



OPENING DISCUSSION

What have been your greatest fears and frustrations since the coronavirus outbreak? How have these fears and frustrations impacted your relationship with God and others? How might God use this season to mature his people and to open the eyes of the lost?

BIG IDEA

In Acts 9:31-43, we learn two attributes of a multiplying church.

MAIN DISCUSSION

Multiplying Churches Live in Communion with God (v. 31)

1. What does it mean that the church was “being built up”? How do Christians build each other up? (1 Thessalonians 5:11)
2. What is the “fear of the Lord”? (Job 28:28) Is it wrong for Christians to fear the Lord since we have a relationship with him through faith in Jesus Christ? Why or why not? (Hebrews 12:28-29)
3. How do Christians experience the comfort of the Holy Spirit? (John 14-16) Are there ways that we can be agents of the Holy Spirit’s comfort and encouragement? (2 Corinthians 1:3-1) If so, what are they?
4. When you think of God, do you imagine having actual fellowship with him? Why or why not? How can you use this quarantine season to commune with God?
5. How does our communion with God as a church family impact our mission for God?

Multiplying Churches Live On Mission for God (vv. 32-43)

1. Think back to the places mentioned in verse 31. Now think about the places mentioned in verses 32 and 36. What was happening with the gospel message? What circumstances did God use to spread the gospel? How does that give us hope in our present circumstances?
2. What stands out about how Peter addressed Aeneas? How should that encourage you when you share the gospel or serve those in need?
3. Take a couple of minutes to read 1 Kings 17:17-24, 2 Kings 4:32-37, and Mark 5:21-43. What similarities do you notice between the stories? What should we conclude about Peter’s ministry as a result? In what ways do these stories impact how we carry out the mission of the gospel?
4. What stands out about Peter’s actions after he sent everyone out of the room? Why should prayer precede our missional efforts?

5. Read the end of verses 31, 35, and 42. Notice a common theme? While this passage isn't a *prescription* for how to grow a church, it is a *description* of a multiplying church. What steps do you need to take to be a believer who is walking in communion with God and is on mission for God?

CLOSING DISCUSSION

We are not responsible for the outcome of our ministry efforts, but we are responsible for who we are becoming and whether or not we are engaging the lost. Multiplying churches do not sacrifice worship for mission or mission for worship. They go hand-in-hand. Name some practical ways you can encourage each other to make the most of this season to grow in your relationship with God and to engage people with the gospel.

PRAYER

Praise the Lord for his Fatherly kindness during this season. Confess any fears that have been overwhelming you. Thank the Lord for his providential work in the midst of the coronavirus pandemic. Ask him to help you use this season to know him and make him known.

COMMENTARY

9:31 the church throughout all Judea and Galilee and Samaria. There must have been hundreds of churches in the small cities and towns throughout this large region, but all of them together can be called a “church” (Gk. *ekklēsia*, singular in the earliest and best manuscripts of this verse, though some later manuscripts have the plural). The NT can apply the singular word “church” to the church meeting in a home (Rom. 16:5; 1 Cor. 16:19), in an entire city (1 Cor. 1:2; 2 Cor. 1:1), in a large region (as here), or throughout the whole world (1 Cor. 12:28; Eph. 5:25). Peace came to the church after the conversion of its prime persecutor (see also Gal. 1:22–24). Fear of the Lord does not mean fear of final judgment but is a common theme in Acts referring either to fear as godly awe, reverence, and devotion (as in Acts 2:43; 10:2; 13:26) or fear of God’s displeasure and fatherly discipline (as in 5:5, 11; 16:29; 19:17; see also Heb. 12:7–10). (ESV Study Bible)

9:36-43 “This miracle mirrors Christ’s resurrecting the daughter of the synagogue ruler, Jairus, in Mark 5:21-43 and parallels. Even the name of the woman in Aramaic seems significant. Peter would have commanded her, ‘Tabitha, koum’ (v. 40), while the in the Gospels Jesus’ words telling the ‘young woman’ to arise would have been “Talitha, koum.”” (Craig Blomberg, *From Pentecost to Patmos*, 43)

9:36-43 With the account of the raising of Tabitha/Dorcas from the dead, Luke continues to present the apostles performing miracles reminiscent of Jesus’ miracles (see Luk 7:11-17; 8:49-56). The miracles also recall similar OT miracles by the prophets Elijah (1 Kgs 17:17-24) and Elisha (2 Kgs 4:32-37). (NIV Zondervan Study Bible)