

Daily Readings

Please note: This week we get back to our study of the book of Acts. Read and reread each passage to get a sense of the total dependence these early followers gave to the Holy Spirit. In the month of September, our sermon series will cover much of the last sections of Acts as we look at the Journeys of Paul.

Monday, June 29 – Read Acts 20:17-38. After Paul’s arrest in Jerusalem, he is taken before the Jewish High Counsel. They were concerned that Paul’s preaching was causing my Jews to convert to following the Christ. Paul realizes that the Counsel is divided between Sadducees and Pharisees. Paul makes a statement concerning the resurrection of the dead, knowing that the Sadducees and Pharisees were deeply divided over this issue. The riot gets so violent that the Roman guard comes and takes Paul into custody until he is tried. **“That night the Lord stood near him and said, ‘Keep up your courage! For just as you have testified for me in Jerusalem, so you must bear witness also for me in Rome.’”** At what times in your life have you witnessed to your faith even though it might have caused you harm? Did you feel the presence and protection of God in those moments like Paul did?

Tuesday, August 11 – Read Acts 23:12-35 – Paul’s life is in danger. The Jews have vowed to kill him and are working a conspiracy to get to Paul in order to execute him. This plot gets back to the Roman authorities and Paul is secretly taken to safety until the Romans can find what charge to bring against him. Since Paul is a Roman citizen, his treatment must be fair and just. The Roman governor makes sure to treat Paul well until a decision is made. The irony of this situation is that Paul is unique in that he is not only a Jewish Pharisee, but also a Roman citizen. This identity gives him access to places and people that no one else would get. God has prepared Paul for this day long before he even knew the Lord. In what ways has God prepared you for the purpose God has set before you?

Wednesday, August 12 – Read Acts 24:1-27 – For two years Paul stayed in prison. The Jews were unable to prove the charges against Paul for defiling the temple. Yet, the governor Felix thought that Paul would pay him for his freedom. Instead Paul used the time in prison to share the gospel with Felix and anyone who would hear. How has God used unjust and difficult times to give you an opportunity to witness your faith?

Thursday, August 13 – Read Acts 25:1-12 – Felix is replaced by Festus as governor. Festus listens to the Jewish High Counsel and grants them another hearing. They accuse Paul of many acts of blasphemy and religious desecration. Festus seems to be sympathetic to the Jews until Paul makes an appeal to be judged by the Emperor, which is his right as a Roman citizen. It seems like things are going from bad to worse for Paul, but this development will open the door for other opportunities to share the gospel. How is God using you to witness your faith? In what situations do you find yourself?

Friday, August 14 – Read Acts 25:13-26:32 – Festus now appeals to King Herod Agrippa II. Together they cannot decide what to do with Paul. It is clear to them by now that the charges of the Jews are not legitimate, but Paul has been in prison for so long they are now stuck with a dilemma of what to do with a Roman citizen. Agrippa hears Paul’s defense and rules that Paul is innocent, but since Paul has appealed to the emperor, he refuses to set Paul free and instead send him to Rome. It is a political mess and Agrippa takes the easy way out by passing Paul to Rome instead of doing what is right and giving him his freedom. The irony of this injustice is that Paul could have never gotten to Rome without this unjust ruling. Through the injustice of humanity, the way of God is going to be done. In what ways do you see the injustice of our society leading to the ways of God being accomplished?



TRIETSCH

STUDY GUIDE & DAILY READINGS

Sunday, August 9, 2009

Gospel on Broadway (Week 1 of 4)

The Sound of Music Finding the Self God Intended

1 Thessalonians 4:9-12

The Word from the Bible (New Century Version)

Now about your love for one another we do not need to write to you, for you yourselves have been taught by God to love each other. And in fact, you do love all the brothers and sisters throughout Macedonia. Yet we urge you, dear friends, to do so more and more, and to make it your ambition to lead a quiet life: You should mind your own business and work with your hands, just as we told you, so that your daily life may win the respect of outsiders and so that you will not be dependent on anybody.

First Thessalonians

First Thessalonians was written by St. Paul from Corinth, about AD 51. The letter is addressed to the newly founded church at Thessalonica (Thessaloníki). It opens with a reminiscence of the founding of the church there. The second part deals with moral behavior and the need for loving relationships among believers. Paul assures the Thessalonians that believers who have died are not being lost; they will rise from the dead when Christ returns. He stresses the suddenness of that coming and the need to be prepared.

The letter itself enables us to fill in some of the gaps in the story of Acts. From 3:1-3a it is clear that Timothy, at least, met Paul in Athens as instructed and that Paul sent him back from there to Thessalonica to stabilize the young congregation. Later Timothy rejoined Paul, who after hearing his report wrote the letter. This second meeting of Timothy with Paul is evidently to be equated with the arrival of Silas and Timothy from Macedonia after Paul had already moved from Athens to Corinth, which is reported in Acts 12:5. The first meeting in Athens expected in Acts 17:15-16 is missing from the Acts account, as is Timothy’s resulting trip to Thessalonica. Therefore we may conclude that the letter was written at Corinth. This is confirmed by the implication in 3:1 that Paul was no longer at Athens.

