

SHINE Devotional

Week 31 – Lesson 1



Reaching the Lost

Scripture reading Acts 9:32

“And it came to pass, as Peter passed throughout all quarters, he came down also to the saints which dwelt at Lydda.”

Acts 9:31 covers about eight to ten years of the Lord establishing local churches all around Palestine. At the same time that God was working in the life of Saul of Tarsus, Peter was busy spreading the Gospel and planting churches in other parts of the country. Verses 32-35 of Acts 9 tells us of his work in a tiny town about five miles from Jerusalem. Peter was determined to obey his Lord’s command to go everywhere and preach the Gospel to everyone in every city, whether large or small. The town of Lydda is not mentioned anywhere else in the New Testament, but Peter went there with the intent of reaching lost people.

There are people everywhere that need to hear of Jesus Christ. When you walk out of the door of your home, you are walking into a mission field. Every time God gives you an opportunity to have a conversation with someone, it is an opportunity to share the Gospel of Jesus Christ. That is why it is so important that you carry gospel tracts. The other day, I was driving to meet two of my daughters and their husbands for an evening out when I realized, I had allowed my car to run out of gas. I pulled over to the side of the road and had to call AAA to come and bring us some gas. I kept thinking over and over about how many times I have told my children, “There is never a reason to run out of gas.” As I sat there waiting for AAA, a roadside service operator funded by the state of Nevada pulled over and offered me gas to get my car to the next gas station. He was very gracious and kind. I thanked him for his help and was able to give him a gospel tract and invite him to church. I told him I wanted him to know for sure he was going to heaven. I got back in the car and prayed that God would use that tract and that he would get saved. Never waste a moment, even an embarrassing one. Every conversation is an opportunity to give someone the Gospel. Don’t waste that opportunity.

When you determine to reach the lost, you will SHINE.

SHINE Devotional

Week 31 – Lesson 2

Encouraging the Saints



Scripture reading Acts 9:32

*“And it came to pass, as Peter passed throughout all quarters, he came down also to the **saints** which dwelt at Lydda.”*

Because of the persecution that had taken place in Acts 8, Christians had spread throughout Palestine. Obviously, a group had come to Lydda and established a church. Peter’s first action when coming to Lydda was to find these “saints” and encourage them. It is interesting that God refers to believers as saints. The word *saint* means “holy one.” You may not think of yourself as a saint, but God does. A saint is anyone who has trusted Christ as Saviour and has the Holy Spirit living inside him. God knows that it is difficult for us to live up to that title. As a mature believer, my responsibility is to encourage younger Christians to understand who they are in Christ and to live up to their potential as saints of God. Paul says, *“I therefore, the prisoner of the Lord, beseech you that ye walk worthy of the vocation wherewith ye are called, With all lowliness and meekness, with longsuffering, forbearing one another in love”* (Ephesians 4:1-2). Because we live in the flesh, we do not naturally live holy lives. We have to daily surrender to the Holy Spirit of God, and we have been given brothers and sisters in Christ so that we can encourage one another to live like saints.

In forty-two years of ministry, I have watched Christians hinder other Christians. I have also watched Christians help other Christians. If you, as a believer, want to SHINE, then follow the example of Peter, by living your life to reach the lost and encourage the saints. When you do, you will SHINE.

SHINE Devotional

Week 31 – Lesson 3

Believe the Impossible



Scripture reading Acts 9:33

“And there he found a certain man named Aeneas, which had kept his bed eight years, and was sick of the palsy.”

This is an impossible situation. When Peter comes to this small town, he finds a man who, has been sick for eight years, laying in a bed because he was paralyzed. Aeneas does not seem to be a believer and was not a good prospect for anyone or anything. All he was, was a man in need. In his condition, he could do absolutely nothing for the church. However, the Lord could do something amazing for him. Eight years is a long time. Eight years ago, your eighteen-year-old son was only ten. Your eight-year-old daughter was not even born. Your eight-year-old car was brand new and spotless. If you just graduated from college, you were just going into high school. If you just got your doctorate degree, you were just barely entering college. For eight years, this man had not moved from his bed. God was about to perform an absolute miracle.

Do you believe God for the impossible things in your life? Peter believed God and he saw the impossible. What are you asking God to do in your town? What are you asking God to do in your family? What are you believing God for? It doesn't have to be a physical miracle, though it could be. It doesn't have to be a financial miracle, though it could be. You serve a God that spoke the world into existence. You serve a God that caused a virgin to bring forth a son. You serve a God that raised Jesus from the dead.

In our story today, we read how He healed a man that had been sick unable to walk for eight years. When you learn to believe God for the impossible, then you, as a believer, will SHINE.

SHINE Devotional

Week 31 – Lesson 4

Give Jesus the Glory



Scripture reading Acts 9:34

“And Peter said unto him, Aeneas, Jesus Christ maketh thee whole: arise, and make thy bed. And he arose immediately.”

Years ago, I heard Jerry Falwell say, “It would be amazing what would be accomplished for the kingdom of God, if we didn’t care who got the credit.” It is absolutely essential, if we want to SHINE for Jesus, that we give Jesus Christ the glory for everything that takes place in our lives. I have the privilege of traveling around the country doing what we call “Family Life Conferences.” God in His mercy allowed my wife and I to raise five children who are serving the Lord Jesus Christ. All of them have married wonderful people. They have given us eighteen grandchildren. All of the older grandchildren have trusted Christ as Saviour, and all of the younger ones are being taught the truths of Scripture. When I am preaching at a Family Life Conference, I like to start out by saying, “Anna and I are not experts at raising children, but what we have been given, is because of the Lord Jesus Christ and His mercy. We give glory to Him for what He has done.”

It doesn’t matter what you have accomplished in your life, you would not have accomplished it had not the Lord enabled you, and given you the strength, and placed you in the circumstances that you have found yourself. No matter how hard you have worked, no matter what you have put into your own life, it is absolutely important if you want to SHINE for Christ, that you give Him the glory for everything that happens in your life. It is absolutely essential, if we want the blessing of God in our lives, and if we want to SHINE for the Lord Jesus Christ, that we give Him the honor for any accomplishment, large or small. When you, as a believer, determine to give God His rightful glory, you will SHINE.

SHINE Devotional

Week 31 – Lesson 5



Take Personal Responsibility

Scripture reading Acts 9:34

“And Peter said unto him, Aeneas, Jesus Christ maketh thee whole: arise, and make thy bed. And he arose immediately.”

Yesterday, we saw that it is important that we give glory to God for whatever happens in our life. Today, I want to show you the other side of that coin. In this miracle, we see that God expects us to take personal responsibility. Peter went to Aeneas and told him that Jesus was going to make him whole. However, he put the responsibility on Aeneas to rise and walk himself. For eight years, Aeneas had not moved from that bed. He was unable to move. Peter was telling Aeneas to do the impossible. Jesus had healed him. Jesus had empowered him, but now Aeneas had the responsibility to obey the command, arise and make up his bed.

To walk by faith, does not mean to sit back and do nothing. To walk by faith is to find out what God’s Word tells us to do, do everything that God tells us to do, and then leave the results to Him. I cannot force a person to trust Jesus Christ as Lord and Saviour, but I can tell everybody I know about Jesus. I cannot change what is going on in the government. I cannot change the pandemic, but I can do what God tells me to do. I can pray the Lord’s prayer list and ask Him to not lead us into trials and deliver us from Satanic attack. God wants to do the miraculous. God can do the miraculous, but He places responsibility upon us. I cannot blame God for my failures. I cannot blame God for the failures of men and women around me and I should never teach anyone to blame their failures on God. God is a miracle working God, but He is a God who says to us, “If you want my blessing, you have to obey my Word.”

Aeneas could have looked at Peter and disobeyed, laid in his bed and remained crippled for the rest of his life. He didn’t. He obeyed the instruction immediately. Years ago, I heard the definition of obedience. Obedience is doing exactly what you are told to do, when you are told to do it, with the right heart attitude. Aeneas obeyed. The sovereign God determined to heal him. Aeneas took personal responsibility, obeyed God, and 2,000 years later we are talking about the miracle. As a believer, when you take personal responsibility to obey the Word of God, you will SHINE.

SHINE Devotional

Week 31 – Lesson 6

Advance the Kingdom



Scripture reading Acts 9:35

“And all that dwelt at Lydda and Saron saw him, and turned to the Lord.”

This week, we have looked at the story of a small man in a small town that saw a great miracle from a great God. Why? Because one man, Peter, decided to SHINE for Christ. He went to this small town to reach the lost. He went to this small town to encourage the saints. He went to this small town believing the impossible. He went to this small town to give glory to Jesus Christ. Aeneas was healed because of Peter’s obedience coupled with his own obedience. The result of the miracle demonstrates will take place anytime the name of Jesus Christ is glorified; the kingdom of God was advanced. All that dwelt in Lydda and Saron, saw this miracle and turned to the Lord.

We live in a time of fear. People are afraid of the Coronavirus. Some people are afraid to wear a mask. Some are afraid to not wear a mask. Some people are afraid to go out of their homes. Other people are afraid to not go out of their homes. People are afraid to say what they believe biblically or politically. We are surrounded by the spirit of fear. You and I as believers have not been given a spirit of fear. We should walk in confidence and realize that no matter what takes place in our world, politically, medically, or financially, we are here to represent the God of the universe. He will one day return to this earth and set up a kingdom that will last for 1,000 years. We will have the privilege of ruling and reigning with Him. We will have the privilege of spending eternity with Him and those we love.

I encourage you to remember who you are in Jesus Christ. Do all you can to reach the lost. Believe your God is a God of the impossible. Give glory to Jesus Christ. Take your responsibilities personally. Determine you want to live to advance the kingdom. When you do, you, as a believer, will SHINE.