

Acts - Commentaries by Paul J. Pascoe

CareLines: Volume 3, Testimony (9:31)

APRIL 1

The churches . . . walking in the fear of the Lord, and in the comfort of the Holy Ghost, were multiplied.

Acts 9:31

Often when we see that we are few in number, we feel that there must be a gospel outreach to bring in others. That may be so; however, notice in this verse that it was personal godliness and faith in the daily life which seemed to cause the disciples to be multiplied. Do not underestimate the power of the testimony of your life to the lost (and to other Christians) if you walk in the fear of the Lord and the comfort of the Holy Ghost!

CareLines: Volume 2, Service: ACT 9:39 (9:39)

ACT 9:39

All the widows stood by him weeping, and showing the coats and garments which Dorcas made, while she was with them.

Acts 9:39

If today were my last day on earth, is there any act of kindness that would be missed tomorrow? Is there anything which others have that would remind them of my selflessness? Would others that remain know and remember that my life was a life lived for Christ? That's the challenge. This is one aspect of service: making things for others.

CareLines: Volume 7, Submission (8:32)

He was led as a sheep to the slaughter; and like a lamb dumb before his shearer, so opened He not His mouth.

Acts 8:32

The Lord Jesus never fought back. When the band of men came to arrest Him, He gave Himself up. He submitted to all the hatred, jeers and mocking. He allowed them to nail Him to a cross. Why? Because He came to die. He came to put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself. Wonderful Saviour. Wonderful grace in leaving heaven to die on the cross for you and me.

CareLines: Volume 2, Evangelism: 2 (8:5-8)

ACT 8:5-8

Philip . . . preached Christ unto them. And the people with one accord gave heed. . . . And there was great joy in that city.

Acts 8:5-8

An ancient philosopher said that all man's pursuits - whether they be riches, fame, power, or whatever else - are ultimately all pursuits of happiness. The few who accomplish their goals in this world often admit that true happiness is still missing. We, like Philip, can bring the message of true and lasting joy to others around us. The message of the angel to the shepherds at the birth of Jesus was "tidings of great joy." Real joy starts with Jesus.

CareLines: Volume 2, Compassion: 2 (7:34)

ACT 7:34

I have seen, I have seen the affliction of My people which is in Egypt, and I have heard their groaning, and am come down to deliver them.

Acts 7:34

These are the words that God spoke to Moses at the burning bush. It is striking to see that God does not say that He had heard their prayers. He says nothing of their conduct (idolatry had crept in). No, it was the deep afflictions and the groanings that moved God's heart. Our God is a God of compassion. He delights to answer our prayers. Even when we may be too discouraged or thoughtless to pray, He is still on our side. He will never forget His promise to us: "I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee."

CareLines: Volume 2, Misunderstood (7:25)

ACT 7:25

For he supposed his brethren would have understood . . . but they understood not.

Acts 7:25

Moses was misunderstood. So don't feel bad when you're misunderstood too. Moses had tried to help his people in the way that he thought best. But he ended up alone with God for 40 years - learning in God's school. Have your fellow-believers misunderstood what you are trying to do? Take heart! Spend time studying with the Lord. He understands you and will use you in His time and in His way - the best way - after He has taught you needed lessons.

CareLines: Volume 3, Service (6:4)

SEPTEMBER 28

But we will give ourselves continually to prayer, and to the ministry of the word.

Acts 6:4

Each member of the Church has a different job to do. In the case of our verse today, the twelve apostles had a very special service for the Lord - continual prayer, and ministry. Your service may be entirely different. Whatever it is, you have been fitted for it and chosen by the Lord to do it. Don't neglect your responsibility.

CareLines: Volume 2, Witness (6:15)

ACT 6:15

And all that sat in the council, looking steadfastly on [Stephen], saw his face as it had been the face of an angel.

Acts 6:15

"And it came to pass, when Moses came down from Mount Sinai with the two tables of testimony [the law] in Moses' hand, when he came down from the mount, that Moses wist not that the skin of his face shone while He talked with him." Ex. 34:29.

What had Stephen and Moses been doing that would produce such a remarkable face? They had been enjoying God - and it showed.

CareLines: Volume 2, Obedience (5:29)

ACT 5:29

We ought to obey God rather than men.

Acts 5:29

A Christian is never called to disobey. The above verse has sometimes been divided into three separate principles:

1. "We ought to obey" is a general statement - the government, rules at work or school, our parents. If there is no established authority we are instructed to "be subject one to another." 1 Peter 5:5.
2. "We ought to obey God" gives the object of our obedience - authority and order comes from God; He does not author confusion.
3. "We ought to obey God rather than men." When there is conflict between two authorities, we are called to obey the higher authority. It's not a matter of disobeying man, but obeying God.

CareLines: Volume 3, Criticism (4:14)

MARCH 25

And beholding the man which was healed standing with them, they could say nothing against it.

Acts 4:14

Some of the criticism that Christians receive is deserved; it is provoked by that which we do in the flesh rather than the spirit. However, that which is done in the power and spirit of the Lord cannot be spoken against. The enemy will always oppose; opposition is to be expected; but it will be powerless if we are acting in the power and the spirit of our Lord.

CareLines: Volume 3, Crowd, The (4:27)

MARCH 20

For of a truth against Thy holy child Jesus, whom Thou hast anointed, both Herod and Pontius Pilate, with the Gentiles, and the people of Israel, were gathered together.

Acts 4:27

There is nothing like trouble to draw a crowd when people are idle. Therefore, it may be that following the crowd would mean that you are always where the trouble is. Both Jew and Gentile, political and religious leaders gathered together in the crowd that crucified Jesus. There is not always "safety in numbers." People we look up to might draw us in the wrong way. That which we do in the crowd today may be hard to forget tomorrow. I wonder how many who were swept along in that murderous throng were smitten with regrets afterwards?

CareLines: Volume 3, Reality (4:20)

MARCH 17

For we cannot but speak the things which we have seen and heard.

Acts 4:20

It is often easy to learn about spiritual things from various sources but then forget them because they were only in our minds. That which we learn by experience or what we enjoy and take into our hearts becomes a permanent part of us. When others hear us speaking about those things that we have really made a part of us then they will be compelled by the reality of the message. Sharing a message from the heart is far better than delivering an intellectually sound argument. Be real!

CareLines: Volume 2, Salvation: 5 (4:12)

ACT 4:12

There is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved.

Acts 4:12

The world has an expression, "It's not what you know, but who you know that really matters." This saying is sometimes true when you're applying for a job, or trying to get an invitation to some important function. But when it comes to the matter of your salvation it's 100% true. If you know Jesus as Lord, you're "in". If you're a good person, a Bible student, a philanthropist, or a crusader against the world's evils, but you don't know Jesus as your Lord and Savior you are still "out".

CareLines: Volume 2, Fellowship: 2 (4:23)

ACT 4:23

And being let go, they went to their own company.

Acts 4:23

Where did the disciples enjoy fellowship? With their own Christian friends. As soon as the authorities let them go they sought out the company of believers. They enjoyed being with them. Remember at the end of John's gospel Peter had said, "I'm going fishing." Not anymore. Fishing days were over for Peter and John. With freedom they wanted fellowship. The company of saints were waiting for Peter and John, and they wanted to be there. What a great lesson for each of us.

CareLines: Volume 7, Courage (28:15)

[Paul] thanked God, and took courage.

Acts 28:15

Paul thanked God for bringing Christians to him who were an encouragement to him in his journey towards Rome. Even those who labor for the Lord on a full-time basis sometimes get discouraged. It is so much of an encouragement for each of us when we meet other Christians who, like us, are trying to live for the Lord and who are watching for the Lord's coming. We can encourage one another and take courage from the lives of others.

CareLines: Volume 2, Encouragement (28:15)

ACT 28:15

He thanked God, and took courage.

Acts 28:15

Paul was being taken to Rome as a prisoner. At one stop on the journey some Christians came to meet him and when Paul saw them he thanked God, and was encouraged. You see, even the Apostle Paul was discouraged at times, but a visit by believers cheered him up. Maybe someone near you is discouraged right now. All it takes is a visit from you and they'll perk right up. Go visit them!

CareLines: Volume 3, Choice (27:41)

OCTOBER 21

And falling into a place where two seas met, they ran the ship aground.

Acts 27:41

Sometimes, in the storms of life, we fall into a place where two seas meet - an especially rough area of water where we don't know what to do. There is only one solution. Cast ourselves on the Lord and seek His guidance. He will bring us safely to shore, we can count on that. But we may get wet getting there!

CareLines: Volume 7, Good Conscience (24:16)

Herein do I exercise myself, to have always a conscience void of offense toward God, and toward men.

Acts 24:16

Paul made a special effort to avoid offending others and God. Therefore he had a good and clear conscience. If something that he wanted to do would offend another, he wouldn't do it. He was in such close communion with the Lord that he was always in the good of God's will and so didn't offend the Lord either. This is a great example for us. We need to practice being meek - in other words, not offending people. To do so would also be an offense against God.

CareLines: Volume 3, Care (20:32)

MAY 9

I commend you to God, and to the word of His grace.

Acts 20:32

The Apostle Paul was about to leave Ephesus and these words were spoken to the Ephesian Christians on the beach just before he got into a ship. He would never see them again and he committed them to God and His word. I have never met most of you, although I talk to you many times from these pages. I, too, commend you to God and His Word. He alone is able to keep you from falling.

CareLines: Volume 2, Worship: ACT 20:7 (20:7)

ACT 20:7

Upon the first day of the week, when the disciples came together to break bread, Paul preached unto them.

Acts 20:7

Here's the example for us to follow. You may have wondered why we remember the Lord every Sunday, rather than some other day or only a few times a year. We get our example from the early believers who came together on the first day of the week - Sunday. Don't ever let it become an empty ritual - one that means nothing to you. This time should be the highlight of a Christian's week, the time when we spend a few moments thinking of Jesus our Savior and what it cost Him to get us to heaven.

CareLines: Volume 3, God Is Close (17:27)

DECEMBER 5

They should seek the Lord . . . though He be not far from every one of us.

Acts 17:27

God's real desire for each person in the world is that they should seek Him. He wants our company. It's man that has turned away from God, not the other way around. And now He's just a whisper away, waiting for man to come and seek Him. Yes, God is close. He's never far away, especially from His own.

CareLines: Volume 2, Searching (17:11)

ACT 17:11

They received the word . . . and searched the Scriptures daily, whether those things were so.

Acts 17:11

You take many classes at school where you are required to do a research paper. You have to get out the encyclopedias. You have to go to the library. You quiz others on what they know. But when it comes to matters of Bible teaching many of us never bother to search out a matter in the Scriptures to see if what we were told was correct. We have lost the ability to research. Or we just don't care. Those in our verse today were diligent in comparing what they heard to the Scriptures to make sure it was correct. This is a good example for us. Let's spend the time and energy to follow it.

CareLines: Volume 2, Worship: ACT 17:24-25 (17:24-25)

ACT 17:24-25

God . . . dwelleth not in temples made with hands; neither is worshipped with men's hands.

Acts 17:24, 25

No, God is worshipped in our hearts. Man has built architecturally beautiful monuments "for the Lord's glory." But He's not worshipped with men's hands. He looks inside people's hearts to see what's there. Every seat in every church building may be filled every Sunday with "worshippers" who go there to be entertained, but much of their worship never reaches heaven. It says in John's gospel that we must worship God "in spirit and in truth." Worship Him from your heart today.

CareLines: Volume 3, Service (15:38)

DECEMBER 7

Paul thought not good to take [John Mark] with them.

Acts 15:38

For some reason John Mark left Paul at one point of Paul's work for the Lord. On this trip Paul decided not to include John Mark because of his previous problem. Young person, sometimes God may have to set you to one side in your service and use someone else to do your job because of some unfaithfulness on your part. Let this episode in the life of John Mark be a lesson to each of us. If the Lord can't use us, He'll use someone else.

CareLines: Volume 3, Correction (15:30-31)

APRIL 4

They delivered the epistle: which when they had read, they rejoiced for the consolation [or, exhortation].

Acts 15:30-31

The exhortation had its desired effect of encouraging and building up the believers; they rejoiced for it. The soul that is close to the Lord longs for direction or even correction from the Lord. How is it, then, that sometimes when we receive exhortation we are agitated rather than comforted? There can be a big difference between correction and criticism: correction is helpful and should encourage; criticism tears down and discourages. If you receive a word of criticism, look for any correction in it, take it from the Lord, and rejoice.

CareLines: Volume 2, Service: ACT 15:38 (15:38)

ACT 15:38

But Paul thought not good to take [Mark] with them, who . . . went not with them to the work.

Acts 15:38

Paul and Barnabas had made a great team in the gospel work. But at this point they had a violent disagreement over John Mark, and parted company. Paul's concern was that John Mark had started out with them on their missionary journey but at one point had turned back and returned to Jerusalem. We aren't told why, but it seems that Paul didn't think it wise to take Mark again, until he proved himself. Young believer, don't turn back. There are many disappointed people when they see one turn back, not to mention the disappointment that the Lord feels. Keep your hand to the plough. Don't turn back!

CareLines: Volume 2, Service: ACT 14:26 (14:26)

ACT 14:26

Antioch, from whence they had been recommended to the grace of God for the work which they fulfilled.

Acts 14:26

Paul and Barnabas arrived by boat in Antioch, a special place in their work for the Lord. It was from there that they had been sent out by the Christians there with money for the saints in Judea. It was at Antioch that the disciples of the Lord were first called Christians. But the work that they were sent to do, they did. It says in our verse, "The work which they fulfilled." How important it is that you finish the work the Lord has given you to do. Don't do it halfway. If the Lord Jesus had only half done His work, we wouldn't be on our way to heaven. When the Lord gives you a work - do it - to completion.

CareLines: Volume 2, Quitting (14:19-20)

ACT 14:19-20

Having stoned Paul, [they] drew him out of the city, supposing he had been dead. . . . And the next day he departed with Barnabus to Derbe.

Acts 14:19, 20

Sometimes we get the feeling that it's not worth the hassle; we might as well give up. Perhaps you might have thought that you didn't have the Lord's mind in a certain thing because things didn't go right. The Apostle Paul was stoned and thought dead. But he got up, walked into the city, and the next day continued on his journey as if nothing had happened. He would not give up. God had work for him to do and do it he would. Don't quit in the work of the Lord, young person. Keep going. It's worth it.

CareLines: Volume 2, Service: ACT 13:2 (13:2)

ACT 13:2

As they ministered to the Lord, and fasted, the Holy Ghost said, Separate me Barnabas and Saul for the work whereunto I have called them.

Acts 13:2

For service to be effectual and for the Lord's glory, it must be given and directed by the Lord. If Barnabas and Saul had decided that they had something they would prefer to do and never mind what the Spirit wanted, then their service, although perhaps tremendously successful, would bring no reward of "Well done" from the Lord. When the Lord lays a work on your heart, do it. You see, a work from Him cannot go against Scripture because the Lord would not contradict Himself. But something that you arrange could be very much against some teaching of Scripture. Doors will open for you when He's behind the work.

CareLines: Volume 2, Salvation: 2 (10:4)

ACT 10:4

Thy prayers and thine alms are come up for a memorial before God.

Acts 10:4

Here was an Italian soldier whose prayers had been heard and whose alms (giving to the poor) had been noticed by God. But God wanted Cornelius to know that for complete blessing he would need to accept Jesus as his Lord and Savior. So Peter was sent to preach the gospel and the group of Gentiles that Cornelius had invited to his house all believed. Kindness and devoutness is not enough for salvation. No, you MUST believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and His death at Calvary. Have you?

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