



Jesus, undeterred, went right ahead and gave his charge: “God authorized and commanded me to commission you: **Go** out and train everyone you meet, far and near, in this way of life, marking them by baptism in the threefold name: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. Then instruct them in the practice of all I have commanded you. I’ll be with you as you do this, day after day after day, right up to the end of the age.” – Matthew 28:18-20 (*The Message*)

### **GO: THE BOOK OF ACTS**

After the departure of Jesus, the disciples could have hidden in fear to protect themselves, or scattered and returned to the comfort of what they knew. But they didn’t. They followed the instructions of Jesus to go and share the way of God with others as Jesus had shared with them. And they changed the world. This is the purpose and mission of God’s church. Are we ready to *GO*?

**You have a part to play!**

**APR 14**

**GO: WITNESS**

**Acts 1:1-11**

As Luke begins the story of what happened to the followers of Jesus, he shares an encounter of the disciples with Jesus before he ascended. The disciples asked a question: "Is this it? Is the kingdom now to be restored?" Jesus told them that the details of when were not their concern. Their roles were to be witnesses for Jesus!

**Our mission is to go and witness to the love and way of Jesus!**

Monday	Read Luke 24:45-49. What positive ways have you observed followers of Jesus witnessing to God's presence and forgiveness in Jesus?
Tuesday	Read Acts 1:1-5. What do you think it means to be baptized by the Holy Spirit?
Wednesday	Read Acts 1:6-9. Why does being a witness for the love and way of Jesus matter?
Thursday	Read Acts 1:10-11. How do we transition from "standing and looking toward heaven," to moving and living by the promise of Jesus' coming?
Friday	Read Acts 1:12-14. As you are invited to share the love of Jesus, what is in your prayers?
Saturday	Read 1 Peter 3:15. How does knowing Jesus impact your life and give you hope?

***CIRCLE Study Questions:***

1. What are ways of witnessing that turn people away from the love of Jesus?
2. Why does witnessing to the love of Jesus matter?
3. Pastor Brian said in this week's message, "We invite, God saves. We witness, the Holy Spirit transforms." What do these statements mean to you?
4. What do you want people to know about Jesus and about the church?
5. The foundational statement of this sermon series is: "You have a part to play!" How does that make you feel? Excited? Nervous? Scared? Hopeful? Overwhelmed? And why?

***FaithFit Challenge:***

With your Clay circle/small group, family, or a spiritual friend, share your answers to these 2 questions. 1) How have you come to know about God, God's love, and the way of Jesus? 2) What impact has the love of Jesus and the presence of the church made in your life, and/or what difference does knowing the love of Jesus make in your life today?

**APR 21**

**GO: ENCOURAGE**

**Acts 3:1-10**

How do we witness? The first witness the disciples share after they received the Holy Spirit happens during an encounter with a lame man begging at the Temple gate. The man asks Peter for money. Peter tells him he has no money to give, but can offer something even better. As the church today, we witness not just through giving money or support, but by lifting spirits and encouraging others with the embrace of God's love.

**We witness by lifting up and encouraging others.**

Monday	Read Acts 3:1-2. Who are the people today who are outside the "gate" – or the doors – of the church and who need encouragement?
Tuesday	Read Acts 3:3-5. What's the difference between simply encountering someone in our daily life versus truly "seeing" them?
Wednesday	Read Acts 3:6-7. How can you offer God's loving presence to those who feel like outsiders, who ask for help, or who need healing?
Thursday	Read Acts 3:8-10. When have you experienced wonder and amazement at the power of the Holy Spirit to uplift or encourage?
Friday	Read Acts 3:11-16. How can you share with others what you've witnessed the Holy Spirit doing in your life, or the life others, to uplift and encourage?
Saturday	Read Acts 3:17-21. How can you witness to others the power of trusting in God's promise of presence and restoration?

***CIRCLE Study Questions:***

1. Who do you know who is a great encourager?
2. What makes someone a great encourager?
3. What prevents us from taking time and truly "seeing" people we encounter in our daily lives?
4. The healing of the man wasn't just about walking, but about inclusion. Who outside of the church family today needs encouragement, healing, and an invitation to be included?
5. Pastor Brian talked about seeing, expecting, and trusting as we witness to the loving embrace of Jesus. What is one area where you can grow in your witness?

***FaithFit Challenge:***

With your Clay circle/small group, family, or a spiritual friend, share your answers to these 2 questions. 1) When and how in your life has someone truly seen your deepest needs and encouraged you with the love of God? 2) Who are the people you encounter in your daily life – friend or stranger – who may need to "be seen", to know someone cares, or to be assured that God has a part for them to play?

**APR 28**

**GO: CARE**

**Acts 6:1-7**

Many in the church today have come to believe the primary role of the pastor is to care for the elderly, shut-ins, the sick, and the dying. The book of Acts offers another perspective. In order to empower the apostles to preach and teach the word of God in the early church, other members of the community were invited to use their giftedness to care for the community. What does this sharing in ministry look like for the church today?

**How can you use your gifts to help the church care for others?**

Monday	Read Acts 6:1. What happens when tension or injustice goes unnamed and unaddressed in a church?
Tuesday	Read Acts 6:2. How are sharing God's word and serving others both important to the church's effort in caring for the community?
Wednesday	Read Acts 6:3-4. How can more people taking "responsibility" (NIV) for ministry help the church witness and care for more people?
Thursday	Read Acts 6:5-6 What can we learn from the Bible about healthy ways to deal with tension or complaints within the church?
Friday	Read Acts 6:7. How can the ways the church cares for others lead to growth?
Saturday	Read 1 Corinthians 12:21-31. If the church is the body of Christ, and every part matters, what might be your part in creating caring community?

***CIRCLE Study Questions:***

1. What expectations do you have for how the church cares for you? For others?
2. When someone isn't being cared for as expected, what should happen?
3. What is the difference between "expecting the church to care for me" and "being part of a church that cares for everyone"?
4. Pastor Brian shared that the Greek word for delivering food to tables and delivering the word are the same in Acts 6 – "*diakaneō*"? How are serving the word and serving the table both important roles enabling the church to care for others?
5. How is the caring of a church connected to its witness?
6. How can you use your gifts to help our church care for others?

***FaithFit Challenge:***

With your Clay circle/small group, family, or a spiritual friend, share your answers to these 2 questions. 1) How have you experienced a follower of Jesus, or the church, caring for you or your family? 2) What gifts, talents, passions, time, or resources do you have that could help the church care for others?

## **MAY 5**

### **GO: EXPAND THE EMBRACE**

#### **Acts 10:9-23**

The law Peter was taught to follow said he was not to enter a Gentile's house, and most certainly not to share a meal. There were codes of cleanliness to be followed. Peter, however, is instructed by God to visit the house of Cornelius, a Gentile and a believer. Peter steps out of his comfort zone, crosses a boundary, and the Holy Spirit moves through his witness to introduce others to the saving grace of Jesus.

**God calls us to cross boundaries and expand the embrace of Jesus' love.**

Monday	Read Acts 10:1-16. What makes crossing a boundary, or doing a new thing, difficult, even if you sense God's direction?
Tuesday	Read Acts 10:17-23. In what ways does God nudge you to get out of your comfort zone?
Wednesday	Read Acts 10:24-33. What boundaries, or personal definitions of "unclean" (NIV), keep us from sharing the love of Jesus with more people?
Thursday	Read Acts 10:34-38. What do you think Peter means when he says God "does not show favoritism" (NIV)?
Friday	Read Acts 10:39-43. Where have you witnessed the love of Jesus transforming or enriching lives that you could share with others?
Saturday	Read Acts 10:44-48. Where do you hope to see God's love breaking through barriers today?

#### ***CIRCLE Study Questions:***

1. Cornelius' devotedness was contagious at home and at work; what habits do you think people pick up from you? What do you hope they pick up from you?
2. How do you think we can know when God is encouraging us to do something?
3. Pastor Brian shared how rigid the Jew/Gentile divide was in the time of the early church. What racial, cultural, and social divides drive such a wedge that we shun others or avoid speaking of Jesus today?
4. How do you think Jesus wants us to speak of him and his love?
5. What fears hold you back from sharing your experience of Jesus with others?
6. What preconceived biases do you need God to crush in your life and heart so that you can expand the love of Jesus to more people?

#### ***FaithFit Challenge:***

With your Clay circle/small group, family, or a spiritual friend, share your answers to these 2 questions. 1) What boundaries do you sense need to be crossed to share the love of Jesus with more people? 2) What questions could you ask someone that both show them you care and invite them to share more about their own spiritual life?

## **MAY 12 - CAROLYN**

### **GO: TELL YOUR STORY**

#### **Acts 22:1-21**

What is your faith story? Again and again, the disciples in Acts witness to their encounters with Jesus. Whenever and wherever they can. They share them when they are asked, and when they are forced. When Paul is arrested, the first thing he asks is for permission to tell everyone his story. Again and again God uses the stories of the disciples to expand the church. You may not think your story means much. You may not think your story is anything extraordinary. But God can use your story in extraordinary ways.

#### **Go and share your story of encountering Jesus.**

Monday	Read Psalm 96:1-3. What inspires you to share and declare God's glory?
Tuesday	Read Isaiah 43:1-2. When and how has God been with you in times of trouble?
Wednesday	Read Acts 22:2-11. How does sharing our backgrounds help us relate to one another?
Thursday	Read Acts 22:12-16. Reflect on a time in your life when God opened your eyes to something you had previously been blind to.
Friday	Read Acts 22:17-21. Why is it important to keep searching for opportunities to share your faith story?
Saturday	Read 2 Corinthians 5:16-17. How has your relationship with Christ transformed your heart, your spirit, and your life?

#### ***CIRCLE Study Questions:***

1. What was one of your favorite stories as a kid? What did you like about it?
2. What are the parts of an engaging, authentic faith story?
3. Some faith stories are based in a powerful, life changing moment. Others are formed over time through many smaller, seemingly insignificant encounters. Which is yours?
4. God can use all kinds of personal stories to reach others, in ways we may or may not ever know. With whom could you share your experiences of God's love, grace, and presence? What parts of your story might others relate to and be inspired to hear?
5. If you someone asks why you are a follower of Jesus, what highlights of your faith story would you share in 2 or 3 minutes?

#### ***FaithFit Challenge:***

With your Clay circle/small group, family, or a spiritual friend, share your answers to these 2 questions. 1) Describe a time in your life when you have known God's presence and/or experienced the love of Jesus. 2) If you could share with a crowd, with no fear and no worries about saying the wrong thing, what would you want everyone to know about Jesus?

## **MAY 19**

### **BAPTIZED BY THE SPIRIT (CONFIRMATION & PENTECOST)**

#### **Acts 2:36-41**

When John the Baptist first begins baptizing in the desert, he tells those who come to him that one is coming who is greater than he, who will baptize not with water, but the Holy Spirit and fire. In the beginning of the book of Acts, Jesus shares the same news: telling the disciples in a few days they will be baptized with the Holy Spirit. Then, on Pentecost, the Holy Spirit comes, described by some as tongues of fire. What does it mean to be baptized by the Holy Spirit?

**Let the Spirit empower you to go and witness to the love of Jesus!**

Monday	Read Luke 3:15-18. What do you think John the Baptist means when he says that Jesus will baptize with “the Holy Spirit and fire” (NIV)?
Tuesday	Read Acts 1:1-5. In your understanding, what is the Holy Spirit?
Wednesday	Read Acts 2:1-4. What amazing thing have you seen God do, or when have you witnessed the Holy Spirit doing something in your life or the life of someone else?
Thursday	Read Acts 2:5-13. What importance do shared experiences of God’s loving presence play in our lives?
Friday	Read Acts 2:14-35. What do you hope people know about Jesus?
Saturday	Read Acts 2:36-41. What is the impact in your life of living as one in Spirit with Christ and with others, sharing in God’s grace and forgiveness as affirmed in baptism?

#### ***CIRCLE Study Questions:***

1. Who do you know who is “on fire” for God?
2. What makes someone a passionate and devoted follower of Jesus?
3. As a follower of Jesus, what is our responsibility for the mission of the church?
4. What would change in the world, or look different, if more people were “on fire” to humbly share the *unconditional* love of Jesus, without judgment or disrespect, and with passion and commitment?
5. As a follower of Jesus, what is one way that you can be a witness to others of the love and grace Jesus offers?

#### ***FaithFit Challenge:***

300 PEOPLE witnessing to the love of Jesus in Michiana! This is our BIG, CRAZY Clay Church goal. Visit [claychurch.com/GO](http://claychurch.com/GO). Take a few minutes to reflect on the GO questions listed there. Then sign up for one of our “witness opportunities” happening this summer in Michiana.