must missions be the focus of all?
3. How can a person know if he or she is called to going to another culture as a missionary?
4. Should missionaries be supported by many churches or primarily by one church? What are the pros and cons?
5. What are some ways that those who do not go as missionaries can be involved in the cause?
6. So, what are we, as individuals and as a Missional Community, going to do with this section of Scripture? What is God calling us to be? What is God calling us to do?

THEME: When we share the gospel, we engage the enemy of souls in spiritual combat, so we must be prepared for spiritual battle.

1. Read aloud the above Scripture and talk about what stood out to you. This could be Scripture alone or it could something that the sermon pointed out to you from Sunday.
2. Should Christians fear the devil? If so, to what extent?
3. How can we discern Satan's deceptive tactics?
4. How can we know if we're filled with the Spirit or just acting in impulsive selfishness?
5. To what extent should we use persuasion in presenting the gospel? Can it be over-used?
6. So, what are we, as individuals and as a Missional Community, going to do with this section of Scripture? What is God calling us to be? What is God calling us to do?

The God Who Keeps His Promises [Acts 13: 13-41]

Sermon 27

THEME: God's promise to send a Savior and His fulfillment of that promise in sending Jesus demands a response.

1. Read aloud the above Scripture and talk about what stood out to you. This could be Scripture alone or it could be something that the sermon pointed out to you from Sunday.
2. Why must God's election be the cause, not the result, of our faith in Christ?
3. Why is it important to affirm that God is sovereign even over evil?
4. Why must a person believe in the deity of Jesus Christ in order to be saved?
5. What lessons can we learn about witnessing from Paul's presentation of the gospel here?
6. So, what are we, as individuals and as a Missional Community, going to do with this section of Scripture? What is God calling us to be? What is God calling us to do?

THEME: Since God is glorified in the salvation of His elect, He wants us boldly to proclaim the gospel, even though it divides people.

1. Read aloud the above Scripture and talk about what stood out to you. This could be Scripture alone or it could something that the sermon pointed out to you from Sunday.
2. Why is the gospel necessarily offensive? What part is offensive?
3. Why is it important to affirm the doctrine of election? Why not just skip it, since it's so controversial?
4. Why is the doctrine of election important as a foundation for the work of evangelism?
5. Can a person get saved without hearing the gospel? Defend your answer from Scripture.
6. So, what are we, as individuals and as a Missional Community, going to do with this section of Scripture? What is God calling us to be? What is God calling us to do?

Marks of a Faithful Servant [Acts 14: 8-38]

Sermon 29

THEME: We should learn from and imitate Paul and Barnabas as faithful servants of Christ, no matter what the cost.

1. Read aloud the above Scripture and talk about what stood out to you. This could be Scripture alone or it could something that the sermon pointed out to you from Sunday.
2. Paul often urged others to follow his example (1 Corinthians 11:1). Does this contradict the principle of pointing people to God, not to himself? If not, is there a danger here?
3. Why didn't God spare Paul from being stoned (Barnabas didn't get stoned)? What does this teach us about God's protection as we serve Him?
4. What is the difference between true and false humility? Is it wrong for the Lord's servant to say "thank you" when someone tells him how his ministry has helped him?
5. What are some warning signs of burnout? In light of the many needs in the world, is it wrong to take time off from ministry?
6. So, what are we, as individuals and as a Missional Community, going to do with this section of Scripture? What is God calling us to be? What is God calling us to do?

THEME: Unity is wrong when it compromises the doctrine of salvation by God's grace alone through faith in Christ alone.

1. Read aloud the above Scripture and talk about what stood out to you. This could be Scripture alone or it could something that the sermon pointed out to you from Sunday.
2. Why is it essential to emphasize justification by faith alone, with nothing added (see Romans 4:2)?
3. Can a Catholic believe in the teachings of his church and be truly saved? Why/why not?
4. Is God fair to save a terrible sinner the instant he believes, but to condemn a good person who never believes in Christ?
5. How do you harmonize James 2:14-26 and Romans 4?
6. So, what are we, as individuals and as a Missional Community, going to do with this section of Scripture? What is God calling us to be? What is God calling us to do?

When Concession is Right [Acts 15: 12-35]

Sermon 31

THEME: Concession is right when it does not compromise essential truth and it is done out of love to avoid offending others.

1. Read aloud the above Scripture and talk about what stood out to you. This could be Scripture alone or it could be something that the sermon pointed out to you from Sunday.
2. How can we determine which doctrines in the Bible are essential to the faith and which are not as important?
3. What are some examples of offensive things that Christians can do that keep unbelievers from believing the gospel?
4. What are some examples of offensive things that Christians can do that could lead weaker believers into sin?
5. What are some culturally acceptable practices that the Bible says are always wrong, but where Christians are in danger of imitating the world?
6. So, what are we, as individuals and as a Missional Community, going to do with this section of Scripture? What is God calling us to be? What is God calling us to do?

When Personalities Clash [Acts 15: 36-41]

Sermon 32

THEME: Christians must be diligent to maintain unity and to continue serving the Lord in spite of personality clashes.

1. Read aloud the above Scripture and talk about what stood out to you. This could be Scripture alone or it could be something that the sermon pointed out to you from Sunday.
2. When is it a sin to belong to a particular denomination? Are denominations by definition sinful? Defend biblically.
3. How does liking someone interface with loving him (or her)? Is it wrong not to like everyone?
4. When my personality clashes with someone else's, how do I know when I cross the line into sin?
5. How can we work at genuine Christian unity with other believers? What practical steps can we take?
6. So, what are we, as individuals and as a Missional Community, going to do with this section of Scripture? What is God calling us to be? What is God calling us to do

THEME: Since the Holy Spirit is sovereign over His work, we must seek to follow Him as we labor for the Lord.

1. Read aloud the above Scripture and talk about what stood out to you. This could be Scripture alone or it could something that the sermon pointed out to you from Sunday.
2. How can a Christian know if he is walking in true dependence on the Holy Spirit?
3. How can we know the Spirit's leading on issues where the Bible does not give specific help?
4. How can we know exactly where God wants us to be serving Him? What factors should we consider?
5. Does God still guide through dreams or visions? If we have such, how can we know if it's from the Lord?
6. So, what are we, as individuals and as a Missional Community, going to do with this section of Scripture? What is God calling us to be? What is God calling us to do?

Three Encounters With God [Acts 16: 11-34]

Sermon 34

THEME: God providentially works to draw very different people to Himself through the same gospel.

1. Read aloud the above Scripture and talk about what stood out to you. This could be Scripture alone or it could something that the sermon pointed out to you from Sunday.
2. Is there such a thing as luck? How can we know that all things are ordered by a wise and loving Providence?
3. How does God's providence relate to not losing our temper when we are treated unjustly?
4. Should evangelicals work together with Roman Catholics or Mormons on social issues, such as abortion? Why/why not?
5. If God must grant saving faith, why can't unbelievers blame Him for not giving it to them?
6. So, what are we, as individuals and as a Missional Community, going to do with this section of Scripture? What is God calling us to be? What is God calling us to do?

How to be Right When You're Wronged [Acts 16: 16-40]

Sermon 35

THEME: When you are wronged, entrust your soul to a faithful Creator in doing what is right.

1. Read aloud the above Scripture and talk about what stood out to you. This could be Scripture alone or it could be something that the sermon pointed out to you from Sunday.
2. How can we know when it is right to defend ourselves and when we should simply yield our rights?
3. Is depression a sin? How can a person be "sorrowful yet always rejoicing" (2 Corinthians 6:10)?
4. What should a Christian do when his life has been a poor testimony to those without Christ?
5. What are some practical steps toward deepening our daily joy in the Lord?
6. So, what are we, as individuals and as a Missional Community, going to do with this section of Scripture? What is God calling us to be? What is God calling us to do?

The Urgent Question [Acts 16: 25-34]

Sermon 36

THEME: The most urgent question in the world is: How can I be saved? The biblical answer is:
Believe in the Lord Jesus, and you shall be saved.

1. Read aloud the above Scripture and talk about what stood out to you. This could be Scripture alone or it could something that the sermon pointed out to you from Sunday.
2. How can we impress on lost people the urgency of salvation?
3. Why does God not take into account good works when a person stands before Him? How do you explain Romans 2:9-10?
4. How much does a person need to know to be saved? Can a person be saved without believing in the deity of Jesus?
5. Is saving faith a work? Why/why not? Give biblical support.
6. So, what are we, as individuals and as a Missional Community, going to do with this section of Scripture? What is God calling us to be? What is God calling us to do?

Upsetting the World for Christ [Acts 17: 1-15]

Sermon 37

THEME: To upset the world for Jesus Christ, we need to be men and women who are committed to Christ and the gospel.

1. Read aloud the above Scripture and talk about what stood out to you. This could be Scripture alone or it could something that the sermon pointed out to you from Sunday.
2. Ralph Winter suggests that every Christian adopt a “missionary lifestyle” and give the difference to the cause of missions. What do you think about this idea?
3. What does total commitment to Christ and the gospel look like in a person who is not gifted as an evangelist or missionary?
4. Why is faith not a leap in the dark? Could it rightly be called “a step” rather than “a leap”? Why/why not?
5. Discuss: Is every follower of Christ called to radical commitment, or just those called into missions?
6. So, what are we, as individuals and as a Missional Community, going to do with this section of Scripture? What is God calling us to be? What is God calling us to do?

Reaching Intellectuals for Christ [Acts 17: 16-34]

Sermon 38

THEME: To reach intellectuals for Christ, we must begin on common ground, show them God's supremacy and their own sin, and call them to repentance and faith in the risen Lord Jesus.

1. Read aloud the above Scripture and talk about what stood out to you. This could be Scripture alone or it could be something that the sermon pointed out to you from Sunday.
2. What are some helpful ways to initiate a discussion of spiritual things?
3. What do you say if someone says, "I don't believe in God," or, "I don't believe in the Bible"?
4. Why is the doctrine of creation crucial to the gospel? Should we debate evolution with an unbeliever? If so, how?
5. Some argue that we should not mention repentance in a gospel presentation, but only faith in Christ. Why is repentance inseparable from saving faith?
6. So, what are we, as individuals and as a Missional Community, going to do with this section of Scripture? What is God calling us to be? What is God calling us to do?

THEME: Because God is faithful to us, especially in times of difficulty, we should respond with faithful service to Him.

1. Read aloud the above Scripture and talk about what stood out to you. This could be Scripture alone or it could be something that the sermon pointed out to you from Sunday.
2. Should all Christians view themselves as God's servants, or just those supported by the ministry? Why does it matter?
3. Discuss the implications: All Christians should give enough that they are forced to trust God to supply their needs.
4. Why should the doctrine of election motivate us to evangelism?
5. How can we find the balance between sensitivity to people and biblical boldness?
6. So, what are we, as individuals and as a Missional Community, going to do with this section of Scripture? What is God calling us to be? What is God calling us to do?

THEME: To accomplish His work of proclaiming the gospel and strengthening the church, God uses workers who are all in process.

1. Read aloud the above Scripture and talk about what stood out to you. This could be Scripture alone or it could be something that the sermon pointed out to you from Sunday.
2. Do you think that making vows is a healthy or unhealthy approach to spiritual growth? Why/why not?
3. Why is it essential for every Christian to be able to lead another person to faith in Jesus Christ? What are the basics here?
4. How can a Christian discover where God wants him to serve?
5. A person tells you, "I tried reading the Bible, but I couldn't get much out of it." How would you help him?
6. So, what are we, as individuals and as a Missional Community, going to do with this section of Scripture? What is God calling us to be? What is God calling us to do?

Evangelizing, Empowering, & Equipping [Acts 18: 1-10]

Sermon 41

THEME: To establish and extend the church, there must be evangelizing, empowering, and equipping.

1. Read aloud the above Scripture and talk about what stood out to you. This could be Scripture alone or it could something that the sermon pointed out to you from Sunday.
2. How can you talk about the gospel to someone who thinks that he is a Christian, but whom you suspect is not?
3. How can a believer learn to walk in the Spirit?
4. A Christian says, "Doctrine is divisive and it is not relevant to where I live." Your response?
5. So, what are we, as individuals and as a Missional Community, going to do with this section of Scripture? What is God calling us to be? What is God calling us to do?

THEME: We should allow God to use us according to His will for His glory, but we should not try to use Him for our own purposes.

1. Read aloud the above Scripture and talk about what stood out to you. This could be Scripture alone or it could be something that the sermon pointed out to you from Sunday.
2. Can Satan work through people to perform miracles (2 Thessalonians 2:9-10)? How can we know whether a miracle is from God?
3. Why is pragmatism (doing whatever works) not a biblical methodology?
4. How can we know in a specific situation whether it is God's will to heal or not (2 Corinthians 12:7-10; Hebrews 12:3-11)?
5. What are the "greater works" that Jesus promised (John 14:12)? Should we be focusing on signs and wonders? Give biblical support.
6. So, what are we, as individuals and as a Missional Community, going to do with this section of Scripture? What is God calling us to be? What is God calling us to do?

Why People Oppose the Gospel [Acts 19: 21-41]

Sermon 43

THEME: People oppose the gospel because Satan has blinded them and the gospel confronts their sin; but God rules over all.

1. Read aloud the above Scripture and talk about what stood out to you. This could be Scripture alone or it could be something that the sermon pointed out to you from Sunday.
2. Should we question our impact for Christ if we are not experiencing Satan's opposition? Why/why not?
3. To what extent should Christians use political power for kingdom purposes? Where is the balance?
4. What are some ways that evangelicals commonly engage in idolatry? How can we rid ourselves of such idols?
5. When presenting the gospel, how confrontational should we be towards our sinful culture? Where is the balance between grace and salt (Colossians 4:6)?
6. So, what are we, as individuals and as a Missional Community, going to do with this section of Scripture? What is God calling us to be? What is God calling us to do?

How One Man Changed the World [Acts 20: 1-16]

Sermon 44

THEME: Paul changed the world through his commitment to establish and strengthen local churches.

1. Read aloud the above Scripture and talk about what stood out to you. This could be Scripture alone or it could be something that the sermon pointed out to you from Sunday.
2. How important is Sunday worship? Are we free to have our main gathering on other days? What are the practical implications of the term, “the Lord’s Day”?
3. Someone says, “Having communion every week makes it a meaningless routine.” Your response?
4. At what point is a believer mature enough to move from being discipled to being a discipler of others?
5. How can we practically demonstrate our unity with Christians who attend other churches? Should it be something structured or something organic and spontaneous?
6. So, what are we, as individuals and as a Missional Community, going to do with this section of Scripture? What is God calling us to be? What is God calling us to do?

THEME: A godly leader is marked by a servant attitude, transparent integrity, godly character, and faithful biblical teaching.

1. Read aloud the above Scripture and talk about what stood out to you. This could be Scripture alone or it could be something that the sermon pointed out to you from Sunday.
2. How does a servant know when to say no to demands that people make on him?
3. How open should a leader be regarding his personal weaknesses and failures? Does transparency mean baring all?
4. What practical steps can we take to grow in humility?
5. Can love and kindness be joined with uncompromising faithfulness to God's truth? How? Where is the biblical balance?
6. So, what are we, as individuals and as a Missional Community, going to do with this section of Scripture? What is God calling us to be? What is God calling us to do?

THEME: *To finish the course, you must put the ministry that you received from the Lord above even life itself.*

1. Read aloud the above Scripture and talk about what stood out to you. This could be Scripture alone or it could be something that the sermon pointed out to you from Sunday.
2. Is ministry the calling of every Christian or only of some? Give biblical support for your answer.
3. How do you know whether to hang in with a difficult ministry or if it is God's way of moving you to a different ministry?
4. Why should every Christian flee from "the American dream"? Is it wrong to look forward to a comfortable retirement?
5. Does verse 26 imply that somehow Christians can be responsible for another person's going to hell? What does it mean?
6. How can we discern whether we are balanced in our understanding of God's whole purpose?
7. So, what are we, as individuals and as a Missional Community, going to do with this section of Scripture? What is God calling us to be? What is God calling us to do?

THEME: *Elders must guard the flock by tenderly warning against false teachers, and by staying centered on God and the word of His grace.*

1. Read aloud the above Scripture and talk about what stood out to you. This could be Scripture alone or it could be something that the sermon pointed out to you from Sunday.
2. How can we know which doctrines are worth fighting about and which ones we can be tolerant of different views?
3. Someone says, "They will know that we are Christians by our love, not by our doctrinal correctness." Your response?
4. A man once told me that if I claimed to be right on a doctrinal matter, I was being proud and judgmental of those who did not agree, and thus was in sin. How would you answer him?
5. Many err by thinking that God's grace means permission to be sloppy about our sin. What does His grace mean and why does it not lead to sloppy living (see Romans 6; Titus 2:11-15)?
6. So, what are we, as individuals and as a Missional Community, going to do with this section of Scripture? What is God calling us to be? What is God calling us to do?

Why Givers are Blessed [Acts 20: 33-38]

Sermon 48

THEME: Givers are blessed because they are freed from greed, they are being conformed to Jesus, they have enduring relationships with others, and they will reap eternal rewards.

1. Read aloud the above Scripture and talk about what stood out to you. This could be Scripture alone or it could be something that the sermon pointed out to you from Sunday.
2. Greed seems to be a sin that few American Christians recognize or confess. How can we be on guard against greed?
3. How can we distinguish one who is truly weak, and thus deserving of our gifts, and one who is not living responsibly?
4. Sometimes giving creates unhealthy dependence in the recipient. How can we avoid this problem?
5. In a world of needs, how can we determine where God wants us to give and how much to give?
6. So, what are we, as individuals and as a Missional Community, going to do with this section of Scripture? What is God calling us to be? What is God calling us to do?

Discerning the Will of God [Acts 21: 1-14]

Sermon 49

THEME: We should walk so closely with God that we discern His guidance as we live in obedience to His Word, in dependence on His Holy Spirit.

1. Read aloud the above Scripture and talk about what stood out to you. This could be Scripture alone or it could something that the sermon pointed out to you from Sunday.
2. Is feeling a peace (or lack thereof) about something a valid factor in determining God's will? (See 2 Corinthians 2:12-14)
3. Do we need to seek God's will for relatively minor decisions (what we wear for the day, etc.)? Why/why not?
4. How can we know when to go against the counsel of godly people? What principles apply?
5. Why is putting out a fleece (or asking for a sign) not a good practice when seeking God's will?
6. So, what are we, as individuals and as a Missional Community, going to do with this section of Scripture? What is God calling us to be? What is God calling us to do?

THEME: When a godly man errs, God will work it together for good according to His loving purpose.

1. Read aloud the above Scripture and talk about what stood out to you. This could be Scripture alone or it could something that the sermon pointed out to you from Sunday.
2. Do you agree that Paul erred by going along with this scheme? Why/why not?
3. What is the difference between a mistake and a sin? Where do motives fit in?
4. How can we discern which issues to compromise on and which issues require taking a stand even if it creates conflict? (Study the life of Jesus in this regard.)
5. Some professing Christians try to defend racism biblically. How would you refute them? How can our church practically show that God's mercy transcends racial boundaries?
6. So, what are we, as individuals and as a Missional Community, going to do with this section of Scripture? What is God calling us to be? What is God calling us to do?

THEME: Paul's testimony teaches us how God works mightily to save sinners.

1. Read aloud the above Scripture and talk about what stood out to you. This could be Scripture alone or it could be something that the sermon pointed out to you from Sunday.
2. Why is the idea that God elected us because He foresaw that we would choose Him opposed to Scripture?
3. What are some practical applications of the doctrine of election? Are there any dangers in believing this doctrine?
4. Some churches teach that baptism is essential for salvation. Is this a denial of the gospel? Why/why not?
5. God's purpose involves His being glorified among the nations. How can a Christian determine how he fits into this purpose?
6. So, what are we, as individuals and as a Missional Community, going to do with this section of Scripture? What is God calling us to be? What is God calling us to do?

The Ups and Downs of Witnessing [Acts 22:23]

Sermon 52

THEME: If we will speak out for Christ, even if we blow it, He will graciously encourage us and give us further opportunities to speak out for Him.

1. Read aloud the above Scripture and talk about what stood out to you. This could be Scripture alone or it could something that the sermon pointed out to you from Sunday.
2. What are some ways to turn a conversation toward spiritual things?
3. What are your main fears about witnessing? How can these be overcome?
4. Why is it important for Christians to acknowledge their sins and ask forgiveness, even before unbelievers?
5. When is it right to stand up for our rights, and when should we back off?
6. So, what are we, as individuals and as a Missional Community, going to do with this section of Scripture? What is God calling us to be? What is God calling us to do?

THEME: The Lord encourages His servants with His presence in their difficult circumstances, His praise for their past service, and His promise of their future service.

1. Read aloud the above Scripture and talk about what stood out to you. This could be Scripture alone or it could be something that the sermon pointed out to you from Sunday.
2. If we don't sense God's spiritual presence with us, how can we gain it?
3. Is it okay to nurse wrong feelings for a while, or should we confront them and seek to put them off immediately? How can we know whether our feelings are sinful or just "human"?
4. When have you been most encouraged? How can you best offer encouragement to someone who is feeling down?
5. Is our future service for the Lord limited somehow by our past mistakes? If so, how? Is it sometimes enhanced by our past mistakes? Give biblical examples.
6. So, what are we, as individuals and as a Missional Community, going to do with this section of Scripture? What is God calling us to be? What is God calling us to do?

THEME: When we face trials and opposition in our service for the Lord, we should trust Him to protect us by His providence and to work out His sovereign plan for our lives.

1. Read aloud the above Scripture and talk about what stood out to you. This could be Scripture alone or it could be something that the sermon pointed out to you from Sunday.
2. Is there a difference between God's permitting evil and His ordaining it? If so, what?
3. Why is the doctrine of God's sovereignty over evil more comforting than the view that He can't control evil since it stems from man's free will?
4. How can God actively direct all things through His providence and yet hold people accountable (see Romans 9:9-24)?
5. How can we know whether God expects us to wait passively on Him or to take action ourselves (see Exodus 14:10-31)?
6. So, what are we, as individuals and as a Missional Community, going to do with this section of Scripture? What is God calling us to be? What is God calling us to do?

THEME: We can live with integrity by speaking the truth, by living in line with Scripture, and by keeping a blameless conscience before God and men.

1. Read aloud the above Scripture and talk about what stood out to you. This could be Scripture alone or it could be something that the sermon pointed out to you from Sunday.
2. Since many of God's servants are slandered, how can we avoid being taken in by slanderous accusations?
3. Does speaking the truth require that we divulge all that we know about a situation? How can we speak truth and yet keep appropriate confidences?
4. Why is the phrase, "Let your conscience be your guide" only partially true?
5. Living with a clear conscience before God and men is the mark of every true Christian. Agree/disagree? Why?
6. So, what are we, as individuals and as a Missional Community, going to do with this section of Scripture? What is God calling us to be? What is God calling us to do?

THEME: To find time for God, we must seize present opportunities, deal with known sin, and establish proper priorities.

1. Read aloud the above Scripture and talk about what stood out to you. This could be Scripture alone or it could be something that the sermon pointed out to you from Sunday.
2. What is the proper balance between grace and salt (Colossians 4:6) in witnessing? How “salty” should we be?
3. Can Christians pursue the kingdom of God and the American Dream at the same time? Why/why not (biblically)?
4. How can a procrastinator overcome his problem?
5. Do you have written spiritual goals for your life? If not, write a life purpose statement and some goals to help you move in the right direction.
6. Felix’s activities, ambitions, and anxieties reveal his priorities. What priorities do your activities, ambitions, and anxieties reveal?
7. So, what are we, as individuals and as a Missional Community, going to do with this section of Scripture? What is God calling us to be? What is God calling us to do?

THEME: God uses His delays to teach us to trust Him more fully and to submit more thoroughly to His lordship over our lives.

1. Read aloud the above Scripture and talk about what stood out to you. This could be Scripture alone or it could be something that the sermon pointed out to you from Sunday.
2. Why does God sometimes delay answering prayers that seem so urgent to us?
3. How can we know whether we're supposed to wait for God to act or take action ourselves? See 1 Samuel 13:1-14.
4. How can we keep our focus on the Lord rather than our circumstances, especially when our circumstances seem overwhelming?
5. Is it hypocrisy to rejoice in the Lord even when you feel like grumbling? Why/why not? How do we rejoice in Him when we don't feel like rejoicing? Should we fake it?
6. So, what are we, as individuals and as a Missional Community, going to do with this section of Scripture? What is God calling us to be? What is God calling us to do?

THEME: God will protect His servants from the forces of evil and use us according to His sovereign purpose.

1. Read aloud the above Scripture and talk about what stood out to you. This could be Scripture alone or it could be something that the sermon pointed out to you from Sunday.
2. Why is it crucial and very practical to see every circumstance as under God's sovereign control?
3. How can a people-pleaser learn to take a stand for God's truth? Where is the biblical balance between truth and love?
4. How far should Christians go in using the government to uphold righteousness? How far can we go in legislating biblical standards in a secular and pluralistic culture?
5. If God is sovereign over frustrating circumstances, is it wrong to seek to get out from under them? Why/why not?
6. So, what are we, as individuals and as a Missional Community, going to do with this section of Scripture? What is God calling us to be? What is God calling us to do?

Two Views of the Resurrection [Acts 25:23 – 26:32]

Sermon 59

THEME: While the world views the resurrection as inconsequential, the Christian views it as the most important fact in history.

1. Read aloud the above Scripture and talk about what stood out to you. This could be Scripture alone or it could be something that the sermon pointed out to you from Sunday.
2. Someone tells you, "It's fine for you to believe in Jesus, but I have my own beliefs that are valid for me." Your response?
3. If Christianity rests on a fact of history, where does faith fit in? Why is it necessary?
4. Some say, "It doesn't matter what you believe, just so you believe in something." But why is it crucial for our faith to rest on the facts about the person of Jesus Christ?
5. Some believe in Christianity as long as it "works" for them. But if trials hit, they turn elsewhere. How does an understanding of the resurrection counter this shallow approach?
6. So, what are we, as individuals and as a Missional Community, going to do with this section of Scripture? What is God calling us to be? What is God calling us to do?

THEME: The crazy person lives for this present world, whereas the sane person obeys Jesus Christ and lives in light of eternity.

1. Read aloud the above Scripture and talk about what stood out to you. This could be Scripture alone or it could be something that the sermon pointed out to you from Sunday.
2. How can we know when we are “worldly”? What does this mean biblically?
3. Is it permissible to enjoy the luxuries of American life? How can we know when we “love the things of the world”?
4. Are all Christians responsible to obey the Great Commission, or are just some called to do so? Give biblical support.
5. Practically, what does it mean to seek first the kingdom of God? How can a person do this and hold down a full-time job?
6. So, what are we, as individuals and as a Missional Community, going to do with this section of Scripture? What is God calling us to be? What is God calling us to do?

THEME: If we will trust in God's sovereign care for us in life's storms, He will use us to bear witness to many.

1. Read aloud the above Scripture and talk about what stood out to you. This could be Scripture alone or it could be something that the sermon pointed out to you from Sunday.
2. Why is the doctrine of God's sovereignty very practical in life's storms? Why is a denial of it a serious error?
3. If we can't determine God's will by the absence of trials, how can we know that we are in His will?
4. Exactly how should Christians be different than the world in the midst of trials? Is it wrong to cry or express grief?
5. Someone asks, "If God is totally sovereign, why pray or evangelize?" Your response?
6. So, what are we, as individuals and as a Missional Community, going to do with this section of Scripture? What is God calling us to be? What is God calling us to do?

Encouragement In Life's Storms [Acts 27: 2-3, 21-26, 33-36]

Sermon 62

THEME: Those who have received God's encouragement in life's storms should encourage others to look to God.

1. Read aloud the above Scripture and talk about what stood out to you. This could be Scripture alone or it could something that the sermon pointed out to you from Sunday.
2. Trials can make us either better or bitter. What makes the difference?
3. Is it a sin to be discouraged? Why/why not?
4. It is easy in a trial to feel angry toward God. Is this ever permissible? If so, how? If not, how do we deal with it?
5. Sometimes our attempts to encourage someone fail. How can we offer genuine encouragement in Christ? Are there things that we should avoid saying or doing at such times?
6. So, what are we, as individuals and as a Missional Community, going to do with this section of Scripture? What is God calling us to be? What is God calling us to do?

Mission Accomplished [Acts 28: 1-31]

Sermon 63

THEME: God accomplishes His Great Commission by protecting, providing for, and empowering His servants who obediently proclaim the gospel to all people.

1. Read aloud the above Scripture and talk about what stood out to you. This could be Scripture alone or it could be something that the sermon pointed out to you from Sunday.
2. Is world missions supposed to be the responsibility of all Christians, or only of those whom God so calls?
3. Agree/disagree: Missions is the ultimate reason the Lord has left the church on earth.
4. How can a person know where he or she fits in to God's purpose in the Great Commission?
5. If a person is apathetic toward world missions, should he conclude that he isn't called? Or, could there be a more serious problem?
6. So, what are we, as individuals and as a Missional Community, going to do with this section of Scripture? What is God calling us to be? What is God calling us to do?