

# Acts week 32

How Fast the Gospel Went Out.

**Acts 9:31; Then the churches throughout all Judea, Galilee, and Samaria had peace and were edified. And walking in the fear of the Lord and in the comfort of the Holy Spirit, they were multiplied.**

Odd how Luke uses the fear of the Lord in conjunction with the comfort of the Holy Spirit. As fear is used here it is one of a few times it is defined as, reverence, respect (for authority, rank, dignity), behavior coupled with (cf. ἐν, I. 5 e.) reverence for one's husband, 1 Peter 3:2; φόβος with a genitive of the object: τοῦ κυρίου, Acts 9:31; 2 Corinthians 5:11;

We would not usually think of comfort when walking in fear of anything, but the two complement the believer, we walk in sincere respect and regard toward the Father, for some the fear may be of not knowing our Lord as they should, not having a desire to know Him more intimately. When we think of all He has done and does for us now we should shudder at the thought we may upset Him or grieve the Holy Spirit. What an honor it is to be called a child of God, to have promise beyond our days on earth, to have a guide and a counselor to walk with us, to help us in need, and wisdom. Everything we could ever need He provides, yes, we climb out of bed every day and off to work for the things we need, but who first created those things we need to survive?

Fear of the Lord,

In the Bible, fear of God is defined in many ways. It is often described as a reverential awe or deep respect for His authority, holiness, and power. The apostle Paul wrote that we should “work out [our] own salvation with fear and trembling” (Philippians 2:12). This means that we should approach our relationship with God with respect and reverence, taking His commands and instructions seriously.

Now that you know the biblical definition of God-fearing, you might wonder what it means to fear the Lord in practice. Fearing the Lord means recognizing His authority over your life and understanding that He is the ultimate judge of our actions, thoughts, and intentions. It involves acknowledging His holiness and righteousness, living a life that reflects your reverence for Him, and seeking to please Him in all aspects of your life.

The fear of the Lord is not about living in constant terror or anxiety. Instead, it is an attitude of humility and submission, recognizing that you utterly depend on God for everything, including guidance, provision, and salvation. It is about

being aware of God's presence in your life and allowing that awareness to shape your thoughts, actions, and decisions. ChristianPure.com

George MacDonald says that God owes us. At first, I was taken aback by this but then as I read on I realized the point he was making. God created all things and then provided for our needs, in this, He owed us for if He didn't provide all life would have died off, and His joy would not have come. So He gave us all we needed, later MacDonald clarifies there is no obligation our Father has to us, for it is not out of obligation but from love, He works in us, sustains us, and corrects us. Our earthly fathers feed us and teach us and yet there is no comparison to what our heavenly Father has done for us. Luke 11:13; "If you then, being evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to those who ask Him!" Yes, I walked in fear of my earthly father in respect of who he was and the correction given that I deserved. Boundaries are a necessity in learning to live righteously and respectfully. He wanted the best for me although at times it did not seem so. A good father invests time and attention to his children, he knows their needs, what brings happiness, and when they need correction. They brought us into the world where they have a responsibility to care for us. Are we to believe it is any different from our heavenly Father? If I meant that much to my earthly father how much more am I worth to my Heavenly Father?

Paul was taken from Jerusalem to Cesarea and then to Tarsus to escape the Helenist trying to kill him, this would be in 37 A.D. Paul would remain in Tarsus for ten years. In the last part of 46 A.D. Barnabus went to Tarsus to seek Paul (Acts 11:25) and then in 47 A.D. Barnabus and Paul traveled to Antioch and began teaching the people there, (Acts 11:26). Paul moved on again for his safety, and then churches now come alive. Perhaps it was fear of this man who was so zealous for the law his reputation proceeded him for years, was he truly converted?

Peter is now moving through the towns and finds the people celebrating and living in comfort in all Judea, Galilee, and Samaria. John Courson makes note of this routinely overlooked verse arrangement. Paul had been in Jerusalem preaching but the people had a difficult time believing Paul was safe. It would be after Paul went to Tarsus that the people are said to have received the faith and began to live in new life throughout the areas of Judea, Galilee, and Samaria, Acts 9:31.

Luke now brings Peter back into his history account.

**Acts 9:32-35; Now it came to pass, as Peter went through all parts of the country, that he also came down to the saints who dwelt in Lydda.<sup>1</sup> 32 Now it came to pass, as Peter went through all parts of the country, that he also came down to the saints who dwelt in Lydda. 33 There he found a certain man named Aeneas, who had been bedridden eight years and was paralyzed. 34 And Peter said to him, “Aeneas, Jesus the Christ heals you. Arise and make your bed.” Then he arose immediately. 35 So all who dwelt at Lydda and Sharon saw him and turned to the Lord.**

Lydda - lud'-dah; would be the second miracle act we find recorded, the first being in Acts chapter 3 but there have been ten years since the time we were learning of Paul. Here Peter meets a man named Aeneas.

God does not mince words and as we read our verse there is something every parent can turn to get their children to make their beds. Aeneas has not stood up for eight years, I can only imagine the thrill it must have been. Peter makes it clear the ability to stand was through the power of our Lord and Christ Jesus, not of his own. However, the second command Peter gives him is to make his bed. I might have thought of this command as possibly the fifth or eighth thing of importance. But we can see the miracle proved to be powerful to all who knew Aeneas and so it was a testimony that changed the lives of others.

Every saved person should have a testimony of how God has touched their life, the changes that have taken place, and the peace that has come to them. Peter does not stop with Aeneas, he now goes to another in need,

**36-43; 36 At Joppa there was a certain disciple named Tabitha, which is translated Dorcas. This woman was full of good works and charitable deeds which she did. 37 But it happened in those days that she became sick and died. When they had washed her, they laid her in an upper room. 38 And since Lydda was near Joppa, and the disciples had heard that Peter was there, they sent two men to him, imploring him not to delay in coming to them. 39 Then Peter arose and went with them. When he had come, they brought him to the upper room. And all the widows stood by him weeping, showing the tunics and garments which Dorcas had made while she was with them. 40 But Peter put them all out, and knelt down and prayed. And turning to the body he said, “Tabitha, arise.” And she opened her eyes, and when she saw Peter she sat up. 41 Then he gave her his hand and lifted her up; and when he had called the saints and widows, he presented her**

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<sup>1</sup> Lydda= Strife, a town in the tribe of Ephraim, mentioned only in the New Testament (Act 9:32,35,38) as the scene of Peter's miracle in healing the paralytic Aeneas. It lay about 9 miles east of Joppa, on the road from the sea-port to Jerusalem. In the Old Testament (1Ch 8:12) it is called Lod. It was burned by the Romans, but was afterwards rebuilt, and was known by the name of Diospolis. Its modern name is Ludd. The so-called patron saint of England, St. George, is said to have been born here. Easton's Bible Dictionary.

**alive. 42 And it became known throughout all Joppa, and many believed on the Lord. 43 So it was that he stayed many days in Joppa with Simon, a tanner.**

We find here that Tabitha had not been dead long, they had just washed her and laid her down upstairs. There seems most of the time references to the length of time a person has been dead. With Jesus, we find the young girl who had just passed and everyone knew she was dead, but Jesus did not listen to them and walked past to bring her back to life. The young man who was in the funeral procession was brought back to life in front of all, and Lazarus was four days in the ground. When we see these miracles does it take away the importance of each death because of the length of time each had passed? Is dead not dead?

What about us, how do we reflect on our time? Born sinful we are dead, and yes not as these who were brought back were, but even worse, we must be reborn so that we may live beyond this world and this life. The stages of life and the stages of death are nothing that prevents our Lord from raising us. How as young adults do we see the blessings and promises of new life, do we or can we fully at a young age grasp the love through the offer of salvation understand? In our mid-adult years as the world becomes confused and complicated do we feel the calling, do we understand reaching up and grasping the hand of our Lord outstretched to us? And in our old age do we come to the Lord for the fear of death, are we now at a time when we begin to question and accept the offer God has given to everyone who has ever taken a breath? God wants that all come to repentance, that all live and none perish, but He has established paths before us to choose and to walk. The stage of death is nothing for God to overcome and the door to conversion remains open as long as our hearts continue looking for a place of peace and security, both of which are only found in His hands.