**ACTS IN ACTION**

Last Week:

**Persecution to Prosperity**

**James 1:2-4**Consider it pure joy, my brothers and sisters, whenever you face trials of many kinds, **3**because you know that the testing of your faith produces perseverance.**4**Let perseverance finish its work so that you may be mature and complete, not lacking anything.

***Main Characters in Acts so far:***

Jesus – Tells the apostles to ”Be my witnesses”, then ascends into heaven.

Peter – Preaches on Pentecost and in Jerusalem, does several miracles. Brings the gospel to the Gentiles.

Stephen – Preaches the gospel to the Jews then is Martyred in Jerusalem

Philip – Preached to, and Baptized the Ethiopian Eunuch

Ananias – Bravely went to Damascus (Straight Street) and baptized Saul

Saul of Tarsus (Paul) – A leading Pharisee who became the Apostle Paul after receiving Jesus and being filled with the Holy Spirit.

James – Brother of John (son of Zebedee) killed in the beginning of Acts 12

James – ½ Brother of Jesus, writer of the book of James.

Barnabas – An early church leader who brought Paul along.

### Gal. 1:11-24

**11**Dear brothers and sisters, I want you to understand that the gospel message I preach is not based on mere human reasoning. **12**I received my message from no human source, and no one taught me. Instead, I received it by direct revelation from Jesus Christ. **13**You know what I was like when I followed the Jewish religion—how I violently persecuted God’s church. I did my best to destroy it.

**14**I was far ahead of my fellow Jews in my zeal for the traditions of my ancestors.

**15**But even before I was born, God chose me and called me by his marvelous grace. Then it pleased him **16**to reveal his Son to me so that I would proclaim the Good News about Jesus to the Gentiles. When this happened, I did not rush out to consult with any human being. **17**Nor did I go up to Jerusalem to consult with those who were apostles before I was. Instead, I went away into Arabia, and later I returned to the city of Damascus.

**18**Then three years later I went to Jerusalem to get to know Peter, and I stayed with him for fifteen days. **19**The only other apostle I met at that time was James, the Lord’s brother. **20**I declare before God that what I am writing to you is not a lie.

**21**After that visit I went north into the provinces of Syria and Cilicia. **22**And still the churches in Christ that are in Judea didn’t know me personally. **23**All they knew was that people were saying, “The one who used to persecute us is now preaching the very faith he tried to destroy!” **24**And they praised God because of me.

**Gal. 2:1-2**Then fourteen years later I went back to Jerusalem again, this time with Barnabas; and Titus came along, too. **2**I went there because God revealed to me that I should go. While I was there I met privately with those considered to be leaders of the church and shared with them the message I had been preaching to the Gentiles. I wanted to make sure that we were in agreement, for fear that all my efforts had been wasted and I was running the race for nothing.

**Gal. 2:6-10**

**6**And the leaders of the church had nothing to add to what I was preaching. (By the way, their reputation as great leaders made no difference to me, for God has no favorites.) **7**Instead, they saw that God had given me the responsibility of preaching the gospel to the Gentiles, just as he had given Peter the responsibility of preaching to the Jews. **8**For the same God who worked through Peter as the apostle to the Jews also worked through me as the apostle to the Gentiles.

**9**In fact, James, Peter and John, who were known as pillars of the church, recognized the gift God had given me, and they accepted Barnabas and me as their co-workers. They encouraged us to keep preaching to the Gentiles, while they continued their work with the Jews. **10**Their only suggestion was that we keep on helping the poor, which I have always been eager to do.

Lord needed that time to **prepare** him.

**Prepare:** (Def) “to make ready beforehand for some purpose, use, or activity”

Training is not enough,

Popularity is not enough

Giftedness is not enough.

God uses TIME to prepare us for readiness in ministry.

**Rom. 5:1-4**Therefore, since we have been justified through faith, wehave peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ, **2**through whom we have gained access by faith into this grace in which we now stand. And weboast in the hope of the glory of God. **3**Not only so, but we also glory in our sufferings, because we know that suffering produces perseverance; **4**perseverance, character and character, hope.

**Jer. 17:7-8**

**7**“But blessed is the one who trusts in the Lord,
    whose confidence is in him.
**8**They will be like a tree planted by the water
    that sends out its roots by the stream.
It does not fear when heat comes;
    its leaves are always green.
It has no worries in a year of drought
    and never fails to bear fruit.”