

## Devo 1 | Jesus Returns to Heaven | Acts 1

A miracle had just occurred! Jesus had just been crucified but overcame death and rose to life again. After three days he exited his tomb and he reunited with his friends, family and disciples.

He spent over 40 days continuing his teachings about God's kingdom. As Jesus continued his ministry, he told his disciples to meet him on top of a mountain in Galilee. There, the crowds and disciples worshipped him and prayed together.

Jesus told them that they must continue preaching, making disciples, and baptizing in the name of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit. He told them, "Remember this, I am always with you until the end of the age."

Years before this day, Jesus had promised that when he left the world, the Lord would send a helper to lead people to God, help them believe in him and guard them from sin. This helper was the Holy Spirit! As Jesus stood on the mountain, he told the disciples his final instruction. He said, "You will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you...and you will be my witnesses to the ends of the earth."

Right after this, another miracle happened! He started ascending into Heaven, so high up in the sky he was hidden behind the clouds! As the disciples stared into the heavens, two angels appeared next to them. They said, "Why do you stand looking into heaven? This Jesus who has been taken from you into heaven will return in the same way you have seen him leave."

The angels reminded them to not be distracted. Jesus would return but it was now our turn to share all that he had done while we wait for his return.

**FAMILY TALK:** How can we obey while we wait for him to return. How do we become witnesses? Pray together.

## Devo 2 | The Holy Spirit Comes | Acts 2

Before Jesus went back to heaven, he made a promise to his disciples. He told them that the Holy Spirit would come upon them, but they needed to wait.

During their waiting, the time came for Pentecost. This was an important festival for the Jewish people when they remembered Moses receiving the covenant law from God. Jews from all over came to the temple in Jerusalem to celebrate this festival and because people traveled from all over the region, many different languages were spoken!

Jesus' disciples were gathered together. As they were talking and eating, suddenly the sound of a great rushing wind filled the house. They couldn't believe

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what they heard! Soon after, they saw what looked like flames of fire fall and upon each disciple. This was it! This was the moment Jesus had promised. The disciples were filled with the power of the Holy Spirit and, not only that, they were given power to speak languages they didn't even know! People were shocked to hear their own languages.

Peter stood up and reminded the crowd that long ago, the prophet Joel had told them that God would pour out his Spirit on all people and that all who called on the name of the Lord would be saved. With boldness, Peter said, "You saw all God had done. He sent his Son and you killed him. But God raised him from the dead. He is alive and he is with the Father. Shame on you! You know what you did!"

It was a powerful day. The presence of the Holy Spirit changed people and they could see that Peter told the truth. They asked what they could do to be saved. Peter said, "Repent and be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ!" (Acts 2:38). On that day, about 3,000 people believed and were baptized! After that, they grew stronger as they spent time eating, meeting, and praying together.

**FAMILY TALK:** Let the oldest person in the group tell of their most exciting experience with Jesus.

## Devo 3 | Peter Healed a Man | Acts 3 - 4

This was some day in the life of Peter and John. It was shortly after Jesus returned to heaven. The only thing on their minds was telling people about Jesus, His resurrection and the forgiveness of sin that comes through faith in Jesus.

They were on their way to the three o'clock prayer meeting at the temple. As they headed up to the temple there was a lame man, begging for money. Peter looked at him and said, "I don't have any silver or gold for you, but in the name of Jesus Christ get up and walk." And guess what happened? The man, who was lame for his whole life, jumped up and began walking and leaping and praising God. What a miracle! The man was seen by everyone walking. They were amazed. Many people followed the three men.

So, Peter started telling all the people that it was not his power that healed the man but it was the power of Jesus. He also told them to repent of their sins and turn to God so they could be forgiven. Well, the temple guards and Sadducees were very angry Peter was teaching about Jesus and threw Peter and John in jail. A big group of leaders met with them and asked them by what power, or in whose name have they healed

this man. Well, we know the answer to that. In front of everyone Peter said loudly and boldly it was by the powerful name of Jesus. They were released from jail with the warning to never speak or teach in the name of Jesus again. Do you think Peter and John obeyed them? Of course not! They said, "Do you think God wants us to obey you rather than Him? We cannot stop talking about all we have seen and heard." They immediately went and met with other believers and prayed together, "Give us great boldness in preaching your word."

**FAMILY TALK:** Does God wants us to be bold to tell others about Jesus? If Christians don't tell others about Jesus, then who will? Pray together.

## Devo 4 | Ananias & Sapphira | Acts 4:32 - 5:11

This particular story in Acts is about Ananias, his wife Sapphira and the consequence of their sin. Their sin was the first sinful event recorded in the life of the church **NOT** the first sin, but the first sin recorded in Acts. As a result of that sin - the churches' first public discipline took place.

In the early church of Jerusalem, believers were united in heart and action in the way they loved people. They could do this because of Jesus. Believers willingly sold off pieces of land or houses that they owned and gave the entire amount of money to the apostles to share with others; because of this, no-one was in need.

Ananias and Sapphira wanted to help too. So they sold a piece of their property, but together decided that they would keep some of the money for themselves, while telling the other believers they were giving the entire amount. Now, the apostles never told them that they had to give up everything. It was up to the giver(s) what amount they wanted to give. The sad part is that Ananias and Sapphira lied about it.

Being filled with the Holy Spirit, Peter confronted Ananias and exposed his lie. He told him he lied to God. When Ananias heard this he fell down and died.

About three hours later Sapphira arrived, not knowing what had happened to her husband. Peter asked her about the amount she and her husband got from the sale of their land. Sapphira lied, just like her husband. Peter called her out and told her that she lied to the Holy Spirit. She then also fell down and died.

The Lord exposed the hypocrisy of Ananias and Sapphira. He did so to make the church then, as well as the church today, aware of sin's presence, and how God feels about it. The deaths of Ananias and Sapphira

were witnessed by the church. The Lord wants a pure church of true believers. God wants us to know that nothing can be hidden from Him. He sees and knows all.

**FAMILY TALK:** If Jesus gets mad at things that come between you and him, is there anything in your life you think Jesus would be mad at?

## Devo 5 | Steven's Sermon | Acts 6 - 7

Stephen was a man who loved Jesus. He taught others that Jesus is the Messiah (Savior of the world). God was good to him and gave him the power to do great things. Even though everything Stephen said was true, the Jews didn't like him.

One day they decided to tell lies about Stephen to get him in trouble. Stephen was taken to a high priest who questioned him to see if what the Jews said was true. Stephen answered by teaching the Jewish leaders about Jesus. He started with the Old Testament stories of Abraham, Isaac, Joseph, and Moses.

In those days, God was working out a plan to bring someone into the world who could save people from their sins. God rescued his people from slavery in Egypt. Even when they continued to disobey God, he didn't give up on them. All the stories Stephen shared were true.

Stephen called the Jewish leaders "stiff-necked" or "stubborn. How could they not see that Jesus was the savior of the world? All the Old Testament stories pointed to Jesus coming as the Messiah. Stephen told the religious leaders they were wrong to reject Jesus and kill him on the cross.

How do you think they reacted to Stephen's speech? They were so angry! They didn't like what Stephen was saying.

Then Stephen looked up and said, "I see the heavens opened and Jesus is standing at God's right side." Suddenly, the people yelled and rushed toward Stephen. They threw rocks toward Stephen. Stephen said, "Jesus, forgive them!" Then he died.

Stephen's story teaches us to be brave when persecuted for your faith. When people are mean to us because we love Jesus, we can be brave because people hurt Jesus too. Jesus died and came back to life, and one day we will live with him forever.

**FAMILY TALK:** How can we be brave when people are mean to us because we love Jesus? Pray together.