

**“The Great Reversal”**  
***Come, Holy Spirit: The Book of Acts Sermon Series***  
**Acts 12:1-3**  
**Dr. Mark Foster**  
**July 12, 2020**

Acts 1: The resurrected Jesus walked the earth for \_\_\_\_\_ days, ascends, and promises the Holy Spirit.

Acts 2: Devout Jews from every nation are filled with the Holy Spirit in \_\_\_\_\_.

Acts 3-4: Peter and John, filled with the Holy Spirit, preach, \_\_\_\_\_, and are arrested and released.

Acts 5: Peter preaches again in \_\_\_\_\_ of local orders.

The Gamaliel principle.

The high cost of real \_\_\_\_\_.

The response: they \_\_\_\_\_ and continued to preach the Good News of Jesus.

Acts 6: Hellenists complain their widows were being neglected in the daily \_\_\_\_\_ distribution.

Acts 7: Stephen preaches truth and is \_\_\_\_\_ to death becoming the first martyr of Christianity.

Acts 8: Saul approved the killing of Stephen and ravaged the church.

Meanwhile, Philip \_\_\_\_\_ an Ethiopian eunuch.

Acts 9: The resurrected Jesus \_\_\_\_\_ Saul on the road to Damascus.

God uses Ananias to \_\_\_\_\_ to Saul.

Saul’s first attempt to become one of the \_\_\_\_\_ fails.

Acts 10: God has no favorites; but \_\_\_\_\_ who reveres God and acts rightly is accepted.

Acts 11: Peter returns to Jerusalem and is \_\_\_\_\_ by orthodox believers.

Barnabas travels 300 miles north to \_\_\_\_\_ to check on new Gentile believers.

Barnabas went to Tarsus to look for Saul and brought him back to Antioch.

**The Great Reversal in Acts 12**

Herod Agrippa in 44 A.D. brought a new wave of persecution against church leaders.

*“The great tragedy of this particular wave of persecution was that it was not due to anyone’s principles... it was due simply to Herod’s bid to gain popular favor with the people.” – Barclay*

In response, the church \_\_\_\_\_ for Peter.

*“Prayer is a defiant act because it recognizes that the purpose of a sovereign God will win out in the end: thy kingdom come, thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven.” – Robert Wall*

God sends an angel to the prison to help Peter escape.

We have an \_\_\_\_\_ part to play in our deliverance.

When we are saved from our circumstance, our first stop is \_\_\_\_\_, our faith community.

The community did not believe Rhoda at first, but Peter just kept \_\_\_\_\_.

Peter told the church what happened and left Jesus’ little brother \_\_\_\_\_ in charge.

Here is “The Great Reversal”: in the end, Peter escapes and Herod \_\_\_\_\_.

The word of God, Jesus Christ, and his church “continued to \_\_\_\_\_ and gain adherents.”

**Action Step:** Every day pray for \_\_\_\_\_ from our enemies and for their \_\_\_\_\_.

## Daily Reading & Reflection

### July 13-17, 2020

**Monday – Acts 21:** *“When our days there were ended, we left and proceeded on our journey; and all of them, with wives and children, escorted us outside the city. There we knelt down on the beach and prayed and said farewell to one another.”* Acts 21:5-6

There are many instances in Scripture where only men are mentioned or counted as a reflection of the cultural norms of the time. In today’s reading, we find specific mention not just of the presence, but of the action taken by women and children alongside of the men. When we send people out into the world, as we did two Sundays ago, it’s not just the responsibility of some—it requires all of us, every man, woman and child. It requires the strength of all of our prayers in order for the work of the Lord to be done.

***Who is praying for you today? Who are you specifically praying for today? Reach out to someone and ask them to pray for you, and ask how you might pray for them.***

**Tuesday – Acts 22:** *“Then he said, ‘The God of our ancestors has chosen you to know his will, to see the Righteous One and to hear his own voice; for you will be his witness to all the world of what you have seen and heard.’”* Acts 22:14-15

In our membership vows, we affirm that we will uphold the Church through our witness. It might be easy to hear this and to think of something like the scene in today’s reading, and simply count ourselves out of doing so. Upholding the Church through our witness for the vast majority of us will never resemble the Apostle Paul’s ministry. For the majority of us, it will mean that we simply tell the good story of what God has done in our lives. ***Think back over your day. Where did you encounter good? Tell someone about it. Pastor Mark reminds us that when we encounter good, we will encounter God. And where we encounter God, we will find good.***

**Wednesday – Acts 23:** *“Keep up your courage!”* Acts 23:11b

The world seems upside down right now. We’re in the middle of a global pandemic with no definitive end in sight, our country is torn into partisan halves, people are responding to generations of systemic racial injustice, and people are unable to work and losing their jobs. We don’t have to be arrested by a raging mob and threatened with death to be reminded to keep up our courage; there’s enough going on in the world.

***Set reminders for yourself throughout the day to read this verse again, and be reminded that the Holy Spirit dwells within you and in God you find your strength to keep going.***

**Thursday – Acts 24:** *“I have hope in God – a hope that they themselves also accept – that there will be a resurrection of both the righteous and the unrighteous. Therefore I always do my best to have a clear conscience toward God and all people.”* Acts 24:16-17

Pastor Mark has reminded us throughout this sermon series that what the world separates, the Holy Spirit unites. Even when facing his accusers and the government which could sentence him to death, Paul reminds us of the daily challenge we have in speaking to and interacting with one another – clear conscience towards both God and people.

***Where in your life did you recently have a conversation with someone where you did not regard them or someone else with a Godly, clear conscience? Consider re-starting that conversation and seeking amends.***

**Friday – Acts 25:** *“But when Paul had appealed to be kept in custody for the decision of his Imperial Majesty, I ordered him to be held until I could send him to the emperor.” Agrippa said to Festus, ‘I would like hear the man myself.’ ‘Tomorrow,’ he said, ‘you will hear him.’”* Acts 25:21-22

This chapter highlights the unique perspective of the author of the text. After working alongside Paul, he can now only helplessly watch the deliberations between King Agrippa and Festus, waiting to learn Paul’s fate. The author was once an active participant but is now a relatively powerless observer.

***Place yourself in the shoes of the author. How would you feel about this change in dynamic from participant to observer? What would you feel as you observed your mentor and friend in this time of trial? And how would you respond?***