

# THE RIVER

it continues...

Sermon series in  
the book of **ACTS**



**St. Matthew**  
LUTHERAN CHURCH

**APRIL 16 - MAY 28**

# **The River Guide**

## **(A Journey through the First 15 Chapters of Acts)**

### **Introduction**

In the Old Testament book of Ezekiel, the prophet is given a vision; There is water trickling from the southside of the Temple flowing into the dead, dry desert. But instead of drying up, the trickle gradually grows becoming a mighty river that was so large that "no one could cross it." And everywhere the water touched it brought life. This is a picture of the life that Jesus brings in these last days in which we live...a river of life that began to flow from Jesus. Who is himself the temple **and continues** through us as we participate in His ongoing mission until He returns.

The Gospels tell of the beginning of this river -from Bethlehem through the Resurrection - while in the book of Acts we see the river widen through the work of the followers of Jesus by the power of the Spirit. This river is ever widening- the mission of Jesus continues. Jesus uses us to touch people for whom He died. This series is about living water that brings life to dead things. It flows from Jesus through us into all the world. Certainly, it is about the beginning of the ongoing mission of Jesus as recorded in the book of Acts. But the book of Acts was not meant to be simply a history lesson. It is a picture of what the ongoing mission of Jesus looks like and it helps us find OUR PLACE IN IT knowing that the same Holy Spirit who was at work in those first followers is at work in us. We believe that God, the Holy Spirit, is still at work in our world and our lives. **It Continues with us.** It is our prayer that through this series and study God will help us embrace our place in the ever-widening flood of God's grace! **Welcome to the adventure!**

### **Forward**

So, how is this guide meant to be used? Each Sunday, beginning April 16<sup>th</sup>, the message will explore a section of Acts, hopefully giving you a place to start as you look to apply it to your life in the mission of Jesus. In addition, we have put together three sets of "Open" questions to help you as you explore these readings. (Note: An open question has no "right" answer. It is meant to be an application question as God's Spirit

touches your heart.) The rhythm we suggest is to have 5 days where you work through the readings but then have one day during the week where you meet in a Life Group, or just with someone else to talk about it. After all, as we shall soon see in our study of Acts, God's people from the beginning not only met together in large group worship but also in small, intimate, groups to grow in faith and life!

Following are the three sets of questions to think about as you are reading. You may want to jot down your thoughts from day to day and then reference them during your Life group time. Please use what is helpful for you.

### **The One-Two Punch**

1. What is God showing me in this reading? What jumps out at me?  
What am I learning? How am I convicted? How am I challenged?  
What am I being invited to do?
2. What am I going to do about it?

### **Junk/Joy/Jesus**

1. What junk (brokenness/sin) do you see in the reading? In your life?
2. What joy do you see in the reading? In your life?
3. Where is Jesus in this reading? In your life?

### **The Mission**

In Jesus life, we see Him "Sharing Life," "Creating Friendships," and "Inspiring Hope." As his followers we pattern our life after his.

- Share Life: Celebrating the gift of Jesus grace through worship. (UP)
- Create Friendships: Growing in Christ through His Word in authentic relationships. (IN)
- Inspire Hope: Sharing Jesus love in the places He has planted us. (OUT)

1. Where do I see people "Sharing Life" as Jesus did? How does it Challenge/invite me to "Share Life"? How am I going to respond?

2. Where do I see people "Creating Friendships" in this reading? How does it challenge me to "Create Friendships"? How am I going to respond?
3. Where do I see people "Inspiring Hope"? Where am I being challenged to "Inspire Hope"? How am I going to respond?

# **BOTTOMLINE: HE REIGNS**

## **(It Begins) - WEEK 1**

### **Day 1**

**Ezekiel 47:1-6A, John 4:13-14, John 19:33-34**

### **The One-Two Punch**

What jumps out at me?

What am I going to do about it?

**Junk:**

**Joy:**

**Jesus:**

### **The Mission**

Sharing Life:

Creating Friendships:

Inspiring Hope:

## **Day 2**

**Ezekiel 47:6B-12, John 15:5-8**

### **The One-Two Punch**

What jumps out at me?

What am I going to do about it?

**Junk:**

**Joy:**

**Jesus:**

### **The Mission**

Sharing Life:

Creating Friendships:

Inspiring Hope:

## **Day 3**

### **Acts 1:1-8, Luke 24:36-48**

#### **The One-Two Punch**

What jumps out at me?

What am I going to do about it?

**Junk:**

**Joy:**

**Jesus:**

#### **The Mission**

Sharing Life:

Creating Friendships:

Inspiring Hope:

## **Day 4**

**Acts 1:9-11, Luke 24:50-52, Ephesians 1:18-23, Matthew 28:18, then 19+20**

### **The One-Two Punch**

What jumps out at me?

What am I going to do about it?

**Junk:**

**Joy:**

**Jesus:**

### **The Mission**

Sharing Life:

Creating Friendships:

Inspiring Hope:



## **Day 5**

### **Acts 1:12-23 (Note especially verse 21-22)**

#### **The One-Two Punch**

What jumps out at me?

What am I going to do about it?

**Junk:**

**Joy:**

**Jesus:**

#### **The Mission**

Sharing Life:

Creating Friendships:

Inspiring Hope:

# THE TIME IS NOW!

## WEEK 2

### Day 1

**Acts 2:1-13, John 7:37-39, Revelation 22:1-6, Revelation 7:9-11**

### The One-Two Punch

What jumps out at me?

What am I going to do about it?

**Junk:**

**Joy:**

**Jesus:**

### The Mission

Sharing Life:

Creating Friendships:

Inspiring Hope:

## **Day 2**

**Acts 2:14-21, Hebrews 1:1-3, I Peter 1:20-21**

### **The One-Two Punch**

What jumps out at me?

What am I going to do about it?

**Junk:**

**Joy:**

**Jesus:**

### **The Mission**

Sharing Life:

Creating Friendships:

Inspiring Hope:

## **Day 3**

### **Acts 2:22-36**

#### **The One-Two Punch**

What jumps out at me?

What am I going to do about it?

**Junk:**

**Joy:**

**Jesus:**

#### **The Mission**

Sharing Life:

Creating Friendships:

Inspiring Hope:

## **Day 4**

**Acts 2:37-41, John 7:37-39**

### **The One-Two Punch**

What jumps out at me?

What am I going to do about it?

**Junk:**

**Joy:**

**Jesus:**

### **The Mission**

Sharing Life:

Creating Friendships:

Inspiring Hope:

## **Day 5**

### **Acts 2:42-47**

#### **The One-Two Punch**

What jumps out at me?

What am I going to do about it?

**Junk:**

**Joy:**

**Jesus:**

#### **The Mission**

Sharing Life:

Creating Friendships:

Inspiring Hope:

**I'VE SEEN THIS BEFORE - JESUS MUST BE HERE!  
WEEK 3**

**Day 1**

**Acts 3:1-16, John 5:1-9**

**The One-Two Punch**

What jumps out at me?

What am I going to do about it?

**Junk:**

**Joy:**

**Jesus:**

**The Mission**

Sharing Life:

Creating Friendships:

Inspiring Hope:

## **Day 2**

### **Acts 3:17-26, I Timothy 2:1-5**

#### **The One-Two Punch**

What jumps out at me?

What am I going to do about it?

**Junk:**

**Joy:**

**Jesus:**

#### **The Mission**

Sharing Life:

Creating Friendships:

Inspiring Hope:



## **Day 3**

### **Acts 4:1-12**

#### **The One-Two Punch**

What jumps out at me?

What am I going to do about it?

**Junk:**

**Joy:**

**Jesus:**

#### **The Mission**

Sharing Life:

Creating Friendships:

Inspiring Hope:

## **Day 4**

### **Acts 4:13-22**

#### **The One-Two Punch**

What jumps out at me?

What am I going to do about it?

**Junk:**

**Joy:**

**Jesus:**

#### **The Mission**

Sharing Life:

Creating Friendships:

Inspiring Hope:

## **Day 5**

### **Acts 4:23-31**

#### **The One-Two Punch**

What jumps out at me?

What am I going to do about it?

**Junk:**

**Joy:**

**Jesus:**

#### **The Mission**

Sharing Life:

Creating Friendships:

Inspiring Hope:

# THE FELLOWSHIP

## WEEK 4

### **Day 1**

**Acts 4:32-5:11**

### **The One-Two Punch**

What jumps out at me?

What am I going to do about it?

**Junk:**

**Joy:**

**Jesus:**

### **The Mission**

Sharing Life:

Creating Friendships:

Inspiring Hope:

## **Day 2**

### **Acts 5:12-16**

#### **The One-Two Punch**

What jumps out at me?

What am I going to do about it?

**Junk:**

**Joy:**

**Jesus:**

#### **The Mission**

Sharing Life:

Creating Friendships:

Inspiring Hope:

## **Day 3**

### **Acts 5:17-26**

#### **The One-Two Punch**

What jumps out at me?

What am I going to do about it?

**Junk:**

**Joy:**

**Jesus:**

#### **The Mission**

Sharing Life:

Creating Friendships:

Inspiring Hope:

## **Day 4**

### **Acts 5:27-42**

#### **The One-Two Punch**

What jumps out at me?

What am I going to do about it?

**Junk:**

**Joy:**

**Jesus:**

#### **The Mission**

Sharing Life:

Creating Friendships:

Inspiring Hope:

## **Day 5**

### **Acts 6:1-7**

#### **The One-Two Punch**

What jumps out at me?

What am I going to do about it?

**Junk:**

**Joy:**

**Jesus:**

#### **The Mission**

Sharing Life:

Creating Friendships:

Inspiring Hope:



# EYES THAT SEE

## WEEK 5

### Day 1

**Acts 6:8-7:3, 7:51-60 (If time, you can include 7:4-7:50, especially verses 39-43; This section is a telling of the history of Israel and their continuous rebellion against God.)**

### The One-Two Punch

What jumps out at me?

What am I going to do about it?

**Junk:**

**Joy:**

**Jesus:**

### The Mission

Sharing Life:

Creating Friendships:

Inspiring Hope:

## **Day 2**

### **Acts 8:1-25**

#### **The One-Two Punch**

What jumps out at me?

What am I going to do about it?

**Junk:**

**Joy:**

**Jesus:**

#### **The Mission**

Sharing Life:

Creating Friendships:

Inspiring Hope:

## **Day 3**

### **Acts 8:26-40**

#### **The One-Two Punch**

What jumps out at me?

What am I going to do about it?

**Junk:**

**Joy:**

**Jesus:**

#### **The Mission**

Sharing Life:

Creating Friendships:

Inspiring Hope:

## **Day 4**

### **Acts 9:1-22**

#### **The One-Two Punch**

What jumps out at me?

What am I going to do about it?

**Junk:**

**Joy:**

**Jesus:**

#### **The Mission**

Sharing Life:

Creating Friendships:

Inspiring Hope:

## **Day 5**

### **Acts 9:23-42**

#### **The One-Two Punch**

What jumps out at me?

What am I going to do about it?

**Junk:**

**Joy:**

**Jesus:**

#### **The Mission**

Sharing Life:

Creating Friendships:

Inspiring Hope:

# BLIND SPOT

## WEEK 6

### Day 1

### **Acts 10:1-29**

#### The One-Two Punch

What jumps out at me?

What am I going to do about it?

**Junk:**

**Joy:**

**Jesus:**

#### The Mission

Sharing Life:

Creating Friendships:

Inspiring Hope:

## **Day 2**

### **Acts 10:30-11:18**

#### **The One-Two Punch**

What jumps out at me?

What am I going to do about it?

**Junk:**

**Joy:**

**Jesus:**

#### **The Mission**

Sharing Life:

Creating Friendships:

Inspiring Hope:

## **Day 3**

### **Acts 11:19-30**

#### **The One-Two Punch**

What jumps out at me?

What am I going to do about it?

**Junk:**

**Joy:**

**Jesus:**

#### **The Mission**

Sharing Life:

Creating Friendships:

Inspiring Hope:



## **Day 4**

### **Acts 12:1-19A**

#### **The One-Two Punch**

What jumps out at me?

What am I going to do about it?

**Junk:**

**Joy:**

**Jesus:**

#### **The Mission**

Sharing Life:

Creating Friendships:

Inspiring Hope:

## **Day 5**

### **Acts 12:19B-25**

#### **The One-Two Punch**

What jumps out at me?

What am I going to do about it?

**Junk:**

**Joy:**

**Jesus:**

#### **The Mission**

Sharing Life:

Creating Friendships:

Inspiring Hope:

# THE GOLDEN PRINCIPLE

## WEEK 7

### **Day 1**

### **Acts 13:1-12**

#### **The One-Two Punch**

What jumps out at me?

What am I going to do about it?

**Junk:**

**Joy:**

**Jesus:**

#### **The Mission**

Sharing Life:

Creating Friendships:

Inspiring Hope:

## **Day 2**

### **Acts 13:13-52**

#### **The One-Two Punch**

What jumps out at me?

What am I going to do about it?

**Junk:**

**Joy:**

**Jesus:**

#### **The Mission**

Sharing Life:

Creating Friendships:

Inspiring Hope:

## **Day 3**

### **Acts 14:1-28**

#### **The One-Two Punch**

What jumps out at me?

What am I going to do about it?

**Junk:**

**Joy:**

**Jesus:**

#### **The Mission**

Sharing Life:

Creating Friendships:

Inspiring Hope:

## **Day 4**

### **Acts 15:1-21**

#### **The One-Two Punch**

What jumps out at me?

What am I going to do about it?

**Junk:**

**Joy:**

**Jesus:**

#### **The Mission**

Sharing Life:

Creating Friendships:

Inspiring Hope:

## **Day 5**

### **Acts 15:22-41**

#### **The One-Two Punch**

What jumps out at me?

What am I going to do about it?

**Junk:**

**Joy:**

**Jesus:**

#### **The Mission**

Sharing Life:

Creating Friendships:

Inspiring Hope: