

Saturday, 6/2

From Ephesus to Jerusalem to jail. That is the journey Paul is now completing. He has been arrested, but before being led to the barracks, Paul speaks to the crowd. What he speaks should serve to instruct us.

Devotional: Read Acts 22:1-21. Notice how Paul speaks confidently about himself and His relationship to Christ.

Pray That your life would be transparent before man and before God.

We Are Gods People

We are God's people, the chosen of the Lord,
born of his Spirit, established by his Word;
Our cornerstone is Christ alone, and strong in him we stand:
O let us live transparently, and walk heart to heart and hand in hand.

We are God's loved ones, the Bride of Christ our Lord,
for we have known it, the love of God outpoured;
now let us learn how to return the gift of love once giv'n:
O let us share each joy and care, and live with a zeal that pleases heav'n.

We are the Body of which the Lord is Head,
called to obey him, now risen from the dead;
He wills us be a family, diverse yet truly one:
O let us give our gifts to God, and so shall his work on earth be done.

We are a temple, the Spirit's dwelling place,
formed in great weakness, a cup to hold God's grace;
We die alone, for on its own each member loses fire:
Yet joined in one the flame burns on to give warmth and light, and to inspire.

From Johannes Brahms, Symphony No. 1 in C Minor, 1876. Arr. By Fred Bock, 1976.
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Taking Gathered Worship Home



Family and Individual Devotions Meditations in Acts

Week of May 27, 2007

The Essence of the Church

Daily Devotionals

Scriptures states “the churches were strengthened in the faith and grew daily in numbers.” This condition of strength and growth was not by luck or coincidence. It was the result of obedience. The early church steeped itself in prayer, in bold proclamation of the good new of Christ, in answering the call God had given them, in love for each other. The church was a family. A community committed to glorifying God in word and deed.

Please use the devotional material below each day this week to meet with Jesus. Please pray that we as a community of faith will learn His ways and walk in them to accomplish His purposes.

Throughout the week we encourage you to use the hymn, “ We Are Gods People” found on the back page as your song, your prayer, and your reminder this week about what the church is all about.

Sunday, 5/27 When Paul left Ephesus there was shedding of tears over a Christian, a fellow family member, who was leaving and would not be seen again. Strong relationships were a trademark of the early church. Notice the reaction to the words of Paul in Acts 21:37-38.

Devotional: It’s too easy to miss the reality of our connection to others in Christ. When we declare Christ as our savior we are quick to understand our new relationship with Him. We are not as quick to realize that we are “fellow heirs” with all who have called on the name of Christ. Read Romans 8:14-17.

Pray That you would care for each member of your spiritual family just as you would care for your earthly family.

Monday, 5/28 The ring of a family relationship continued when Paul arrived in Jerusalem. There, Paul was warmly received by the people. This reception was certainly one of Christian love, but as Acts 21:19 reveals, it also consisted of an anticipation of hearing about the success of Paul’s ministry.

Devotional: We should take great pleasure in the human joy of the Christian family. The social and recreational times we have with other believers. But equally important is the enjoyment we experience in the success of others in their Christian ministries. Read I John 1:3.

Pray That just as you take joy in your union with Christ, you should also take joy in the union you have with other Christians.

Tuesday, 5/29

It would be easy to misunderstand what Paul did shortly after his arrival in Jerusalem. Here, Paul openly participated in the Jewish law. In doing so, he acknowledged his Jewish heritage, while maintaining a relationship with the Jewish people. Is this wrong?

Devotional: Read I Corinthians 9:19-23. How did Paul develop relationships with the Jewish people and with the Gentiles? Is this contradictory? Reflect particularly on I Corinthians 9:21. Read also Galatians 6:9.

Pray For an ability to identify with and build fellowship among those not in Christ, and doing so in a manner that maintains your integrity under the law of Christ.

Wednesday, 5/30

Let us not forget the danger that faces Paul. Paul left Ephesus knowing “that prison and hardship” would be encountered. Still, Paul followed the leading of the Holy Spirit. He continued into harms way as he continued to preach those things helpful to the spiritual well being of the people God brought into his life.

Devotional: Now would be a good time to back track to an earlier part of Paul’s ministry. Re-read Acts 4:29. Was Gods calling to Jerusalem an answer to the request Paul laid before God? Is your prayer this bold?

Pray Regardless of your present or future circumstances you would engage every situation with the same boldness.

Thursday, 5/31

Being bold is in a measure of our confidence. When we are sure of the things we believe we are more likely to go forth with boldness.

Devotional: Your whole life should reflect Christ. Read II Corinthians 3:2-6. Your ministry should be a “letter from Christ” to those around you. Is your life such a letter?

Pray That your life, your ministry, would reflect Christ.

Friday, 6/1

Just as boldness is a measure of our confidence, confidence is a measure of our maturity in the faith. Faith is the foundation of our life in Christ, but as scripture teaches us, adding to our faith will make us effective and productive.

Devotional: For ever increasing maturity in your knowledge of Gods word. That this knowledge will lead to faith and confidence.

Pray That s your faith grows your life would display increasing confidence and boldness.