

*Basic Tips: 1.) Use a translation you can understand. The NIV or The Message are good starters. 2.) Use a kids Bible with kids. 3.) Keep a pencil and notebook around to write down questions, observations, and conclusions. 4.) Have fun. Use your imagination and your brain.*

**July 5-12, 2020**

**What is the Church?**

Day 1	Acts 24
Day 2	Acts 25
Day 3	Acts 26
Day 4	Acts 27
Day 5	Acts 28

**Questions to Guide You:**

While we are not gathering in our building every week, it is the perfect time to reconsider what is the Church? We'll start by reading in the book of Acts.

- 1.) Before reading, what has God been teaching you this week about the church? About yourself? About justice?
- 2.) What is Paul accused of doing? Which of these accusations are true? Is Paul a troublemaker? Is it wrong to cause trouble like Paul? Who creates similar trouble today?
- 3.) Tertullus contrasts Paul's troublemaking with the "peace" Felix has provided. What kind of "peace" are they enjoying and trying to protect? Where do you see yourself longing for this false peace that cannot stand hard questions or disagreements or protests? Peace preserved by injustice is not worth having.
- 4.) What is Paul's defense? What is "The Way" Paul mentions? How is "The Way" connected to the Israelite faith and the God of the Israelites' ancestors? Why is it important for us to preserve this unbreakable connection to the Jewish faith?
- 5.) What is Felix afraid of? What gets in Felix's way of faith?
- 6.) Why does Festus go to Jerusalem first? What political mechanisms do you see preventing justice? How do political implications and appearances still prevent justice? In your own life are you more preoccupied with what is right or what appears right to others? How can we die to the desire to please others and appear right?
- 7.) Why does Paul appeal to Caesar? What is he trying to accomplish?
- 8.) Paul is trying to be loyal to Jesus and God of Abraham, but he is accused

of being "un-Jewish" or "anti-Israel". Those are huge claims that seem appropriate to the vast majority of people listening to the trials, but what do those accusations specifically amount to? In the same way, what would it mean to be "anti-America" or "un-American"? What specific things are non-negotiable "American"?

- 9.) Acts 26 is my favorite chapter. What stands out in Paul's speech? What does Paul talk about? Why are his accolades noticeably absent from this defense? Where are his defense witnesses?
- 10.) What role does God's promise play in Paul's defense and his willingness to die? How does Paul identify with his accusers and their fears? Does Paul hide his past sins? Why not?
- 11.) Why does Paul tell his story again? Why does Scripture record every word of it again? What does this show us about testimonies? What is yours? Who have you told your testimony to? What did God save you from? What road were you on when Jesus interrupted you? Where would you now be without the interruption? Where would you be in 10 or 20 years on that road?
- 12.) What is the gospel according to Paul? What transformation happens in believers according to Acts 26:18? Does it seem that drastic to you?
- 13.) What can we learn about God in Acts 27? What do we learn about the world and our lives in it? Why do natural disasters occur? How does God use this one?
- 14.) When have you failed to turn around after many warning signs appeared?