

# Where the Wind Blows

---

The title of this week's homework actually comes from one of my favorite images of the Holy Spirit as described by Jesus' himself. "*The wind blows wherever it pleases. You hear its sound, but you cannot tell where it comes from or where it is going. So it is with everyone born of the Spirit.*" (John 3:8). In Greek, the word used for wind, *pneuma*<sup>1</sup>, also means "spirit", and like the wind, the Spirit is also invisible, powerful, and utterly un-managed and un-contained by human efforts. Just as the wind blows of its own accord, so does the Holy Spirit. *Pneuma* also means, "breath of life", as when God breathed life into Adam in Genesis 2:7. So the *pneuma* is our life force, both physical and spiritual, driven by the will of God. We will see the *Pneuma* directing events all through our homework passage this week.

Last week with the tragic death of Stephen, the Word was scattered across Samaria as the Hellenist Christians fled from Jerusalem. Looking back we can perhaps now see the Word carried on the wind and scattered like seeds to plant a new harvest elsewhere. Sadly it took the death of a beloved and faith-filled saint for the believers in Jerusalem to begin to understand that Christ's mission had to be taken beyond the Jewish nation. A harvest of half-Jewish converts in Samaria paved the way for the Word to be taken to the Gentiles. This week we will see the miraculous conversion of the most zealous of Pharisees, and we will also follow Peter as he is led by the Holy Spirit to Caesarea to baptize Greek God-Fearers. We have a lot of ground to cover this week, but we will be starting with such an exciting passage that I hope you will become so engaged in your homework you will be drawn into the Word throughout the week!

## An Unlikely Convert

Last week when we studied the devastating persecution of the Hellenists in Jerusalem at the hands of Saul of Tarsus, it was enough to make one weep and question how this could possibly become one of the most effective evangelists of all time, Paul. Today we will be eyewitnesses to the Lord's most humbling rendering of poetic and divine judgment resulting in a conversion only he could bring about. *Heavenly Father, allow this dear child of yours to see with new understanding the working of your Holy Spirit in this scripture passage. Your ways and work for each of us is so individually orchestrated to your will, that no single one of your children has the same story to tell of their conversion. Help us to see that while the conversion of one of your faithful may be dramatic, the more mundane conversion of most of your children is designed to be effective in your kingdom as many will relate to the quiet experiences of your faithful. Amen.*



Read Acts 9:1-19 and answer the following questions.

---

<sup>1</sup> Vine's Expository Dictionary of Old and New Testament Words

*Empowered by the Holy Spirit*

How does verse one describe Saul's activities?

What did Saul request of the High Priest? What was Saul's intent?

What happened to Saul on the way to Damascus?

What do you think is the significance of Saul's physical blindness?

Why do you think he doesn't eat or drink for three days?

What does the Lord tell Ananias about Saul?

What does Ananias do next to and for Saul?

What does the healing of Saul's blindness have to do with his subsequent baptism?

🔥 Read 2 Corinthians 11:21-29. What did Saul come to endure as the apostle Paul? How is it that Paul was able to stand up to these trials and hardships? What is it about his conversion that gave him the necessary strength?

Our first verse gives us the image of Saul “breathing out murderous threats” against the followers of the Way<sup>2</sup>. The Greek word *empneō*, translated “breathing out” figuratively describes Saul’s fervor in persecuting the followers of Christ. It indicates that threatening and slaughter were the elements from which Saul drew and expelled his life’s breath.<sup>3</sup> In other words, he lived to be God’s instrument of judgment and punishment. Then Saul is struck blind. What irony! Saul self-righteously persecuted Christians in the mistaken belief that he knew truth. In point of fact, Truth Himself struck Saul down! Jesus reveals what is truth to Saul. Saul is cut to the core of his being. Verse 9 says he neither ate nor drank for 3 days. He was utterly distraught by the realization that he was persecuting the Lord Himself. This was a complete paradigm shift of his belief system. Previously Saul was firm in his convictions and education. And then everything was turned upside down. He spent three days praying and fasting, sorting through what had just happened and coming to terms with the concept that everything he thought he knew and understood was wrong, and that he of all people missed the coming of the Messiah! Saul’s physical blindness was a symbolic manifestation of his spiritual blindness.

Humbled and dependent upon others to care for him, Saul was placed at the mercy of a Christian who might have every reason to bring harm to him for persecuting other believers. Saul, a Pharisee empowered by the Sanhedrin to arrest and imprison believers, was at the *mercy* of one he was sent to persecute! Jesus arranged for a “follower of the Way” to heal Saul of his blindness illustrating that God’s power was with the Christians whom Saul was zealously persecuting, and most assuredly not with the religious leaders in Jerusalem. This Christian also provided confirmation that what Saul experienced was truly the power of the Messiah working in Saul’s life. It was not his imagination, it was not a mental breakdown, it was the Lord giving Saul an opportunity to repent of his unfaithfulness and to embrace Jesus as the Messiah.

Why is the conversion of Saul so dramatic? Perhaps because of the mission Jesus would set before him. He did not have the benefit of being part of Jesus’ daily, earthly ministry either before or after the Resurrection. A dramatic conversion of a larger than life orator and thinker leads to a dramatic ministry. As one of the foremost Pharisees of his time, Saul’s understanding of the Jewish faith coupled with Jesus’ plan for him to take the gospel message throughout the Roman Empire is unparalleled. Saul’s zeal for Jewish beliefs is translated into a zeal for Christ. His gifts of teaching, persuasive argument and oration allow the gospel to be taken beyond the provincial church in Jerusalem to the centers of higher learning throughout Asia Minor, Greece (Achaia) and Rome scattering the seeds of faith everywhere he went, whether it was the dark prisons inhabited by the lowest of men or the courts of kings.

Saul’s conversion and encounter with the Risen Christ, also had to sustain him throughout his many trials and hardships. His encounter with Christ confirms his calling to be an apostle to the Gentiles and gives him the authority and strength to do so. In 1 Corinthians 9:1, Paul writes, “....Am I not an apostle? Have I not seen Jesus our Lord? Are you not the result of my work in the Lord?” True conversion comes from a personal encounter with Jesus and leads to a new life in relationship with Him.

---

<sup>2</sup> Those who followed Christ were known as followers of “the Way”

<sup>3</sup> Vine’s Expository Dictionary of Old and New Testament Words

## *Empowered by the Holy Spirit*

By the end of scripture passage we see that Saul repents of his sin, accepts Jesus as his Messiah, is baptized and is filled with the Holy Spirit.

In Acts 9:16, the Lord tells Ananais, “*I will show him how much he must suffer for my name.*” Saul’s conversion had to be complete and his faith steadfast if he was to stand against the persecution to come. The persecution he would encounter far exceeded the length and breadth of persecution he himself had inflicted upon Christians before his conversion. Not only did Saul’s zeal for the truth allow him to persevere in the face of persecution, he was his most convincing and demonstrative of that faith under pressure.

## *Personal Reflection*

Not all of us are called to be like Saul. Not all of us are called to be great leaders, but we are called to lead others to Christ. Read Paul’s letter to the Philippians, 2:14-16. What does it say about our purpose and testimony for the kingdom of God?

## **A Changed Man**

Yesterday we witnessed the episode that completely transformed Saul, who “*breathed out murderous threats*” against the followers of the Way, into the man who would become Paul, the apostle who would do more for the spread of Christianity than any person apart from Christ himself. Today’s scripture lesson will show us how complete this alteration was, and will teach us that no matter how depraved a heart might be, it is no match for the transforming power of the Holy Spirit. *Heavenly father, open your child’s heart to receive your word and your truth today. Amen.*



Read Acts 9:19b-31 and answer the following questions.

How long was it before Saul began preaching that Jesus is the Son of God in the Damascus synagogues?

Verse 22 reads, “*Yet Saul grew more and more powerful and baffled the Jews living in Damascus by proving that Jesus is the Christ.*” What about his teaching and past experiences made him so powerful in proving that Jesus is the Christ? (See also, Galatians 1:14 and Philippians 3:4b-6)

Why do you think the Jews in Damascus plotted to kill Paul?

According to Galatians 1:18, three years passed before Saul went to Jerusalem to meet with Peter. It is believed that after Saul fled Damascus, he traveled to Arabia where he spent three years before coming to Jerusalem.

When Paul came to Jerusalem, how was he received?

How did Barnabus champion Saul's inclusion among the believers and brought him to meet with the apostles?

According to Galatians 1:18-19, with whom and how long was Saul in Jerusalem?

According to our passage in Acts and the Galatians passage, where did Paul go next?

What did Saul do in Jerusalem? Among which Jews did he talk and debate, and to what end?

🔥 What do you think affected the disciples most about Saul presence in Jerusalem? Do you think he was fully accepted by them? In Damascus Saul needed Ananias to "sponsor" him among the disciples there, and in Jerusalem he needed Barnabus for the same reason. What role do you think the Holy Spirit played in this?

### *Personal Reflection*

Yesterday we saw the Holy Spirit actively working out Saul's conversion upon his encounter with the Risen Lord. The Holy Spirit guided his heart and mind working through his spiritual crisis during his three day fast. In our passage today, where do you see the Holy Spirit at work through Saul and those around him. Perhaps also consider how the Holy Spirit also worked through Barnabus.

When Saul set out for Damascus from Jerusalem it was with the express purpose of persecuting the followers of the Way in Damascus. He went with the blessing of the Sanhedrin and the written authority of the High Priest. When he reached Damascus the scriptures tell us the Jews were astonished by his teaching. This man who had caused such havoc<sup>4</sup> in Jerusalem when “*Saul began to destroy the Church*”(v. 8:3) had arrived in Damascus and was preaching that Jesus is the Son of God! The people in Damascus had no idea what had transpired on Saul’s journey, understandably they were “*astonished*” (9:21). Here Luke uses the word *existanto*, which means, “to be out of one’s mind, to be beside oneself<sup>5</sup>, struck out of their senses”. Mark used this same word to describe people’s response to Jesus in Mark 2:12; 5:42; 6:51. The Sanhedrin’s most influential and dangerous man sent to imprison and raise havoc in Damascus, as he did in Jerusalem, was preaching that Jesus is the Messiah! No wonder the influential Jews in Damascus were “*baffled*”<sup>6</sup>. Saul preached powerfully as he proved the case that Jesus is the Christ. In “*proving*” his point, Saul was taking the Old Testament prophecies and piecing them together with the facts of Jesus’ life like a puzzle to show the Jews in Damascus that Jesus is the completed picture of the Torah prophecies. We see by verse 23 the Jews have turned against him plotting his death and Saul makes his escape. Paul tells in 2 Corinthian 11:32-33 that the Governor of Damascus authorized his arrest, likely to keep the peace with the Jewish leaders in Damascus.

Upon his departure from Damascus it is believed he travelled on to the desert regions of Arabia for three years. His activities during this time are unrecorded. His habit was to go to heavily populated areas to preach. Arabia was fairly unpopulated so it is surmised he went there possibly to study and pray. His absence undoubtedly permitted the persecution of the Christians in Damascus to ease for a time.

Saul next appears in Jerusalem. His cold reception by the disciples there clearly point out their fear of him and their skepticism of his conversion. He had terrorized the church in Jerusalem with lasting affects to his reputation. It was difficult for the disciples in Jerusalem to reconcile the Saul they knew with the Saul who entered Jerusalem claiming to believe that Jesus is the Messiah. With Barnabas’ sponsorship Saul was accepted among the disciples and brought to speak with Peter. Next we learn that Saul is talking and debating among the Hellenist Jews, the very people whom Stephen had been debating! Of all people it is Saul who takes up where Stephen’s work had left off. Saul’s teaching was too powerful for the religious leaders of the Grecian synagogue, so again they conspire to murder whom they cannot defeat with words and they attempt to assassinate Saul. The persecutor has become the persecuted. With help from the church he escapes to Caesarea, the major port near Jerusalem, and departs for Tarsus in the region of Cilicia, north of Syria.

Our passage concludes with Luke’s summary of the status of the church: “*Then the church throughout Judea, Galilee and Samaria enjoyed a time of peace. It was strengthened; and encouraged by the Holy Spirit, it grew in numbers, living in the fear of the Lord.*” (v.31). The persecution of the followers of the Way subsided for a time and the number of believers increased. The presence of the Holy Spirit protected and guided the growing church allowing it to become stronger and to flourish. During this time the church was comprised of only Jewish and Samaritan (considered half-Jewish)

<sup>4</sup> Remember our word study of *elymaineto*, translated as destroy or wreak havoc – the wild boar tearing through the vineyard.

<sup>5</sup> Vine’s Expository Dictionary of Old and New Testament Words

<sup>6</sup> *Synechynnen*, “bewildered, confused,” from *syncheō*—Bible Knowledge Commentary

converts. With the Mission to bring the Gospel to Judea and Samaria well underway, it was time to bring it to the ends of the earth.

## Peter Takes the Gospel to the Gentiles

Our homework focus shifts from Paul to Peter for the rest of the week. We will be tackling a large portion of scripture broken down over the next few days. Probably the biggest obstacle to the spread of the Gospel in the early years of the church was the profound chasm between Jews and Gentiles. Most God-fearing Jews were scandalized by even the idea of associating with Gentiles let alone evangelizing to them and allowing them admittance into their social circles. But this is exactly what God calls Peter to do. While most of us think of Paul being the “apostle to the Gentiles”, it is Peter’s work that lays that foundation and opens the way for Gentiles to be accepted by the Jerusalem church. In our studies over the next few days we will follow the Holy Spirit’s leading of Peter step by step through the breaking down of social barriers between the Gentile believers and the Jewish church. *Heavenly Father, open our eyes and hearts to the movement of your spirit as we pursue your word today. Let us contemplate it and hide it deep within our hearts, and help us to understand how to live it today and every day. Amen.*



Read Acts 10:1-8 and answer the following questions.

How is Cornelius described? Also look ahead to the way he is described in v. 22.

Read Micah 6:8. How does this describe Cornelius?

What do you discern about Cornelius’ prayer-life from these verses?

What does verse 4 say about his prayers and gifts to the Lord?

What does Leviticus 2:2 say about memorial offerings?

## *Empowered by the Holy Spirit*

How are prayers and gifts like a memorial offering? (See Philippians 4:18, Hebrews 13:15-16 and Revelation 5:8)

According to the description in verses 2 and 3, and the words of the angel of the Lord, why do you think God chose Cornelius for this special event?

What does the angel of the Lord tell him to do?

How does Cornelius respond?

Our opening verses describe Cornelius and his household as devout and “God-fearers”, praying regularly and giving alms to the poor. A God-fearer is one who has dedicated time to seeking the Lord, attending synagogue and following the teachings of the Torah to the best of his abilities. These verses make it clear that he practices at least two of the three main Jewish acts of piety: praying regularly and almsgiving, although fasting (the third act) is not mentioned it can perhaps be assumed. Cornelius, a Roman Centurion had evidently spent time among the Jews, coming to know Yahweh. We have no way of knowing if Cornelius is the centurion of the story told in Luke 7:1-10 who sent for Jesus to heal his servant, but that story too reflects the Lord’s mission to bring even Gentiles into his kingdom.

We are told in verse 3 that Cornelius received a vision. 3pm is one of the traditional times of prayer for the devout Jew.<sup>7</sup> It is at this moment that Cornelius receives a vision of an angel of the Lord who tells him that his prayers are pleasing to the Lord. The angel describes Cornelius’ prayers and gifts to the poor in terms of a fragrant offering, pleasing to the Lord. In the description of Cornelius’ faith it becomes clear that he seeks the Lord earnestly. The Lord answers Cornelius’ devotion by providing the man who will be able to bring Cornelius into a deeper relationship with the Lord he was already seeking to please. Cornelius is instructed to seek Peter at the home of Simon the tanner in Joppa. Like the centurion of the Luke story, Cornelius responds immediately to the instructions given by the angel of the Lord, without doubt or question. Cornelius calls for three devout members of his household – two servants and a military aide – to whom he explains everything in his vision before sending them off to Joppa after Peter. The beginning of our passage told us that Cornelius’ family is devout, now we see that Cornelius’ faith has had an impact on his servants and his military aide as well. Cornelius’ devotion clearly led others to faith in the Lord.

In scripture passages just prior to chapter 10, Peter has been traveling through the coastal towns spreading the good news to Jews in those regions. Caesarea, the primary costal port of Israel was built by Herod the Great and was the capital of the Roman province of Judea. Inhabited primarily by

---

<sup>7</sup> This time of day also corresponds with the Tamid sacrifice at the Temple New American Commentary; see also Acts 3:1, Peter and John were going to the temple for prayer when they healed the cripple at this same time in the afternoon.

Gentiles, it did have a small population of devout Jews. Friction between the Jews and the Romans was intense.<sup>8</sup> We can see the Holy Spirit leading Peter closer to Caesarea and the home of Cornelius.

We can almost imagine the Lord reigning from his throne in heaven surveying his earthly kingdom, seeking a faithful Gentile to be the first with whom to reveal his plan to Peter that Gentiles are part of his salvation plan. As Cornelius' faith had been encouraged to grow, the Holy Spirit was at work with Peter, preparing him to open a new door of evangelism.



Read Acts 10:9-23 and answer the following questions.

What happened to Peter as he prayed? Describe what Peter saw, heard and the number of times it repeated.

What is the Lord telling Peter with this vision? What is he being prepared for?

Read Mark 7:1-23. What does Jesus teach in this discourse?

What do the men say to Peter?

How does Peter respond to the two Gentile servants and the Roman soldier?

What is it that Peter and Cornelius were doing when they received their visions?



What do you think is the significance of the visions coming while the men were praying?

---

<sup>8</sup> The Roman governor's place was in Caesarea and was the scene of the slaughter of Jews in \_\_\_\_\_.

## *Empowered by the Holy Spirit*

According to Jewish dietary laws (as outlined in Leviticus 11), certain animals and foods were considered forbidden and unclean. As Gentiles did not follow this practice of differentiating between “clean” and “unclean” food stuffs, the Jews often viewed Gentiles as “unclean” – sort of a “you are what you eat” kind of thing. Since Jews tended to view Gentiles as “unclean” it vastly limited the interaction between the two groups, to the point where a Jew wouldn’t enter a gentile’s home for fear of becoming ritually unclean. Respectful Gentiles would not enter into the home of a Jew, or ask a Gentile to “defile” themselves by entering a Gentile home (See Luke 7:1-10). Notice that Cornelius’ men call from outside, showing respect for the ritual cleanliness of the home of Simon who is Jewish.<sup>9</sup>

The concept of being ritually “clean” and “unclean” goes back to the concept “sacred” or things or people set apart for service to God versus “profane”, for everyday use. For something to become “sacred” or usable by God they had to go through a process of ritual cleansing or purification. As Peter is seeing this vision of clean and unclean foods, food that allows people to live and serve God, God is revealing to him that even those who consume unclean foods (Gentiles) can be set apart for service to God, or enter into a relationship with him. Prior to this vision, Peter would never have thought a Roman could become a follower of Christ. We are told that as Peter ponders the meaning of his vision, attempting to understand what it all means, Cornelius’ servants arrive and the Spirit tells him to go with them, and that he sent them to him. I’m not convinced that at this point Peter completely understands the full meaning of the vision, but his understanding is sufficient for him to ask these Romans into the house he is staying – the home of a Jew – to be his guests, offering both lodging and a meal before setting out together the next day. I believe he comes to understand the full import of the vision upon his experience at the home of Cornelius as he witnesses the movement of the spirit upon a household of Gentiles.

Peter’s vision of the vast sheet with four corners containing all the animals, clean and unclean, represent the four corners of the world and all its inhabitants. If the gospel was to go to the ends of the earth as Jesus instructed in Acts 1:8, then Peter and the rest of the “Jewish” believers would have to come to terms with associating with the Gentile world. Jesus had already given a discourse on ritual cleanliness in Mark 7.<sup>10</sup> Jesus said to the Pharisees, “*Don't you see that nothing that enters a man from the outside can make him 'unclean'? For it doesn't go into his heart but into his stomach, and then out of his body.*” (*In saying this, Jesus declared all foods "clean."*)” (Mark 7:18-19). Shortly after this discourse Jesus heals the daughter of a gentile woman (Mark 7:24-30) opening the way for a ministry to the Gentiles.

## *Personal Reflection*

In both scenes where Peter and Cornelius receive their visions, it is their customary time of prayer. Do you have a customary time of prayer? According to NAC, when we have a habitual time of prayer - time spent with God, he uses that time to direct us in the way he would have us go. In prayer time we open ourselves up to God enabling him to lead us further in our relationship with him, as well as in the work he has set aside for us to do. If you don’t already have a customary or habitual time of prayer and Bible

---

<sup>9</sup> It is also interesting to note that this Simon is a tanner, or leatherworker. His profession would require him to work with dead animals, rendering him ritually unclean, and yet Peter is staying with him.

<sup>10</sup> It is believed that the Gospel of Mark was dictated by Peter.

study, use the period of this study to create a new habit of daily prayer time and as this habit develops you may want to record how you have felt the Holy Spirit move in this time with you.

## The Key

With our passage today the Holy Spirit brings together the Jews led by Peter and a gathering of Gentiles in what must have been one of the most eye-opening moments in Peter's ministry. Take a few minutes to pray that the Lord will pour out a fresh and new understanding of these scriptures for you today.



Read Acts 10:23b-48 and answer the following questions.

Who travels with Peter?

What demonstration of faith in Cornelius is revealed in verse 24?

Why do you think Peter points out the fact that Jews don't associate with Gentiles?

What is it that God has shown him to make him enter a Gentile's home?

Peter then asks of Cornelius, "*May I ask why you have sent for me?*" What does this tell us about Peter's understanding of why he's there?

What then are his reasons for going to the home of Cornelius?

🔥 What do Cornelius' expectations appear to be? Remember he's assembled a large gathering to come listen to Peter. What is he expecting to hear? (See also v. 22).

## *Empowered by the Holy Spirit*

Write out verses 34-35 and comment on the significance of what Peter says.

Read carefully verses 36-38, in these verses does it appear that Peter is revealing something new?

At verse 39 it appears that Peter is beginning to reveal something about Jesus that the gathering had not yet heard. What hadn't they heard?

What happened next?

Why were the Jewish believers “astonished” at what they saw?

Peter says in verse 47, *“Can anyone keep these people from being baptized with water? They have received the Holy Spirit just as we have.”* How is this event similar to the outpouring of the Holy Spirit in Acts 2:1-4?

Upon seeing the outpouring of the Holy Spirit, what was the only response left to the Jewish believers?

What does this particular baptism imply?

Peter begins his message to those assembled in Cornelius' house with what would be considered a revolutionary statement by all who are familiar with the Old Testament belief that the Jews alone are God's chosen people, set aside to receive special benefits from God: his promises and his revelation. Peter's words reveal that it is not just the Jews who are favored, but all *“from every nation who fear him and do what is right”*(v.35). Peter preached that a personal relationship and commitment to Jesus is the means to forgiveness of sin and salvation. Peter delivers God's special message to Cornelius (and

his house hold) first intimated by the angel when the angel instructs Cornelius to send for Peter. Peter is to bring him the answer to his prayers: the key to knowing God and having a relationship with him. That key which opens wide the door for Cornelius' faith is that all who believe that Jesus is the Messiah, their sins will be forgiven. They will have peace with God and inclusion into his kingdom. They are included as God's chosen people and heirs to all that his grace promises. The Life Application Bible Commentary phrases this Spirit led moment beautifully:

"Having been sovereignly (even miraculously) guided to the home of Cornelius and having been impressed by the truth that God doesn't show partiality (10:34), Peter took the keys of the kingdom of heaven given him by Christ (Matthew 16:19) and, in a epoch-changing moment, opened the door of salvation to the Gentiles."

While Peter was still speaking, those gathered in Cornelius' home to receive God's special message immediately believed what Peter told them. Their belief resulted in the outpouring of the Holy Spirit upon the gathering. This event becomes known as the Gentile Pentecost. The Spirit poured forth speech in foreign languages accompanied by the ecstatic praising of God just as had happened to the Jews at Pentecost, closely paralleled the events of Acts 2, and clearly showing that God does not show favoritism for the Jews over the Gentiles. Those who "*fear him and do what is right*" (exemplified by the testimony we read about Cornelius) receive the Holy Spirit. Peter and his Jewish companions have nothing to do with the Gentiles receiving the Holy Spirit except in providing the message opening the door that allows them to accept Jesus as their savior. It is not by the laying on of hands, prayers for the Spirit to come, or any other means of human intercession that the Spirit is poured out, it is only by the will of God. Peter and his companions are utterly amazed at what they witness, but they cannot doubt or deny what they are seeing. As they witness this outpouring of the Holy Spirit all that is left to do is baptize them as a symbol of their public allegiance to Christ, and also their inclusion in the body of Christ. No human intervention or opinion can overturn what God had so blatantly ruled. The kingdom of God is open to all mankind who choose to enter.

### *Personal Reflection*

This week's lesson has been long but overwhelming in its evidence that the Spirit blows where it will. Between Saul's divinely led conversion and the Spirit guiding both Cornelius and Peter to the culmination of a Gentile Pentecost, we cannot help but see that the Holy Spirit is what leads to not only the growth of the church, but also the faith of the individual. Look back over the events of your life and ask the Lord to show you where the Spirit has divinely worked out circumstances to build your faith or lead you in the way He would have you go. Give this some serious consideration in your prayer time with the Lord. Write about those past experiences and ask him to lead you forward.