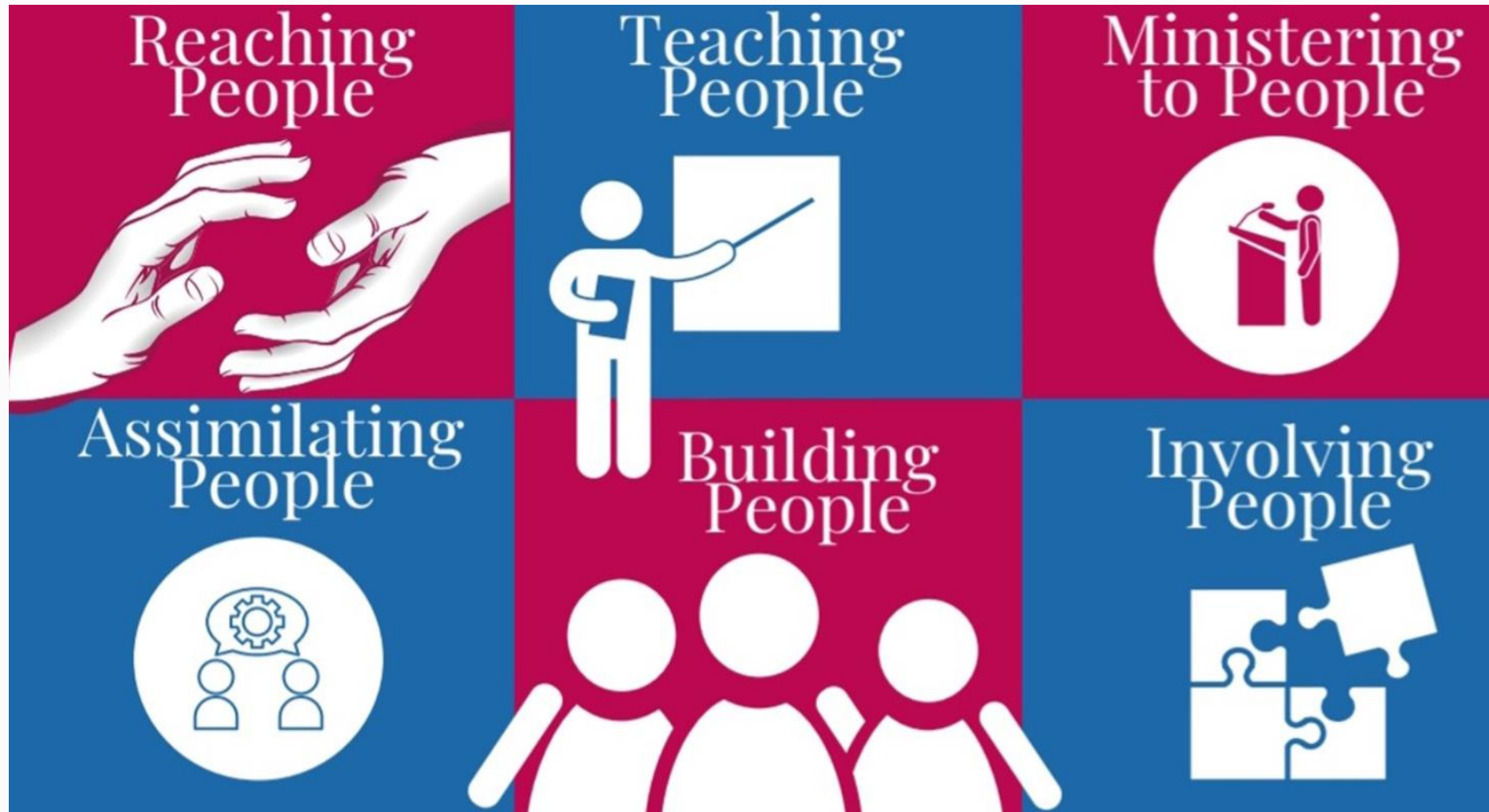




Faith and Love C.O.G.I.C
Sunday School

Lesson 6 October 12, 2025
SAUL EARNS CREDIBILITY

SUNDAY SCHOOL CORE VALUES



SUNDAY SCHOOL RESPONSIVE READING

Superintendent/Teacher: Behold how good and how pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in unity. **Psalms 133:1**

School/Class: But do not forget to do good and to share, for with such sacrifices God is well pleased. **Hebrews 13:16**

Superintendent/Teacher: All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness. **2 Timothy 3:16**

School/Class: Your word is a lamp to my feet and a light to my path. **Psalms 119:105**

SUNDAY SCHOOL RESPONSIVE READING

Superintendent/Teacher: Let each of you look out not only for his own interests, but also for the interests of others. **Philippians 2:4**

School/Class: He who has a generous eye will be blessed, for he gives of his bread to the poor. **Proverbs 22:9**

Superintendent/Teacher: Therefore he says: "When He ascended on high, He led captivity captive, and gave gifts to men." **Ephesians 4:8**

School/Class: As each one has received a gift, minister it to one another, as good stewards of the manifold grace of God. **1 Peter 4:10**

SUNDAY SCHOOL RESPONSIVE READING

Superintendent/Teacher: For as the body is one and has many members, but all the members of that one body, being many, are one body, so also is Christ. **1 Corinthians 12:12**

School/Class: For as we have many members in one body, but all the members do not have the same function. **Romans 12:4**

Superintendent/Teacher: By this all will know that you are My disciples, if you have love for one another. **John 13:35**

School/Class: For you, brethren, have been called to liberty; only do not use liberty as an opportunity for the flesh, but through love serve one another. **Gal. 5:13**

SUNDAY SCHOOL RESPONSIVE READING

ALL:

But grow in the grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. To him be glory both now and for ever. Amen. **2 Peter 3:18**

Lesson 6 October 12, 2025

SAUL EARNS CREDIBILITY



- Bible Basis: Acts 9:19b-31
- Bible Truth: Saul's bold and powerful preaching caused the numbers of the church to increase.
- Memory Verse: VERSE: "And straightway he preached Christ in the synagogues, that he is the Son of God" (Acts 9:20).
- Lesson Aim: By the end of the lesson, we will: RECALL Saul's acceptance as a Christian and the reward of his zeal in preaching about Jesus; EXAMINE the church's willingness to accept and meaningfully include in the Body of Christ those whose background is perceived as being suspect and encourage their bold witness about the change in their lives; and CELEBRATE those whose lives were transformed by Jesus Christ and then became bold witnesses for His cause.
- Background Scriptures: Acts 9:19b-31 & Psalm 18:20-30 - Read and incorporate the insights gained from the Background Scriptures into your study of the lesson.

Acts 9:19b-31 KJV

19b Then was Saul certain days with the disciples which were at Damascus.

20 And straightway he preached Christ in the synagogues, that he is the Son of God.

21 But all that heard him were amazed, and said; Is not this he that destroyed them which called on this name in Jerusalem, and came hither for that intent, that he might bring them bound unto the chief priests?

22 But Saul increased the more in strength, and confounded the Jews which dwelt at Damascus, proving that this is very Christ.

23 And after that many days were fulfilled, the Jews took counsel to kill him:

Acts 9:19b-31 KJV

24 But their laying await was known of Saul. And they watched the gates day and night to kill him.

25 Then the disciples took him by night, and let him down by the wall in a basket.

26 And when Saul was come to Jerusalem, he assayed to join himself to the disciples: but they were all afraid of him, and believed not that he was a disciple.

27 But Barnabas took him, and brought him to the apostles, and declared unto them how he had seen the Lord in the way, and that he had spoken to him, and how he had preached boldly at Damascus in the name of Jesus.

28 And he was with them coming in and going out at Jerusalem.

Acts 9:19b-31 KJV

29 And he spake boldly in the name of the Lord Jesus, and disputed against the Grecians: but they went about to slay him.

30 Which when the brethren knew, they brought him down to Caesarea, and sent him forth to Tarsus.

31 Then had the churches rest throughout all Judaea and Galilee and Samaria, and were edified; and walking in the fear of the Lord, and in the comfort of the Holy Ghost, were multiplied.

LIGHT ON THE WORD

Saul. Before Paul's conversion to the great apostle and prominent leader of the first-century church, he was Saul the persecutor of Christians. He attained letters from Jerusalem's high priest authorizing him to arrest believers and bring them to Jerusalem for trial (Acts 9:1-2). Saul traveled to Damascus for this purpose. Then, on the outskirts of the city came the event that transformed this persecutor of Jesus Christ and destroyer of the infant church into the chief propagator of the Gospel of grace and master builder of the church (1 Corinthians 3:10; 1 Timothy 1:13).

LIGHT ON THE WORD

Damascus. A Syrian oasis city protected on three sides by mountains and situated on trade routes about 160 miles northeast of Jerusalem. The name Damascus can also refer to the surrounding area in the southwestern part of the modern nation of Syria. Many crops in this area grow well because the land is watered by two rivers: Abana, "the Cool" (modern Nahr Barada), which runs from the northwest mountains through a deep ravine to the city; and Pharpar, "the Crooked" (modern Nahr-el-A-waj), which flows west to east.

LIFE NEED FOR TODAY'S LESSON:

AIM: Students will learn that people who are effective advocates boldly tell others about their deepest convictions.

INTRODUCTION

Paul Saw the Light

Before Saul's great conversion, he witnessed the stoning of the first Christian martyr, Stephen. Stephen's death commenced the events that would culminate in Saul's conversion and commission as the Apostle to the Gentiles. This transformation had lasting significance in Saul's life; meticulous accounts of it are given in the book of Acts (9:1-19, 22:1-21, 26:1-23) and referenced in his own writings (1 Corinthians 15:9; Galatians 1:13-17). But as an oppressor of the church, Saul breathed threats and murder against the disciples of the Lord. He tried to abolish the church, imprisoning both male and female Christians. While traveling toward Damascus, a light from heaven shone around Saul and his traveling companions and they fell to the ground (Acts 9:1-19). Temporarily blinded, Saul was led into Damascus. There, the disciple Ananias and the Christian community forgave Saul, baptized him, and helped him through the bewildering event of his conversion.

BIBLE LEARNING

AIM: Student will discover how Saul earned credibility among many of the believers.

I. TESTIFYING POWER OF GOD'S LOVE

Acts 9:19b-25

The sincerity of a speaker makes his or her testimony powerful, believable, and influential. A testimony has greater credibility when the listener can attest to the enormous change in the speaker's life, and this is evidenced in Saul's life. The voice of Saul echoed in the ears of those who were once viewed as prey to his persecution. Now, the man who despised Christians has become one! The man who persecuted the church is a member of it! The one who denied the existence of the truth is teaching others to accept the same. His experience with Jesus was authentic. It is difficult to convince others to believe in something we do not believe ourselves. When we have an encounter with God, one that radically changes our lives, it is difficult to keep the Good News to ourselves.

I. TESTIFYING POWER OF GOD'S LOVE

Acts 9:19b-25

Paul spent time studying Jesus and wasted no time in sharing the Gospel with others. Too often we want to wait until we feel thoroughly grounded in our faith before we speak to anyone about Jesus' goodness. It is essential that we, the Lord's disciples, spread the Good News and become advocates for the Lord. God has done a marvelous thing in our lives; He saved and redeemed us! Salvation alone is justification enough to testify of the Lord's unmerited grace and mercy.

I. TESTIFYING POWER OF GOD'S LOVE

Acts 9:19b-25

Saul was a brilliant scholar and could masterfully articulate a convincing argument. However, what convinced his listener was the evidence of God operating in his life. Our testimony should be backed up by a changed life.

Lesson 6 October 12, 2025

SAUL EARNS CREDIBILITY



I. TESTIFYING POWER OF GOD'S LOVE

Acts 9:19b-25

19b Then was Saul certain days with the disciples which were at Damascus. 20 And straightway he preached Christ in the synagogues, that he is the Son of God. 21 But all that heard him were amazed, and said; Is not this he that destroyed them which called on this name in Jerusalem, and came hither for that intent, that he might bring them bound unto the chief priests? 22 But Saul increased the more in strength, and confounded the Jews which dwelt at Damascus, proving that this is very Christ.

This passage discusses the account of Saul's conversion experience and his stay in Damascus with the disciples for several days after his baptism. Although he had an extensive knowledge of the Old Testament, Saul was still a new convert and needed further instructions concerning the teachings about Christ prior to his stepping out to reach others for Christ. Evidently he was soon ready, because we find him straightway (Gk. eutheos, ew-THEH-ose) or "at once" preaching in the Jewish synagogues that Jesus is the Son of God. Many attempts have been made to explain Saul's conversion vision, often in the form of rationalistic explanations, such as a thunderstorm outside Damascus, an epileptic seizure, or psychogenic blindness as the result of repressed guilt. All such ideas are merely speculative. What the accounts in Galatians 1:15-17, 1 Corinthians 15:8-9, and Acts 9 picture is a radical conversion experience.

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Saul the persecutor was stopped dead in his tracks on the Damascus road. The crucified and risen Jesus showed Himself to Saul, who was completely transformed from persecutor to witness. The one who would be the captor of Christians became a captive of Christ. For Saul and for Luke (the author of Acts), a totally different man emerged from that vision of the risen Lord, and that is conversion. There is only one word with which one can describe Paul's experience - a miracle, the result of direct divine action. When all is said and done, both Saul and the book of Acts give strikingly similar pictures of his conversion.

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Immediately following his conversion, Saul not only identifies himself with the disciples who resided in Damascus but also starts proclaiming Christ as the living "Son of God," a phrase which occurs in Acts only here, but which nevertheless became a central concept for Saul and his apostolic ministry (cf. Romans 1:1-4). The extent of the astonish mentor amazement of his Jewish listeners in the synagogue is seen in the Greek word *existemi* (Gk., ek-SEES-tay-mee), which includes the root meaning of standing out of oneself. As it was in the case of Ananias (vv. 13-14), they simply could not believe that the former persecutor who sought to destroy (Gk. *portheo*, por -THEH-oh, to ravage or sack) the church had made such a radical about-face.

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SAUL EARNS CREDIBILITY



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Luke described him as "proving" (Gk. *sumbibazo*, soom-bee-BAD-zo) that Jesus is the Christ.

The word, used only in Acts and Saul's letters, means to join or put together, demonstrate, or deduce, and seems to picture his joining Old Testament prophecies with their fulfillment in Christ, thus demonstrating that Jesus was the Christ, the Messiah promised by God to Israel.

The result was that Saul's Jewish listeners were confounded and unable to respond to Paul's skillful interpretations of the Scriptures.

Lesson 6 October 12, 2025
SAUL EARNS CREDIBILITY



**I. TESTIFYING POWER OF GOD'S
LOVE**

Acts 9:19b-25

23 And after that many days were fulfilled, the Jews took counsel to kill him: 24 But their laying await was known of Saul. And they watched the gates day and night to kill him. 25 Then the disciples took him by night, and let him down by the wall in a basket.

According to Paul's account in Galatians 1:18, in the third year after his conversion he went to Jerusalem. The "many days" here corresponds to that account. The expression "after three years" is probably an inclusive reckoning (Galatians 1:18).

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SAUL EARNS CREDIBILITY



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In Jewish reckoning, any part of a year was considered a year. "Three years" would thus refer to two full years and any portion of the third, from its beginning to its end, or even one full year and any portion of two others. It was during this period that Paul visited Arabia before returning to Damascus. Unable to refute Saul, the exasperated Jews in Damascus finally took counsel, that is, conspired to kill him. The Greek word *anaireo* (ah-neye-REH-oh) translated here as "kill" used here literally means to take away or to do away with. When Saul and the disciples learned of the plot, plans were made for assuring his escape from the Jews. Since the Jewish plotters must have been carefully watching the city gates for Saul, the disciples chose another route for his escape. He was lowered in a basket through the window of a house built along the city wall. Paul also referred to this event in 2 Corinthians 11:32-33.

II. TRANSFORMING POWER OF GOD'S LOVE

Acts 9:26-31

Saul had a horrible reputation with fellow Christians. Many did not trust him and doubted the legitimacy of his transformation. Despite the naysayers, Saul continued to preach the Word of God with power and conviction. Saul's advocate, Barnabas, came alongside him and vouched for his authenticity. He journeyed with Saul and introduced him to the Apostles and other believers, who welcomed him into the community. Like Barnabas, it is essential that we rally behind new Christians who have tarnished reputations. Encouragement is essential to the growth of new believers. Reassurance stifles the pessimistic darts thrown by other followers who doubt their conversion. No matter how one has lived in the past, we must be willing to accept and welcome all of God's children into the family of faith.

II. TRANSFORMING POWER OF GOD'S LOVE

Acts 9:26-31

God has already accepted us and others into the fold, so who are we to deny membership to anyone? Saul's transforming life is an excellent example of the tremendous, incomprehensible, and unfailing love God has for humanity. God can change anyone; His grace and love do not discriminate. The person our society thinks is less deserving of forgiveness and transformation is a prime candidate to become an instrument for the Lord's divine purpose. Saul's zealous and bold proclamation of the Good News of Jesus Christ drew many to God; lives and communities were empowered. The church flourished and grew stronger as many decided to give their lives to Christ and live in fear of the Lord.

II. TRANSFORMING POWER OF GOD'S LOVE

Acts 9:26-31

26 And when Saul was come to Jerusalem, he assayed to join himself to the disciples: but they were all afraid of him, and believed not that he was a disciple. 27 But Barnabas took him, and brought him to the apostles, and declared unto them how he had seen the Lord in the way, and that he had spoken to him, and how he had preached boldly at Damascus in the name of Jesus. 28 And he was with them coming in and going out at Jerusalem. 29 And he spake boldly in the name of the Lord Jesus, and disputed against the Grecians: but they went about to slay him. 30 Which when the brethren knew, they brought him down to Caesarea, and sent him forth to Tarsus. 31 Then had the churches rest throughout all Judaea and Galilee and Samaria, and were edified; and walking in the fear of the Lord, and in the comfort of the Holy Ghost, were multiplied.

On arriving in Jerusalem, Saul attempted to join up with the Christian community there but was at first rejected. Like Ananias, they knew his reputation as a persecutor and were not convinced that so vehement an enemy could now be a Christian brother. In character with what we learn of him in Acts, Barnabas enters the picture as mediator and facilitates the acceptance of Paul by taking him to the apostles and testifying to his conversion. Barnabas' testimony would fully rehabilitate Saul in the minds of the apostles. Thus he secured Saul's acceptance in the apostolic circle. Saul was now "with them coming in and going out among them" in Jerusalem (v. 28). The expression is reminiscent of Acts 1:21, where it refers to the circle of apostles. That meaning may well be intended here.

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SAUL EARNS CREDIBILITY



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Saul was fully accepted into the apostolic circle. He too was a "witness" for Christ. As he had previously done in Damascus, Saul testified in the synagogues and was resisted. This time Saul debated with his fellow "Grecians," or Greek-speaking Jews. One is reminded of Stephen, and it may have been in the same synagogue that Saul gave his testimony for Christ (cf. 6:9-10). Earlier they had succeeded in having Stephen killed; now they determined to do the same to Saul. Again the plot to kill Saul leaked, and the Christians hastened Saul off to the port of Caesarea and from there to his hometown of Tarsus.

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Verse 31 concludes the story of Saul's conversion and the end of the persecution that broke out after Stephen's death (8:1). The persecution was now ended with the conversion of its most ardent advocate into a witness for Christ. The church throughout all of Judea, Galilee, and Samaria was at peace. Although the Jerusalem church was now decentralized, it was still regarded as unified. The "peace" (NLT) of the church is described in terms of edification (the building up of the believers), walking in the fear of the Lord (reverence and worship), the "comfort" (KJV) or "encouragement" (NLT) of the Spirit, and multiplication and growth, terms reminiscent of the earlier summaries in Acts (cf. 2:43-47). It is a familiar pattern. The Lord brings His people through a time of crisis. Through His deliverance, the church finds peace and continues to flourish (cf. 5:42).

LIGHT ON THE WORD

Preparing for Ministry

The Jews threatened Paul with death because of his radical preaching of Jesus as Messiah, but he was protected by the believers and delivered from his pursuers. The preparation of Paul's ministry lasted approximately thirteen years. While in the Arabian desert, Saul had time to pray and reflect on Stephen's death, the implication of his conversion, the vision from Jesus, and all its meaning in light of Jewish theology. This lasted approximately three years. Subsequently, Saul returned to Damascus and visited Peter in Jerusalem for fifteen days. The final phase of Saul's preparation came when Barnabas went to Tarsus to look for him and bring him to Antioch. There he stayed for approximately ten years.

BIBLE APPLICATION

AIM: Students will learn that Christians are able to have a bold and strong impact on the lives of others.

BIBLE APPLICATION

All kinds of people go to the hospital: the educated and illiterate, poor and privileged, thieves and stellar citizens gather in one facility seeking medical assistance. The church is similar to a hospital. Regardless of a person's lifestyle or background, anyone in need of God's attention is invited to join. All are welcomed to receive the gift of life through accepting Christ Jesus as Lord and Savior. Believers should welcome new brothers and sisters into the family of faith.

STUDENT RESPONSES

AIM: Students will acknowledge that Christians should not judge others by their past and neglect to see the power of the Holy Spirit in the lives of others.

STUDENT RESPONSES

As ambassadors of Christ Jesus, we should declare boldly the life-changing experience we have in Him. People around us should know we are Christians. Our lives should reflect what we preach and inspire others to seek Christ. One of the ways we grow in our passion for telling others about our experience with Christ is to review the story of how we came to know Him. As a class, write out your individual testimonies of how you came to become a follower of Christ. Share your stories with the other class members.

Prayer

Lord,

We are ambassadors of Your Holy Word. Guide our tongues and allow us to hear and see what we need to do as we share Your Word. Bless us and keep us.

In the Name of Jesus, we pray.

Amen.

Next Sunday
October 19, 2025
Lesson 7
Peter Takes a Risk
Acts 10:24-38