

FLAME

The Church Grows



ROOTED ACT VII



As we continue reading through the Bible this year, we've come to Rooted: Act VII. This is a reflection guide to accompany the Act VII reading plan and sermon series focused on the Apostle Paul's journeys around the Roman Empire and his correspondence to the people in churches that form these communities.

Over the next five weeks, if you miss a day, just pick up where you left off or skip ahead. Keep going! It is good to be on this journey together.

The point isn't to accomplish a task; the point is to spend meaningful time in Scripture.

The Bible is the living word of God, meant to shape us as we read it. Full of thought-provoking and life-changing material, the redemptive arc of the Bible points to the core message: that a man, Jesus, who was fully God, came to live among us, die on our behalf, and rise in a cosmic act of love and redemption so that we can have a restored relationship with God and others. We believe He will return to bring the culmination of His hope for His people and creation. The Church around the world lives this hope together in community.

Find out how to go deeper in your faith this season:



CHURCHBCC.ORG/ROOTED

DAILY READING GUIDE

MAY 19 - JUNE 22

WEEK 1

THAT YOUR LOVE MAY OVERFLOW

- May 19** Sunday Worship
- May 20** Acts 16
- May 21** Acts 17:10–34
- May 22** Philippians 1
- May 23** Philippians 2
- May 24** Philippians 3
- May 25** Philippians 4

WEEK 2

LIVING THE SHARED STORY

- May 26** Sunday Worship
- May 27** Acts 18, 19
- May 28** Acts 20, Ephesians 1
- May 29** Ephesians 2, 3
- May 30** Ephesians 4
- May 31** Ephesians 5
- June 1** Ephesians 6

WEEK 3

SHAPED BY HOPE

- June 2** Sunday Worship
- June 3** Acts 17:1–9; 21
- June 4** Acts 22–23
- June 5** 1 Thessalonians 1–3
- June 6** 1 Thessalonians 4, 5
- June 7** 2 Thessalonians 1, 2
- June 8** 2 Thessalonians 3

WEEK 4

SUSTAINED LIVING

- June 9** Sunday Worship
- June 10** Acts 24, 25
- June 11** Acts 26, 27
- June 12** Colossians 1
- June 13** Colossians 2
- June 14** Colossians 3
- June 15** Colossians 4

WEEK 5

PRESENT SUFFERING & COMING GLORY

- June 16** Sunday Worship
- June 17** Acts 28, Romans 1, 2
- June 18** Romans 3–5
- June 19** Romans 6–8
- June 20** Romans 9–11
- June 21** Romans 12–14
- June 22** Romans 15, 16

(NOW) QUESTIONS FOR PERSONAL REFLECTION OR GROUP DISCUSSION

1. Notice what you feel drawn to and away from in the text.
2. Open your heart to see yourself and your community in this reading.
3. Where do you sense God is leading you through this reading today?

THE CHURCH GROWS UNDER PAUL'S TEACHING

INTRODUCTION AND OVERVIEW OF READING PLAN

Throughout the book of Acts and the letters of Paul, the spark ignited by Jesus' death and resurrection becomes a flame burning brightly among the nations. Paul's missionary journey expands the Good News of life in Christ to all people – Jews, Gentiles, and to the “ends of the earth” (Acts 1:8). **The flame grows as new, multiethnic communities of faith are established—men and women, Jew and Gentile, slave and free, marked not by social status but by their commitment to follow Jesus and by God's presence dwelling in them through the Holy Spirit.**

In his letters to these churches, Paul addresses practical and philosophical questions of theology related to the health and wellbeing of their specific communities. **At their core, the letters invite the early Church, living under the rule of the Roman empire to ask, “What does it mean to live with Jesus as Lord?”** As we read Paul's journeys and letters today, we too are invited to consider what faithful living in our context looks like and how the outworking of Jesus' kingdom continues with us.

In Paul's letter to the Christians in Rome, we get perhaps the most robust collection of his theology—his understanding of the Gospel that he first preached in his mission to the world outside Israel. **Altogether, the second half of Acts and these letters illustrate the legacy of the early Church and invite us to find our place in the unfolding story of God's faithfulness to all people.**

As we journey together with Paul and the early Church over the next five weeks, our readings will layer chapters from Acts with six of Paul's letters. Each devotional is written in the form of a letter and includes an introduction of the passage and a personal reflection. As we read, **let us discover our role in stoking the flame of hope that Jesus has for His people and creation through the Church in the world today.**

KEY PEOPLE

Paul: At the beginning of Acts, we meet Saul of Tarsus, persecutor of Jesus-followers. But, after meeting Jesus on the road to Damascus, his life changes, and he becomes Paul the Apostle, a herald to Jesus' rule as the Jewish Messiah and the risen king for all nations. From Jewish synagogues to Gentile marketplaces across the first-century Roman Empire, the Apostle Paul invites people to the new family of Jesus—the Church.

Silas, Timothy, Apollos: some of Paul's co-workers on his missionary journeys.

BEHIND THE DESIGN

Upon first look, these graphics show a flame being passed between two torches, which is an allusion to the phrase “passing the torch.” On a closer observation, you will see this flame is in the shape of a dove, traditionally representing the Holy Spirit. From its beginning, the church has grown from people sharing the gospel, bringing the light of Christ through the work of the Holy Spirit.

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