

Bible Study for January 4-10

You are encouraged to take some time to reflect on the scripture and the questions provided either individually, or with members of your household.

Read: Acts 19:1-7

Notes:

I have to admit that the book of Acts is one of my favorites. It is filled with stories of what happened in the early Christian Church, what it was like, and a great example of how we can live our lives. Acts completes the story of Jesus and is the bridge from the gospels to the epistles. It sets the stage for the letters that follow, giving us some background on what was going on. It would be difficult to get the full sense of what the epistle letters are about without the information found in the book of Acts.

Our re-creation in baptism is an image of the Genesis creation, where the Spirit of God moved over the waters. This Sunday we celebrate the baptism of Jesus and the story in Acts makes it clear that it is the Spirit's movement that make Jesus' baptism different from John's. The Spirit has come upon us as upon Jesus and the Ephesians, calling us God's beloved children and setting us on Jesus mission to re-create the world in the image of God's vision of justice and peace.

Questions to Ponder:

When and where were you baptized? Is there an interesting story behind your baptism?

The disciples in Ephesus lived about 1300 kilometers from Jerusalem. What does the fact that they were followers of John the Baptist tell you about the extent of John's influence?

How would their awareness of John the Baptist be good preparation for them to hear the gospel? (See John 1:19-34)

What do we learn about the relationship between faith in Jesus and receiving the Holy Spirit?

How do people try to use Jesus for their own purposes today?

What is the difference between that and real faith in Christ?