

## **Faith Comes by Hearing Bible Study – 9.10.25 (For 9.14.25)**

### **First Reading:** Joshua 23:1-3, 6-11

<sup>1</sup>A long time afterward, when the Lord had given rest to Israel from all their surrounding enemies, and Joshua was old and well advanced in years, <sup>2</sup>Joshua summoned all Israel, its elders and heads, its judges and officers, and said to them, “I am now old and well advanced in years. <sup>3</sup>And you have seen all that the Lord your God has done to all these nations for your sake, for it is the Lord your God who has fought for you.

<sup>6</sup>Therefore, be very strong to keep and to do all that is written in the Book of the Law of Moses, turning aside from it neither to

the right hand nor to the left, <sup>7</sup>that you may not mix with these nations remaining among you or make mention of the names of their gods or swear by them or serve them or bow down to them, <sup>8</sup>but you shall cling to the Lord your God just as you have done to this day. <sup>9</sup>For the Lord has driven out before you great and strong nations. And as for you, no man has been able to stand before you to this day. <sup>10</sup>One man of you puts to flight a thousand, since it is the Lord your God who fights for you, just as he promised you. <sup>11</sup>Be very careful, therefore, to love the Lord your God.

1. These words are some of the very last words Joshua spoke to the Israelites after conquering the land. What does Joshua emphasize in his message?
2. How is Joshua's message like Moses' before him? How does devotion to the Lord help the Israelites (and us) in every situation?
3. Joshua mentions multiple times that the Lord is “for you.” How is this message supposed to comfort and encourage us?

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

<sup>42</sup>And they devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and the fellowship, to the breaking of bread and the prayers.

<sup>43</sup>And awe came upon every soul, and many wonders and signs were being done through the apostles. <sup>44</sup>And all who believed were together and had all things in common. <sup>45</sup>And they were selling their possessions and belongings and

distributing the proceeds to all, as any had need. <sup>46</sup>And day by day, attending the temple together and breaking bread in their homes, they received their food with glad and generous hearts, <sup>47</sup>praising God and having favor with all the people. And the Lord added to their number day by day those who were being saved.

1. Devotion was the focus of the early church as they boomed on the day of Pentecost. What is it they are devoted to? Which of these areas is especially poignant to you?
2. This group's devotion brought a change in the spiritual climate to everyone. What are some changes mentioned? Why is that important?
3. This devotion also produced a substantial witness. How does the Holy Spirit use devotion to the Lord for mission?

**Gospel:** Mark 12:28-34

<sup>28</sup>And one of the scribes came up and heard them disputing with one another, and seeing that he answered them well, asked him, "Which commandment is the most important of all?" <sup>29</sup>Jesus answered, "The most important is, 'Hear, O Israel: The Lord our God, the Lord is one.' <sup>30</sup>And you shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind and with all your strength.' <sup>31</sup>The second is this: 'You shall love your neighbor as yourself.' There is no other commandment greater than these." <sup>32</sup>And

the scribe said to him, "You are right, Teacher. You have truly said that he is one, and there is no other besides him. <sup>33</sup>And to love him with all the heart and with all the understanding and with all the strength, and to love one's neighbor as oneself, is much more than all whole burnt offerings and sacrifices." <sup>34</sup>And when Jesus saw that he answered wisely, he said to him, "You are not far from the kingdom of God." And after that no one dared to ask him any more questions.

1. In this chapter, Jesus has already been questioned by Pharisees and Sadducees. Now, a scribe approaches him. What do you think might have been the scribe's intention in asking Jesus this question?
2. Jesus responds by quoting two Old Testament scriptures. What would be the significance of Jesus' quote? What would that have revealed to this scribe?
3. The scribe seemingly delights in Jesus' answer and they share a moment of joy in their conversation. How have you experienced something similar with others over your shared devotion for the matters of God?