

THE PROMISE OF PENTE COST

A 20-DAY DEVOTIONAL



The Promise

Read: Acts 1

Jesus is alive! And his disciples are firsthand witnesses of the resurrected Christ.

Jesus appears to his disciples over a span of 40 days, speaking to them about things pertaining to the kingdom of God. He commands them that they should not depart from Jerusalem but wait for the promise of the Father: “For John truly baptized with water; but ye shall be baptized with the Holy Ghost not many days hence (Acts 1:5).

The apostles wanted to know when the physical kingdom would be restored back to Israel. Jesus reassures them of a greater promise; a spiritual kingdom and power. With that, he was taken up and a cloud received Him out of their sight. The disciples return to Jerusalem and go up into an upper room to await the promise. The promise they were anticipating was the Holy Ghost and their preparation for receiving it was prayer and supplication.

Prayer is a spiritual tool designed by God and given to men, through which great victories are accomplished. Prayer is designed to release the promises and power of Almighty God in our communities and in our world. Prayer is power!

*“But ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you:
and ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judaea,
and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth.”*

Acts 1:8

Reflection: Have you ever wondered what the twelve apostles and believers prayed while they waited in the upper room? Knowing the task set before them, their prayers were most likely more evangelistic than personal.

Life Application: Make a list of 5 points that you would have prayed if you were in the upper room awaiting the promise. Next, make these 5 points part of your daily prayers.

Fire

Read: Acts 2

The day of Pentecost had fully come and they were all with one accord in one place and they were all filled with the Holy Ghost. The unity of the people and the unity of the Spirit opened the door to miracles.

In the upper room, 120 people lifted up their voices in prayer and supplication with a great sense of expectation of the promise that Jesus spoke of. With no reference point, or anyone's previous experience to pull from, they had no idea what to expect. But they believed the words of Jesus and waited in anticipation. And finally, it happened.

Can you imagine how they felt as the Spirit poured out? There were sounds and wind, cloven tongues like as of fire, languages and voices lifted high. They must have been overwhelmed with complete joy. JOY in knowing that everything that was prophesied had now come to fruition. JOY in knowing that their Saviour, gone physically, now lived inside of them spiritually. JOY in knowing that they had received power to take the Gospel to the entire world.

News spread quickly like wildfire, and even intrigued a group of Jews, devout men dwelling in Jerusalem. They were confused, amazed and asked what it all meant? This is when we hear Peter's first message as he stands up with the eleven apostles, raises his voice and declares that this is the fulfillment of prophecy.

*And they continued steadfastly in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship,
and in breaking of bread, and in prayers.*

Acts 2:42

Reflection: When we try a new restaurant or visit an amazing landmark, we just can't wait to share the details and photos with others. How much more a life changing experience of receiving the Holy Spirit?

Life Application: If you have received the gift of the Holy Spirit, recount your experience with someone today. If you have not yet received the Holy Spirit ask someone to join you in praying that your faith would be lifted to receive.

Miracles, Signs and Wonders

Read: Acts 3

The church continues to grow and many signs and wonders were done through the apostles. As Peter and John go up to the temple at the hour of prayer, they encounter a man lame from his mother's womb sitting at the gate Beautiful.

As believers, we have access to the presence of God and power to live day by day by His Spirit. While Peter and John went about their daily routine of prayer in the temple, they encountered a lame man begging by the gate Beautiful. His situation was far from beautiful, as he had been carried and laid by the gate daily for many years. The man could not enter into the temple, but asked alms from those who did.

Both Peter and John saw and understood the deeper need of the beggar. They didn't have money, but they gave him what they had; which was much more valuable than silver and gold. Healing in the name of Jesus! The lame man rose up, received strength in his feet and entered the temple walking, leaping and praising God. This miracle drew a crowd and Peter tells them that the healing was not of their own power or godliness but by the power of God and he encourages them to repent.

The Lord wants us to reach out to those who are sick, hungry, poor, needy, naked and destitute and give them what he has given us — hope. We are called to stand in the gap for others and call on the name of Jesus, who alone is able to loose their bands of wickedness, undo their heavy burdens, let the oppressed go free and break every yoke.

*Then Peter said, Silver and gold have I none; but such as I have give I thee:
In the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth rise up and walk.
7 And he took him by the right hand, and lifted him up:
and immediately his feet and ankle bones received strength.*

Acts 3:6-7

Reflection: It's so easy to overlook the needs of others because we are so consumed with our own lives. Peter and John paused long enough to discover the lame man's greater need.

Life Application: Is there someone you have been meaning to check-in on but seem to never get around to it? Why not pay them a visit or give them a quick call this week and spend time listening to how they are doing.

Out of Your Comfort Zone

Read: Acts 4

Word has reached the Sanhedrin council of the miraculous healings that have taken place. Peter and John are arrested as the high priests and officials demand to know how this happened.

Isn't it interesting that doing good can make people upset? In life, we won't be able to please everyone, but the important thing is to do what we know is right in the sight of God. The healing of the lame man at the gate Beautiful resulted in the arrest of John and Peter. The high priests and officials demanded to know by what power or by what name they had healed the lame man. The apostles were detained and brought before the Sanhedrin council to explain themselves.

In our Christian journeys, there will come a time when we will have to decide if we're all in. Our faith is tested when we are put in situations where our options are to believe God or not. This act of faith usually calls for us to step out of our comfort zones. The comfort zone of our personality, our routines, our habits and even our logic. Sometimes it doesn't make any sense to the human mind, but the Holy Spirit guarantees to confirm His word with signs and wonders.

This same Peter made a choice a few chapters back to deny Jesus, he wasn't ready to be in 100%. But what a difference we see now as Peter boldly made his case for Christ before the Sanhedrin council. The council perceived they had been with Jesus and did not want the news to spread any further, so they forbid the apostles to preach in the name of Jesus. They couldn't stop them. When released their friends prayed that they would continue to speak the word in boldness and that's what they continued to do.

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Don't Hold Back

Read: Acts 5

A husband and wife decide to lie about money, the apostles are arrested again but this time, an angel opens the doors of the prison and sets them free.

Whatever one chooses to give or hold back, whether in finances, talents, ministry or evangelism, it is given to or withheld from God. Nothing can be gained from holding back where God is concerned. Ananias and Sapphira learned this the hard way. A husband and wife who plotted together to hold back on God and tried to cover their actions with deceit, lost their lives as a result.

Whatever God gives to us should be used to glorify Him. We never have to worry about hoarding or pinching that thing. God will never be a debtor to any man or woman. In fact, He is the only one who has the ability to multiply what He has put in your hands to amounts that exceed our very own intellect.

Give it all you got, go in 100% and watch what God will do.

*Then Peter and the other apostles answered and said,
We ought to obey God rather than men.*

Acts 5:29

Reflection: The world today is designed to keep us continuously busy and as a result our spiritual lives decline. It's important to make a concerted effort to give as much time to our spiritual growth as we do our natural lives.

Life Application: Identify areas in your spiritual life that you may not be giving 100%. Is it prayer? Is it caring for the sick? Is it giving to the poor? Is it reading the bible? Between now and the end of the year purposefully plan how you can improve in those areas — and note your results.

Filling the Gap

Read: Acts 6

The Apostles' lives were dedicated to prayer and to the ministry of the word. The number of disciples continued to increase quickly. As a result, gaps developed as the number of people outweighed the number of available workers.

Whenever there is a lack of workers, something is going to be neglected. The church was growing at leaps and bounds and there weren't enough people to serve. A murmuring arose of the Grecians against the Hebrews because their widows were neglected in the daily ministrations. The apostles gathered the disciples and offered a speedy solution.

The truth is, as disciples we should always be in a posture ready to serve. Jesus set the best example and became a servant to us all. Maturity takes time and we all have individual walks with God. However, we should always strive to grow in God and his word, so when gaps arise, we can easily avail ourselves to fill them.

The apostles were willing to take the time to resolve the issue and those chosen to serve had a willing heart. Our willingness to submit to the will of God is key in order to allow the purpose of God to be realized and for the Gospel to have its free course.

And the word of God increased; and the number of the disciples multiplied in Jerusalem greatly; and a great company of the priests were obedient to the faith.

Acts 6:7

Reflection: Instead of being part of the problem, always strive to be part of the solution.

Life Application: Is there a ministry in the church or a charitable cause in your community that you noticed needs some assistance? Can you provide your support once per month?

Chosen for a Purpose

Read: Acts 7

When Stephen finds himself before the council, he takes the opportunity to recount the story of God calling Moses out of his country and from his people to unknown land He would show him.

The Lord chose you because you are special to Him and our obedience to Him is so very important. When Abraham was in his homeland, God called him out. "Get thee out of thy country, and from thy kindred, and come into the land which I shall show thee." And Abraham obeyed.

When God calls us to serve him, we must obey his voice. He is calling us to a better life. He is calling us to demonstrate what He can do through us. He takes the weak things of this world and shows His power by working through them. "...For my strength is made perfect in weakness" (2 Corinthians 12:9).

God has called every one of us for a purpose, which is to serve Him. Stephen became the first Christian martyr but lived a life in obedience to God.

*2 And he said, Men, brethren, and fathers, hearken;
The God of glory appeared unto our father Abraham, when he was in Mesopotamia,
before he dwelt in Charran, 3 And said unto him, Get thee out of thy country,
and from thy kindred, and come into the land which I shall shew thee.
7 And the nation to whom they shall be in bondage will I judge, said God:
and after that shall they come forth, and serve me in this place.*

Acts 7:2-3, 7

Reflection: God is always present and willing to give us direction and guidance. Sometimes it may be difficult to hear Him when the things around us are distracting us.

Life Application: Think about the things that may be distracting you from living out God's purpose in your life. How can you eliminate some of those distractions?

Keep Going!

Read: Acts 8

The believers in Acts were undergoing tremendous persecution. Their lives were at stake for preaching the name of Jesus but that didn't stop them. They continued to preach the word wherever they went.

Jesus had told his disciples that the Gospel message should be preached in four geographical areas; however, until this point the Gospel had only been presented to those people living in Jerusalem and needed to be spread to the rest of the world.

Violent persecutions hit the church at Jerusalem and literally forced them to leave town. Some of the Christians headed to Judea, while others headed for Samaria. God knew exactly what He was doing. He had a purpose for the persecution — His will must be done!

Though it may not make much sense to us, persecution, when God causes it, has a great spiritual purpose to fulfill in our lives.

Therefore they that were scattered abroad went every where preaching the word.

Acts 8:4

Reflection: Persecution and threats of death didn't stop the disciples from preaching the Gospel. Why do you think that is?

Life Application: Technology today allows us to instantly reach people in all parts of the world. Send an email, voice note or image sharing an encouraging scripture. Be a part of spreading the Gospel worldwide!

Conversion

Read: Acts 9

Saul consented to Stephen's death (Acts 8: 3), but then finds himself at the mercy of God on the road to Damascus when he loses his sight. The conversion of Christian persecutor Saul to Gospel preaching Paul astonished everyone but also solidified the power of God that can work in each and every one of us.

In fact, when Saul arrived in Jerusalem after his conversion, the people were afraid of him and some planned to kill him. Can you imagine one of the chief religious leaders, a Pharisee who dedicated his life to persecuting the church, imprisoning, beating and approving the murder of your fellow brethren standing before you and saying 'I'm converted'?

As a matter of fact, he was on his way to persecute the church when he encountered Jesus on the road to Damascus, anyone would have thought that this was a set up!

Thankfully, this conversion experience was genuine. His heart was now controlled by Christ. Saul became Paul who we know today as the author of many books in the bible. There are so many people who you could never imagine becoming a Christian. But this is where we cannot underestimate the power of God and His word.

God's word and His love can reach anybody, anywhere. And when we surrender to His will with a sincere heart there is no limit to what He can do in and through us. Saul's conversion solidified in the hearts of many that Jesus indeed was the Christ and that He was doing wonderful things among His people.

*3 And as he journeyed, he came near Damascus:
and suddenly there shined round about him a light from heaven:
4 And he fell to the earth, and heard a voice saying unto him, Saul, Saul, why
persecutest thou me? 5 And he said, Who art thou, Lord? And the Lord said, I am
Jesus whom thou persecutest: it is hard for thee to kick against the pricks.
6 And he trembling and astonished said, Lord, what wilt thou have me to do?*

Acts 9:3-6

Reflection: Unknowingly Saul was not just persecuting the Christians, but he was rebelling against Christ. His encounter on the Damascus road, caused him to see himself

Life Application: Are you rebelling against Christ? Does he have control over your will? Or are you zealously pursuing your own cause?

Angels Can't Preach

Read: Acts 10

If we read the word with a prayerful and open heart, we will hear the voice of Christ summoning us to the mission field; pointing us to the center of the great commission.

It is to this call that the Apostle Peter responded when he went to preach the Gospel to Cornelius. We are led into a private conversation that took place with Cornelius and the Angel of the Lord. Here, the angel commends Cornelius for being a devout and generous man who gave much assistance to the poor. The angel also told him that his prayers went up before the Lord as a memorial; nevertheless, he was to send to Joppa for a preacher, whose name was Peter, who would tell him what he needed to do.

Why couldn't the angel have preached the Gospel? The reason is angels have never been redeemed and only the redeemed can declare the message of salvation. David in the Psalms said, "Let the redeemed of the Lord say so." This was a command to the redeemed to declare the saving power of the Lord. It was Peter, not the angel, who was God's preacher. Peter was redeemed by the blood of Jesus Christ. God did not intend for angels to carry the Gospel message; they are only ministering spirits that aid in preparing sinners to hear God's Gospel truth. It may even be fair to say that angels do not understand the Gospel. Peter told us that the angels desired to look into it but were not able to. We are Christ's ambassadors; we are His hands, feet, and voice.

*And when he looked on him, he was afraid, and said, What is it, Lord?
And he said unto him, Thy prayers and thine alms are come up for a memorial before
God. 5 And now send men to Joppa, and call for one Simon, whose surname is Peter:
6 He lodgeth with one Simon a tanner, whose house is by the sea side:
he shall tell thee what thou oughtest to do.*

Acts 10:4-6

Reflection: The next time you and I are tempted to pass someone, let us remember that angels cannot preach. We are commanded to preach the Word, in season and out of season.

Life Application: Preach the Word!

God's Plan

Read: Acts 11

Peter was prepared to meet with opposition from his fellow apostles upon his return to Jerusalem. After visiting the home of a Gentile, he knew he would have some explaining to do, but what God was doing was so much greater!

This chapter really addresses our humanity and the biases that we all carry. At the same time, we see God's divinity and His love for ALL mankind.

Peter obeyed God's direction to visit the home of a Gentile — Cornelius — to further expound the word to him, but not without reservation. Peter challenged God on this and the Lord quickly corrected him by saying: "9 What God hath cleansed, that call not thou common." Jews at that time, had no dealings with Gentiles, moreover; to enter the homes to sit and eat with them. Everyone was not happy to hear that salvation had now come to the Gentiles. Peter knew that word would get back home and he would have a lot of explaining to do, but what God had allowed him to witness and be a part of, was astronomical.

In Antioch, the disciples are referred to as Christians for the very first time.

*Forasmuch then as God gave them the like gift as he did unto us,
who believed on the Lord Jesus Christ; what was I, that I could withstand God?*

Acts 11:17

Reflection: Salvation is a free gift to everyone and it is important to surrender our belief systems, traditions and biases to the will of God so His greater purposes can be accomplished.

Life Application: Is there someone who you have never shared the Gospel with because you thought it was "not for them?" Or they may not accept it? We never know what's happening in people's hearts. Today take a step of faith and tell one of these people that salvation is available for them.

Breaking Out

Read: Acts 12

The most threatening thing on earth to the Devil and his demonic schemes, is the liberated saint of God.

The early church was in revival, but where there is revival, there will also be resistance. The book of Acts chapter 12 verse 1 states that, “Herod stretched forth his hand to vex the Church” by killing James and imprisoning Peter. Maybe you have never been in this particular situation, but you might have experienced strong opposition and felt hindered in your desire to accomplish your spiritual goals.

As a child of God you may ask “why do I have such opposition when I’m trying to do my best for the kingdom of God?” The answer is simple — the devil knows that you are his greatest threat. He will try to frustrate and discourage you with trials, fear and inadequacies. These things should not determine whether you are free or not, for “whom the son sets free is free indeed” (John 8:36).

We must do our best to live victoriously over sin and to stand fast in the liberty with which Christ has made us free, and not be entangled again with the yoke of bondage (Galatians 5:1).

*And, behold, the angel of the Lord came upon him, and a light shined in the prison:
and he smote Peter on the side, and raised him up, saying, Arise up quickly.
And his chains fell off from his hands.*

Acts 12:7

Reflection: Don’t be ignorant to the devil’s devices. His greatest scheme is to keep sinners in his camp by imprisoning people in cages of fear and intimidation.

Life Application: Memorize these scriptures and speak them out loud when you feel stuck because of fear and intimidation: John 8:36, Galatians 5:1, 2 Timothy 1:7.

Separated for God's Service

Read: Acts 13

The highest calling is to be a servant of God.

Saul and Barnabas were called to be separated by the Holy Spirit. They were sent out on their first missionary journey. A prudent man desired to hear the word of God, but a sorcerer in the land withstood them, because he wanted to turn the deputy away from the faith.

Whenever the plan of God is unfolding, be certain that you will find the devil's attempt to stop it, but you can't stop God. The devil's plan backfired as Saul, who filled with the Holy Ghost, set his eyes on him, rebuked him and set blindness upon him. When the deputy saw what was done, he believed.

We are called to be servants of God. The genesis of man began with stewardship as his primary responsibility (Adam being made custodian of the Garden of Eden). God created man to worship Him, to serve Him, and to be witnesses of the Gospel.

As His children God expects us to be "separated for service," fulfilling the purpose for which He created us.

*As they ministered to the Lord, and fasted, the Holy Ghost said,
Separate me Barnabas and Saul for the work whereunto I have called them.*

Acts 13:2

Reflection: Consider the spirit of humility and servitude required from us as outlined in this scripture: "Whoever wants to be a leader among you must be your servant, and whoever wants to be first among you must become your slave. For even the Son of Man came not to be served but to serve others and to give his life as a ransom for many" (Matthew 20:26–28).

Life Application: Today, find someone or something that you can serve. Maybe do a grocery run for someone, cut someone's lawn, surprise someone with flowers, a meal or a dessert, do a few hours of volunteer work.

The Journey Continues

Read: Acts 14

Despite the violent threats, Paul and Barnabas continued to preach the Gospel. It grieved them when they healed a crippled man and the people began to worship them.

Saul and Barnabas continued their journey through Iconium, Lystra, Derbe and Antioch. They preached in the synagogues and some Jews believed but others didn't. The unbelieving Jews stirred up the Gentiles and made their minds evil towards the apostles. Paul heals a crippled man in Lystra and the people begin to worship him and Barnabas as gods. This terribly grieves the apostles as they tear their clothes in remorse and explain to the people that they are men just like them and they should turn to the living God.

Paul was stoned and dragged out of the city and they thought he was dead. The disciples surrounded him and prayed and he rose up and departed to Derbe. Despite the violent persecutions, Paul's journey continued. He persevered despite the odds before him.

Which when the apostles, Barnabas and Paul, heard of, they rent their clothes, and ran in among the people, crying out, 15 And saying, Sirs, why do ye these things? We also are men of like passions with you, and preach unto you that ye should turn from these vanities unto the living God, which made heaven, and earth, and the sea, and all things that are therein:

Acts 4:14-15

Reflection: Paul and Barnabas were quick to correct the error of the people in Lystra when they began to worship them after the crippled man was healed.

Life Application: What erring ways can you identify in your own life. Create a step by step plan of how you will correct and overcome it.

The Multi-Cultural Church

Read: Acts 15

The work that Jesus did on the cross, He did for the sake of the whole world.

'Whosoever will...' was His invitation to every man and woman that would ever be born. He subjected His will and suffered agony to fulfill an eternal plan, so that all men could be saved. Since Jesus willingly paid such a dear price for the souls of men, we need to put aside our fears, biases and ignorance, and invite hurting souls to the cross of Jesus regardless of their race.

The fact is, not everyone that accepts Christ will be like you; and that is just fine. They may not look, act, dress or think like you do, but in what better way is our God glorified, than when a rainbow of different people can declare His goodness. What a witness! He is not only able to save one set of people, but all people.

The scriptures teach that there is neither Jew nor Gentile in the body of Christ (Gal 3:28), therefore our cultural diversity should not be a hindrance to the unity of the Church. Because of the great commission and love for God's service, let us use the differences of our cultures and races to show His love and declare that "the grace of God that brings salvation, has appeared unto all men..." (Titus 2:14).

*And when there had been much disputing, Peter rose up, and said unto them,
Men and brethren, ye know how that a good while ago God made choice among us,
that the Gentiles by my mouth should hear the word of the Gospel, and believe.
8 And God, which knoweth the hearts, bare them witness, giving them the Holy Ghost,
even as he did unto us; 9 And put no difference between us and them,
purifying their hearts by faith.*

Acts 15:7-9

Reflection: Isn't it wonderful that we can see all cultures represented in the church? This is the plan of God that salvation would come to ALL men and women!

Life Application: Today, share your testimony with someone of another race or culture.

Will You Go?

Read: Acts 16

Where there is compassion, there is compulsion. If we don't go and help the lost sheep, who will?

The heart's cry of the lost in our neighbourhood is no different from the Macedonian call "Come over here and help us". It is the cry of the unsaved to the Church at large, and to the individual Christian specifically. Sometimes we get discouraged when we think of the crime rate of street gangs; the plight of alcoholics and drug addicts; or the hostility of anti-Christ movements. Don't be disheartened; you have what they truly need — the love of God and a message of hope through Jesus Christ.

You may not be an eloquent preacher, but you have a powerful witness that can be evidenced through teaching a bible study, sharing your testimony with a co-worker, prayer or encouragement. The power of the Spirit is not reserved for the "gifted", but it is available to all who are willing to believe and serve Him (Matthew 9:36-39).

Today we have the opportunity to make a difference and answer the call of the living to "come and help us." We can also answer the request of those in torment, "Send someone to tell them!"

Will you go?

And a vision appeared to Paul in the night; There stood a man of Macedonia, and prayed him, saying, Come over into Macedonia, and help us.

Acts 16:9

Reflection: Discouragement is normal, but if God calls you and sends you somewhere to do His will, take comfort in knowing that He will make provision for you.

Life Application: Consider writing a letter or sending an email to a missionary in another country encouraging the work they are doing.

Upside Down

Read: Acts 17

In a country where people from every nation reside, the ‘world’ is represented right in our backyards. God creates daily opportunities for us to meet and reach these precious people.

Consider the lack of resources the believers in the early Church had and the circumstances under which they preached the Gospel of Christ, not to mention that their lives were at stake. It is remarkable to read that they turned their world upside down. They did this through basic apostolic principles. Principles such as: their child-like faith, fervent prayer, unity, and complete dependence on God.

We notice that it was not the members of the Church that made this statement but the people outside of the Church. What does your community think of your church? These early followers didn't just have the will to change their world, but they actually did it. Even though the circumstances in which they live differ from ours, we too can be world-changers. We can be world-changers by aiming to change one person at a time.

In the Gospels, Jesus promised his disciples ‘that he would make them fishers of men.’ Also, in Acts chapter 1, Jesus promised them that he would empower them to be His witnesses. They would begin their witnessing in Jerusalem, Judea, Samaria, and then the utmost parts of the earth. We do not have to go far to reach the world. Let us not ignore these opportunities when they are given.

And when they found them not, they drew Jason and certain brethren unto the rulers of the city, crying, These that have turned the world upside down are come hither also;

Acts 17:6

Reflection: Today our prayer should be ‘God help me as I work along with my local church to be a world-changer.’

Life Application: How did the believers in the early Church turn their world upside down? Can this happen again today? Write down your answers and choose one or two methods that you can enact.

World Changers

Read: Acts 18

God specializes in using base things to accomplish great and mighty things.

Apollos was well educated, very eloquent, and mighty in the scriptures. He spoke boldly in the synagogue of Ephesus and commanded attention when he taught. Those who listened were impacted by his oration; however, he was limited in his knowledge of salvation, preaching only the baptism of John.

Two ordinary people, named Aquila and Priscilla, heard Apollo's teaching and knew that he was lacking the entirety of the Gospel. They took him aside and explained the plan of salvation according to the Word of God and he believed. This ordinary couple did such an extraordinary thing by teaching this eloquent man the way of the Lord so perfectly, that Paul testified that he "planted, Apollos watered, and God gave the increase."

Every believer, in spite of education or social status, can do great things for our great God.

Do you know what God's will is for your lives? It is so easy to default to what makes us comfortable but most times, the will of God takes us out of our comfort zone. What would happen if we totally lost ourselves in the perfect will and purposes of God.

Be filled with persistence.

26 And he began to speak boldly in the synagogue: whom when Aquila and Priscilla had heard, they took him unto them, and expounded unto him the way of God more perfectly. And when he was disposed to pass into Achaia, the brethren wrote, exhorting the disciples to receive him: who, when he was come, helped them much which had believed through grace: 28 For he mightily convinced the Jews, and that publicly, shewing by the scriptures that Jesus was Christ.

Acts 18:26-28

Reflection: Every believer, in spite of education or social status, can do great things for our great God. Put your life in the hand of the Lord and watch Him do extraordinary things through you.

Life Application: Do you know what God's will is for your lives? Take some time today to pray about it and write down what God puts in your heart.

Who Are You?

Read: Acts 19

Repeat after me... That's how easy the Sons of Sceva thought it would be to demonstrate the same "power" that Paul did to cast out devils. Desperate not to lose their livelihood, they quickly learned that knowing and believing in Jesus was essential to walk in the power of the Holy Spirit.

The life that we live will certainly speak for us.

Paul continues to preach in Ephesus and the idolators fear they will go out of business if people begin to turn to the God he preaches about. The seven sons of Sceva come up with a plan to do what Paul does. In an attempt to win over the crowd and show themselves equally powerful as Paul, they hatch up a plan. They decide to cast out demons using the same "formula" as Paul and repeating the same words that he does — sounds simple enough right? The evil spirit responds by saying: "Jesus I know, Paul I know; but who are you?..."

According to John 4:15, "whosoever shall confess that Jesus is the Son of God, God dwelleth in him and he in God." When God resides in you, the devil will recognize who you are. The people that know their God shall be strong, and not only shall they be strong but they will do exploits for Him.

What can the Devil say about you? Does he know who you are? If not, make yourself known to him by your witness and consecration.

Then certain of the vagabond Jews, exorcists, took upon them to call over them which had evil spirits the name of the Lord Jesus, saying, We adjure you by Jesus whom Paul preacheth. 14 And there were seven sons of one Sceva, a Jew, and chief of the priests, which did so. 15 And the evil spirit answered and said, 16 Jesus I know, and Paul I know; but who are ye? And the man in whom the evil spirit was leaped on them, and overcame them, and prevailed against them, so that they fled out of that house naked and wounded. 17 "And this was known to all the Jews and Greeks also dwelling at Ephesus; and fear fell on them all, and the name of the Lord Jesus was magnified.

Acts 19: 13-17

Reflection: What can the Devil say about you? Does he know who you are? If not, make yourself known to him by your witness and consecration.

Life Application: Spend time this week to fast and consecrate yourself to the Lord.

The Unknown

Read: Acts 20

If it wasn't for the commitment of the disciples like Paul, to preach the good news, we wouldn't have it available today. And the responsibility rests on us to continue, so that generations after us may also have the opportunity to know of this great salvation.

Paul was an incredible man of God. When God called him, he stepped out of the known religion of Judaism into the unknown teachings of Christianity, having not a clue as to what the Lord had in store for him. Studying Paul's ministry, we see that he became one of the most faithful, dynamic and influential Christians. This is a result of a man, who with unquestioning obedience, conquered the fear of the unknown and trusted in the everlasting arms of his God.

God has a plan for each and every one of our lives. This plan is to be followed by faith not by sight, "for without faith it is impossible to please Him". Believe not in what your eyes can see, but believe in the God who can see all things and is walking before you.

Because we know the love of God and trust in His everlasting arms, let us walk this journey with confidence, knowing that The Lord of Hosts is going before us; and that through Christ we are more than conquerors.

And now, behold, I go bound in the spirit unto Jerusalem, not knowing the things that shall befall me there: 23 Save that the Holy Ghost witnesseth in every city, saying that bonds and afflictions abide me. 24 But none of these things move me, neither count I my life dear unto myself, so that I might finish my course with joy, and the ministry, which I have received of the Lord Jesus, to testify the Gospel of the grace of God.

Acts 20:22-24

Reflection: God has chosen us and commissioned us to "Go" which gives us freedom to preach. He did not give us the spirit of fear, but of power, and of love, and of a sound mind.

Life Application: What can you do to ensure that the Gospel continues to be transmitted to future generations?



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