

ACTS

REVIEW

WATCH NO VIDEO THIS WEEK

READ Acts 8-12 (pick a section; Perhaps Acts 8:26-40)

ASK:

The early church and the apostles themselves learned that ever-expanding movement of the gospel has the power to transcend political, racial and religious divides. Which meant they had to un-learn some things. They had to learn about the heart and mission of God - for them, and for others. They had to see that they had more in common with the Samaritans (created in image of God, fallen, objects of God's mercy), than they had in conflict with the Samaritans (politics, ethnicity, religion).

- **What things have you had to learn or unlearn after the grace of the gospel came into your life?**

The apostle Paul's mind was hard against the gospel, but after God's grace entered his life he experienced a softening of your heart. When we truly understand the gospel we start to resemble Paul: Persuaded by the truth of God, Softened by the grace of God, and Eager to be in the service of God - no matter what that means.

- **How about you? How has your heart become more and more softened toward:**
 - **God, obeying what he says is best for you?**
 - **Other people, loving them and being warmly hospitable because of the way Christ Jesus showed you hospitality while you were still far from him?**

The gospel is both for those who do not yet know Jesus and for Christians as well. The apostle Paul never got past the grace he received in the gospel. He never outgrew marveling at the work that God had done in his life (read: 1 Timothy 1:12-16). The implications of the gospel continued to work their way out into more and more areas of his life, even as he was part of the outward movement of the gospel. The same should be true for us. We should look to the grace that God has given us in Christ, and seek the spiritual welfare of those around us, because how could we not? This is exactly what God has done for us in Jesus life, death, and resurrection.

- **How is God's grace continuing to work it's way out in you life?**
- **How is his grace moving you to participate in the outward focus of the gospel? How might God want you to step into the mission of being the church this week?**

PREVIEW Next week we will be participating in Neighbor Day. Maybe spend some time talking about what you're planning to do. And pray that God would bring "much joy to the city" because of the way the gospel is working outward in your lives.

PRAYING TOGETHER FOR THE VULNERABLE

"He has shown you, O mortal, what is good. And what does the Lord require of you? To act justly and to love mercy and to walk humbly with your God." –Micah 6:8

As a church, we want to be intentional about acting justly, loving mercy, and walking humbly with our God. As a first step, The Protect Team will provide monthly prayer guides based on Psalm 147.

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| 7 He upholds the cause of the oppressed (Nov)
and gives food to the hungry. (Dec)
The Lord sets prisoners free, (Jan) | 8 the Lord gives sight to the blind, (Feb)
the Lord lifts up
those who are bowed down, (Mar) |
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the Lord loves the righteous. (**Apr**)
9 The Lord watches over the foreigner (**May**)
and sustains the fatherless
and the widow, (**June**)

but he frustrates
the ways of the wicked. (**July**)

"...and sustains the fatherless and the widow" Psalm 147:9 (May)

THINK

"Yet to all who did receive him, to those who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God-children born not of natural descent, nor of human decision or a husband's will, but born of God." John 1:12-13 and "I will not leave you as orphans; I will come to you." John 14:18

Discuss: How can we relate to the fatherless? How does God respond to us as fatherless children?

"Religion that God our Father accepts as pure and faultless is this: to look after orphans and widows in their distress and to keep oneself from being polluted by the world." James 1:27

Discuss: Why does God consider looking after the orphans and widows in their distress pure and faultless? What attitudes and parts of culture can we find in the world that might 'pollute' our thinking about caring for the orphans and widows?

"For in You the fatherless find compassion." Hosea 14:3

Discuss: How does God respond to the fatherless? How can I demonstrate compassion toward the fatherless and the widow?

PRAY

- Adore: Thank God for the way he has welcomed us into his adoptive family. Thank him that he is trustworthy to provide compassion and care for the fatherless and the widow.
- Confess: We confess our thoughtlessness and apathy at times for these people groups.
- Ask: Ask the Lord to break our hearts for the fatherless and the widow, and show us specific ways we can be involved with caring for them.

DO

- Visit <https://www.mare.org/> and pray for the children who are waiting for a Forever Family.
- Join **Every Single One**, and provide prayer/birthday/Christmas gifts for children waiting for forever families. Contact Gabriella Nabozny at gnabo@lasadoption.org or (248) 663-8133
- Reach out to those who have lost loved ones to form relationships or provide for practical needs. Check out <https://www.desiringgod.org/articles/what-do-we-say-to-grieving-people> or <https://www.focusonthefamily.com/family-q-and-a/life-challenges/helping-a-bereaved-friend>
- Consider fostering a waiting child, or providing respite for a foster family. You can come alongside foster/adoptive families to pray and provide practical support. Contact Lauren Boone at lauren@opcmlford.org if interested in learning more.

LECTIO VISIO

Christians believe in God's Word and take him at his Word. Yet 21st century Christians have a difficult time seeing God's Word the same way God's people have for centuries: **visually**. That's what this method of Scripture reading is designed to do: help you see the text.

3 INGREDIENTS

3 candles, or a 3 wick candle

1 Passage (preferably narrative, 5-10 verses)

12 or fewer people (Christians or non-Christians)

10 COMMANDMENTS OF LECTIO VISIO

1. No prep! (Lead by asking)
2. Pray simple prayers (tsp prayers: Thank you, Sorry, Please)
3. Shut your Bibles (yup, you read that correctly. Don't worry.)
4. Open your eyes (senses) and picture the scene. Try to get down in the dust of the story.
5. Direct the Film (you as the leader help the biblical scene come alive for those you're studying with)
6. No peeking ahead (1 verse at a time)
7. No rabbit trails (stick to what the text says, not "I feels")
8. Keep telling the story (instead of explaining, WONDER)
9. Keep silence
10. Lead by asking the 5Qs
11. Repeat #2 TSP.

THE 5 QUESTIONS

1. What did it say?
2. What do you see?
3. What happens next? (Guess)
4. What do you hear? (Then/Now)
5. What do you want to do?

A COUPLE EXTRA TIPS FOR LEADERS

Mirror the group. Repeat back what is said and direct them back to the story if things get off track.

Lead Strong. God is actually the one leading the discussion by his Word. Take courage. Have fun. Encourage a bit of playfulness.

Take Notes Here (how did it go? what applications did people give that you can follow up on next week?)