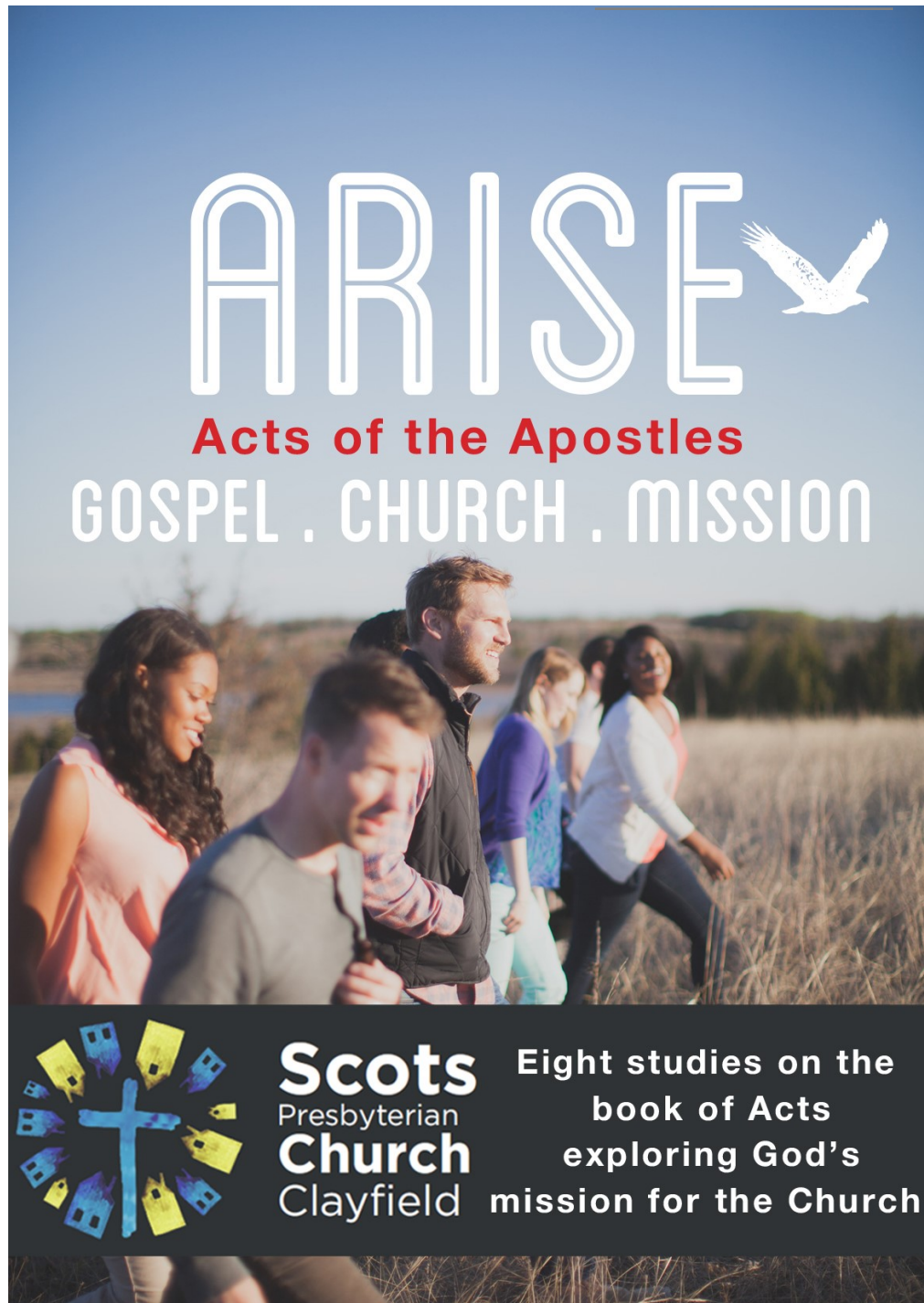


Name:



About Arise

At the end of Luke's Gospel the risen Jesus declares to the disciples that repentance and forgiveness of sins will be preached in his name, beginning at Jerusalem. Acts describes Jesus' ongoing work to get the good news out to all nations in the power of the Spirit.

And so while Luke's Gospel described how God would save broken humans through a crucified King, Luke's second volume is written to convince us that the persecuted Church really is God's way to get the message out. Will we trust the Spirit and speak of Jesus boldly?

O Church Arise

Weekly Quiet Times

Getting started

Try to make time for five quiet times to **be still** with God each week. Before each quiet time pray that God would open your mind to help you understand the scriptures (Lk 24:45). As you read each chapter ask - *what does this teach me about God? about Jesus? and how must I respond to God's word today?*

Week 1

☐ Psalm 1 ☐ Acts 1 ☐ Psalm 69 ☐ Acts 2 ☐ Joel 2

Week 2

☐ Acts 3 ☐ Acts 4 ☐ Psalm 2 ☐ Acts 5 ☐ Acts 6-8:3

Week 3

☐ Acts 8 ☐ Isaiah 53 ☐ Acts 9 ☐ Acts 10 ☐ Acts 11

Helpful suggestion

Why not start a journal and begin writing down what God has been saying to you as well as prayer points for others — looking to see them answered *being watchful and thankful* (Col 4:2)

Week 4

☐ Acts 12 ☐ Acts 13 ☐ Isaiah 49 ☐ Acts 14 ☐ Acts 15

Week 5

☐ Acts 16 ☐ Philippians 1 ☐ Phil 2 ☐ Phil 3 ☐ Phil 4

Week 6

☐ Acts 17 ☐ Romans 1 ☐ 1 Kings 8:1-30 ☐ Acts 18 ☐ Acts 19

Week 7

☐ Psalm 20 ☐ Acts 21 ☐ Acts 22 ☐ Acts 23 ☐ Acts 24

Week 8

☐ Acts 25 ☐ Acts 26 ☐ Acts 27 ☐ Acts 28 ☐ Revelation 22

1 Spirit empowered

Acts 1-2

Key verse

"But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth." (Acts 1:8)

Getting started

Share: Have you ever had to wait for something that, when you finally received it, changed everything?

Going deeper

Read Acts 1:1-11

1. How is the book of Acts related the Luke's Gospel? (Acts 1:1)
2. Up to this point, what are some **convincing proofs** (1:3) Luke has given that Jesus really is both Lord and Saviour?
3. When the disciples receive God's promised gift of the Holy Spirit, what will it do for them?
4. What do you notice about the geographical pattern in 1:8?

Read Acts 2:1-13

5. The disciples speak in other recognisable tongues and languages. How does the crowd respond to this noise?
6. How many language groups were represented?
7. Filled with the Spirit what does Peter do next? (vs14-16)

Read Acts 2:22-24 and 29-47

8. Who is the focus of Peter's speech and what does Peter stress about him?
9. How does the crowd respond to Peter's speech?
10. How would you describe the life of the new community?

Taking it home

From what we've heard in these chapters what should we expect from a Spirit-filled Christian and a Spirit-filled Church?

What can we change so that our Church better reflects the early Church?

Pray that we would speak about Jesus, witnessing in the Spirit's power, and be far more devoted to the Scriptures and each other.

2 Sent out through suffering

Acts 6-8

Key verse

“And Saul approved of their killing him. On that day a great persecution broke out against the church in Jerusalem, and all except the apostles were scattered throughout Judea and Samaria.” (Acts 8:1)

Getting started

Share: When have you experienced something good come out of bad or even terrible circumstances?

Going deeper

Read Acts 6:1-15

1. What drives the decisions the apostles make in verses 1-4?
2. How is Stephen described? (6:5 & 8)
3. What is the impact of appointing these men?
4. What principles can we take away from this as a Church?

5. In 6:1-14, what is Stephen falsely accused of saying?

Read Acts 7:51-8:4

In 7:2-43 Stephen describes God's constant grace and faithfulness towards his people but their constant rejection of Him and the leaders He appointed.

6. From 7:44-53 what do we learn about their own wrong attitudes to the temple and the law?
7. What is the ultimate act of disobedience the Jewish leadership had committed?
8. How can we avoid our own hearts becoming cold to God and not end up opposing Him or even rejecting Jesus?
9. In what ways does the death of Stephen remind us of the death of Christ? Why would Luke make this connection?
10. Though tragic, how does Stephen's death advance God's plan? (1:8)

Taking it home

How does how God worked through the life of Stephen encourage us as a Church and as Christians?

Pray that we would have faith and courage like Stephen and trust that God can use even the worst of times to spread the Gospel.

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3 Even Enemies & Gentiles

Acts 9-11

Key verse

“But the Lord said to Ananias, “Go! This man is my chosen instrument to proclaim my name to the Gentiles and their kings and to the people of Israel.” (Acts 9:15 NIV)

Getting started

Share: Have you ever felt that God couldn’t possibly work through you, or thought of someone else this way?

Going deeper

Read Acts 9:1-22

1. In Romans 10:10 Paul tells us that “it is with your heart that you believe and are justified, and it is with your mouth that you profess your faith and are saved.” How do the words of Paul’s mouth describe his change of heart in vs 1 and 20?
2. Think through carefully: From vs4-22, what key truths did Paul learn through his Damascus Rd experience?
3. What do we need to help people understand today to change their worldview and even negative stance towards Jesus?

Read Acts 10:1-15

4. What do we learn about Cornelius and the Italian regiment?
5. How does God prepare Peter to meet Cornelius?

Read Acts 10:34-48

6. What does Cornelius, a God-fearer, still need have explained in order to be right with God?

What are the key points of Peter’s message?

7. What does this teach us about the ‘good people’ around us who contribute to society and even respect the Church?
8. How does God dramatically show his acceptance of even Gentiles?

Taking it home

What can we learn in the two examples about our approach to evangelism?

What key truths do people need to be told to be saved and whose work is it to convince them?

Pray that we would speak these same key truths about Jesus to whoever will listen knowing that Jesus still powerfully changes lives!

4 Let nothing get in the way

Acts 13-15

Key verse

“It is my judgment, therefore, that we should not make it difficult for the Gentiles who are turning to God.” (Acts 15:19 NIV)

Getting started

Share: Describe a time when you felt excluded?

Going deeper

Read Acts 13:44-52

1. In Pisidian Antioch in the centre of Turkey, why do Paul and Barnabas receive such a negative response from the Jews?
2. How do the Gentiles respond?
3. Read Isaiah 49:6. Who has God made a light for the Gentiles?
4. In 13:49-52, what can we learn from Paul and Barnabas' response to this opposition? (read also 14:19-20)

Read Acts 15:1-21

5. What demands were some Jewish Christians wanting to impose on all Gentiles? (15:1 & 5)

Why would the Pharisees in Jerusalem be so prone to this way of thinking?

6. If accepted, how might these demands have affected the ongoing growth of the Church?



7. What is the real issue when we demand that people believe the Gospel *plus* do something else to be saved? (10-11)
8. After healthy debate, what decision does the council make?
9. If demanding circumcision would split the church between Jew and gentiles, what would calling Gentiles to abstain from these three things safeguard?

Taking it home

Though we would certainly agree that we are only saved through faith in Christ alone, are there any ways we might be seen to be exclusive rather than inclusive and accepting as a Church?

Pray that we would continue to hold out God's grace to everyone while also striving to stay unified by putting the needs of others before our own.

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5 Good outcomes from bad

Acts 16

Key verse

“The jailer brought them into his house and set a meal before them; he was filled with joy because he had come to believe in God - he and his whole household.” (Acts 16:34 NIV)

Getting started

Share: When have you experienced good coming out of dreadful circumstances?

Going deeper

Read Acts 16:1-10

1. After the decision of the council of Jerusalem why do you think Paul now insists that Timothy is circumcised?
2. In what ways does God clearly direct Paul and his companions to take the Gospel to Macedonia in Roman Europe?

Read Acts 16:11-24

3. In verses 11 to 15 what do we learn about Philippi?
4. Is the Gospel still unstoppable in this Roman Colony?

Notice how the ‘we’ language in 16:11 indicates to us that Luke himself has now joined Paul’s mission.

5. Paul is now met by a slave girl with the spirit of ‘Python,’ an evil spirit able to predict the future. Why do you think neither Jesus (Luke 4:34-35) nor Paul would allow demons to publicly announce who they were?
6. What happens as a result of this slave girl being freed?

Read Acts 16:25-40

7. What do you think caused this Gentile jailer to ask, “Sirs, what must I do to be saved?”
8. What is the wider impact of the Jailer’s conversion?
9. Later in his letter to the Philippians Paul would praise God for their “partnership in the Gospel from the first day until now.” From what we’ve seen in the conversions of Lydia, the slave girl, and the jailer, why might they have continued with such joy and partnership in the Gospel?

Taking it home

For the first time in Philippi the mission faces Gentile opposition but even this can’t slow the unstoppable progress of the Gospel. What encouragement can we take from this today?

Pray that we would never fear opposition due to our faith in Jesus but trust that even through opposition Jesus saves lives.

6 Ignorance is no excuse

Acts 17

Key verse

“While Paul was waiting for them in Athens, he was greatly distressed to see that the city was full of idols.” (Acts 17:16)

Getting started

Share: When were you last genuinely shocked by your own culture?

Going deeper

Read Acts 17:16-34

1. Why did Paul find Athens so distressing?
2. If Paul was to walk around our city, what do you think he might be equally distressed to see?
3. Athens was the Ancient center for philosophy and wisdom. Read Romans 1:22-23. From God’s perspective what was the true state of wisdom in Athens as the many idols give clear evidence of?
4. In verses 18-21, why were the Athenians so interested in hearing what Paul had to say?

5. Speaking at the Areopagus (Hill of Mars), how does Paul connect with these philosophers and speak in a way the Athenians will understand?
6. Our society prides itself on being inclusive. In trying to be inclusive by having an altar to an unknown God what did this actually indicate about Greek society? (vs 23)
7. What was so wrong about the Athenians small view of God? (vs 24-31)
8. Though God may have overlooked such ignorance in the past how was God going to respond in the future? (vs 30-31)
9. Why do you think the resurrection of the dead was of such interest to those who heard Paul on this day? (vs 32-34)

Taking it home

What can we learn from how Paul reacts and engages with the Athenian culture how we should react and engage with our own?

Pray that we would trust that just as in Athens the message of Jesus is just as powerful to change lives today as back then.

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7 A model ministry

Acts 20-23

Key verse

"I have declared to both Jews and Greeks that they must turn to God in repentance and have faith in our Lord Jesus." (Acts 20:21)

Getting started

Share: Have you ever been rejected for something you've said?

Going deeper

Read Acts 20:17-31

1. As Paul brings to a close his ministry in Greece and Turkey he now meets with the elders of Ephesus for the last time. Why does he do this?
2. What does Paul value and stress about his own ministry?
3. Which of Paul's ministry principles do you find most vital and worth emulating by the elders of our Church?
4. In 21:11 Paul is warned by the Holy Spirit that only arrest and imprisonment await him in Jerusalem. Paul's response though is "I am ready not only to be bound, but also to die in Jerusalem for the name of the Lord Jesus." How does this statement and also verse 20:24 resonate with you?

Read Acts 22:22-23:11

5. As Paul is attacked by his fellow Jews at the temple then rescued by being arrested by the Romans Paul is now permitted to speak to the angry crowd. They listen in silence to Paul's defence until verse 21 of chapter 22. Is there any aspect of God's plan to take the Gospel to all nations that we might find offensive and need to repent of?
6. How does the treatment of Paul by the Romans compare with how the Sanhedrin treat him?

Why might Luke want to stress this as Paul is about to head for Rome?
7. Though rejected by the Jews and arrested by the Romans, what is Jesus' involvement and plan in all of this?

Taking it home

Why is 23:11 such an encouragement for both Paul and us?

Read 1 Peter 3:15-18. How can we emulate Paul in his behaviour towards both Jews and Romans as we give an answer for the hope that we have?

Pray that despite opposition, we would never give up hope that Jesus is still in charge of his mission and keep sharing our faith with gentleness and respect.

8 Through many dangers

Acts 26-28

Key verse

"This man is not doing anything that deserves death or imprisonment." Agrippa said to Festus, "This man could have been set free if he had not appealed to Caesar." (Acts 26:31-32)

Getting started

Share: How do you normally cope in times of chaos and crisis?

Going deeper

Read Acts 25:1-12

Read (vs9:15) After Paul has defended himself before the crowd in Jerusalem (ch22) and the Sanhedrin (ch23) he now defends himself in another three trials before governors Felix (ch24), Festus (ch25) and King Agrippa (ch26).

1. In 25:8 Paul asserts his threefold innocence against the law, the temple, and Caesar. If he's so confident of his innocence why do you think he appeals to Caesar?

Read Acts 26:17-32

1. In verse 16 how does Jesus himself describe what happens when someone puts their faith in him?

3. In vs 20 what should be the fruit of repentance in our lives?
4. How has God acted in our world in such a way that Paul can confidently say that, "it was not done in a corner." (vs26)
5. What is Paul's ultimate purpose in giving his defence? (vs29)
6. Just as Jesus was attended three trials and was acquitted three times so is Paul and could have been set free if he hadn't appealed to Caesar. What impact might it have for the early Church if Paul is acquitted by Caesar himself?

Read Acts 27:13-26

8. How does Paul, a prisoner, speak to this boatload of 276 professional soldiers and sailors during this storm?
9. In what ways is Paul's boat trip the opposite of Jonah's?
10. In the last two verses of Acts (28:30-31) how does Acts end in Rome just as it began at Pentecost in Jerusalem?

Taking it home

"Through many dangers, toils and snares I have already come, 'tis grace has brought me safe thus far and grace will lead me home."

From what we've seen and heard this term, how can we have the same calm assurance and confidence in the Gospel as Paul going forward not matter what life throws at us?

Pray that we would stand firm holding onto Jesus as we hold out the unstoppable Gospel as Christ's Church to the world.

