

# **WON'T BACK DOWN**

MIDPOINT OF THE BE/CAUSE INITIATIVE



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## A LETTER FROM PASTOR JASON

Dear Bethlehem Church Family,

Last fall, we launched a two-year discipleship and generosity initiative called the **BE/CAUSE** initiative. **BE/CAUSE** is rooted in 1 John 4:19: "We love because he first loved us." Everything we do as Christ followers is in response (BECAUSE) of what He has done for us.

**WE SERVE BECAUSE HE FIRST SERVED US.**  
**WE FORGIVE BECAUSE HE HAS FORGIVEN US.**  
**WE GIVE BECAUSE HE GAVE HIS LIFE FOR US.**

BECAUSE of the Gospel of Jesus Christ, the church has been advancing for 2000 years, and in our ever-changing and challenging world, we believe the local church has the chance to be a place of hope and healing for all people. The **BE/CAUSE** initiative is our corporate response and belief that God has more for us in the future BECAUSE of all we've seen Him do in the last few years.

We believed if all who call Bethlehem Church home would prayerfully accept this challenge, our ability to expand across all of our campuses would become a reality. As your pastor, I am thankful to God because of His faithfulness, and I've never been more proud of the people of Bethlehem Church. Our society lives in fear and speculation about inflation, the economy, and the future; the people of Bethlehem Church march forward with a spirit of generosity, trusting in a God who provides and is faithful.

Our campus expansion couldn't come at a more critical time. Since launching the **BE/CAUSE** initiative, our church is averaging 1,000 more people than this time last year. All of our campuses have added additional services to make room. At our 316 Campus, we took the unique and unprecedented move to launch our weekend services on Thursday night. This decision has been wildly successful. Our kids ministry areas are completely full each weekend, and we've never had more people involved in small groups and engaged in serving on a week-to-week basis as well. We've baptized more than 300 people since we launched the **BE/CAUSE** initiative. Our new 316 worship center is rapidly being built, and this fall, we will unveil detailed plans for expanding the 211 and Oconee Campuses.

We are excited about the second half of the **BE/CAUSE** initiative due to the fact that so many new people have a chance to jump in and join those who have already made commitments. As we continue this journey, please pray about your role in the **BE/CAUSE** initiative, whether by joining the mission God has given us with a first-time commitment, staying strong in your current commitment, or by increasing your current commitment.

We all are people who are changed BECAUSE of the gospel of Jesus Christ. I am thankful to pastor people who are committed to leading others to discover new life in Christ. Nan and I love and appreciate each of you.



Pastor Jason Britt

# WHAT WE SET OUT TO DO

BE / CAUSE

HE DID. I WILL.



## PRIMARY GOAL

## SECONDARY GOAL

# 100% ENGAGEMENT

# \$27 MILLION



At its core, the **BE/CAUSE** initiative is a discipleship initiative, so our primary goal is that every single person who calls Bethlehem Church home would actively engage and participate in this season. The opportunity before us is rooted in God's faithfulness that is behind us. We love Jesus more than anyone else because He has loved us like no one else ever has. We love each other because Jesus told us that's how the world would know we are His disciples. We love the lost because that's who Jesus came for. In an ever-changing world, the local church has always been and is now the carrier of the greatest message the world has ever known: the gospel. Everything we do is in response to what God has first done in our own lives.



We are asking, "What does it look like to position, in the hearts and minds of people, the reality that the greatest cause you could ever give yourself to is the church?" We are inviting everyone to go on a journey of the heart in this season. Do we live our lives in response to the love of God? Because the love of Jesus has changed our lives, do we live with a generous posture toward God and toward others? Are we giving in a way that changes us, or has it become comfortable and routine?

This is a one-fund project. Every person's journey of the heart matters and impacts the holistic nature of the initiative. Bethlehem Church is committed to helping others discover new life in Christ, and through the BE/CAUSE initiative, this mission is being accelerated over the next two years in multiple ways.



**BECAUSE THE CHURCH IS AN ETERNAL CAUSE WITH AN IMMEDIATE CURE**  
**\$15 MILLION**

Together we will continue to invest in our ongoing ministries and trust God to accelerate the life change that is happening week in and week out. The current two-year ministry budget is \$13.5 million, and this includes each campus, every ministry, and every Gospel initiative that serves kids, students, adults, and people with special needs.

**BECAUSE every community needs a champion, we will increase our investment in our local and global community by committing \$1.5 million in this next season. The local church should be the greatest source of hope in the community where God has placed it. Our community should be better because the people of God, changed by Jesus, are an active part in the life of the community. We will continue to lock arms with non-profit organizations who are doing the hard work of holistic change in the lives of people in the hardest of situations.**



**BECAUSE EVERY LIFE MATTERS TO GOD AND JESUS LOVES THE LOST**  
**\$12 MILLION**

The reality is we have maximized the use of every square inch of our current facility and haven't come close to reaching all the lives that Jesus wants to change. Doubling our seating capacity at the 316 Campus allows us to then create new next-generation space on each campus. Our 316 Campus will also incorporate a new, multi-functional community and student building with surrounding green space to further expand our outreach and impact.



# WHAT GOD HAS DONE

## WE CELEBRATE

AS OF SEPTEMBER 30, 2023



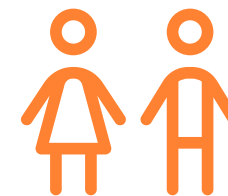
**\$31.5M**

**BE/CAUSE**  
Commitments and  
expected gifts



**354**

First-time givers

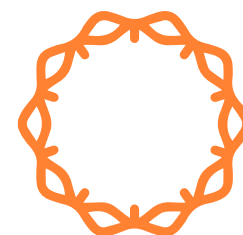


**1,339**

**BE/CAUSE**  
Commitments  
representing  
**3,429 total people**

**335**

Baptisms across all  
campuses + St. Croix  
Christian Church



**9,185**

People attended Easter at  
Bethlehem Church



**1,500**

First-time guests



**\$500,000+**

Invested in our local and global community



Additional service time added across all campuses



Launched 1st ever Thursday service at the **316 campus** with an average attendance of **506 people**



**800+**

Volunteers serve across our campuses each weekend



**1,239**

Hours served by students making a difference in our community

## CONNECT CAMPS



**451**

Elementary-aged campers



**166**

Volunteers



**17**

Salvations



## BREAKAWAY CAMP



**31**

Salvations



**36**

Volunteers



**220**

Middle and high school-aged students



**5,117**

Average weekly in-person attendance



**3,735**

Adults



**1,312**

Next Generation



**70**

Bethlehem Buddies



# WHERE WE ARE GOING

## WON'T BACK DOWN

Because of God's faithfulness and grace, we received commitments and expected gifts of \$31.5 MILLION last fall. Therefore, we feel that God is showing us that we can go further faster, and we are expanding our BE/CAUSE initiative secondary goal to \$34 MILLION.

**BE/CAUSE** The Church is an Eternal Cause with an Immediate Cure: \$16.7 MILLION (expanded from \$15 Million). Because every step forward in generosity expands the eternal impact of our local and global communities.



- Current Ministries, accounting for an increase in the cost of the current economic environment.
- Continued expanded investment in local non-profits serving the least of these, planting new churches and revitalizing existing churches, and expanding our global impact through new initiatives.

**BE/CAUSE** Every Life Matters to God and Jesus Loves the Lost: \$17.3 MILLION (expanded from \$12 Million). Because the generosity of God's people and the expansion of His kingdom have always gone hand in hand, this will be through a three-pronged approach to further expand our outreach.



- 316 Campus:
  - New 1800 Seat Auditorium
  - New Kids and Buddies spaces
  - New Student/Community building
- 211 Campus:
  - Expanded Kids and Student spaces
- Oconee Campus:
  - Expanded Kids and Student spaces

*\*Additional facility costs to be covered by fair market value sale of current 316 Campus location to Bethlehem Christian Academy and financing from a ministry partner.*



## WHAT IS

# YOUR ROLE?

Throughout the last year, we've seen God do amazing things in and through us, impacting our local community and across the globe. He has given us every reason to trust Him, and we respond by honoring Him with our first and best.

### NEW COMMITMENT



You recently joined our church family and are wondering, "What is the **BE/CAUSE** initiative, and how do I become a part of it?" The BE/CAUSE initiative is for anyone who would call Bethlehem Church their church home, and we welcome you to the family! We hope you will join us on this journey as we respond to God based on all that we have seen Him do in our midst, personally and corporately.

### FINISH STRONG



Others made a commitment one year ago, and for some of us, this journey has been more difficult than we envisioned. You may have gone to an entirely new level in your generosity and are still adjusting to it. Perhaps you have experienced job loss, job change, or unexpected financial expenses. Persevere to finish strong in this journey you began. We all stand together, encouraging one another. We know that God is faithful. He will provide, and we want to finish strong in our commitment to the **BE/CAUSE** initiative.

### INCREASE



Some of us made our **BE/CAUSE** commitment a year ago, and we may have had an increase in faith or finances. It doesn't mean keeping our commitment has been easy because it has likely required a lot of sacrifices. But, you may be sensing the Lord stretching you to take an additional step of faith in your generosity by increasing your commitment. Generosity is not a one-time event, it is a journey. Consider asking yourself these questions: "Am I giving in a way that challenges me?" "Do we live with a generous posture toward God and others?" Pray and ask yourself if He is inviting you into another step of faith with an increased commitment.

# COMMITMENT CARD

## BE / CAUSE

HE DID. I WILL.

### PRIMARY GOAL: 100% ENGAGEMENT

We want every single person to take his or her next step in discipleship and grow in generosity.

**SECONDARY GOAL: \$34 MILLION**  
expanded from \$27 Million

**BECAUSE THE CHURCH IS AN ETERNAL CAUSE WITH AN IMMEDIATE CURE: \$16.7 MILLION**  
expanded from \$15 Million

Because every step forward in generosity expands the eternal impact of our local and global communities, we will continue to fund ministry operations at each campus, as well as invest in our local community and global partners.

**BECAUSE EVERY LIFE MATTERS TO GOD AND JESUS LOVES THE LOST: \$17.3 MILLION**  
expanded from \$12 Million

Because the generosity of God's people and the expansion of His kingdom have always gone hand in hand, this will be through a three-pronged approach to further expand our outreach.

316 Campus: New 1800 Seat Auditorium · New Kids and Buddies spaces · New Student/Community building

211 Campus: Expansion of Kids and Student spaces

Oconee Campus: Expansion of Kids and Student spaces

### I AM NEW TO BE/CAUSE

I would like to make a 12-month commitment to the BE/CAUSE initiative in the amount of:

\$

December 2023-December 2024  
\*This includes your regular giving over the next 12 months as well as your expanded giving and stored resources.

### I AM ALREADY COMMITTED TO BE/CAUSE

My current two-year commitment is:

\$

December 2022-December 2024

At the midpoint of BE/CAUSE, I would like to:

Confirm my commitment to finish strong

Increase my two-year commitment to:

\$

December 2022-December 2024

Name		
Address		
City	State	Zip
Email		
Phone	Church Campus	

We've included a sample commitment card in the back pocket of this book. You can use this as a tool to pray about your commitment and what that will mean for your journey with God as we approach the midpoint of the BE/CAUSE initiative. You can either bring that exact card or we will have a new one for you on Commitment Weekend, November 2nd and 5th.

# JOURNEY OF GENEROSITY

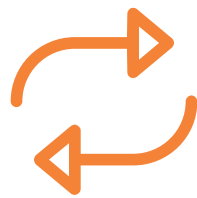
This tool is designed to help you move from money being an idol, to money being a tool for God's Kingdom. The journey focuses on the condition of our hearts, further transforming us into the likeness of Christ.

Each step of the journey represents growth in a lifestyle of generosity and sacrifice.



## AN INITIAL GIVER

is someone who decides to give for the first time out of a response to God's Word about giving. This is someone who chooses to give something and trust God and the leaders of the church with this gift. They experience the initial joy of putting Jesus' words into action (Matthew 7:24).



## A CONSISTENT GIVER

is someone who decides to give something and give it consistently to exercise the discipline of giving as a disciple of Jesus. Often, someone who chooses to make an online recurring gift will be someone who is learning the joy of consistency. Non-online givers can also be consistent givers; it just requires more discipline. They experience the joy of excelling in this grace of giving (2 Corinthians 8:7).



## A PRIORITY GIVER

is someone who understands the pre-eminence of Christ and that He is before all things – that all things were created by Him, for Him, through Him, and to Him. This giver places such a significant priority on their giving that it drives their spending and saving, as opposed to their spending and saving driving their giving. They experience the freedom of serving "one master" and declaring Jesus is first (Matthew 6:19-24 and Colossians 1:15-20).



## A SURRENDERED GIVER

is someone who recognizes that Christ surrendered His whole self for us, and therefore we desire to offer our entire selves to Him in love (Ephesians 5:1-2). This giver would say, "My giving is not just changing my spending and saving. It's also changing me!" They also look at what they're not giving away and ask, "Is it surrendered too?" This informs how they use everything they've been blessed and entrusted with – whether through direct monetary giving or a God-honoring use of an existing resource like a home or vehicle.



## AN ETERNAL GIVER

is someone who sees the eternal impact of their giving – on them and on others – not just the immediate programs and ministries it helps accomplish. This giver has been captivated by the knowledge that the more they are led to "do good... to be generous and ready to share," the more they "take hold of that which is truly life" (1 Timothy 6:19). This person looks at what they have and asks, "Am I stewarding this for God's Kingdom or for me?" This encourages them to keep growing! They make all decisions (big purchases, savings, giving, relationships, areas of service) in light of how it will affect their eternal impact.

# MESSAGE NOTES & GROUP DISCUSSION NOTES

## 1 ACTS

### The Promise of the Holy Spirit

**1** In the first book, O Theophilus, I have dealt with all that Jesus began to do and teach, **2** until the day when he was taken up, after he had given commands through the Holy Spirit to the apostles whom he had chosen. **3** He presented himself alive to them after his suffering by many proofs, appearing to them during forty days and speaking about the kingdom of God.

**4** And while staying with them he ordered them not to depart from Jerusalem, but to wait for the promise of the Father, which, he said, “you heard from me; **5** for John baptized with water, but you will be baptized with the Holy Spirit not many days from now.”

### The Ascension

**6** So when they had come together, they asked him, “Lord, will you at this time restore the kingdom to Israel?” **7** He said to them, “It is not for you to know times or seasons that the Father has fixed by his own authority. **8** But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you, and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth.” **9** And when he had said these things, as they were looking on, he was lifted up, and a cloud took him out of their sight. **10** And while they were gazing into heaven as he went, behold, two men stood by them in white robes, **11** and said, “Men of Galilee, why do you stand looking into heaven? This Jesus, who was taken up from you into heaven, will come in the same way as you saw him go into heaven.”

### Matthias Chosen to Replace Judas

**12** Then they returned to Jerusalem from the mount called Olivet, which is near Jerusalem, a Sabbath day’s journey away. **13** And when they had entered, they went up to the upper room, where they were staying, Peter and John and James and Andrew, Philip and Thomas, Bartholomew and Matthew, James the son of Alphaeus and Simon the Zealot and Judas the son of James. **14** All these with one accord were devoting themselves to prayer, together with the women and Mary the mother of Jesus, and his brothers.

**15** In those days Peter stood up among the brothers (the company of persons was in all about 120) and said, **16** “Brothers, the Scripture had to be fulfilled, which the Holy Spirit spoke beforehand by the mouth of David concerning Judas, who became a guide to those who arrested Jesus. **17** For he was numbered among us and was allotted his share in this ministry.” **18** (Now this man acquired a field with the reward of his wickedness, and falling headlong he burst open in the middle and all his bowels gushed out. **19** And it became known to all the inhabitants of Jerusalem, so that the field was called in their own language Akeldama, that is, Field of Blood.) **20** “For it is written in the Book of Psalms,

“‘May his camp become desolate,  
and let there be no one to dwell in it’;

and

“‘Let another take his office.’

**21** So one of the men who have accompanied us during all the time that the Lord Jesus went in and out among us, **22** beginning from the baptism of John until the day when he was taken up from us—one of these men must become with us a witness to his resurrection.” **23** And they put forward two, Joseph called Barsabbas, who was also called Justus, and Matthias. **24** And they prayed and said, “You, Lord, who know the hearts of all, show which one of these two you have chosen **25** to take the place in this ministry and apostleship from which Judas turned aside to go to his own place.” **26** And they cast lots for them, and the lot fell on Matthias, and he was numbered with the eleven apostles.

# 2 ACTS

## The Coming of the Holy Spirit

**1** When the day of Pentecost arrived, they were all together in one place. **2** And suddenly there came from heaven a sound like a mighty rushing wind, and it filled the entire house where they were sitting. **3** And divided tongues as of fire appeared to them and rested on each one of them. **4** And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other tongues as the Spirit gave them utterance.

**5** Now there were dwelling in Jerusalem Jews, devout men from every nation under heaven. **6** And at this sound the multitude came together, and they were bewildered, because each one was hearing them speak in his own language. **7** And they were amazed and astonished, saying, "Are not all these who are speaking Galileans? **8** And how is it that we hear, each of us in his own native language? **9** Parthians and Medes and Elamites and residents of Mesopotamia, Judea and Cappadocia, Pontus and Asia, **10** Phrygia and Pamphylia, Egypt and the parts of Libya belonging to Cyrene, and visitors from Rome, **11** both Jews and proselytes, Cretans and Arabians—we hear them telling in our own tongues the mighty works of God." **12** And all were amazed and perplexed, saying to one another, "What does this mean?" **13** But others mocking said, "They are filled with new wine."

### Peter's Sermon at Pentecost

**14** But Peter, standing with the eleven, lifted up his voice and addressed them: "Men of Judea and all who dwell in Jerusalem, let this be known to you, and give ear to my words. **15** For these people are not drunk, as you suppose, since it is only the third hour of the day. **16** But this is what was uttered through the prophet Joel:

**17** "And in the last days it shall be, God declares, that I will pour out my Spirit on all flesh, and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, and your young men shall see visions, and your old men shall dream dreams;

**18** even on my male servants and female servants in those days I will pour out my Spirit, and they shall prophesy.

**19** And I will show wonders in the heavens above and signs on the earth below, blood, and fire, and vapor of smoke;

**20** the sun shall be turned to darkness and the moon to blood,

before the day of the Lord comes, the great and magnificent day.

**21** And it shall come to pass that everyone who calls upon the name of the Lord shall be saved.'

**22** "Men of Israel, hear these words: Jesus of Nazareth, a man attested to you by God with mighty works and wonders and signs that God did through him in your midst, as you yourselves know— **23** this Jesus, delivered up according to the definite plan and foreknowledge of God, you crucified and killed by the hands of lawless men. **24** God raised him up, loosing the pangs of death, because it was not possible for him to be held by it. **25** For David says concerning him,

"I saw the Lord always before me, for he is at my right hand that I may not be shaken;

**26** therefore my heart was glad, and my tongue rejoiced; my flesh also will dwell in hope.

**27** For you will not abandon my soul to Hades, or let your Holy One see corruption.

**28** You have made known to me the paths of life; you will make me full of gladness with your presence.'

**29** "Brothers, I may say to you with confidence about the patriarch David that he both died and was buried, and his tomb is with us to this day. **30** Being therefore a prophet, and knowing that God had sworn with an oath to him that he would set one of his descendants on his throne, **31** he foresaw and spoke about the resurrection of the Christ, that he was not abandoned to Hades, nor did his flesh see corruption. **32** This Jesus God raised up, and of that we all are witnesses.

**33** Being therefore exalted at the right hand of God, and having received from the Father the promise of the Holy Spirit, he has poured out this that you yourselves are seeing and hearing.

**34** For David did not ascend into the heavens, but he himself says,

# 2 ACTS

"The Lord said to my Lord, 'Sit at my right hand, until I make your enemies your footstool.'"

**36** Let all the house of Israel therefore know for certain that God has made him both Lord and Christ, this Jesus whom you crucified."

**37** Now when they heard this they were cut to the heart, and said to Peter and the rest of the apostles, "Brothers, what shall we do?" **38** And Peter said to them, "Repent and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins, and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. **39** For the promise is for you and for your children and for all who are far off, everyone whom the Lord our God calls to himself." **40** And with many other words he bore witness and continued to exhort them, saying, "Save yourselves from this crooked generation." **41** So those who received his word were baptized, and there were added that day about three thousand souls.

### The Fellowship of the Believers

**42** And they devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and the fellowship, to the breaking of bread and the prayers. **43** And awe came upon every soul, and many wonders and signs were being done through the apostles. **44** And all who believed were together and had all things in common. **45** And they were selling their possessions and belongings and distributing the proceeds to all, as any had need. **46** And day by day, attending the temple together and breaking bread in their homes, they received their food with glad and generous hearts, **47** praising God and having favor with all the people. And the Lord added to their number day by day those who were being saved.

## NOTES

# 3 ACTS

## The Lame Beggar Healed

**1** Now Peter and John were going up to the temple at the hour of prayer, the ninth hour. **2** And a man lame from birth was being carried, whom they laid daily at the gate of the temple that is called the Beautiful Gate to ask alms of those entering the temple. **3** Seeing Peter and John about to go into the temple, he asked to receive alms. **4** And Peter directed his gaze at him, as did John, and said, "Look at us." **5** And he fixed his attention on them, expecting to receive something from them. **6** But Peter said, "I have no silver and gold, but what I do have I give to you. In the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, rise up and walk!" **7** And he took him by the right hand and raised him up, and immediately his feet and ankles were made strong. **8** And leaping up, he stood and began to walk, and entered the temple with them, walking and leaping and praising God. **9** And all the people saw him walking and praising God, **10** and recognized him as the one who sat at the Beautiful Gate of the temple, asking for alms. And they were filled with wonder and amazement at what had happened to him.

## Peter Speaks in Solomon's Portico

**11** While he clung to Peter and John, all the people, utterly astounded, ran together to them in the portico called Solomon's. **12** And when Peter saw it he addressed the people: "Men of Israel, why do you wonder at this, or why do you stare at us, as though by our own power or piety we have made him walk? **13** The God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob, the God of our fathers, glorified his servant Jesus, whom you delivered over and denied in the presence of Pilate, when he had decided to release him. **14** But you denied the Holy and Righteous One, and asked for a murderer to be granted to you, **15** and you killed the Author of life, whom God raised from the dead. To this we are witnesses. **16** And his name—by faith in his name—has made this man strong whom you see and know, and the faith that is through Jesus has given the man this perfect health in the presence of you all.

**17** "And now, brothers, I know that you acted in ignorance, as did also your rulers. **18** But what God foretold by the mouth of all the prophets, that his Christ would suffer, he thus fulfilled. **19** Repent therefore, and turn back, that your sins may be blotted out, **20** that times of refreshing may come from the presence of the Lord, and that he may send the Christ appointed for you, Jesus, **21** whom heaven must receive until the time for restoring all the things about which God spoke by the mouth of his holy prophets long ago. **22** Moses said, 'The Lord God will raise up for you a prophet like me from your brothers. You shall listen to him in whatever he tells you. **23** And it shall be that every soul who does not listen to that prophet shall be destroyed from the people.' **24** And all the prophets who have spoken, from Samuel and those who came after him, also proclaimed these days. **25** You are the sons of the prophets and of the covenant that God made with your fathers, saying to Abraham, 'And in your offspring shall all the families of the earth be blessed.' **26** God, having raised up his servant, sent him to you first, to bless you by turning every one of you from your wickedness."

# NOTES

# 4 ACTS

## Peter and John Before the Council

**1** And as they were speaking to the people, the priests and the captain of the temple and the Sadducees came upon them, **2** greatly annoyed because they were teaching the people and proclaiming in Jesus the resurrection from the dead. **3** And they arrested them and put them in custody until the next day, for it was already evening. **4** But many of those who had heard the word believed, and the number of the men came to about five thousand.

**5** On the next day their rulers and elders and scribes gathered together in Jerusalem, **6** with Annas the high priest and Caiaphas and John and Alexander, and all who were of the high-priestly family. **7** And when they had set them in the midst, they inquired, "By what power or by what name did you do this?" **8** Then Peter, filled with the Holy Spirit, said to them, "Rulers of the people and elders, **9** if we are being examined today concerning a good deed done to a crippled man, by what means this man has been healed, **10** let it be known to all of you and to all the people of Israel that by the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, whom you crucified, whom God raised from the dead—by him this man is standing before you well. **11** This Jesus is the stone that was rejected by you, the builders, which has become the cornerstone. **12** And there is salvation in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved."

**13** Now when they saw the boldness of Peter and John, and perceived that they were uneducated, common men, they were astonished. And they recognized that they had been with Jesus. **14** But seeing the man who was healed standing beside them, they had nothing to say in opposition. **15** But when they had commanded them to leave the council, they conferred with one another, **16** saying, "What shall we do with these men? For that a notable sign has been performed through them is evident to all the inhabitants of Jerusalem, and we cannot deny it. **17** But in order that it may spread no further among the people, let us warn them to speak no more to anyone in this name." **18** So they called them and charged them not to speak or teach at all in the name of Jesus. **19** But Peter and John answered them, "Whether it is right in the sight of God to listen to you rather than to God, you must judge, **20** for we cannot but speak of what we have seen and heard." **21** And when they had further threatened them, they let them go, finding no way to punish them, because of the people, for all were praising God for what had happened. **22** For the man on whom this sign of healing was performed was more than forty years old.

## The Believers Pray for Boldness

**23** When they were released, they went to their friends and reported what the chief priests and the elders had said to them. **24** And when they heard it, they lifted their voices together to God and said, "Sovereign Lord, who made the heaven and the earth and the sea and everything in them, **25** who through the mouth of our father David, your servant, said by the Holy Spirit,

"Why did the Gentiles rage,  
and the peoples plot in vain?

**26** The kings of the earth set themselves,  
and the rulers were gathered together,  
against the Lord and against his Anointed'—

**27** for truly in this city there were gathered together against your holy servant Jesus, whom you anointed, both Herod and Pontius Pilate, along with the Gentiles and the peoples of Israel, **28** to do whatever your hand and your plan had predestined to take place. **29** And now, Lord, look upon their threats and grant to your servants to continue to speak your word with all boldness, **30** while you stretch out your hand to heal, and signs and wonders are performed through the name of your holy servant Jesus." **31** And when they had prayed, the place in which they were gathered together was shaken, and they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and continued to speak the word of God with boldness.

# 4 ACTS

## They Had Everything in Common

**32** Now the full number of those who believed were of one heart and soul, and no one said that any of the things that belonged to him was his own, but they had everything in common. **33** And with great power the apostles were giving their testimony to the resurrection of the Lord Jesus, and great grace was upon them all. **34** There was not a needy person among them, for as many as were owners of lands or houses sold them and brought the proceeds of what was sold **35** and laid it at the apostles' feet, and it was distributed to each as any had need. **36** Thus Joseph, who was also called by the apostles Barnabas (which means son of encouragement), a Levite, a native of Cyprus, **37** sold a field that belonged to him and brought the money and laid it at the apostles' feet.

## NOTES



### Ananias and Sapphira

**1** But a man named Ananias, with his wife Sapphira, sold a piece of property, **2** and with his wife's knowledge he kept back for himself some of the proceeds and brought only a part of it and laid it at the apostles' feet. **3** But Peter said, "Ananias, why has Satan filled your heart to lie to the Holy Spirit and to keep back for yourself part of the proceeds of the land? **4** While it remained unsold, did it not remain your own? And after it was sold, was it not at your disposal? Why is it that you have contrived this deed in your heart? You have not lied to man but to God." **5** When Ananias heard these words, he fell down and breathed his last. And great fear came upon all who heard of it. **6** The young men rose and wrapped him up and carried him out and buried him.

**7** After an interval of about three hours his wife came in, not knowing what had happened. **8** And Peter said to her, "Tell me whether you sold the land for so much." And she said, "Yes, for so much." **9** But Peter said to her, "How is it that you have agreed together to test the Spirit of the Lord? Behold, the feet of those who have buried your husband are at the door, and they will carry you out." **10** Immediately she fell down at his feet and breathed her last. When the young men came in they found her dead, and they carried her out and buried her beside her husband. **11** And great fear came upon the whole church and upon all who heard of these things.

### Many Signs and Wonders Done

**12** Now many signs and wonders were regularly done among the people by the hands of the apostles. And they were all together in Solomon's Portico. **13** None of the rest dared join them, but the people held them in high esteem. **14** And more than ever believers were added to the Lord, multitudes of both men and women, **15** so that they even carried out the sick into the streets and laid them on cots and mats, that as Peter came by at least his shadow might fall on some of them. **16** The people also gathered from the towns around Jerusalem, bringing the sick and those afflicted with unclean spirits, and they were all healed.

### The Apostles Arrested and Freed

**17** But the high priest rose up, and all who were with him (that is, the party of the Sadducees), and filled with jealousy **18** they arrested the apostles and put them in the public prison. **19** But during the night an angel of the Lord opened the prison doors and brought them out, and said, **20** "Go and stand in the temple and speak to the people all the words of this Life." **21** And when they heard this, they entered the temple at daybreak and began to teach.

Now when the high priest came, and those who were with him, they called together the council, all the senate of the people of Israel, and sent to the prison to have them brought. **22** But when the officers came, they did not find them in the prison, so they returned and reported, **23** "We found the prison securely locked and the guards standing at the doors, but when we opened them we found no one inside." **24** Now when the captain of the temple and the chief priests heard these words, they were greatly perplexed about them, wondering what this would come to. **25** And someone came and told them, "Look! The men whom you put in prison are standing in the temple and teaching the people." **26** Then the captain with the officers went and brought them, but not by force, for they were afraid of being stoned by the people.

**27** And when they had brought them, they set them before the council. And the high priest questioned them, **28** saying, "We strictly charged you not to teach in this name, yet here you have filled Jerusalem with your teaching, and you intend to bring this man's blood upon us." **29** But Peter and the apostles answered, "We must obey God rather than men. **30** The God of our fathers raised Jesus, whom you killed by hanging him on a tree. **31** God exalted him at his right hand as Leader and Savior, to give repentance to Israel and forgiveness of sins. **32** And we are witnesses to these things, and so is the Holy Spirit, whom God has given to those who obey him."



**33** When they heard this, they were enraged and wanted to kill them. **34** But a Pharisee in the council named Gamaliel, a teacher of the law held in honor by all the people, stood up and gave orders to put the men outside for a little while. **35** And he said to them, "Men of Israel, take care what you are about to do with these men. **36** For before these days Theudas rose up, claiming to be somebody, and a number of men, about four hundred, joined him. He was killed, and all who followed him were dispersed and came to nothing. **37** After him Judas the Galilean rose up in the days of the census and drew away some of the people after him. He too perished, and all who followed him were scattered. **38** So in the present case I tell you, keep away from these men and let them alone, for if this plan or this undertaking is of man, it will fail; **39** but if it is of God, you will not be able to overthrow them. You might even be found opposing God!" So they took his advice, **40** and when they had called in the apostles, they beat them and charged them not to speak in the name of Jesus, and let them go. **41** Then they left the presence of the council, rejoicing that they were counted worthy to suffer dishonor for the name. **42** And every day, in the temple and from house to house, they did not cease teaching and preaching that the Christ is Jesus.

## NOTES

















## KEY DATES

### COMMITMENT WEEKEND

316 Campus | November 2nd & 5th

211 Campus | November 5th

Oconee Campus | November 5th



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