June 21, 2026

THE HOLY SPIRIT SERIES

BOOK OF ACTS EDITION

SERMON: The Spirit Strengthens
SPEAKER: Pastor Jeremy
CORE SCRIPTURE: Acts 20:18-38

WATCH SERMON | SERMON NOTES

SMALL GROUP DISCUSSION GUIDE

SUMMARY

In Acts 20, Paul knows that following God's call will lead to hardship, yet he continues forward because the Holy Spirit strengthens him. This passage reminds us that the Spirit doesn't always remove obstacles, but He gives us the strength to obey when obedience is costly, to persevere when the journey is difficult, and to care for God's people faithfully. The same Spirit who strengthened Paul is at work in us today, helping us choose faithfulness over comfort and follow Jesus wherever He leads.

SHARE

Think of a time when you knew what you needed to do but kept putting it off because you didn't want to do it. What made it so hard to take that step? (This could be a difficult conversation, a step of faith, or something else entirely.)

READ

Read Acts 20:22-24 together out loud as a group:

"And now, compelled by the Spirit, I am going to Jerusalem, not knowing what will happen to me there. I only know that in every city the Holy Spirit warns me that prison and hardships are facing me. However, I consider my life worth nothing to me; my only aim is to finish the race and complete the task the Lord Jesus has given me—the task of testifying to the good news of God's grace."

DISCUSS

Feel free to pick/choose what is most helpful for you. Remember, the goal is to have rich, relational, authentic, Jesus-centered discussions.

1. What stood out to you the most about the sermon?

2. In Acts 20:22-23, Paul says he is "compelled by the Spirit" to go to Jerusalem, yet the same Spirit warns him that "prison and hardships" await him. How do we reconcile the Spirit both calling us

forward and warning us of difficulty? What does this teach us about the nature of God's guidance and the Christian life?

3. Pastor Jeremy said, "Hardship is not always a sign we're outside God's will; it's often a sign we're in it." How does this challenge the common Christian misconception that "if God is in it, it should be easy"? Can you think of biblical examples or personal experiences that illustrate this truth?

4. Look at Acts 20:28. Paul tells the elders to "keep watch over yourselves and all the flock of which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers." What does it mean that the Holy Spirit appoints people to care for God's people? How does this change our understanding of leadership and responsibility in the church?

5. In Acts 20:24, Paul says, "I consider my life worth nothing to me; my only aim is to finish the race and complete the task the Lord Jesus has given me." What is the difference between focusing on our comfort versus focusing on our faithfulness? How does this shift in focus change the way we approach difficult decisions or seasons?

6. Pastor Jeremy shared his story about leading a small group as a new Christian and avoiding a difficult conversation. What resonated with you about that illustration? Is there a situation in your life right now where you're resisting doing what you know God is calling you to do?

7. Paul's ministry was marked by perseverance through beatings, imprisonment, false accusations, shipwrecks, and being stoned and left for dead. Yet he could still say in Acts 20:20, 27, "I have not hesitated." Where do you need the Holy Spirit's strength to persevere right now—whether in relationships, health, finances, work, or ministry?

YOUR NEXT STEPS

- Identify one area where God is calling you to obedience, perseverance, or caring for someone—even though it feels costly or difficult. Write it down and pray specifically for the Holy Spirit's strength this week.
- Reach out to someone God has placed in your life who needs care, encouragement, or prayer. It could be a family member, friend, neighbour, or someone in your small group.
- Reflect on your focus: Are you more focused on your comfort or your faithfulness? Ask the Holy Spirit to help you shift your focus toward finishing the race God has set before you.

PRAY

Spend time to pray together as a group:

- Pray for strength to obey when obedience is costly. Ask the Holy Spirit to help each person take the next step God is calling them to, even when it's hard.
- Pray for perseverance for those in the group who are tired, discouraged, or carrying long-term burdens. Ask God to remind them that He who began a good work will carry it to completion (Philippians 1:6).

- Pray for our church as we step into a new season. Ask God to raise up shepherds—people who will care for, encourage, and walk alongside those who are searching, hurting, or confused.
- Pray for one another by name, asking the Holy Spirit to strengthen each person in the specific areas they shared tonight.

CONNECT

As Cornerstone Community Church steps into a new season, there will be opportunities to serve, care for others, and step out in faith. Check **The Hub** for upcoming community **events**, **workshops**, or ministry opportunities where your group can come alongside and make a difference together.

CLOSING

Close by reading Acts 20:32 together:

"Now I commit you to God and to the word of his grace, which can build you up and give you an inheritance among all those who are sanctified."

Remind one another: The same Spirit who strengthened Paul is the same Spirit who lives in every believer today. You don't have to do it alone.