

Speaker 1:

It is time for a pause in your day. Welcome to a podcast where we press the pause button on our busy lives for a few moments, and we focus on God's word with Sharon and Nicole. We pray this is a time of refreshing for you. The Sweet Selah Moments Podcast is a cooperative production of Word Radio and Sweet Selah Ministries.

Nicole:

Welcome to Sweet Selah Moments. This is Episode 125 Endings and Beginnings. We are starting a brand new season today. We'll be studying the first eight chapters of the Book of Acts in the Bible. I've wanted to look at the early church for quite some time, and now we are.

Sharon:

We are. This was your choice and I'm so glad you chose it, Nicole. I'm so excited. It's going to be fascinating to see how a band of random guys chosen on purpose by Jesus set out to share the good news of life after death and rescue from sin's grip. It really is amazing when you think about it. Jesus chose unlikely men. He chose fishermen. He chose a radical zealot. He chose a tax collector just to name a few. Some of the disciples just kinda show up and we don't really know their background, but there they are chosen by Jesus, not because of any great talent or fame, but because he wanted them. Isn't that the sweetest reason?

Nicole:

Oh, yeah.

Sharon:

I love it. Kinda like he chooses us. Right?

Nicole:

I know.

Sharon:

And they literally, by walking in the Spirit, change the world with the true message of salvation by faith in Jesus. It's an astounding story.

Nicole:

Yeah. It really is.

Sharon:

And we get to study it together.

Nicole:

I can't wait. I'm really hoping that we can learn more about how they did church back then, Sharon. I'd like to see what we can learn as we do church today.

Sharon:

Yes. Yes. Yes.

Nicole:

It'd be very helpful. So let's start though with some background on the book itself. So I did some research and the Book of Acts was written by Luke, and I did not know that.

Sharon:

No kidding?

Nicole:

I was assuming it was written by Paul. But it was written by Luke and it was probably finished by 60 or 62 AD and they think that because Nero severely persecuted the Christians in 64, which you talk about. And then Paul, his death was around between 64 and 68 AD they believe. So none of that was recorded. We kind of left Paul at the end of Acts kind of in jail waiting (Sharon: Yes, yes) to see what happened. So they

believe it was finished before then since Luke didn't record it. Acts is the only biblical book that chronicles the history of the church immediately after Jesus's ascension.

Sharon:

It's a really important book.

Nicole:

It's a unique little book. Yeah.

Sharon:

It is, yeah.

Nicole:

So this book provides us with a valuable account of how the church was able to grow and spread out from Jerusalem into the rest of the Roman Empire and eventually the entire world.

Sharon:

Yes.

Nicole:

And to us today. So this is really cool. So the title of the book of Acts comes from the Greek word 'praxis'. A word often used in early Christian literature to describe the great deeds of the Apostles or other significant believers. So acts of believers, kind of cool. In short, the Book of Acts was written to provide a history of the early church, which is what we need.

Sharon:

Do you know what? That was a fabulous introduction, thank you.

Nicole:

Oh, thank you.

Sharon:

So fun. Well, this is such a weird title for the beginning of a new series, Endings and Beginnings. But I called this first episode that, because it's kind of an overlap with the Gospel of Luke. Luke backs up a little bit before we get to the early church, to the ascension, when Jesus is lifted up from earth, before he then moves forward and chronicles what happens next. And I like that. You know how sometimes you're watching a movie and then there's another part to it, and they kind of give you a summary a little bit.

Nicole:

Yes.

Sharon:

Or they bring you back a bit. So Luke is gonna start with Jesus' ascension where he leaves, because really that's the beginning of when they have to figure things out without his physical presence there.

Nicole:

Right. That's like a good recap for us.

Sharon:

Right.

Nicole:

Thank you, Luke.

Sharon:

Right. And then they're in the same boat we're in, they get the Holy Spirit, which hasn't happened yet either. But they don't have physical Jesus walking around with them.

Nicole:

Right, right.

Sharon:

Yeah. So, all right, well let's start by reading Acts verses 1-11, our passage for today. And then we'll look at it in more detail. So I'll start with verse one. Here we go. So, and here's the reference to the Gospel of Luke right in the first verse, Nicole. Here it is. "In my first book, I told you Theophilus about everything Jesus began to do and teach"

Nicole:

"Until the day he was taken up to heaven after giving his chosen apostles further instructions through the Holy Spirit."

Sharon:

"During the forty days after he suffered and died he appeared to the apostles from time to time, and he proved to them in many ways that he was actually alive."

Nicole:

I love that.

Sharon:

(Unbelievable) "And he talked to them about the kingdom of God."

Nicole:

"Once when he was eating with them, he commanded them, do not leave Jerusalem until the Father sends you with a gift he promised, as I told you before."

Sharon:

"John baptized with water, but in just a few days, you will be baptized with the Holy Spirit."

Nicole:

"So when the apostles were with Jesus, they kept asking him, Lord has the time come for you to free Israel and restore our kingdom?"

Sharon:

"He replied, the Father alone has the authority to set those dates and times. And they are not for you to know."

Nicole:

"But you--" (Oh, go ahead)

Sharon:

Oh, sorry, it's your turn.

Nicole:

I know, but it's a good verse.

Sharon:

I was getting really wrapped up.

Nicole:

"But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes upon you, and you will be my witnesses, telling people about me everywhere in Jerusalem, throughout Judea, in Samaria, and to the ends of the earth."

Sharon:

"After saying this, he was taken up into a cloud while they were watching, and they could no longer see him."

Nicole:

"As they strained to see him rising into heaven, two white robed men suddenly stood among them"

Sharon:

"Men of Galilee, they said, Why are you standing there staring into heaven? Jesus has been taken from you into heaven, but someday he will return from heaven in the same way you saw him go." So there we are. Jesus has just left earth.

Nicole:

Yes. Wow.

Sharon:

And that's what we're gonna look at today. The way we're going to study this is we're going to look at small chunks instead of just one verse at a time. Because our last study was on Thessalonians and that was a letter.

Nicole:

Yes.

Sharon:

It was a little different. This is history.

Nicole:

Yes.

Sharon:

And so I'm going look at the first chunk, the first three verses and chat about them, and then you'll get to move on after that. So here we go. So we're gonna look at verses 1-3 first, and I'm gonna read them again and then talk about 'em. So, "In my first book, I told you Theophilus about everything Jesus began to do and teach until the day he was taken up to heaven after giving his chosen apostles further instructions from the Holy Spirit. During the forty days after he suffered and died, he appeared to the apostles from time to time. And he proved to them in many ways that he was actually alive and he talked to them about the kingdom of God." So Luke writes precisely. (Nicole: Yes) He always does. We know that he's chatting to Theophilus and that he actually did that for Luke too. So even though tons of people read the gospel, he had a specific person in mind. He researched it very well. His Gospel of Luke. We think that he got a lot of his information directly from Mary because, (Oh, wow) I know, because when you look at Luke 2 we've got Mary pondering things in her heart. We've got the incident of Jesus going to the temple when he is 12 and her freaking out because she can't find him.

Nicole:

Oh. From a very motherly point of view, yeah. Wow.

Sharon:

A motherly point of view. So we think that he got a lot of eyewitness accounts. (Nicole: Yes) And put it all together. (Oh, neat) So that's what he did. So then he talks about the next very important thing that he's gotten from eyewitnesses which is during forty days after Jesus was risen from the dead that he kept appearing. It's interesting. He wasn't, nobody could pin him down for all those forty days. Do you know what I mean?

Nicole:

Yeah. He was kind of everywhere.

Sharon:

He was everywhere. He walked through doors. So his resurrected body could do things that his earthly body could not do.

Nicole:

Wow!

Sharon:

It's interesting. He has still the earthly body 'cause you can see the marks in his hands. (Nicole: Yes) That hasn't changed. But the ability to walk through doors is unique to him.

Nicole:

I tried it and I can't do it yet.

Sharon:

You can't do it. No, I walk right into them. Exactly. So, and he proved to them in many ways that he was really alive. That is such a fun verse because--

Nicole:

I know it makes me laugh.

Sharon:

It does. But that is the biggest stumbling block for people. (Nicole: Yeah) What you believe in somebody that died, that they came back to life. That was a stumbling block back then. Just like the virgin birth was (Right) as it is today. Because these are supernatural events that don't happen, but they did. (Right) They actually did. And I think it's fun too, that when he came back, he talked to them about the kingdom of God. A lot of training went on that we don't, we don't have that recorded. But I think it came out in the apostles teachings and then in the early church. He was prepping them for when he was gonna ascend. Isn't that neat?

Nicole:

That's so neat. I didn't realize that he was around for forty days after his death and resurrection.

Sharon:

I know it. Yeah. It's pretty cool.

Nicole:

I'm so excited about this book.

Sharon:

Yes.

Nicole:

There's so much I didn't know. Okay. So my turn and my section is verses 4-5. "So once when he was eating with them, he commanded them, do not leave Jerusalem until the Father sends you the gift he promised. As I told you before, John baptized with water. But in just a few days you will be baptized with the Holy Spirit." So I think it's neat first that he was eating with them. He was doing very human things still.

Sharon:

One of the proofs. Ghosts don't chomp down on food.

Nicole:

No. Didn't he say that when he first walked into the room? Like, Hey, feed me. Do you have some fish?

Sharon:

Yes. Yes.

Nicole:

Because they recognized his person, they recognized his face as Jesus. But it was still so fascinating. I can't wait to see what we're gonna look like as we're resurrected.

Sharon:

I know. It'll be interesting.

Nicole:

We're gonna be changed somehow.

Sharon:

Yes.

Nicole:

Because he is enough different that they had to be convinced he was alive.

Sharon:

Yes. And evidently, we'll walk through doors.

Nicole:

I know. You don't even have doors in heaven. So he's eating with them. He's doing very human, very community based things with them still. And he's talking, he's giving them instructions as he's living life with them still. This is so neat, that "sends you with the gifts he promised". So Jesus is about to leave, but God still promised to give them help, to give them gifts. He wasn't just leaving them with nothing.

Sharon:

Not abandonment.

Nicole:

So I love that he didn't and he told them to wait until they had these gifts, this help. So God doesn't send us out unprepared. Like, okay, well I was here, do my job. Good luck to you. He was like, wait, let me, let me prepare you for this. (Sharon: Yes) Let me give you what you need in order to go out and do what I've called you to do.

Sharon:

I love that. I love that.

Nicole:

Very neat.

Sharon:

Yeah. I wonder if they knew what he meant when he said, you'll be baptized by the Holy Spirit.

Nicole:

I know. Probably not. This was also new to them. (Sharon: Yeah) They were the first believers to have Jesus among them and then leave, and then the Holy Spirit. They were the very first. So all of this was so new.

Sharon:

Exactly.

Nicole:

Probably had no context. So you probably tried to be like, okay, you were completely immersed in water and you came out different. The Holy Spirit is gonna completely immerse you and you will be different.

Sharon:

Yes. Yes.

Nicole:

So he did a good job trying to explain it. They're probably like, what is going on?

Sharon:

Yes. Exactly. What exactly is this? Yeah. It would've been very mysterious, I think.

Nicole:

I know!

Sharon:

Yeah. So, all right, well, my turn with verses 6-8. "So when the apostles were with Jesus, they kept asking him, Lord has the time come for you to free Israel and restore our kingdom? He replied, the Father alone has the authority to set those dates and times, and they are not for you to know, but you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes upon you. And you will be my witnesses, telling people about me everywhere, in Jerusalem, throughout Judea, in Samaria, and to the ends of the earth." Which is so cool. So, okay. So they've got Jesus back. He's resurrected. He's eating fish. He's talking to them about the kingdom. And they're like, so, so when is it coming?

Nicole:

Right. Let's go.

Sharon:

Right, right, 'cause all along, you know, part of the Old Testament prophecies haven't been fulfilled yet because Jesus' Second Coming is coming as the Warrior King. Right? And so what messed up some people, with Jesus' First Coming is they didn't read the, like Isaiah 53 passages that said he was gonna suffer and die.

Nicole:

Right. Right.

Sharon:

They just looked at the warrior passages.

Nicole:

Oh yeah. The ones they wanted to happen now, because right then they were living in oppression. Yeah,

Sharon:

Right. Exactly. And so they're still like, so is it now? Is it now? Is it now? I wonder when they got to heaven, if they're like, really, 2000 plus years?

Nicole:

You still---?

Sharon:

You know, it's just so funny. It's just so funny to me. But anyways, Jesus gives a very clear answer. These dates are not for you to know. (Nicole: Yeah) Okie dokie. We don't get to know it. (Yeah) You know, sometimes our children ask us things and we're like, you do not need to know that right now. (Right) Yeah. Like, what is in my Christmas present or whatever. You do not need to know that now.

Nicole:

And it's not out of maliciousness or lording it over, it's out of concern and love because we know that they can't handle that information.

Sharon:

Right. Yes.

Nicole:

Or it would be damaging or whatever. So God knows that we cannot handle that information. No. We can't.

Sharon:

Nicole, can you imagine what it would be like if they'd been told, let's, let's just say Jesus is coming back in 3000 years afterwards 'cause (Nicole: Right) I don't know. And it's not for me to know. (Right) Let's just say that. And what if he said, well, I'm coming back in 3000 years. Okay. So where's the anticipation of being ready for him to come?

Nicole:

Oh yeah. You'd slack, I would slack off hard. Like, oh, we got another thousand years before he comes. I don't have to be a good Christian. I just need to survive this. We got another thousand years of living on this earth.

Sharon:

Mm-Hmm. Exactly.

Nicole:

It would be terrible.

Sharon:

It would be terrible.

Nicole:

Wow.

Sharon:

That's why we can't know. (Nicole: Yeah) Because every generation has to know, this may be the last one where people can hear about Jesus. (Mm-Hmm. Yes.) We can't get lax.

Nicole:

We need that sense of urgency.

Sharon:

We do.

Nicole:

We really do. 'Cause we're so lazy in and of ourselves,

Sharon:

We are so naturally lazy. We really are. Oh my goodness. Oh, okay. So then in verse eight, he returns to talking about the power when the Holy Spirit comes on you. So you're gonna be baptized in the Holy Spirit, whatever that is. (Nicole: Yeah) And I love the way you described it, immersed in God's own Spirit is what's gonna happen. And then he gives a little bit more. He says, you're gonna receive power. (Oh yeah) That's interesting. (That's new) Yeah. That is new. Now, when he sent them out two by two, when they were still apostling/discipling with him before his death, he gave them temporary power from the Holy Spirit to heal. (Yes) But it was temporary for the mission.

Nicole:

Yeah. And even in the Old Testament, some people had, the Holy Spirit would come upon them for a time, for a certain task.

Sharon:

Right.

Nicole:

But never stayed.

Sharon:

Never stayed. But now there's gonna be this immersion where the Holy Spirit is within us where just like, you know, he's all through us.

Nicole:

Wow.

Sharon:

And there's gonna be that power that's there, which is so exciting.

Nicole:

I know.

Sharon:

And then he tells 'em their job. You're my witnesses. And, I've told the story a million times. Ray Gamble came to know Christ because they were the witnesses. Because they walked with Jesus. And they saw him die, and they saw him rise again. And rather than deny what they saw, they endured horrible deaths. (Nicole: Oh yeah) Because it was true. And they knew it was true. And that's how my husband came to faith (Amazing) was their witness. (That's so beautiful) So he tells them that, you're gonna be my witnesses, but can you imagine them being told they're gonna tell people everywhere, like to the ends of the earth? What? Are you kidding me?

Nicole:

That's a very big task God.

Sharon:

That's a huge task. How in the world?

Nicole:

Better get some better sandals.

Sharon:

Yeah. Yeah. But I kind of like that this is even good advice for us. You know, we start in our own Jerusalem. Right here with our family. I mean my little Jerusalem was my mom leading me to Christ at age four. Right?

Nicole:

Right. Oh, I love that.

Sharon:

And then in school, I bridged out a little bit to my Judea and I told my school friends about him and then Samaria and now we're on a podcast that's heard all over the world. So it does happen.

Nicole:

Yes.

Sharon:

It does.

Nicole:

But we don't have to panic and head out to the farthest reaches of the world tomorrow. We need to start, like you said, small with our little Jerusalem. I love that.

Sharon:

Yes. And he kept some people right in Jerusalem.

Nicole:

Yeah. Some of them didn't leave.

Sharon:

You know, not everybody went to the ends of the earth. And he raised up Paul and Paul did a lot of the ends of the Earth-ing. Right? So, but it's just so fun that right then they're listening. What, wait, we're gonna do what?

Nicole:

Maybe getting a little overwhelmed and God's like just, Nope, start with, start here. (Sharon: Yes. Yeah) I love that. All right, then I'll finish up with verses 9- 11. These are fun verses. "So after saying this, he was taken up into a cloud while they were watching, and they could no longer see him. And as they strained to see him rising into heaven, two white robed men suddenly stood among them. Men of Galilee, they said, Why are you standing here staring into heaven? Jesus has been taken from you into heaven, but someday he will return from heaven in the same way you saw him go." Oh my word. I love these verses. I just, you picture yourself there, just watching like Jesus, after you've gone through so much with him, they followed him. They learned from him. They betrayed him. They're restored to him. They watched him be beaten and killed. They despaired. And here he was again. They had him back and now he's leaving again.

Sharon:

And only forty days later.

Nicole:

Only forty days. They probably were, I'm thinking their minds were whirling, trying to connect all the things he had said about his death.

Sharon:

Yes. Yes.

Nicole:

With the reality of that and the reality that he was resurrected and everything was coming to a completion. It's like, okay, so what did he say then? Does it mean this now? All of that in forty days and then, hey, you're going out to the ends of the world. So much.

Sharon:

So much.

Nicole:

Their little brains are probably processing so much.

Sharon:

Yes.

Nicole:

And they're just standing there watching him go to heaven. I wonder how long they stood there.

Sharon:

I would've been hoping he came back down again. That's for sure.

Nicole:

But maybe, maybe he was joking. Is this a test? What's that? No, it's a bird. And I love that though, but Jesus even immediately doesn't leave them in that state of loss of a dear person they love so much.

Sharon:

Yes. Yes.

Nicole:

He sends his, I'm assuming angels, 'cause they appeared suddenly.

Sharon:

I think they probably were.

Nicole:

Some angels go, Guys, what are you doing here? Why are you staring? He's coming back. So immediately Jesus comforts them, reassures them that he's coming back.

Sharon:

Yes.

Nicole:

But you have a job to do. Yes,

Sharon:

Exactly. And you actually were told to go and wait in Jerusalem.

Nicole:

Right.

Sharon:

For the Holy Spirit.

Nicole:

So why are you standing here? You have a job. Such a beautiful thing that God comforted them and reassured them and pointed them back to what they were supposed to be doing.

Sharon:

Yes. Yes.

Nicole:

He's such a kind God. He didn't leave them gaping there at the sky going what do we do now?

Sharon:

Exactly. Exactly. They needed a little more of a nudge there (Nicole: Yes) definitely. And I love too, that it says that he will return from heaven in the same way. Because that's been passed down to us. I know they probably thought, they probably looked at the sky a lot wondering, is this the day he's coming back the way he left. Right. And of course it wasn't for any of them. (Right) And it may or may not be for us, but we've got in Revelation that, wonderful talk, and I think Jesus said it too, that the Son of Man is coming like lightning in the sky. No one's gonna miss it. (Wow) When he returns, the entire world is gonna know it.

Nicole:

So it won't be a little quiet cloud elevator coming down.

Sharon:

Yeah. It's gonna be pretty amazing.

Nicole:

Oh my goodness. It's so exciting.

Sharon:

It really is. So we're still looking forward to that second coming. (Nicole: Yeah) So my dad used to say, keep your eyes to the skies. Look for him.

Nicole:

Yeah. Oh, that's so neat.

Sharon:

I love it. Okay, so there, there's our sort of dissection of it all. But now we're gonna look at the whole passage together and answer some of the key questions that we are asked. And our three questions for this whole season will be, what was my favorite verse and why? What did we learn about God? I always want that. Why did we learn about God from this passage? And number three, what did we learn about the early church and how can we apply that to today? Because I really do believe the Bible is practical as well. We are learning history, but we also wanna, well, what did I learn for me? (Nicole: Yeah) What can I do now based on what I've learned?

Nicole:

Right. No, I love that.

Sharon:

So why don't we start with you and your favorite verse.

Nicole:

I love verse 11, the very last verse. "Men of Galilee, they said, why are you standing here staring into heaven? Jesus has been taken from you into heaven, but someday he will return from heaven in the same way you saw him go." So I just love God's provision and his care. (Sharon: Yes) And his compassion to comfort them in probably a bit of a scary moment. Like, oh no, we're on our own. (Yeah) And then that beautiful promise that he's coming again. (Yes) So be ready. He's coming. So I just think that's so neat because it was a comfort to them and a comfort to us.

Sharon:

It is. Yeah. Yeah. I mean, they'd said goodbye to him when he died, and then only forty days later they had that second. So.

Nicole:

Oh, so tough.

Sharon:

The comfort was needed.

Nicole:

Absolutely.

Sharon:

Yes. Yes.

Nicole:

What about you?

Sharon:

I chose verse seven where Jesus said, "He replied, the Father alone has the authority to set those dates and times, and they're not for you to know". I wrote, I'm being trained in waiting. (Nicole: Oh) And that builds trust and faith. (Yeah) We don't know everything, but you know what? If we knew everything, where's the faith? Where's the trust?

Nicole:

Right. We wouldn't go to him. 'cause we'd know it all.

Sharon:

No. We'd know it all. So this is a training time for us. Do we trust that he's coming again? Do we look up to the sky with anticipation? Do we have faith after over 2000 years that Yes, he will. He'll be back.

Nicole:

Oh, that's so good. Yeah.

Sharon:

Right. So that was my favorite verse because I've had a lot of training and waiting this year. So.

Nicole:

I know. We're like it's not my favorite year.

Sharon:

Yeah. So, okay. So I'll start with this one. What did we learn about God from this passage? So one thing I learned about God, and it's from my favorite verse, God is not obligated to tell me everything. I would like him to.

Nicole:

Yeah.

Sharon:

Yeah.

Nicole:

It'd be so nice if he was, but.

Sharon:

Yes. And sometimes it would make decision making easier, you know?

Nicole:

Yes. Yeah.

Sharon:

Do I do this or that? Well, if I knew the outcome, I'd know which way to go.

Nicole:

Clearly pick which one. Right.

Sharon:

Right. But I don't. So, God wants me to gain and grow in trust and faith. And therefore, I'm not gonna know everything, and I better just receive it like a little kid and not pout about it. So.

Nicole:

That's good.

Sharon:

And number two, God doesn't abandon us. The Trinity, the Spirit part of the Trinity lives in me. And that's a huge mystery and gift. My God is not just outside me. He's always in me. (Nicole: Yeah) I can't lose him, if I go to prison, he's in me. (Yeah) You know, if somebody puts me on a deserted island, he's in me. He's with me. They cannot, they can't do it, Nicole. They can't take God from me.

Nicole:

Oh, I love it. That's so good.

Sharon:

Isn't that awesome?

Nicole:

That's a great thought.

Sharon:

Yeah. So how about you? What did you learn about God from this passage?

Nicole:

Oh, very similar. I was so impressed by that. The fact that we are never abandoned or unprepared to do what God has called us to do. He calls us, sometimes it feels like an impossible task, but he's there with us. He prepares us. He comforts us. And I put also God living in us. Wow. Like we have the power of God with us forever. We don't get it taken. It's not taken back when our job is done. God has given us the Spirit forever. And that power is always available. And I-- Wow. It's hard for my little brain to process.

Sharon:

Yes. Yes. And we forget that.

Nicole:

We do. I do not tap into that enough.

Sharon:

No, we, we don't. That's exactly it. It's there. We don't tap into it.

Nicole:

It's there. Yeah. And we take it for granted I think. I wonder if the people that had it for a shorter period of time were--, if they could feel it more or had more of a rush with it, and when it was gone they missed it. We remember, I remember very vaguely my period of time without the Holy Spirit in me. And I remember the feeling when I was saved. And it was a remarkable feeling. (Sharon: Yes) But I've had him in me now for 31 years. (Yes) So I think sometimes we forget what it was like to live without the Holy Spirit.

Sharon:

Yeah. We do. And he's still, it's not like we're robots. He's not he's not programming our every move.

(Nicole: Right) So we still have choice (We do. Yeah) to not tap in. (Right) And to go our own selfish way.

(Yeah) And to grieve him. (Yes) Because he's a part of us. Right?

Nicole:

Right. We can make those choices to keep sinning. So it was a good reminder to me to be in that place of awe still, that like a fresh, like he's in me. God anointed me with the Holy Spirit. Wow. What am I doing about that?

Sharon:

Yes. Yes. Yes. Totally immersed. So cool. Yeah. Okay. Well, Nicole, what did you learn about the early church and the application kind of things?

Nicole:

Yeah. So they asked a lot of great questions. They were asking Jesus, even the, the silly questions like, Hey, when are you gonna come and defeat the kingdom? And when are you gonna be the Warrior King? But they weren't afraid to ask questions. And they listened and they obeyed when the angels said to go

to Galilee and to wait. They listened. And they waited. They got the help from the Holy Spirit. So I think that was really very wise of them.

Sharon:

Yes. Yes.

Nicole:

To gather their wits before they went out into the ends of the earth. I thought that was good.

Sharon:

I love that. Yeah. And listening is a very important part of being the church (Nicole: Yeah) as a body. And the whole body. They went to Jerusalem, not Galilee this time. (Oh yes. Yeah) But anyways, the whole, all of them did it as a church.

Nicole:

Yes. Well, so that was the other thing too. They didn't do things alone. They talked to each other and I think even God sent them out in pairs. They were never alone in that. So I think like how can that apply to us today? Not to try to do this on our own.

Sharon:

Right.

Nicole:

To ask good questions of each other and our pastors and our people that, you know, study the Bible.

Sharon:

And do it together.

Nicole:

And do it together. Yeah.

Sharon:

Absolutely.

Nicole:

But not forget to ask the Holy Spirit 'cause he did give us a wonderful guide right living within us.

Sharon:

He surely did. He surely did. And then, you know, like with our church goes in a certain direction. Like now we're going to be working with a program that adopts orphans from Africa. Which we did for a season. (Nicole: Yeah) We went in the same direction. And we either supported those that were, or we were one of the ones that did.

Nicole:

Right. Right. Oh that's good.

Sharon:

Yeah. So I kinda like the togetherness there.

Nicole:

Yeah. What about you?

Sharon:

So, well, what I learned about the early church is, they started out pretty confused. Which comforts me. They expected Jesus to be king right away. Straining their eyes to heaven. Come back, you know. It must've been hard to see Jesus leave that scary moment. So their church, the church started with a great loss of God's physical presence on earth as Jesus.

Nicole:

Oh yeah. Wow.

Sharon:

You know, it started with loss. Which is so fascinating to me. So I just, in terms of application, there are gonna be times of loss. There's gonna be times of sadness. (Nicole: Yeah) But great things can come out even of sad times. (h, sure. Yeah) Because out of that huge loss came a cohesiveness as a group like we're gonna see. And obedience together so that together they could do Jerusalem, Judea, Samaria, and the uttermost parts of the world. (Right) So loss can lead to still victory. Yeah.

Nicole:

Oh, that's really good.

Sharon:

Yeah. So anyways, I think it is gonna be so much fun to watch them band together. And to see them do what they do. And we're actually stopping in chapter eight, and Paul starts in chapter nine. So early church, even before Paul. The church that Paul persecuted, is what we're looking at.

Nicole:

Oh, wow. That's so neat.

Sharon:

So, it's actually kind of fun. So we're mostly looking at the disciples and the ones that they converted.

Nicole:

Yeah. I think it'll be so fascinating 'cause you think of the early believers, oh, well, they're the heroes of the faith and how they did marvelous things for God. But I love seeing their humanness too.

Sharon:

Yes. Yes.

Nicole:

Their confusion, their loss, their scared. You know, I love seeing like, oh, okay. I can relate to that.

Sharon:

Exactly.

Nicole:

Because I'm right there with you.

Sharon:

Yes. Yes. They were never superhuman.

Nicole:

No. And how did they do it and how they went back to God. (Sharon: Right) So this'll be so good.

Sharon:

It will. Well, let's pray. Oh my. Lord, thank you. Thank you for the testimony, the witness, the beauty of the early church. Thank you for the twelve rough and ready men you chose in your sovereign wisdom, using the foolish things of the world to confound the wise. Thank you for what they did. Thank you for their testimony and their faithfulness. Oh Lord. I really do wanna meet them someday, your precious men. And Lord, as we study in the weeks ahead, teach us. Teach us how to do church well together. In Jesus' name. Amen.

Nicole:

Amen. We are so glad to be back with this new season that's all about the early church. Studying God's word always yields treasures, and today was no exception. We'd love to hear from you. How's your church life going at the moment? Did you learn anything new from today's talk? You can email us at sharon@sweetselah.org or comment on this episode [@sweetselah.org/podcast](https://www.sweetselah.org/podcast). Join us next week for episode 126, The Waiting Days. Have you ever had to wait for something not knowing exactly how long the wait would be? That's hard. We'll be talking about that next week as we dive into the second half of Acts chapter one. Have a great week.

Speaker 1:

We are so glad you stopped for a while with us. The Sweet Selah Moments Podcast is a cooperative production of Word Radio and Sweet Selah Ministries. More information about this podcast can be found [@sweetselah.org](http://sweetselah.org). Thank you for joining us.