

WORSHIP

SUGGESTED WORSHIP SONGS:

Can't Stop Praising, In Control, Jesus, Your Name, Hosanna

WELCOME

Do you think we are painting a picture of the church that God wants the world to see today? Why or why not?

WORD

ACTS 9:31-36

So the church throughout all Judea and Galilee and Samaria enjoyed peace, being built up; and going on in the fear of the Lord and in the comfort of the Holy Spirit, it continued to increase. ³² Now as Peter was traveling through all those regions, he came down also to the saints who lived at Lydda. ³³ There he found a man named Aeneas, who had been bedridden eight years, for he was paralyzed. ³⁴ Peter said to him, "Aeneas, Jesus Christ heals you; get up and make your bed." Immediately he got up. ³⁵ And all who lived at Lydda and Sharon saw him, and they turned to the Lord.

The book of Acts gives us a picture of the early church. Sometimes it gives us a bird's eye view – a zoom out so we can see the big picture - people meeting in the temple courts and in their homes breaking bread, fellowshiping, praying, and devoting themselves to the Word of God, and how God was adding to their number daily those who were being saved. Sometimes it zooms in and takes us into the lives of a group of people or individuals, showing us their **trials, triumphs, and transformation**.

One thing we can conclude so far is that God uses ordinary people like you and me to create the picture of His church so that the rest of the world can see and be drawn to Jesus. Each one of us has a role to play. We need to learn to be **contributors** and **not merely consumers** in the body of Christ.

Acts 9:31 *So the church throughout all Judea and Galilee and Samaria enjoyed peace, being built up; and going on in the fear of the Lord and in the comfort of the Holy Spirit, it continued to increase.* We can say that this is a picture of the church God wants the world to see today. How can we be contributors to this picture?

In **Acts 9:32-35**, we see Peter intentionally traveling, visiting the places where God was working through the people that had been scattered because of persecution. In the process, Peter also visited the saints who lived at Lydda.

SAINTS BY CALLING

Christians are saints by calling (**1 Corinthians 1:2**) – not because of what we do, but because God called us to Himself and into a relationship with His Son Jesus Christ. We do not become saints because of our good

works – we do good works because we are saints. Though we are not perfect, our walk should match our talk (**1 John 2:5-6**).

EVANGELIZE

At Lydda, Peter found a man named Aeneas, who had been bedridden eight years, for he was paralyzed.

Acts 9:34, Peter said to him, "Aeneas, Jesus Christ heals you; get up and make your bed." Immediately he got up.

It's as if Peter was saying, "Jesus is giving you a brand new start at life. Get up because you have work to do!" Likewise, we are on a mission – that is to make disciples. It doesn't matter if we have just given our life to Christ, it's never too early to tell others about Him!

Acts 9:35, *And all who lived at Lydda and Sharon saw him, and they turned to the Lord.*

When people around us see us, will they turn to the Lord? Will our life be like a catalyst that will inspire them to seek God? Peter was very careful not to draw attention to himself. His business was to point people to Jesus.

In **Mark 2:3-11**, we see Jesus healing a paralytic. More than physical healing, Jesus pointed our greatest need – to be forgiven (v.5) and only He can heal our souls.

Why lift someone up (evangelize)? Because people are helpless and powerless to help themselves (**Romans 5:6**). Do you know someone whom you are tempted to think is hopeless, thinking they will never change? Think of that person as **helpless instead of**

WORD (cont'd)

hopeless and start to pray for that person. Love that person and point them to Jesus.

ENCOURAGE

Acts 9:36-43. Peter's next stop was in Joppa where we are introduced to Tabitha. Her life was a beautiful picture of a Jesus-follower because she was full of good fruit so much so that the people were devastated when she got sick and died. But Peter prayed and in the power of the Holy Spirit, she was brought back to life.

In the same way, God can use us to encourage people who may seem "dead". **Why lift someone up (encourage)?** Because when one is distracted, vision can die. When one is doubtful, hope can die. When one is disillusioned, zeal can die. When one is disobedient, testimony can die. When a follower of

Jesus gets back on their feet, they can get back to work in helping bring people to Jesus.

1 Thessalonians 5:11, 14 tells us to encourage one another – to admonish the unruly, encourage the fainthearted, help the weak, and to be patient with everyone. **Hebrews 10:24-25** tells us to stimulate one another to love and good deeds, and to encourage one another (the best venue to do this is in a small group!). **Ephesians 4:29** tells us to edify one another through our words (starting with our own families).

1 Thessalonians 4:13-18 tells us to comfort and encourage one another with these words – we have hope because someday we and those who have "fallen asleep" (all true believers in Christ) will be with the Lord forever.

Let us lift someone up today. **Evangelize. Encourage.** Know that someday Jesus will lift us up to be with Him.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

(Leaders: Please choose questions that are appropriate to the level of spiritual maturity of your members)

1. Aside from the picture of the church given in **Acts 9:31**, what other characteristics do you think the church should showcase to the world today?
2. Knowing that Christians are saints by calling, how should this affect the way you live your everyday life?
3. Take turns in encouraging one another in your small group through words of affirmation and through sharing a Bible verse that can encourage him/her. Practice this further by doing the same to your family members.

WORKS

PRAY CARE SHARE IN ACTION

Ask God to help you see people as helpless and not hopeless. Have this in mind when you are praying for the people in your Pray-Care-Share list. Pray for opportunities and take the time to lift them up this week.

WEEKLY PRAYER POINTS

I. Thanksgiving

- Worship God for who He is, what He has done, and what He will do in our lives

II. Country and the World

- Upright and moral governance of Public Servants and a God-centered Philippines
- Repentance and Salvation

III. Church

- That CCF Members would honor and love God and make disciples
- Elders, Pastors, Leaders, and Families
- Ministries and Churches worldwide

IV. CCF Facilities

- Worship and Training Center
- Prayer Mountain

V. Personal Concerns

- Deeper intimate relationship with God
- Righteous living
- Salvation of family and friends