

# THE CONTINUING ACTS OF THE CHRIST



## Week Seventeen - Worship, not Works

### A Note to the Parents/Teachers

*In Chapter 15, we read of Paul and Barnabas' continuing their missionary journey to Antioch of Pisidia. Here Paul and Barnabas preach the good news to Jews and Gentiles that salvation comes only through believing in Jesus Christ. But, some teachers have come to the Antioch church and have started to tell the Gentile believers that in order to be saved they have to be follow all of the rules, rituals, and laws of Moses. They had to earn their salvation through works of obedience. This passage reminds us that the gift of salvation and the Holy Spirit is freely given to all who believe. Salvation and the Holy Spirit will lead to right living, right living won't lead to salvation and the Holy Spirit.*

- **Big Idea:** We do not have to work for what we have already been freely given.

### Starter

#### Evidence of Grace

- Ask kids to share ways they've seen God at work lately. Anything, big or small, which is good is from God. Take time to thank God together.

#### Discussion:

- Do you ever feel like you have to be a good boy or girl so that your mom or dad or maybe your grandma or grandpa will love you? Or do you already know that they love your no matter what?

### Sing Together

## Story - from Acts 15: 1-35

Paul and Barnabas are back preaching and teaching the good news of the gospel to the people in Antioch. But, some other men came down from a town called Judea and began to teach the people in Antioch that, "Unless you follow all of the rules and rituals given by Moses, you cannot be saved." Paul and Barnabas strongly argue with these men that the non-Jewish believers don't have to become Jewish or follow the Jewish rules in order to be saved.

The church in Antioch isn't sure what to believe or who to believe. So the believers in the church send Paul and Barnabas to the church in Jerusalem to check with the Peter, James, and the other leaders to see who to believe. On their way down to Jerusalem, Paul and Barnabas stop in some churches along the way and tell the churches about all of the Gentiles who are believing in Jesus. This brought great joy to these churches to hear that many more people are believing this true story.

Paul and Barnabas finally arrive at the church in Jerusalem and they tell the church what God was doing among the Gentile people in all of the cities that they visited on their journey. But some of the believers that were Pharisees stood up and said, "It is necessary for the Gentiles to follow all of the rules and rituals that were given to us by Moses."

All of the leaders of the church start to debate on whether the Gentiles have to become Jewish and follow all of the rules of Moses in order to be saved, forgiven, and receive the Holy Spirit. Finally, Peter stands up in front of everyone and says, "Brothers and sisters, you remember that I was chosen and told by God to proclaim the good news of Jesus to the Gentiles. I, and others with me, have seen with our own eyes, that the Gentiles received the Holy Spirit just like we did when we believed in Jesus. God does not have favorites. He gives the gift of the Holy Spirit to anyone who believes."

After Peter speaks, Paul and Barnabas share about all of the signs and wonders that God did through them among the Gentile people. Then James, Jesus' brother, who some consider to be one of the leaders of the Jerusalem church, gets up to speak to all of the other leaders. James also says the same thing as Peter, Paul, and Barnabas. James quotes verses from prophets in the Old Testament that tell Israel that the nations (Gentiles) were always a part of God's plan. They were always meant to be included in the redemption process and purpose of Jesus. So James says that since they were always meant to be included in the saving work of Jesus, then they should not be making it more difficult for them to believe and follow Jesus.

The church decides unanimously (every single person) that the Gentiles do not need to become Jewish and follow all of the Jewish rules and laws in order to become a Christian. So the Jerusalem church sends Paul, Barnabas, and two other guys, Judas and Silas, to go back to the church in Antioch and tell them the good news. This is great news for the Gentiles! The believers in Antioch rejoice because of the clarity and encouragement that is in the letter from Jerusalem.

This passage reminds us that we are freely given the gift of the Holy Spirit when we believe in Jesus. There is nothing we have to do, rules we have to follow, or hoops to jump through to earn God's love and earn the Holy Spirit. Righteousness comes through believing and when we believe we receive the Holy Spirit. It is the power of the Holy Spirit that will help us figure out how to live as the new humanity in God's kingdom on earth. The Holy Spirit will lead us to right living; right living won't lead us to the Holy Spirit.

*[Dialogue Questions - you may use some or all]*

- What does it mean to believe something?
- What does it mean to believe in Jesus?
- Where do we feel like we have to earn something that has already been given?
- Where in our lives are we working or trying to be good or obedient in order to earn someones love?
- What has Jesus already accomplished for us?
- What truth do I need to remind myself of when I feel unloved, or unworthy to be loved?
- Who is someone in my life that needs to hear this good news that they don't have to earn God's love?

### **Breakout Time**

#### **Pray:**

God, thank you for sending your Son, Jesus Christ, to show us what it looks like to live fully in your kingdom by obeying you not to earn your love, but because you loved Him and He loved you. Thank you, Jesus, for undoing the power of sin and death and providing a way to new life by believing in you!

#### **Craft:**

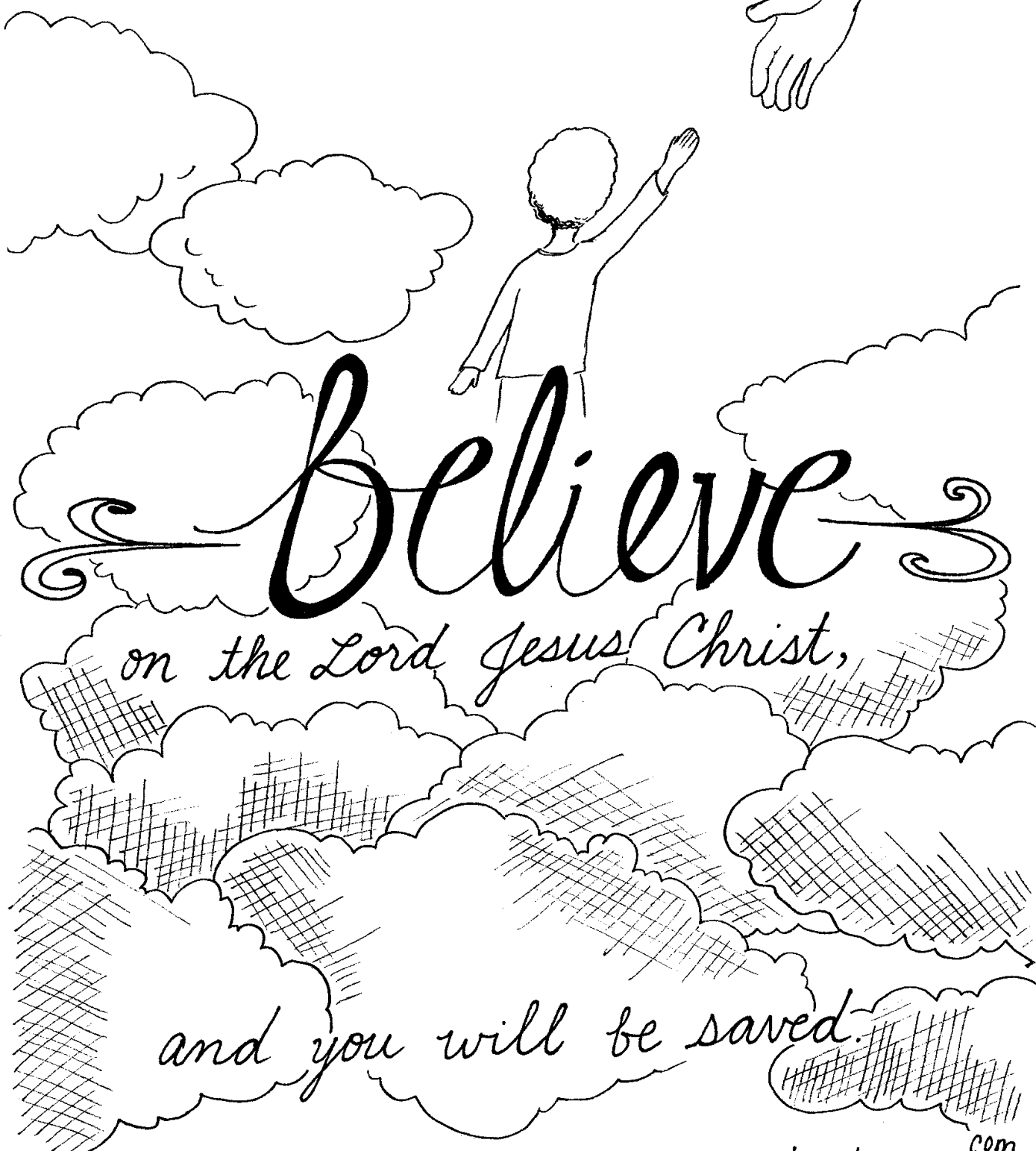
- Have the kids color the attached coloring sheet.
- While they are coloring maybe talk about what it means to believe something is true. What does believing in Jesus look like, what does it mean, and how we should live if we believe in Jesus.

### **BLESS Activity**

This week, ask your family how you can practice the Speak rhythm. Who are some friends that you have that don't know Jesus who need to hear the good news of the gospel; that they can be freed from sin

Who can you tell about Jesus this week?

Who can you encourage or speak kind and loving words to this week?



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