

# 2021 Fall Spiritual Renewal

## Redeemer Lutheran Church

### The Church Lives

#### Week 7

#### **Taking Jesus to the Neighborhood**

As children, most of us enjoyed connect the dot activity books. In the simplest books you could tell the end result before a single line was drawn – a duck, a puppy, a tree ... pretty basic stuff. For older kids, the objects became more complex. As you looked at a page all you saw was a bunch of numbered dots, but you had no idea what you would discover until you had taken pencil or marker to paper and connected all those dots in the proper order.

The fun of a dot-to-dot experience is the “aha!” moment. At some point, when enough of the dots have been connected, you can see the finished product. Something that was unclear comes into focus.

The deeper we read in the Book of Acts we see things becoming clear. God’s plan to bring humanity back to Himself has been accomplished through the death and resurrection of Jesus. Now, the message of hope, life, and salvation in Jesus’ name was being spread all over the world, particularly by the apostle Paul, who was called by God to bring the message of Jesus to the Gentiles.

The challenge is our ability, through the power of the Holy Spirit, to connect the dots in the world today. Paul’s mission, after all, was the mission of Jesus to every generation. When we join Jesus in His mission we find that we are right where God has need of us today.

#### **Talk About It**

What is one way you, your family, or your church is actively seeking to fulfill God’s mission to bring the Good News of Jesus to your community and/or the world?

#### **Discussion**

One message that Paul brought as he proclaimed the Gospel is that our true citizenship is in heaven and, in Christ, the resurrection promise is a certainty. How does a daily awareness that heaven awaits all those who have faith in Jesus bring hope, encouragement, and confidence to live for God today?

Read Acts 13:1-12; 16:16-34. Whenever Paul preached, spiritual attack was right there. What form did these battles take?

What spiritual battles might we face as we seek to bring the message and hope of Jesus to our neighborhoods? How can we resist and overcome?

As the early church connected the dots and began spreading the life-saving, life-giving message of Jesus, the truth of the Gospel was declared again and again. What is the heartbeat of the Gospel?

- Paul in Pisidian Antioch (Acts 13:13-39)
- Paul writing to the church in Rome (Romans 1:16-17)

If a close friend or family members came to you and said, “I have watched your life and listened to your words and I want what you have. What must I believe and do to be saved?” what would you share with them?

Read Acts 19:8-10, 23-41. The spiritual attacks Paul faced came from all fronts ... Jews, pagans, and businesses. How did Paul and his ministry team face these attacks as they ministered in Ephesus? What are some ways we might face the same sort of resistance as we follow Jesus today?

Read 1 Corinthians 1:10-13; 3:1-11. Within the churches, Paul also faced the prospect of division within the fellowship of believers. What was the issue in Corinth and how can the church today guard against similar assaults by the enemy?

In 1 Corinthians 12, Paul compares the church to a body, with every member having a specific function. God gifts His people and we are called to identify, develop, and use those gifts our Lord has given. What is one spiritual gift God has given you and how are you developing and using that gift for His glory? How can your group encourage you as you seek to use your giftedness for the Lord’s work?

Read Galatians 5:22-23. These “fruits of the Spirit” are given to all believers in Christ. Which one would you like to see grow in your life? How can your group pray for you as you grow in maturity in this area?

Read Romans 8:14-17. By faith we are children of God. What does it mean to say, “I am a child of God?” How does your relationship with God grow and change as you learn to see yourself truly as a child of God?

**Reflection**

One of the most difficult things we face as we actively live our faith and share our lives is the possibility that someone receiving our witness rejects that witness. Keeping in mind that conversion isn't our work but the work of the Holy Spirit in a person's life, what hard things can happen in your own life if you become bolder in living faith and sharing life with others? What positive things can happen if you live faith and share life with others (either in your relationship with God or relationships with others)? Is the risk worth the commitment to walk by faith with Jesus as His disciple?