

Weekly Study Guide

The week of January 11, 2015

Daily Readings

Monday	Acts 17:16-21	Tuesday	Acts 17:22-34	Wednesday	Acts 25:23-27
Thursday	Acts 26:1-8	Friday	Acts 26:9-23	Saturday	Acts 26:24-32

My notes on this week's readings...

Next Week in Worship

Next week's message: *If God is Good, Why is There Suffering?*

Next week's readings: Revelation 21:3-4, Luke 4:16-21

The Biblical picture of God is both good and powerful. And yet there is so much pain and suffering in our lives. How can this be? Join us next week as we learn about God's response to what is broken in his world.

first lutheran church

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Group Discussion

Connect	<p>Do you have any friends with different religious beliefs or practices? Do you ever talk about your similarities or differences?</p>
Learn	<p>This week we're exploring questions about the relationship between faith in Jesus and other religions. Read Acts 17:16-34 for one example of early Christian teaching in the context of religious diversity.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• What was Paul's first reaction to the worship of many gods/idols in Athens (v. 16)? What can we learn from this reaction?• Verses 17 and 18 tell us about Paul's strategy and response to this situation. What seems to have been Paul's main message to the Athenians according to these verses?• The next section summarizes Paul's invited lecture. In this speech he connects with the Athenian context (vv. 22-23), gives a very brief and contextually relevant summary of the story of the Bible (vv. 24-28), and then identifies his own main point of difference (vv. 29-31). What would you say is the climax of this speech?• Based on this passage, what would you say is the center of the Christian message in a religiously diverse environment? <p>In Acts 26 we can see Paul again explaining his own Christian faith, this time in a different context of religious diversity. Unlike Acts 17 in Athens, now Paul is speaking to a Jewish audience. King Agrippa is a ruler of the Jews and a descendant of the famous King Herod the Great.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Read Acts 26:1-5. What is Paul's point here?• Read Acts 26:6-8. Here Paul reveals the heart of the controversy. What is it that differentiates Paul from his fellow Jews to whom he must defend his faith?• Read Acts 26:9-23. This is the main body of Paul's testimony before King Agrippa. What is the main thing that has energized Paul's life and ministry? (Notice especially how he begins and ends this section.)• Read Acts 26:24-29. What strikes you most about these closing interactions between Paul and Agrippa?• Read Acts 26:30-32. Paul has testified passionately about Jesus to people who disagree with him. They are not ready to repent and believe, but the result is still peaceful. What do you think contributes to this outcome?
Apply	<p>In these examples the apostle Paul's message to people of different faiths was simple. He testified about the person of Jesus. Jesus was his issue. When you talk about your faith to people of different faiths, how could this example help you? Do you get tripped up thinking that you have to talk about lots of issues? What would it be like if you could just focus on Jesus who is alive and invites everyone to himself?</p>
Pray	<p>Pray together today that Christians would come to be known for their relationship to Jesus and for the love of Jesus that they practice.</p>