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**Chapter 12:**

**vs 1-19: Peter Imprisoned and Miraculously Delivered from Prison**

- This Herod was the nephew of King Herod who ruled at the time of Jesus. As a Jew he killed James and went after Peter and it pleased the Jews. How would you describe opposition to Christ and his church today?
- The congregation was together at Mary's house, praying for Peter. And then, SURPRISE! Peter is there and knocks on the door! What are some of your prayers that you'd be surprised if God answered them?

**Chapter 13:**

**vs 1-3: Barnabas and Saul Commissioned**

- 'While they were worshiping the Holy Spirit said...' In our current Church praxis, Leaders are elected by vote at congregational meetings. Do you believe that the Holy Spirit is at work during these elections? How? Why or why not?

**vs 4-12: The Apostles Preach in Cyprus**

- They are not on the first missionary journey of Paul. Since Gentiles are already welcome, why would they go to preach the Gospel in the Synagogue? Would you stand up against an outspoken opponent of Christ? What would you say?"

**vs 13-53: Paul and Barnabas in Antioch of Pisidia**

- In this long speech Paul, speaking to his brother Jews, relates a very detailed account of the life of Christ, including the disturbing account of his persecution and death. Are there past issues the church has resolved and you disagree? What might they be? Would you need some real special strength to place them before your brothers and sisters in the faith?

**Chapter 14:**

**vs 1-7: Paul and Barnabas in Iconium**

- Paul and Barnabas were called 'Apostles, those who are sent out'. Who, do you think, might be called 'apostles' of the church today?

**vs 8-20: Paul and Barnabas in Lystra and Derbe**

- As the proclaimer of the Good News of Jesus Christ, Paul had been given the power to heal. Is there healing going on in our congregations? If so, how would you verbalize it? If not, Why not?

- The Greek Gentile crowd wanted to worship Paul and Barnabas as Greek Gods, and thereby commit idolatry. Are we in danger of committing idolatry in our Christian practices? If so, what might that be? If not, Why not?

#### **vs 21-28: The Return to Antioch in Syria**

- They proclaimed the Good News and made many disciples. Preaching and teaching to 'make disciples' was identified as 'evangelism' in our church for many years. Today the word is 'witness'.? Is such preaching still being done in our congregations? Are there still people coming to our services in need of such evangelistic preaching?

### **Chapter 15:**

#### **vs 1-21: The Council at Jerusalem**

- The coming of the Holy Spirit is proof that God accepts the Gentiles. We have received the Holy Spirit at our baptism. Are there other ways by which the Holy Spirit is received to assure a believer of God's love and acceptance?
- The act of circumcision assured a Jew of God's favor, of being part of God's covenant by doing acts that were required of them. We confess to be saved by grace. What does that mean?

#### **vs 22-35: The Council's Letter to Gentile Believers**

- Why do you think that it was necessary to impose these three Jewish food laws on the Gentile believers?
- Judas and Silas are identified as 'prophets' meaning that they spoke prophetic truth about God in their preaching and teaching and encouraging the Gentile Christians. Do you recognize such prophetic voices in our church? If so, where or how might it be present?

#### **vs 36-41: Paul and Barnabas Separate**

- Disagreements developed into heated arguments with the result that we have not heard anything about Barnabas' and John Mark's further ministry. (Paul mentions Barnabas as a good example to follow in 1 Corinthians 9:6) How have these kinds of disagreements and separations persisted over the centuries and what are some of the results?

### **Chapter 16:**

#### **vs 1-5 Timothy joins Paul and Silas**

- On his second Missionary Journey, Paul has young Timothy join them in Derbe. Paul had Timothy circumcised. What do you think of that, given Paul's own words about circumcision? Why might it have been necessary?

#### **vs 6-10 Paul's vision of the Man in Macedonia**

- Can you trace how the Holy Spirit prepared Paul for the vision of the man from Macedonia? Have you ever had a similar vision-like dream to suggest new direction?

### **vs 11-15 The Conversion of Lydia**

- God opened Lydia's heart and the Spirit sent her to faith in Jesus. She provides hospitality for Paul and the others. Do you think Lydia's presence was just by chance, or do you detect God's work through the Holy Spirit? Why or why not?

### **vs 16-40 Paul and Silas in Prison.**

- In prison, Paul and Silas were praying and singing. How would you hope to respond if you were imprisoned because of your faith? Do you think the Kitchener congregation that was locked down and punished with huge fines were treated that way because of their faith? Why or why not?
- The message is so clear: "Believe on the Lord Jesus and you will be saved, you and your household." Do you believe that it is proper to speak such a simple and clear message to someone today? Why or why not?

## **Chapter 17:**

### **vs 1-15 The Uproar in Thessalonica and Paul and Silas in Beroea**

- Paul, Silas, and Timothy faced the physical threat of the mob and possible punishment by the Roman State for treason. What would you identify as a great threat to our Christian faith today?

### **vs 16-34, Paul in Athens**

- Athens at this time was the center of art, culture, and philosophy, and boasted the leading university of the Greeks. Paul, being highly educated in Jewish law and scriptures, was able to clearly present the Good News of Christ to these highly educated philosophers. How do you value higher theological education for our Pastors and leaders? Do you think there should be more study of the Bible and church history for our members? Why or why not? Would you attend those? Do you think only our pastors and leaders should be able to clearly present the Good News of Christ to our society? Why or why not? Are you concerned that our Seminaries are closing or reverting to University Schools? Why or why not?

May we pray together?

*Dear Lord Christ.* In the Acts of the Apostles, we are receiving examples of faithful, fearless, clearly stated and highly and impactful witness to our faith, in the face of powerful threats, personal danger, and political opposition. This burning spirit for witness seems to have abandoned our faith communities, we seem to be content to preach to our own people and no longer prioritize reaching out to the world with the clear truth of the Gospel, more concerned about consolidation than expansion of our congregations. In your unlimited patience have mercy on us, Lord, and help us to find new ways and means to witness to your grace, love, and power to bring us all into God's kingdom. For you are the Son of God, our Christ, who lives and reigns with the Father and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen.