

Small Group Guide TO BE CONTINUED

The Church at Brook Hills,

Dr. Bart Box

March 20, 2011

Acts 28:17-31

This guide is a tool to help you lead your group into spiritual transformation. Use it as a resource to lead your group in discovering, owning, and applying the truths of God's Word. There may be aspects you do not want to use and there may be instances where you just want to focus on a particular point or truth. Some questions may bring out emotions and cause people to dwell on an aspect of their relationship with God. Your role is to help facilitate this encounter with God in His Word through His Body, not just to complete the guide. Use this as a flexible teaching tool not a rigid group task list.

Relate . . .

Begin your group time by engaging in relational conversations and prayer that may include the following elements:

Welcome—a simple, brief time to greet one another (especially new friends), enjoy refreshments, and make announcements.

Review—a time to review the truths discussed last week and report on how members have had success or frustrations in applying those truths during the week. The leader will want to provide encouragement and shepherding during this time. Periodically, the leader will also want to review the gospel and allow members to share reports about opportunities they've had to share the gospel. Occasionally, the leader will want to revisit the vision for the group and discuss ways to accomplish that vision better.

Prayer—a time of general prayer with the whole group praying for struggles regarding the application of truths, for those with whom the group is sharing the gospel, and for understanding of today's truths.

Reflect . . .

Use the following summary and questions to review this week's message and reflect on its implications in our lives:

Message Outline:

To Be Continued

Acts 28:17-31

We continue the advance of the gospel with...

- The same concern for other's souls. (vv. 17-23)
 - We don't ignore the lost people around us.
 - We plead passionately with the lost people around us.
- The same confidence in God's sovereignty. (vv. 24-31)
 - We don't despair over gospel rejection.
 - We persist faithfully in gospel proclamation.
- The same passion for Christ's kingdom. (vv. 20, 23, 30-31)
 - We don't give our hearts to trivial matters.
 - We love deeply the gospel story.

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Application

“Precisely because the church is first of all the place [i.e. the gathering] where God does certain things, it becomes a people who belong to a new society that is being formed in this present evil age. By their acts of witness and deeds, believers share the gifts they have been given with their neighbors. However, before they can serve they must be served. Before they can act, they must receive.” (Michael Horton)

- The gospel must serve as both the message and motivation in our evangelism.
- As we...
 - Remember the grace of the gospel...
 - We are motivated with genuine love for others.
 - Embrace the truth of the gospel...
 - We are strengthened in the face of rejection.
 - Behold the wonder of the gospel...
 - We are stirred in our affections for Christ’s kingdom.

Message Summary

Dr. Bart Box noted that the book of *Acts* ends somewhat abruptly, without Luke ever revealing the conclusion of Paul’s ministry and life. Although no one knows for sure why Luke chose to end the book in this manner, the truth is that the story of *Acts*—the spread of the gospel to the ends of the earth through the witnesses of Christ empowered by Spirit of Christ—continues through our lives today.

The advancement of the gospel looks different in everyone’s life since God has gifted us differently and given different specific calls to each of us. Most of our lives will not look exactly like Paul’s. However, our hearts should mirror his heart for the lost. Paul had a deep compassion for the souls of others and a passion for sharing the kingdom with them. As he shared the gospel with others, Paul found great rest in God’s sovereignty—knowing that there will be positive and negative responses to hearing the gospel.

As we seek to develop a heart for others like Paul had, our motivation, passion, and boldness to share the gospel will come from a sincere and profound overflow of it in our own lives. When we continually return to and reflect on the amazing gospel story, we will naturally respond with a desire to see others know Christ and experience the gospel at work in their lives too.

Discuss

Use the following questions to review the Head (What does God want me to know?), Heart (What does God want me to value/desire?), and Hands (What does God want me to do?) aspects of the message.

- Describe how Paul’s concern for the souls of others was consistently evident even in the face of difficulties and persecution?
- How was Paul’s persistence in sharing the gospel evidence of his priorities?
- How does a love for others and a passion for Christ and His kingdom go hand-in-hand?
- What are some of the major distractions in our lives or obstacles that keep us from being compassionate toward the lostness of others?
- How can we become more aware of the lostness that surrounds us daily and of the lostness of the world?
- What are the names of a couple of people for whom we can pray regularly that God would increase our burden for their souls?

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- How did Paul's faith in God's sovereign work for the salvation of some and the rejection of Him by others, testify to God's control and role in salvation?
- Why must we see a rejection of the gospel not as a personal rejection but as a decision to reject Christ?
- How can we encourage one another to be more persistent in sharing the gospel?
- What are some ways that we can become more comfortable and/or prepared to share the gospel with confidence?
- Why is the gospel powerful and essential for everyone?
- What words describe the condition of your life before you truly understood and believed the gospel? How does an accurate view of our self, serve as a reminder of the beauty of the gospel?
- How can we intentionally put the gospel at the forefront of our life and the lives of our family regularly during the week and during specific occasions such as Easter, Christmas, earthquakes, and tsunamis?

Respond . . .

Encourage your group to break out into smaller, same-gender groups where they will respond to the truths of the message. These groups will share with one another based on the following questions and then close in prayer:

- What are some of the main truths that God wants you to know from the message?
- How do your thoughts need to adjust to align with these truths?
- According to the truths from the message, what does God want you to value/desire?
- How do your values or desires need to change to align with His values?
- What actions does God want you to take according to the truths of this message?
- What is an action that you can start to implement today or tomorrow?

Close this time by praying for each other, specifically for strength in the application of these truths and for the lost people with whom you are seeking to share the gospel.

Weekly Prayer Focus ... (from the worship guide)

- ***Lives and Church:*** *Pray that God would use your life and our church to advance the gospel to all nations, as it advanced through the book of Acts. Pray that God would raise up willing and equipped laborers among us who would be sent to the harvest field.*
- ***Local:*** *This week we are praying for Olivia's House, a residential chemical dependency treatment center for women in East Lake that allows many families to stay together. Some of our members volunteer time there. We are also praying for Brookwood Baptist Church, Jim Barnette, Pastor.*
- ***Global:*** *This week we are praying for our partners at Urban Impact, serving the unreached people groups in NYC. We are also praying for Brook Hills teams in Australia, India, and the Middle East.*